

Ashfield Cum Thorpe 2022 Recorder's Report

2022 saw the Platinum Jubilee and subsequent death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles became HM King Charles III, the resignation of two Prime Ministers, substantial increases in the cost of living, some disruption in the supply chain for some food and goods, and further afield, a war in Ukraine. 2022 was also another year affected by Covid 19, which was still around in Ashfield, but its impact was diminished and in Autumn another booster vaccination became available for some Ashfield residents. Restrictions having been relaxed and, Ashfield residents were able to meet up and socialise and felt more comfortable to do so.

Ashfield Parish Council

The Parish Council continued to meet throughout the year with the same Councillors and Clerk as in the previous year and still with two vacancies for Councillors.

Residents were encouraged to bring relevant matters to the attention of the council to attend public meetings. The annual parish council meeting took place in the Village Hall on May 4th and was reasonably well attended. Reports were given by the Council, District and County Councillors and village organisations, including the Footpath Group, Community Council, Ladies Group, Welfare Trust, and Village Recorder. Issues raised included the state of Ashfield's roads, responsibility for road repairs in Grove Lane, problems about parking and obstruction of the road, the proximity of bird scarers to footpaths, and the timing of their use.

In September, the Council started to circulate a brief summary of items addressed by the council, and these notes were added to the village web page along with the more formal minutes of meetings.

Matters addressed in included the following: -

- **Planning applications** Changes to planning conditions for Osier View; access changes at Ashfield Place; new residential development between Quintons and Crowborough Farm; application for ground mounted solar panel at 1 Hillside; listed building consent for chimney at Merryvale House; two storey extension at Farisee Cottage.
- **Water leak outside Pilgrim's Rest** was reported and quickly fixed.
- **Drainage in Waddlegoose Lane** Work had taken place to alleviate flooding.
- **Sewage Pumping Station gates** It had been noted that the gates were not closed properly, Anglian Water were informed, who immediately responded and secured the gates.
- **Obstruction at Grove Lane junction** A Tree was damaged by an articulated lorry exiting Grove Lane, trying to avoid a van which was often parked close to the junction with Grove Lane. The lorry ran into the hedge of No.5 The Ashes, damaging a large tree and the telephone line. This was reported as an emergency to Suffolk Highways and the tree was cut down. Contact was made with residents and the company which owned the van to ask for the van to be parked elsewhere. Parking difficulties continued however, with an agricultural vehicle occasionally parked on the road instead of the van.
- **Overgrown hedges** Discussions with property owners and assistance relating to encroachment on the road by private hedges, which limited "pedestrian refuge" to escape from traffic.
- **Verge cutting, and visibility splays at A1120 junction** Overgrown greenery which made some roads unsafe, including the A1120 junction. This was raised with Suffolk Highways and some cutting back happened, but more may be needed.

- **Traffic Speeding** Discussions regarding signposting in a new 40mph zone, from The Swan crossroads to just after Ashfield Place. The possibility of speed limits at the northern end of the village was also considered but rejected by Suffolk Highways.
- **Footpaths** After pressure from the Parish Council, Suffolk County Council replaced the rotted and dangerous sleeper bridge on a footpath between Grove Farm and Waddlegoose Lane with a full bridge complete with handrails.
- **Grove Lane road repairs** complaints had been made to the council about the state of the road through Grove Farm to the bridleways. Enquiries confirmed the road to be the responsibility of the Highways Authority and the PC is pressing for the rebuilding of this road.
- **Potholes at the South end of the Street and near A1120 junction-** The Highways Authority was contacted, and the work undertaken in December. One location was next to the repairs of 2021.
- **Dangerous straw stack and leaky fertiliser tank behind Church Farm** - Concerns had been raised by resident. The new Property Director for Ashfield Place Farms confirmed that the existing tenant was to clear the stack, although this did not happen. The tank was taken away.
- **Bus service from Ipswich 118/119-** Regular bus users brought to the council's attention the withdrawal of the afternoon service from Ipswich, with effect from 30th August, which made it even more impractical to use public transport. Ipswich buses had revised the timetable "due to punctuality issues", leaving Ashfield with two buses a day to Ipswich Monday to Saturday, and one bus back departing Ipswich at 13.03. The matter was raised with county councillor and Ipswich Buses but so far, there had been no constructive response. The service is funded by the County Council.



Highways and Road matters

January 12th Icy conditions resulted in an accident when a car crashed into a ditch at the northern end of the village near Pear Tree Farm. The emergency services were called out and two people were freed from the car. There was no report of any injury.



Halesworth Police

March 26th the A1120 was closed following a collision at approximately 8am involving a car and a bicycle, and one person was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital, though it was understood that their injuries were not life threatening. The accident occurred at the junction with Thorpe Lane. Reports from Framsdon stated that several cyclists had been involved and at least one vehicle, seven police vehicles, one ambulance and one fire engine were in attendance.

May 4th notification was received from Suffolk Highway's Authority that the A1120 would be closed overnight, (from 8.30 pm to 5.30 am), from Ashfield Road to Thorpe Lane, between 9th and 14th May, in order to carry out drainage improvement work. A diversion plan was put in place.

June 21st a foul water leak developed at the manhole in the Street, near to the pumping station. This was reported to Anglian Water, who took immediate action.

July 11th two people were injured in a crash on the A1120, between a silver Honda Civic and a white Nissan NV400, van near to the junction with the Street. Newspaper reports referred to potentially life-threatening injuries to the driver and passenger of the Honda, a man and a woman, who were both in their 80's. They were driven to hospital by a member of the public. The incident was reported to the police the following day, who appealed for witnesses. Most Ashfield residents were unaware of the accident, and no emergency vehicles had been observed at the scene, although some vehicle debris was later spotted nearby.

October "Road closed ahead" and "Diversion" signs appeared at the end of the Street at the junction with the A1120. It turned out that the actual road closure was somewhere on the A1120 beyond Peasenhall, and at least 11 miles away from Ashfield.

Community Council and Other Social Events

The Village Hall was up and running after being closed for Covid and then for building work. The Community Council organised a number of social events over the year, including "pop-up pub" evenings, a Platinum Jubilee Barbeque, Wine Tasting evening, Christmas Social, coffee mornings and refreshments for two cycling clubs.

The Treasurer's Report for 2 years to 31 March 2022, was circulated to residents. It was reported that for the past two years, there was a surplus of income over expenditure resulting in cash reserves. Very few activities were held in the hall as a result of Covid outbreaks and lockdowns but the receipt of Covid grants and settlement of an insurance claim for the subsiding floor, enabled a lot of much needed work to the hall to be completed. The roof may need to be replaced in the future.

March 18th "Pop up Pub" an evening social and open bar.

April 9th Coffee Morning a morning get together with refreshments.

April 21st Community Council AGM- all residents were invited to attend, to hear reports and to question the committee.

June 4th the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was marked in Ashfield with a barbeque and the ceremonial planting of a tree. The tree was planted at the back of the hall, but further away from the hall than the silver jubilee trees to avoid root damage to the building. Robert Grimsey made a speech reflecting on village life over the past 70 years, and the tree, which was already in the ground, was "topped off" by lifelong Ashfield resident Doreen Baxter, aided by her niece. The National Anthem was sung. About 85 people attended and a profit of £214 was made on the day.

Ashfield Village Hall
Friday 18th March
7.00pm till late
Pop-up pub



1 free drink and nibbles
Pool table

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Barbecue
Saturday 4th June 1pm till late



Come and celebrate the jubilee with us at Ashfield Village Hall.
Hot dogs, burgers, cake, and bar plus veggie options available.
Bring a side dish if you wish.
Cash only





Jubilee bunting at the village hall (Google Street View)



Jubilee bunting in the Street (Google Street View)

August 12th Pop up Pub was well attended, with live folk music played outside by Ashfield residents Ruth and Des Hart. It was a warm summer evening. A profit of around £250 was made.



October 7th "Pop up Pub" with Fish and Chip Supper- held in the village hall with live music again provided by Ruth and Des Hart. The fish and chips from Debenham had to be ordered in advance, with orders collated by Graham Greene.

November 19th Ashfield's fifth Wine Tasting Evening- was organised and presented by Richard and Petra Ellis. Three red wines and three white wines were tasted, all from local suppliers at under £15 per bottle. Bread and homemade soup were also provided, the tickets were £12.



November 26th Christmas Wreath Workshops- run by Jane Ryder, were held in the village and subsequently, many lovely wreaths appeared on doors throughout Ashfield.



December 3rd "Pop up Pub" Christmas Social- Seasonal nibbles were brought along, the bar was open and mulled wine was also available. A few festive jumpers made an appearance. The evening was well attended.



December 11th A coffee morning was held at the village hall and the new vicar, Rev Gary Best made a guest appearance.

October 22nd Ashfield Mystery Meal resumed after Covid. All courses were in Ashfield and 16 venues hosted one course for 8 people as part of a 4-course meal. The evening ended with coffee supplied at Blacksmith Cottage.

Cyclists Refreshments Ashfield Village Hall provided a refreshment stop for cyclists from two clubs on numerous dates during the year, and also for a 113km cycling event which started in Blaxhall on September 24th. Ashfield residents provided the refreshments, with profits going towards the cost of running the hall. The Community Council offered to reimburse the costs of ingredients.

Ashfield St Mary's Church

May 18th the new Priest in Charge of the Benefice, Rev. Gary Best took up his post. The post had been vacant since August 2020.

May 22nd the **Rogation Service** -Rev. Gary Best led his first service in Ashfield, and after the service, he "planted" the first of two Queen Elizabeth maple trees to mark the Platinum Jubilee, (the second tree was planted during the Jubilee BBQ behind the village hall.) Tea was served in the church after the service.

Regular services took place in the church during the year, including Benefice Services, Evening Prayers, Holy Communion and on November 13th a Remembrance Service. On December 20th, a Carol Service was held and seven ladies from Ashfield Ladies Group sang at the service. Mince pies and mulled wine were on offer after the service. On Christmas Day, Rev. Gary Best led a Holy Communion Service.



Church Fund Raising

April 30th A Cello concert by sisters Yalda and Shieda Davis was held in the church and over £450 was raised for church funds.

May 21st and May 27th Robert Grimsey opened his garden and arboretum to view the collection of aesculus (horse chestnut) trees. There was a steady stream of visitors who were able to see the trees in bloom in the original garden as well as a more recently created circular garden. Light refreshments were available. Visitors made donations in favour of Ashfield's church.

August 24th villagers were invited to tea and cakes and to meet the vicar in the village hall.

"MORE TEA VICAR"

AN INFORMAL GATHERING TO MEET OUR NEW PARISH PRIEST THE REV'D GARY BEST.

**WEDNESDAY 24TH AUGUST, 10AM TO NOON.
IN THE VILLAGE HALL.**

TEA/COFFEE AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

REV'D GARY WILL GIVE A BRIEF PRESENTATION AT 10.40am AND LOOKS FORWARD TO MEETING AND GETTING TO KNOW YOU.

FROM ST MARY'S ASHFIELD, YOUR PARISH CHURCH.

September 10th the church was open for the annual Suffolk Historic Churches Trust Cycle Ride.

November 7th a beetle drive was held in the village hall, organised by Jane Davison. A profit of £314.41 was raised church funds.

December Christmas cards at 30p each were offered for sale to raise funds.

Ashfield Ladies Group

During the first part of the year the group continued to meet online using Zoom, due to Covid and repairs to the village hall, although the numbers taking part were quite low.

June 21st the group started meeting again in person in the village hall. This was a social event with tea, coffee, biscuits, and homemade cake. There was no fee, and no speaker, and participants were invited to bring along a friend or neighbour who might be interested in joining the group. The meeting was well attended.

July 15th the planned meeting was cancelled for several reasons, including the hot weather.

September 20th the group met again when the speaker was Kate Weights (nee Wilson) who gave a presentation about "Tropics", the skincare company and why she joined it. Members were asked to bring along a small bowl and towel so that they could try out the lotions Kate brought with her.

October 18th the third meeting in person with a talk by Ashfield resident Myles Hansen, entitled “What’s in a Name”.

November 15th Jenny Pearson facilitated a Christmas Card making evening.

There was no outing or Christmas meal this year, but on 20th December, 7 ladies sang in the Church Carol Service.

The Death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II

September 8th HRH Queen Elizabeth II died.

September 10th The National Proclamation for King Charles III took place in London. Ashfield’s church bell was tolled unmuffled 96 times in the morning, representing the Queen’s age when she died. The Union flag was flown from the church from 11 am Saturday September 10th through to Sunday evening, September 11th.

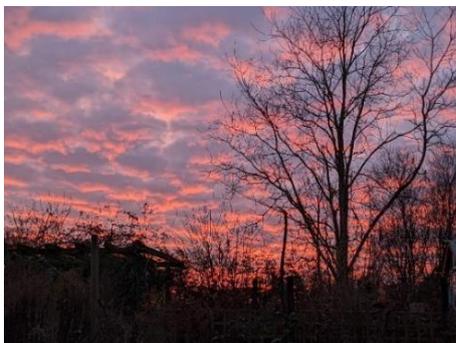
September 11th Regional proclamations took place with the County Proclamation for Suffolk on the Cornhill in Ipswich and local proclamations 2½ hours later - the three nearest to Ashfield being St Michael’s Church, Framlingham, the Shire Hall, Woodbridge and the Market Place, Stowmarket.

September 19th The Queen’s funeral took place and was shown live on television, and the day was made a bank holiday. Ashfield was very quiet that day with very little traffic on the roads.

A period of national mourning started with the Queen’s death and ended after the State Funeral. The church was opened 24 hours daily during the period of mourning for prayers and reflection and messages of condolences to be left on sheets which would be formed into a book of condolence. As a consequence of the period of national mourning, the Parish Council meeting arranged for September 12th had to be rescheduled for 26th September.



Weather and Countryside



January 31st & February 1st
Interesting sunsets in Ashfield



February 18th Storm Eunice A “red” weather warning was issued by the Met Office and a major incident declared for Suffolk, due to the potential danger to life. Very strong winds were experienced in Ashfield; the roof of a garden shed was blown off and anything not fixed down was blown about.

March 31st Ashfield had a light sprinkling of snow.

June 4th was very warm, with temperatures in Ashfield reaching 32°C and it was still warm at 10pm. According to press reports, Suffolk was the warmest place in the country. June 17th was also very warm and sunny, and the warmest day of the year to date. On 18th June, the sky turned pink, and cars became dusty as a result of dust blown from the Sahara Desert.

July Ashfield was included within the area covered by a “red” warning for extreme heat issued by the Met office, which meant that adverse health effects were expected as well as adverse impacts on daily

routines, working practices and infrastructure. The extreme heatwave occurred from 16th to 19th July with temperatures in Ashfield of 26°C on July 18th and 39°C on July 19th. The hottest temperature recorded was 40.3°C at Coningsby, Lincolnshire on 19th July. There had been no significant rain for some time and July 2022 was the driest July for East Anglia on record according to the Met Office, resulting in fire risks. Ashfield escaped with no fires, but in the neighbouring village of Earl Soham, fire spread over six acres of crops on 2nd August.

August 12th The Environment Agency placed East Anglia into drought status, because of the impact the prolonged dry weather had on water resources, but no hosepipe ban was imposed.

September to December Many trees had already shed their leaves by September due to the drought and hot weather over the summer months. The grass remained brown, and rainfall was still negligible. Some rain fell on 26th September, then more during October and the grass started to grow again. Late October and early November was mild and very wet with rain or drizzle almost every day, up to the first week of December. December was a cold month.

Rainfall totals for Ashfield by month in 2022 in mm. recorded by Geoff Henney.

Jan	11.6	Apr	9	Jul	0.07	Oct	51.7
Feb	5.4	May	48.1	Aug	0.07	Nov	111.5
Mar	21	Jun	38	Sep	24.9	Dec	47.3

2019 total rainfall 617 mm / 24.3 inches.

2020 total rainfall 648 mm / 25.7 inches.

2021 total rainfall 566.5 mm / 22.30 inches.

2022 total rainfall 418.5 mm / 16.48 inches.

Property

Farisee Cottage changed ownership twice in 2022; firstly, in January, when a sale at £360,000 was registered with The Land Registry and then in August, the cottage was advertised for sale by Durrants Estate Agents with a guide price of £380,000. A buyer was soon found, and the cottage occupied again.



Durrants sales particulars



Clarke and Simpson sales particulars

Tey Cottage came on the market in April, and was advertised by Clarke and Simpson, with a sale price of £265,000. The cottage was described as a three-bedroom semidetached cottage with 0.2 acres. A sold sign appeared in June, but the house was still unoccupied at the end of the year.

Ashfield Place - house, land & Swan Cottage - the sale was completed around April time. The farm land continued to be farmed by the outgoing tenants until handover later in the year. The house underwent renovation but was still empty at the end of the year.

Mulberry Tree Cottage was advertised for sale, with an asking price of around £575,000, in May. The property was not on the market for long and around August a buyer had been found.



Huntingfield sales particulars

Bramcote - in August this five bedroomed detached property was advertised for sale by Huntingfield estate agents for £750,00 but appeared to have been taken off the market towards the end of the year.

From: TheMoveMarket.com

Other Matters

2021 Census Information from the census recorded the population of Ashfield to be 222, with a mean age of 41.3. (The population was 219 in the 2011 census).

January - Crime There was a daytime burglary from outbuildings at Roll and Pork Cottages.

February - Ukrainian refugees Ashfield residents contributed to a collection of essential items for Ukrainian refugees crossing over the border to Poland, organised by Bedfield School. Annabel Shiroi-Thomas of Ashfield arranged the collection in Ashfield and the transportation of goods to Bedfield.

April - Avian Flu There was an outbreak of avian flu in the area. The Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs provided guidance about keeping birds safely and reporting suspected disease or deaths in birds. In October, following increased incidence in wild birds and on commercial premises, further measures were taken to mitigate the disease spreading amongst poultry and captive birds. An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone became effective across the country and all bird keepers were legally required to follow strict biosecurity measures.

September - Ashfield's defibrillator was recalled by the manufacturer in August due to a software malfunction and was repaired and returned by 19th September.

Energy costs - The cost of fuel rose dramatically. Some energy firms went bankrupt, necessitating the transfer of their customers to alternative suppliers. Government support was announced to assist with rapidly rising prices and messages were circulated to Ashfield residents. Warning messages were also circulated in the village about scammers offering access to help with heating costs.

This document includes information sourced from the following publications:

Ashfield cum Thorpe village email system

Mid Loes Benefice Magazine

Property sale particulars (various sources)