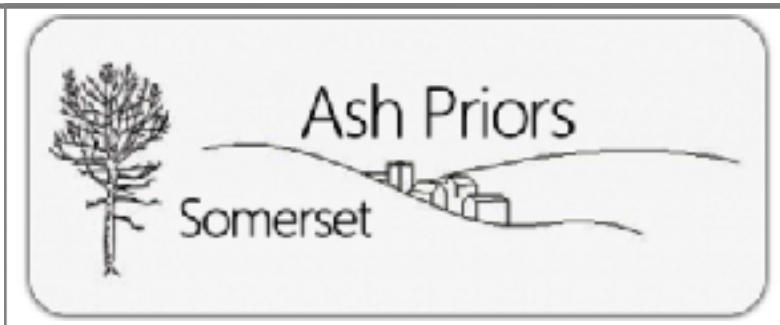




This month

- The Village School
- From the Vicarage
- Summer fetes and activities
- Library news
- ... and much more!

Contributions

If you have a story to contribute or an event to publicise then please let me know. The deadline for the next edition is the 20th of each month.

Subscribe

The Villager is delivered freely to your inbox every month, contact Simon Harrison (srbharrison@me.com) to subscribe (contributions welcomed). For back issues and to find out the latest about the village go to www.ashpriors.org.uk

Contact

mark.atlay@btinternet.com
07889 486071

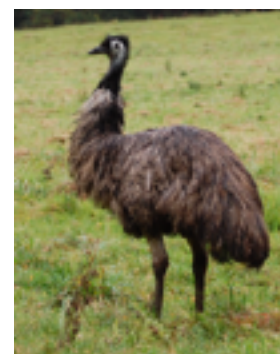
Editorial



Anyone have the low down on why a few hundred concrete sleepers have appeared between Ash Priors and Halse? Are there plans to extend the West Somerset railway? Has HS2 been rerouted as part of Andy Burnham's plans to move the centre of gravity away from London. We need to know!

Meanwhile the common remains a tinderbox, leaves have shrivelled and streams are trickling at best. Just the sort of environment in which Emus thrive.

Following last month's story, Simon Harrison sent me this picture of a local Emu which used to live in the field opposite Park Gate House and was very friendly. He used to let Simon pluck feathers from his neck for tying trout and salmon flies in return for pheasant chick pellets.



Simon is expecting herds of wildebeest, caribou or bison soon.

Mark



Ash Priors

Village dates for your diaries

Saturday 15th August **Pop-Up pub**

Saturday, 5th of September Ash Priors Village **Community Walk**

Sunday 27th September - **Harvest Lunch**

Ash Priors Volunteers

10am Saturday 12th September - **stream clearing**

10am Saturday 7th November - **litter picking**

Further details via the Village WhatsApp group closer to the time.

Museum of Somerset

Summer of Fun - Here's the highlights:

- Kids go FREE
- Dress-up in the imaginative zone
- Play the Sound Game and share a giggle!
- Try the vintage Nintendo
- Leave your mark on the giant collective artwork

Dryad Inn

The Dryad Inn is back - the pop-up pub with no fixed abode

Please note that only folks aged 18 and over can attend - both inside and outside the hall

There will also be filming of the event for a music video. If anyone wants to be part of the 'pub scene', please contact Becky Wright at Dryad Gin so that you can be invited earlier in the day - email address - hello@dryadgin.co.uk

THE DRYAD INN



Pop Up Pub

Ash Priors Village Hall

Sat 15th August

6pm till 10.30pm

HAPLESS SAILORS SHANTY 7pm

DRYAD GIN COCKTAILS

LOCAL CIDER / BEER

FRESH PIZZA

there will be filming at this event





Dunster castle

This summer there's something for all ages to enjoy at Dunster Castle. Younger visitors can step into a world of medieval adventure with our knight-themed Summer of Play, where they can test their skills and take on challenges inspired by knightly quests. Try your hand at sword fighting, jousting and archery and keep an eye out for special events throughout the summer, including visits from Sword-Fighting Knights and spectacular Falconry displays.

And when the summer days begin to cool, why not join us for Summer Nights?

Every Thursday in August, our gardens will remain open until 8pm, giving you the chance to experience Dunster Castle's grounds in the golden evening light.

Relax on Green Court with live music, soak up the atmosphere, and enjoy refreshments and light bites available in Tenant's Hall.

Guided Walk & Lunch

Ash Priors Village Association Local Guided Walk & Lunch Saturday 5th September

Walks start from Village Hall
6 mile walk - 09:30
4 mile walk - 10:15



Refreshment break at The New Inn - Halse
Dogs on leads welcome

**People not walking are also welcome at the
VH for a Ploughmans Lunch at 13:00 - £10pp**

Local Artist's Exhibition - Raffle

To book contact:
Ruth Evans - 01823 432 690
ruth.evans2230@gmail.com



Made with PosterMyWall.com

We encourage all, whether walking or not, to come along to the Village Hall for a Ploughman's lunch (£10 pp - veggie option available) at 13.00 for a social get together and to view the exhibition by a local artist and there will also be a raffle and more!

Independent Visitors Wanted

As we head towards summer, it is easy to be drawn into thoughts of lazy holidays and family get-togethers. But you might be looking for something else, a way of giving back to your community and the children of Somerset.

The number of children coming into the care of the Local Authority is at its highest level ever – at over 700. As a result, Route1 is seeing an increase in the number of children who are asking for an Independent Visitor.

An Independent Visitor (IV) is a volunteer who makes a commitment to one child in care. They visit the child once or twice each month to build a trusting, supportive relationship and friendship that can sometimes last many years. The visits might involve going out for coffee and a chat, having a picnic, or going for a dog walk. The relationship can bring life-changing experiences and opportunities to a child or young person – and their IV!



Here's what one of volunteers said: "I have been a volunteer with Route1 for five years now. Supporting a child in care has been one of the most rewarding things I have done. Last week I had the privilege of taking my young person to the beach for the first time. The joy on their face will remain with me always."

It sounds rewarding but too difficult for me... Our youngest volunteer is 19 and our oldest is over 80! Some have experience of being with children, but many don't. If you are kind, fun and reliable then we can support with the rest. There is extensive, free training which is delivered face-to-face – no Zoom breakout rooms for us! And once trained there is ongoing support.

Your life experience will be highly valued, and you will be trained and supported in developing key skills. Your volunteering can be arranged to suit your availability.

For more information about Route1 Advocacy and Independent Visitors, you can contact us by emailing: route1advocacy@somerset.gov.uk, calling 01749 822801 and our website is www.route1advocacy.co.uk



No time to volunteer but you'd like to help out?

You can donate to the Route1 fund, set up to help enrich the lives of children in care and managed by Somerset Community Foundation. The friendly Route1 team members are always happy to talk to individuals, groups, and businesses – use the details above. You can also make a donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/route1fund>

What to do with food recycling in the hot weather?

We appreciate it's not the best weather to store food recycling, but there are some things that can be done to help:

- Use the food waste bin's handle to keep it locked – depending on the type this will be to either pulling the handle forward or lifting it up.
- Keep food waste bin lids closed to reduce smells and pests.
- Store bins in a shaded area where possible.
- Line caddies with newspaper or compostable liners.
- Empty your kitchen caddy more frequently (every 2-3 days).
- Clean caddies regularly to keep them hygienic.
- Freeze food waste until collection day to help prevent odours and flies. Bag up food waste first, a tub could also be used to store bagged food waste in the freezer ready for recycling.

Forthcoming local events



The Village School

From 'Memorials of Ash Priors' by the Reverend Arthur Wilfred Baynham, Vicar, (1908).

Head teachers

Eliza Cridling.
Eliza Stevens.
Mary Ann Stevens.
Sophia Stevens.
Louisa Pullin.
Mrs. Knight
Miss Luck
Miss Mary Ann Pepper
(1904)
Mrs. Sarah Nicholls (1903)
Mrs. Mary Doble. (1904)
Mrs. Mary Jane Newill



“The village School is a small but useful little building which has served its purpose well for many years. From the windows is a fine view of the Blackdown Hills and the Wellington Monument, standing 900 feet above the level of the sea. This monument was erected by subscription in honour of the Duke of Wellington, who was Lord of the Manor, and in commemoration of his victory at Waterloo.

In this undertaking Sir Thomas Lethbridge was chairman of the committee. In this monument he has left a perpetual object lesson in history for the children.

In the schoolroom hangs a board recording the date and purpose for which it was built.

'This Schoolroom was built at the sole cost and charge of Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge, Bart., Anno Domini, 1833; and it was built that the poor children of Ash Priors should be early taught the great truths contained in the Holy Bible and thereby become good Christians and good subjects.

The school and the school house belong to Sir Wroth Lethbridge and are let to the managers at a nominal rent of 10 shillings a year. It is under the Somerset County Council, who hold themselves liable for the maintenance of the school provided the parish meet the requirements of the County Education Committee with regard to what is considered adequate accommodation for the children. There are six managers, appointed by the parish under this act in 1903.

In the year 1904 the Education Committee required additional accommodation in the form of a larger playground, better ventilation and offices. Rather than that it should become a Council School the managers recognised the desirability of trying to raise the moneys. Sir Wroth P. C. Lethbridge undertook to do the work principally at his own expense, thus keeping up the traditions of the family who have always taken so great interest in the parish and all the institutions connected with it.

In the year 1870 there were 55 children attending the school. In 1908 there are 20."

From The Vicarage

Whenever you go past your village church you would be surprised if it were not there, or if there were a large “closed, any claims to be made to....” Or a FOR SALE board outside! But this is the reality of small village parish churches today.

OUR church is there, open every day, offering a space for spiritual rest, sanctuary, somewhere where all people are welcome, available for sad and happy family occasions, for prayer and worship, as a beacon of comfort and hope. It is part of village life, geographically and spiritually. A healthy community is proud of its focal points...A local Pub, a Village Hall, good local schools and a Church....a community that is alive.



Behind that image there are, of course, financial struggles. Where would a pub be without its paying customers? Where would a school be without its funded children? Where would a Village Hall be without its team of volunteers to keep up the fundraising? Where would the church be without funds to maintain its ancient building and to keep it functioning for the day you need it?

There is a fond idea that your village church is funded by The Church of England, who are, as we all have heard, rich land owners who donate large amounts to worthy causes throughout the world.

Our parish churches, the buildings and the work that takes place in the name of “The Church” is all financed by ourselves, the local parishioners, the gas or oil, electricity, ground care, building maintenance, insurance, supplies for services, even the support of clergy and administration has to be completely paid for by ourselves.

Today I am reminding you that the small number of members cannot financially support their church and its presence in our community.

Our church is an important part of the village and we need the village to financially support it . Donations to the Tower Appeal and one-off donation are really appreciated, but regular, steady giving by Standing Order is the gift that just keeps giving! Supporting your local church may not buy you any favours at the heavenly gates but it may make a huge difference to your church and your community.

Details of who to contact to are included in The Villager.

God bless you for reading this and considering supporting your church in your community

Helene

Benefice Services

	2nd August	9th August	16th August	23rd August	30th August
Ash Priors		9.30am Communion		11.15am worship	
Fitzhead		11.15am Worship for all			
Halse	11.15am Worship		11.15am Communion		
Milverton		9.30am Worship	9.30am Communion	10.30am united Communion @ Chapel	8am BCP Communion
Langford Budville	11.15am Communion		11.15am Worship	12md Baptism	10am Community Celebration
Runnington		9.30am Worship		9.30 Communion	
Milverton Methodists	10.30am Worship	10.30am Communion	10.30am Worship	10.30am united Communion	10.30am Worship

Road works

Developer and Somerset Council work with utilities to co-ordinate essential work

Important utility upgrade and replacement schemes are scheduled to start on the A358 in north Taunton later this month.

The work is planned by Wales and West Utilities (WWU) and National Grid to replace ageing gas services and the electrical network, along Staplegrove Road and Minehead Road and will start 20 July, running through to October.



Road to Northway

The road from the corner of the common towards Queensbridge, Kerdon and Denbury farms will be closed except for local traffic from 19th August for three days to allow for pothole filling and surface patching.



Bishops Lydeard Community Library

Discover the Library in your pocket – Try the LibrariesWest App

Did you know you can take your library wherever you go? With the free LibrariesWest app, your local library is always at your fingertips. The app makes it quick and easy to manage your account on the move. You can search the catalogue, reserve items, and renew loans in just a few taps—no need to wait until your next visit.

Planning your next read is simple too. Reserve books and choose where to collect them, with notifications when they're ready, so you'll never miss out on a great title. A small fee for adult reservations, but those for children are free.

The app also helps you stay organised. You can keep track of what you're reading, link family accounts to manage everyone's loans in one place, and even find your nearest library along with opening times.

Best of all, it's completely free and available for both Apple and Android devices—making it easier than ever to stay connected to your library service wherever you are. Download the LibrariesWest app today and make the most of your library membership—anytime, anywhere.

To download the app, visit the App Store or Google Play using your device. Although not currently available through the Kindle Store, if you are able to download the Google Play app on a Kindle Fire you should be able to download the LibrariesWest app from there.

Find out more on the Libraries West website - <https://www.librarieswest.org.uk/-/library-app>

- Storytime – Mondays 11.00 - 11.30 (term-time only) – lots of stories and rhymes
- Lego club – Saturdays 10.00 - 13.00
- Printing, photocopying (small charge per sheet)
- Public computer (library members only – joining is free)
- Free wi-fi (library members only – joining is free)
- For children - a trail of pictures to track down, with a little treat for finding them all. Also colouring, Lego, Duplo and toys.

Opening hours:

· Monday 10 – 4 Wednesday 10 – 4 Friday 10 – 4 Saturday 10 – 1

The Library will be closed on the August Bank Holiday – Monday 31st

Volunteering - if you are interested in volunteering at Bishops Lydeard Community Library, please telephone Iain Hunter on 01823 433016 or email iain.hunter@btinternet.com

Somerset Council News

Initial Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Report published

In 2025, we ran a Local Plan Call for Sites for 6 weeks from 13 January to 24 February. Following this, we assessed the sites received, alongside other sources of sites. These are contained in the Interim HELAA Report (2026).



The HELAA is a high-level technical study which considers the potential suitability, availability and achievability of identified sites for future residential, economic or renewable energy development. The HELAA forms the initial stage of the site assessment process and provides evidence to support the preparation of our new Local Plan. [Read the report](#) and find out more about:

The HELAA process sits as a first stage in the wider Local Plan site selection process. It does not allocate sites or grant them planning permission or planning status of any kind.

It is a 'policy off' assessment, which means it considers some high-level constraints but does not consider adopted plan policy constraints at this stage.

Given its high-level nature and 'policy off' approach, the report is deliberately badged as an 'Initial HELAA Report'. No sites are labelled as conclusively 'suitable', and the best a site can come out as is:

- 'potentially suitable';
- 'available'; and
- 'achievable'.

Waste Collection Dates

Month	180 Refuse Collection	Food Caddy Collection	Garden Collection	Recycling Box Collection
Jul		30	30	30
Aug	13	6, 13, 20, 27	13, 27	6, 13, 20, 27

Is it time to renew your garden waste subscription?

If you subscribe to the garden waste collection service, you may soon receive an email renewal notice. However, there's no need to wait for your notification before you renew. The simplest way to renew your subscription is online, visit the [garden waste collection webpage](#).

You can also follow the link to check when your subscription is due, or sign up as a new subscriber.

If you provide an email address, we'll email you a renewal notice in the month before your subscription is due.

Due to the high costs of postage and administration, we no longer post renewal notification letters. We recommend making a note in your calendar or diary ahead of your garden waste subscription expiry date.



Government to make 'plug-in solar' available within months

More households will be helped to save money on bills through plug-in solar panels as the government vows to go further and faster on clean energy in response to conflict in the Middle East. 'Plug-in' solar panels to be in shops within months, offering households chance to significantly cut energy bills

- Move comes as government steps up drive for clean homegrown power to get the UK off dependency on fossil fuel markets in response to Iran war
- New rules introduced to ensure majority of new homes in England will come with solar panels fitted as standard
- Innovative new approach of discounted power on windy days in areas where wind farms are paid to switch off to avoid 'wasted wind', predominantly benefiting Scotland and the East of England



Non-black plastic plant pots now recyclable from home

It's good news for avid gardeners, as our Waste team has confirmed that most plant pots can now be accepted for kerbside recycling in the Bright Blue Bag. Most plastic pots can be accepted. However, **black plastic pots remain unrecyclable**.

The change comes as the national Simpler Recycling regulations come into force across the country.



Useful contacts

Ash Priors WhatsApp Group: coordinator Liz Robertson 07905 489966

Benefice Rector: Revd Helene Stainer 01823 400305 / 07707 198937

Churchwarden: John Taylor (Keyholder) 01823 432925

Organist: Jill Taylor 01823 432925

Parish Meeting Chair: Richard Brooksbank 01823 430981

Parish Leads

Planning and Neighbourhood Watch Stuart Scott

Footpaths Chris Close

Roads & Drains Lynn Lake

The Common Ian MacDonald & Neil Wood

Land and Water David Clarke

Parish Meeting Secretary: Norma Atlay ashpriorsvillagemeeeting@gmail.com

PCC Secretary: Ros MacDonald 07570 956060

PCC & Village Hall Treasurer: Simon Harrison 01823 432122

Village Hall Chair: Maria de Broë-Ferguson 01823 433299

Village Hall Secretary: Ruth Evans 01823 432690

Village Hall Bookings & Keys: Jill Taylor 01823 432925

The Villager (Editor): Mark Atlay 07889 486071

The Villager (Subscriptions): Simon Harrison 01823 432122

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator: Stuart Scott 07745 983179

Ash Priors & Halse WI President: Greer Allaway 01823 400 600

Rural Crime: 07492 888109

Musgrove Park Hospital: 01823 333444

Post Offices: Oake 01823 461531 / Norton Fitzwarren 01823 330774 / Staplegrove 01823 325481

Report a Road issue: www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/

Report Fly-Tipping: https://my.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/en/service/Fly_tipping