PARISH MEETING MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2026 AT 7.30 PM.

ASHENDON WI REPORT

Mr. Chairman, Christopher, thank you for allowing the WI to present our report to the village again this year.

If I may, I would first like to take you all back to November 2025.

Our Annual Meeting took place on the 11th, a date of **remembrance**. We opened with a moment of silence to honour the women who founded our WI. This March marks 87 years of ladies of our village coming together each month to learn, support each other, and enjoy each other's company.

In 1939, women met in The Hut during the onset of World War II, a difficult time for the village filled with anxiety. Today, we appreciate their resilience and courage as we continue their legacy with gratitude.

The first elected President, Mrs. Fountaine, lived in the Pollicott farmhouse, now owned by the Bates family. Vanessa is our current President—perhaps there is a Presidential suite at the farmhouse?

Our WI in 2026 – The Here and Now:

We are proud of our WI and all it represents **today**.

Our group comprises 19 dedicated members who regularly support and contribute to our village community.

Each year, Remembrance Poppies are respectfully displayed in the Church, on the Church wall, and on the lytch gate. In addition to the November installation, this year we marked the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

In November, we gathered in the Village Hall on a Saturday to enhance the displays for both the Church and the Wall. The event was marked by productive collaboration and a shared soup meal, contributing to a strong sense of community spirit. We look forward to further improving this display in the Autumn this year.

Additionally, we take pride in decorating the Church during the Christmas season and anticipate reintroducing angel decorations this year.

Furthermore, WI flower arrangements continue to be requested at village functions. Mary provided, you will agree, stunning hanging baskets for display outside the Pub last year.

Since our report last April Ashendon WI has invited speakers to improve our understanding and education.

Our April Meeting gave an insight in what to look out for and the tactics used by Scammers.
Belinda effectively led our 2025/26 Resolution Meeting, "Bystanders can be Lifesavers." In alignment with this, in January, we held a talk and instruction by Ken Kennington from Chearsley on defibrillator use.
In June we heard a factual and illuminating talk by Jenny Edmonds on her recent travels through Jordan and in July we welcomed back a previous speaker, who engaged us in "How to read an English Country Church". Simply fascinating!
In September we were told about the amazing courage, skill and sacrifice of women who ferried warplanes around the country to keep the RAF flying during World War II.

Last September we entered the WI County Show Competition. These are a selection of the items made not only for last year but previously. We invite you to admire our crafters work at the end of this meeting.

Now, some of our members are GIFTED but not all. Last October Vicky showed us how to crochet. To put it mildly, she had her work cut out ---- we were useless!!
Especially me!

We invited guests to our Christmas meeting in December. A much-enjoyed casserole supper was served with absolutely delicious meringues provided by Sue Payne. Carols were sung and we made merry!

After the festive celebrations, we were back in business:
Doug Kennedy from Cuddington talked about restoring the river Thame and chalk streams and in February we exercised to music with FitSteps – a fun meeting with a purpose.
Recently, we were pleased to have Peter Watt join our meeting as a guest speaker, presenting on Al Bowlly, regarded as Britain's First Pop Star.

Just last week, we had a captivating talk on Waddesdon Manor, particularly Waddesdon Woman who rejected their subordinate roles they had once accepted within their European families. Truly illuminating!

We have been out and about:

After lunch at the Lions Bledlow, we visited, by invitation, Manor House and Gardens on the Carrington Estate with an add-on visit to the Lyde Gardens.

With the world facing challenges, our visit to Thrift Farm Buckingham stood out as a beacon of hope.
Thrift Farm exemplifies care—combining a children's nursery, plant centre, cafe, and farm. It demonstrates how a nursery can support adults with mental health and learning differences. The farm builds communication and social skills, the plant centre fosters interaction, and craft activities encourage motor and creative development. Staff are professional and caring.
We would recommend a visit.
When we visited, we were each given this….. handmade especially for us - it was emotional!

Recently we set off for Pitchott Kitchen for a social lunch.

AND FINALLY:
We held a very successful Literary Lunch – ladies from surrounding WI's and village guests were seated in a packed Village Hall. Lunch was served followed by an inspiring talk by Helen Fry on "Women in Intelligence during WWI and II". The resourcefulness of these women was amazing – hanging washing out to give directions, knitting to give messages.

Well everyone, as you can hear, we are a hardworking but social WI and this is by no means all the WI encompasses: I have left out so much!

Thank you for listening.
We encourage any lady to join us.

I am very happy to take questions along with my fellow members here tonight.

Susan Rand.
Secretary Ashendon WI.