

**AYNHO,
THE APRICOT VILLAGE
DECEMBER NEWSLETTER**

*Wishing you a
Merry
Christmas*

**“CAROL SERVICE - 4PM
SATURDAY 21ST
DECEMBER”**

**“CHRISTMAS DAY - 10AM
COMMUNION”**

CHURCH CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2024

ASTWICK VALE BENEFICE

AYNHO-CROUGHTON-EVENLEY-FARTHINGHOE-HINTON-in-the-HEDGES with STEANE

Sunday December 1 st 1 st Sunday of Advent	11am 9.15am 10am 6pm	Aynho Farthinghoe Evenley Hinton	Communion Communion Morning Prayer Evensong
Sunday December 8 th 2 nd Sunday of Advent	10am 9.15am 11am 11am 5.30pm	Aynho Evenley Croughton Hinton Farthinghoe	Morning Prayer Communion Communion Morning Prayer Carol Service
Sunday December 15 th 3 rd Sunday of Advent	10.30am	Farthinghoe	Benefice Communion
Saturday December 21 st	4pm	Aynho	Carol Service
Sunday December 22 nd 4 th Sunday of Advent	9.15am 11am 11am 5.30pm	Farthinghoe Croughton Hinton Evenley	Morning Prayer Morning Prayer Communion Carol Service
Tuesday December 24 th Christmas Eve	5pm 10pm 11.30pm	Farthinghoe Croughton Evenley	Crib Service Midnight Mass Midnight Mass
Wednesday December 25 th Christmas Day	10am	Aynho	Communion
Sunday December 29 th 1 st after Christmas	10.30am	Hinton	Benefice Communion

Church Information: about the life of our church, or enquiries about baptisms, weddings, funerals or burials –

Please contact the Rector on 01869 810903 or by email to office@astwickvalebenefice.org

Bell Ringing in November – Alternate Tuesdays at 7.30pm
St Michael's Church Cleaning – Wednesday 18th December (9.30-10.30am)

Items for **January Newsletter by 20th December**
by email please to Newsletter.aynho@gmail.com

Christmas Cards - in aid of the Children's Society
can be bought by calling at Sybil's at 32 Roundtown.

This Newsletter is issued by St Michael's Church and includes all Church and community news and is printed locally in Aynho by "Ciceroni Travel" **(Vol:703)**

RECTOR'S RAMBLINGS

December is a time for stories. There is one great Christmas story, and we will hear and see it again this year. But first, let me tell you another. Picture a town on the Mediterranean many centuries ago. Behind it mountains tower up before dropping almost vertically to the sea. The settlement clusters around the small deepwater port that provides its purpose and livelihood. The place is Myra in the early 4th century. A vital port on the long and inhospitable coast that offered rare and valuable safe harbour between the provinces of Africa and the Roman Empire's capital. Myra is like a service station, useful, sometimes a welcome sight, but rarely loved.

I want you to picture the town at night. Look in closer, zooming in over the tile roofs, the maze of streets, boats riding the gentle tide at rest in the harbour, watchmen making their patrols as the last few stagger home from the Inns and Taverns, until you come to a single small dwelling in the tangle of whitewashed houses. It could be described as simple. There is not much inside in the way of furniture, but the few pieces that are there are good quality but worn. In a single bed three young girls are sleeping. Their father, a little aged by worry, sits by the glowing embers of the dying fire. Once prosperous, he now barely has enough to get by. Things are only getting worse, and his daughters are approaching the age of marriage. Without anything to offer as a dowry for one daughter, let alone three the prospects look bleak. If debts are called in everything he has could be taken, he and his children bonded into slavery. Without prospect of marriage for his daughters, the only option might be to sell the only thing they have, themselves. In any case, the 4th century did not deal kindly with poor unmarried unprotected young women. Their plight is known, but all their neighbours and remaining friends have offered is sympathy and pity.

As the father begins to doze, a shadow moves in the street outside, and a hooded figure creeps stealthily towards the house. A hand emerges from the recesses of its robe, and there is a clink and the faint glint of something metal concealed. Reaching up to the window the figure pushes something through, and it lands with a sudden thud on the floor inside. The father wakes with a start, waking his daughters in turn. Quickly and cautiously the father moves to investigate this parcel whilst his children crowd round to see. Later, when the story is told and retold, people will say that the bag landed in one of the girl's shoes or snagged in a stocking hanging up to dry.

In the mystery bag they find a wealth of coins, enough to provide a very handsome dowry, to bargain for a comfortable future. There is no sign of where it came from, nor any clue when they look outside. Charity at this time was rare, anonymous charity unheard of. The miracle, as they saw it, was repeated the next night, waking the house - sleeping more soundly than they had in months - with another clinking thud. The night after they waited up to see what would happen. It was a long vigil, with false starts at every sound in the street, but a little past midnight there came the now familiar thud of the third gift. They rushed outside in time to glimpse a recognisable figure running away down the street. The anonymous donor was Nicholas, the young leader of the persecuted Christian community in the town.

Born when Christianity was illegal he was elected leader as a young man, on becoming a priest he sold his possessions, and distributed the proceeds anonymously to those in need in the town. Now remembered as St. Nicholas (or Santa Clause in Holland) there are many miracles credited to him, as well as his work to reprieve prisoners condemned to death, distribute food in times of famine, and set out the Creed at the first Christian Council. However, it is a simple act of charity, not miraculous, but Divinely inspired, that has been best remembered. Even through the centuries, we can still understand what it is to be in need and to be offered help.

If you would like to know more about the great story that shaped Nicholas' life, and the lives and acts of millions before and since, you are invited to join us this December at St. Michael's. It is an invitation that does not wear out. Until then, God bless you, have a happy Advent and a Merry Christmas.

Revd George Frost

IN YOUR VILLAGE HALL

(Bookings Secretary: Shirie Beaumont **Contact: 07878 430705**)

WINTER LUNCH CLUB

DATES FOR DECEMBER: Thursdays 5th, 12th and 19th

There will be a few Christmas goodies on the Menu on Thursday 19th December. Please remember to book your place for any Thursday by noon on Monday of the relevant week. Payment is by CASH only. On 19th December I will bring along some pots of homemade jam for sale.

Winter Lunch Club will restart in 2025 on Thursday 9th January.

Amanda – 01869 810341

AYNHO WRITERS GROUP **Contact: Keith McClellan at keithcarolmac@gmail.com**

Aynho Writers meeting at the Mary Cartwright Room in the Village Hall, 10am-12.30pm, Saturday, December 14th.

Last month, we enjoyed stories on Turkeys or Turks, Stormy Days Ahead, or other Christmas themes, and then we went to lunch at the Rose and Crown, Charlton. The next meeting will be a new experience. Writing at the actual meeting set by our visiting speaker, we would welcome new members as several older members are leaving, and one member, sadly, has died this month. Come and liven us up.

AYNHO GARDENING CLUB - 2nd Wednesday **Contact: Annabel Bellamy 810847**

It was very good to see so many of you at the AGM and well done for taking part in the challenging Quiz, devised by Amanda. Thank you for your contributions to the buffet table – always a delicious mix.

The first event of 2025 will be held on **Wednesday 12th February** - the second Wednesday of the month as always.

In the meantime, **the Committee wish all the Members of the Aynho Gardening Club a Very Happy Christmas.**

AYNHO LADIES GROUP **Contact: Jill Wightman 811206 email: jayrw10@gmail.com**

Well yes, winter has arrived with all its good and not so good points - last month's talk and demonstration by Lis Mann was held on a freezing evening. We still, however, had a very enjoyable time with the chance to actually 'have a go' at weaving using a peg loom which was both fascinating and enlightening and reminded us that we can do these things with a little instruction. Thank you, Lis.

Sadly there will be no Christmas lunch this year but we will have an anniversary lunch in April to look forward to instead.

Looking to 2025 our first meeting will be held on **15th January at 2.30pm** when Kate Angell will be back this time to explore ENERGY or 'chi' and the beliefs surrounding it. There will be more about this next month. Meanwhile take care, keep warm and have a wonderful Christmas.

Mulled Wine and Mince Pies - Wednesday 4th December 10.30am – 12 noon in the Village Hall. Tea, coffee and homemade biscuits will also be available. Cost £3. All are welcome but booking is essential. Please contact Jill. Thank you.

SHORT MAT BOWLS

Tuesdays 2.30 – 4.30pm: New Members welcome.

The cost is £2.50 per session. Woods for bowling are available if you don't own your own.

Contact: Carol McClellan 07398 210313 or email: keithcarolmac@gmail.com

THINKING AND PLANNING AHEAD – ENTERTAINMENT

Without the Cartwright in our midst we are a bit stuck for somewhere social to meet, eat and drink – all things which make it better for us all, individually, in groups and in our community. We are missing the Cartwright and the Apricot room.

We have tried Pop up Pubs – they have been a success, run by volunteers, and all the profit has gone into the Community Fund (to support other activity). But we need more – probably to use the Village Hall for all sorts of things especially over the colder/wetter months.

The Village Hall Committee (reps from many village groups) is set up to run the Hall and keep it functioning for all users; it is not set up to run “entertainments”.

We rather need to set up an “Entertainments committee/group” – to come up with ideas, galvanise events, whether just pub nights (with food sometimes), quiz nights, race days, parties, discos (for all ages). These events could be supported with a license from the Village Hall to sell alcohol as when needed to go along easily with the fun to be had. The larger the group the better to share the burden of running each idea/event.

Could you offer help with any part of this? Maybe share a role with others?

2025 is not for sitting on our hands waiting for something to happen. Aynho needs to do this for ourselves – and for all age groups. Please consider it.

VILLAGE “OUTSIDE” ACTIVITIES

Aynho Apricots Cycling Club We meet on Saturday or Sunday mornings once a month, choosing a convenient date via WhatsApp. We provide short and long ride options, with a stop for coffee/breakfast. All ages and abilities are welcome.

Aynho Apricots Running Club We meet on Sundays at 9am on Portway, confirming during the week via WhatsApp. We usually run a lap of the track, before splitting off into two groups: those who wish to remain at the playing fields and those who wish to run on the road or a trail. There are options for beginners and experienced runners alike.

Social Dog Walking We meet on occasional weekdays around lunchtime, choosing a time and place via WhatsApp. There is no pressure to commit regularly - just come along if and when convenient.

For all three of the above please get in touch with:

Faraz Shibli 07742 906780 email: faraz.shibli@oxon.org

Bridge Circle **Contact: Kevin D’Silva email: kevinds@salusinvest.com**

We meet on the second and fourth Mondays of every month at 7 for 7.15pm at the Great Western Arms, confirming in advance via WhatsApp. We are a very social group and welcome players of all abilities, including complete beginners, for whom we occasionally run coaching sessions.

Aynho Cricket Club

Whilst there isn’t much cricket being played during the dark winter months, Aynho Cricket Club kept their grey matter exercised last month with their inaugural fundraising event – Cricketers Get Quizzical. Far from a standard quiz night, this evening saw 50 Aynho residents (cricketers, supporters, and many other of the village’s great and good) gather at the village hall for a far-from-conventional quiz and delicious three course meal. Quiz rounds saw the ten teams tackle such challenges as ‘Service Station or Cheese?’, playdough modelling, heads and tails, and performing the limbo... Whistles were kept wet by a top-notch bar service, and the chilli and accompaniments cooked up by Marc Redfern and Carrie Willmer could have given many local eateries a run for their money.

A huge thank you to the event's organising committee, the quiz masters, chefs, bar staff and volunteers on the night, the local businesses and individuals who donated raffle prizes, and to everyone who attended and made it such a memorable evening – those who came commented they hadn't laughed so much in months! Thanks to everyone's generosity the fundraiser made an amazing £1,200 which will go towards Aynho children's All Stars cricket programme as well as equipment for the club. We're looking forward to the next event already!

Poppy Appeal -Thank You

Thank you Aynho for your very generous support to the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. This year we raised £940 from our house to house collections which beat our record year by a good £100, and is very generous of you all. Huge thanks to the house to house collectors on your streets who bothered you for that first 24 hours as the Appeal got underway late last month.

Just for awareness it became apparent to the village during the year that two brothers, Joseph and Ernest Seccull, born in Aynho in the 1890s but who were enlisted into the Army from a village near Leamington, were both killed during the First World War. Their names do not appear on any village memorial. For whatever reason they are not listed on Aynho's memorial either – probably as they left here as infants. We called their names alongside the other 14 very well-known/remembered names this year at the Act of Remembrance Service at St Michael's which was special. In 2025 we will consider and consult whether we record more permanently the Seccull brothers – “lest we forget”.

AT YOUR SPORTS FIELD & PAVILION

Well-Being Walks - from The Pavilion Thursdays 10am

Contact: Dawn on 07929 322949

There are two walks led by qualified walk leaders. One walk is a leisurely stroll for approximately 2 or 3 miles and lasts just over the hour or longer if needed. We walk at the pace that is comfortable for all. The second walk is more challenging covering an average of 6 miles and lasting up to 2 hours. There is no need to pre book. We are a friendly bunch and welcome all new walkers. However, the walks are not suitable for pushchairs as we often go across fields. We meet at the Sports Field Pavilion and set off at 10am every Thursday morning, rain or shine. On returning to the Pavilion there is tea, coffee and a tempting selection of cakes for sale. There is no fee for the Health Walks but we do ask for a voluntary 50p to cover the running costs of the Pavilion. All you need is some sturdy footwear. Hope to see you there.

Aynho Parish Council (APC) – News

Aynho Parish Council met on Monday 4th November.

Draft Minutes of the meeting are available on the Parish Council website. Planning Applications were reviewed, and these are open to public review on the PC website. Following discussion of the 2025/2026 Precept and Budget it was agreed to hold an Extraordinary Council Meeting on Monday 25 November to discuss setting the budget, requests for Grant support and other financial matters.

STOP PRESS – other news:

Aynho Christmas Tree arrived on Saturday 30th November

Lights on – **1st December** – come along and join in the fun.

Tree decorating – 2pm on The Green

Rock Choir – 3pm on the Green or the Village Hall (depending on the weather)

Food and Pop-up Pub: mulled wine, hot chocolate; hot food; mince pies: Carols and sing-along.

The Parish Council would like to thank **Perry Tree Farm** for its generous tree donation.

Neighbourhood Watch – volunteers are still being sought to re-establish a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Aynho – please contact us if you can help.

Quick reminder – The Post Office in Village Hall - Tuesdays 1.30-3pm

Note for your diary:

Parish Council Meeting: Monday 2nd December at 7pm in the Village Hall.

SUPPORTING KATHARINE HOUSE HOSPICE

Lights of Love – Thursday 5th December

We'd love for you to join us for our annual Lights of Love event on Thursday 5 December at St Mary's Church, Banbury, where we come together to remember and celebrate the lives of those we have loved and lost. Find out more www.khh.org.uk/lights.

Tractor Run returns – Saturday 14th December

On Saturday 14 December, a festive fleet of fairy-lit tractors will be taking a tour around local villages to spread some Christmas cheer and raise money for Katharine House Hospice. The super-popular Tractor Run will depart from Spring Hill Farm, Barford St Michael at around 5pm and travel through the local villages, chugging along into Banbury, as well as driving by Katharine House Hospice to wave hello! If you're in the area, it's an exciting sight to behold! Find out more here www.khh.org.uk/tractor. You can track the route to see what time they will come through Aynho from Adderbury and back down the Clifton Road to Deddington. It is busy so do take care.

Branching out – Recycling Your Christmas Tree - 9th/10th January

Our brilliant tree-cycle scheme is back, giving people the opportunity to get rid of their Christmas tree in a hassle-free, environmentally friendly way once all the festivities are over. You make a donation to Katharine House Hospice and, in return, we will send one of our elves to collect and recycle your tree. Head to our website to find out more and check if your postcode is included in the scheme. www.khh.org.uk/christmastree

We need you!

Do you want to gain valuable skills and experiences while meeting new people and doing something amazing for your community. We're looking for more shop volunteers to join one of our 7 charity shops. You'll be part of a friendly team, helping raise vital funds that support our care for patients and families. If this could be you, visit www.khh.org.uk/volunteer-shops.

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Contact: **Chris Henson 07402 449969**

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THE SYNERGY PRACTICE Our team at the synergy practice has expanded to include medical aesthetics (e.g. Botox and fillers) and Swedish massage. We are here to help if you are in need of physio, sports therapy, massage or aesthetic services. Call 01865 803066 or book online www.thesynergypractice.com

KATE ANGELL Mindfulness Meditation and T’ai Chi Chih/Qigong Teacher. One to one and small group workshops and weekly classes.

Call Kate 07478 276891 or email kate@calmerminds.co.uk for info/book.

Hearing Choices - with Lisa Summersell at Health Centre (Memorial Hall) Kings Sutton OX173PG. Expert independent advice; over 20 years’ experience. All your hearing needs: ear wax removal, digital hearing aids, tinnitus advice.

Contact: 01295 574380 or 07942 641986 or email contact@hearingchoicesuk.co.uk

Learn Spanish with Liliana. Children & Adults. Explore Spanish culture with laughter and the joy of learning a new language. Time to practice what you’ve learnt with Duolingo.

Tel: 07307 87 0101. Hasta pronto!
