



# Cottered & Throcking Reports

Cottered and Throcking Groups, Clubs or Societies were invited to submit or present a report on activities throughout the last year for the Cottered and Throcking Annual Community (Parish) Meeting held on Monday 11 May 2026:

## **Ardeley and Cottered WI • Kathryn Cassels**

Ardeley and Cottered WI meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm in Cottered Village Hall.

During the past year we have had a number of interesting talks:

Shepreth Wildlife Conservation spoke about their work with injured hedgehogs.

Tony Tutton gave his presentation "Coronation to Coronation", which relates his life as a musician from 1953 to 2023.

Albeiro Rojas Tomedes talked about his work as an artist and displayed his amazing crochet projects.

Beverly Harlow told us about the Foodbank that is run from Walkern Church, and which is supported by people living in Cottered.

Two local Magistrates described the work of the Magistrates Court.

Nick Hunt told us about "Show Business."

In addition, in August we hosted Pixie and Pickles, two Therapy ponies, with a picnic on the Village Green where we were joined by Oasis, and we went to see "Dick Whittington and his Cat" at the Gordon Craig Theatre

We are a very friendly group of ladies who are always pleased to welcome new members to the Institute.

Visitors are welcome to attend any meeting, and when we think that a meeting may have a more universal appeal, we are happy for gentlemen to come along as well.

## **Bellringers • Lois Kennedy, Tower Secretary**

Although enthusiasm often surpassed prowess, throughout the past year (2025 - 26), Cottered's St. John the Baptist team of bell ringers have continued with great dedication.

We would like to thank Christine Robinson who stood down as Tower Captain. Testimony to her hard work, she has been replaced by two others, Jenny Thomson as Ringing Mistress and Lois Kennedy as Tower Secretary.

The central core of Cottered ringers is often augmented by both regular and occasional visitors, all contributing invaluable skills, expertise and advice for which we are very grateful.

We hope that the Cottered community notice our gradual improvement while continuing to be patient with us if we sometimes struggle to learn.

Our Wednesday afternoon practices are open to everyone, from the vaguely curious to the super adept. You will always find a friendly, encouraging and supportive community of ringers.

As bell ringers, we are conscious of our significance, not only to Cottered but to society in general hence, over the last year, we have marked such events as Remembrance Sunday, Christmas, weddings and funerals; we will continue to do so.

In readiness for later this year, we are currently practising for our 2nd HCACR striking competition to be held in Rushden.

We hope to improve on 4th place but if not, we'll have fun trying!

## **Book Club • Christine Robinson**

We have read an eclectic range of books again this year. The books are all borrowed from Hertfordshire Library service, and are chosen by individual members on a rotational basis. We meet every 6 weeks or so, in various members' homes.

This year we have read

The Night Watch – Sarah Walters

The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels – Janice Hallett

Stiff Upper Lip Jeeves – PG Wodehouse

Take it Back – Kia Abdullah

The Ministry of Time – Kaliane Bradley

Stoner: a novel – John Williams

The Family Remains – Lisa Jewell.

### **Cottered & Throcking News • Jenny Thomson, Editor**

A Year of Cottered & Throcking News 2025-2026

Our parish magazine team consists of our sub-editors, our treasurer, our subscriptions manager, our roving reporter and 13 faithful delivery team members. Writers and photographers from across the whole parish keep Cottered & Throcking News fresh and lively. I value all these contributions.

We've not been short on content this year – here's a reminder of some of the things we've featured over the last 12 months:

- **Commemorations** like the VE Day event in May 2025 and the celebration in March 2026 of Neville Chuck, Editor of the magazine for 52 years.
- **Regular favourites** like the Harvest Supper, pub quizzes, Parish Council meetings, the Craft and Produce Show, Poems and Puddings, the Village Festival and the ever-popular Light the Night for Christmas.
- **Charity runs and cycle rides** by parishioners – often generously supported by their friends and neighbours.
- **Celestial events** including a partial eclipse and even the discovery by a Cottered amateur astronomer of a moon, previously unrecorded, in our solar system.
- **Local news** – sometimes 'boring but important'. Things like changed bin collections, and changes to our local government representation.
- **Our local roads!** The DriveSafe team monitoring speeds; the whatsapp group monitoring HGVs breaching the 7.5-tonne weight limit; the threat to rural roads of traffic inappropriately re-routed when the A507 closes.
- **Significant planning applications** like the two Beane Valley Solar plant applications on the A507 near to Cottered Parish, both still under consideration.
- **Our public spaces:** the celebration of 25 years of the new Village Hall and the re-opening of this Pavilion.
- **The excellent speakers** who give talks to the Women's Institute – we love reproducing these.
- **And not forgetting** the Crochet club, the pétanque players, the tennis match, and Mabel, the escaping love-sick tortoise. It all happens here and we report on it.

If I've missed you out please let me know and we'll give you some coverage in the next issue!

The £5 a year subscription is voluntary, and in the last financial year about two-thirds of households paid it, amounting to £1,230. Income from advertisers came to £1,715. Our printing bill and expenses came to a little over £2,000.

This means we can still make sure that every household that wants a copy of our magazine receives it, whether or not they pay a subscription.

We love parishioners' contributions! Please email copy, short stories and photographs to [magazine@cotte.red](mailto:magazine@cotte.red) - I'm always delighted to hear from you.

### **Cottered and Throcking Joint Parochial Church Council • Kathryn Cassels**

Revd Mark Bailey was Instituted by the Bishop of Hertford, and Inducted and Installed by the Archdeacon of Hertford as Rector of the Benefice of Ardeley, Benington, Cottered with Throcking and Walkern at St Mary the Virgin, Walkern on Monday, 16th June.

Cottered and Throcking Churches have continued to hold regular services at 11.00am on Sunday mornings. On the first, second and third Sundays of the month the service is at Cottered and on the fourth Sunday it is

at Throcking. In months when there are five Sundays, the five parishes in the Benefice take it in turns to hold the service.

The numbers attending the regular Sunday services remain low. However, "special" services such as those held on Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Day usually see an increase in the congregation.

Coffee mornings take place in Cottered Church on alternate Tuesdays usually between May and early December, and a popular Harvest Supper is held in the Village Hall in late September.

Cottered Church is open every day. Throcking Church is not normally open, but during the summer months it will be open at weekends. There are a number of interesting eighteenth and early nineteenth century memorials that are well worth a visit.

During 2025 Cottered Church commemorated the centenary of the death of Sun Yat-Sen, the first President of modern China, with an exhibition in Church. Dr Sun was a friend of Sir James Cantlie and is known to have visited him at his home in Cottered. This exhibition will shortly be replaced by another to commemorate the centenary of the death of Sir James, a distinguished physician and surgeon who pioneered the study of tropical medicine and developed modern First Aid. He wrote the original First Aid manual for the St John Ambulance Association.

In September part of the ceiling in the organ loft at Throcking collapsed shortly before a wedding was due to take place. The Church Architect has written a specification for the repair and tenders have been received. Hopefully, work on the ceiling will begin soon. Meanwhile, at Cottered part of the Churchyard wall that was in very poor condition is currently being repaired.

The care and maintenance of two mediaeval buildings is ongoing, and we are grateful to those who give their time to help us to keep the buildings and churchyards available and safe to be used.

#### **Cottered Cavaliers Golf Society • John Harwood-Bee**

The society continues to run a series of tournaments throughout the year despite the smaller number of members able to play. Over the past few years, sadly we have lost some of our regular players. In 2026 we shall run 4 tournaments between now and the end of September. If anybody would like to join a very friendly and relaxed group of golfers then please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### **Cottered Village Appreciation Society • John Harwood-Bee**

Now in its 16th year CVAS continues to do a lot of good within the village. Fortunately we still have a significant number of volunteers who step up to help when something needs doing in the village. We continue to provide a tidy up service for the churchyard as well as the village hall and for clearing leaves, twigs and branches from the greens in support of the Parish Trust and the council. CVAS is also the home of the Petanque group and we have helped keep the court in good condition. On a financial footing we have continued to help with donations for a number of projects including the A507 Safety group and we provide the insurance cover for all the activities and the volunteers who are involved in village projects. This includes coverage for such events as Village Day. On that note, it is disappointing to have to report that due to lack of interest there will not be a Village Day this year. Although we run it as a separate entity, Village Day comes under the umbrella of CVAS. On a positive note CVAS has been happy to work with Cottered Village People on their projects which this year will include a fun day on 23rd August.

#### **Cottered Village People • Wendy Hodges Jackson**

The CVP is a great group of people trying to create a sense of community by organising various events throughout the year in the village. They meet 4-6 times a year in The Bull sharing ideas, skills and talents and hopefully making a lovely environment for the people of Cottered. In fact, by coming to these meetings, some people who have lived in the village for many years are introduced to others who they have never met before!

So, past events - The highlights of last year were the amazing VE Day celebrations, the Village Day and Light The Night at Christmas where so many people came and had the best time. These were funded by the organisation of a Bingo Night, a Quiz Night and various other events where raffle prizes were donated and

around 70/80 came and supported. The Pool and Darts evenings and the Walk and Talk mornings are very popular every month and they welcome new faces - furry ones too (on the walk!!).

There is a Tennis tournament, Picnic & Rounders day and a Crochet Club.

As well as putting the money into future events we were also able to raise funds for a food bank at Xmas which was a very worthwhile charity and we are always grateful for any grants that villagers may be able to obtain which help enormously.

The group also decorates the village at Xmas with fairy lights around all the trees along the main road. This makes a wonderful scene and many people compliment Cottered as they drive through. Cars were hooting us which was lovely. They also decorate a large Xmas tree by the village hall. The tree is donated, erected and taken down by John and Alice Harvey. Last year we invited villagers to participate in decorating a bauble which they could dedicate to someone or just add for themselves which was very popular.

So, all in all, a fantastic year organised by an incredible team of volunteers.

If you would like to join us we would love to have you! You make new friends and it also makes Cottered an even better place to live as faces are familiar and therefore more welcoming.

### **Friends of Cottered Church • Kathryn Cassels**

The Friends of Cottered Church were formed in 1977 to help to maintain, beautify and keep in good order the fabric and internal fittings of the Church building together with its churchyard and boundary wall. This was to be achieved by raising money and by providing practical assistance where appropriate. The initial project was the repair of the steeple, but later projects included several repairs to the roof, the installation of a new stained-glass window to celebrate the Millenium, the installation of a toilet and kitchenette, and last year the refurbishment of the churchyard paths. By the end of 2025, the Friends had raised £204,000 and made grants to the PCC of £197,000.

Before 2025 the Friends normally organised three or four events each year, including Quizzes, Auctions, Murder Mystery Plays, concerts, stalls on Village Day, the famous Christmas Get-Together, "Poems and Puds", Art Exhibitions and Christmas Markets. Most of the events involve food in some way or another. 2025 was a quiet year in that we only held the Christmas Get-Together, and the "Poems and Puds" evening, but going forwards the Friends intend to organise more events.

Keeping a medieval building in good repair costs money. The Friends hope that villagers will support our events, and if anyone would like to join the committee, we would be pleased to welcome them.