



The Ammerdown Centre Newsletter 2021



Dear Friends

We have just bid farewell to the second group of NHS Chaplains who came to stay with us at Ammerdown for rest, peace and refreshment. It was a real privilege to welcome them all - from all over the country - as we thanked them for all that they have done for us, particularly over the last 18 months. The time was theirs but we discovered some table tennis champions, swimmers, drummers and bread makers among them! We hope to welcome them back again next year.



We have continued to welcome many guests for courses, retreats, training, private stays, quiet days, cream teas, celebrations, lunches, entertainment, peace and stillness. It is so good to be operating more fully! Our Ammerdown Quarterly News shares more possibilities in the months ahead.



Our interfaith work continues. I had the honour of being a part of the Interfaith Panel at the Root and Branch Inclusive Synod – A Synod that starts with women and doesn't end there. As the Voice and Influence Partnership draws to a close, look out for a film that will shortly appear on our website, showcasing some of the amazing work that was achieved through the community grants' project and the recording of an excellent zoom discussion on faith and racial justice.

Rev Narinder Tegally, Lead Chaplain at Bath RUH, challenges us to reflect on our language and privilege through a monthly Book Club. This leads us into our Advent and Epiphany Bible Study ZOOM on the Book of Ruth and 'Borders and Belonging' by Pdraig O'Tuama & Glenn Jordan.

In September, the Caring for Creation Zoom group met in person at Ammerdown. Check out Bella's article as we are all challenged to make a difference.

As Advent begins, John Bell leads us in retreat to reflect on the meaning of Advent. Then follows a week of Christmas Meals with our Christmas Chapel Readings and Carols and, finally, our candlelit Carol Service in our Ammerdown Garden.

Blessings to you all this season.

Christine

Christine Clinch, Lead Manager



Welcome!

A warm welcome to Lauren and Gaber – our newly appointed Social Justice Initiators! They will be supporting and developing our Social Justice Programme, as well as helping to make our guests feel welcome!



Update from Debbie



The birds singing, the sun shining down, picnics unpacked, children eagerly awaiting the footsteps of Peter Rabbit and his friends... just one of the lovely moments that Ammerdown had the joy of hosting over the summer months. It gave us great pleasure to witness families and friends coming together in the Ammerdown garden. Something which was so normal 18 months ago and so special to be able to do now.

Quantum Theatre entertained us with 'Peter Rabbit and his naughty Cousin Benjamin'. Then on a beautiful summer's evening (the weather was so kind to us), just before dusk, Folksy Theatre performed Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'. And there's more to come - 'The Little Match Girl' in December, served, of course with mince pies!

Our refurbishment programme has continued throughout the year so that all the bedrooms will have had new beds and been freshly painted, re-carpeted and curtained, by the end of December. Aldrich Cottage, which is rented out through Sykes Cottages and used by the centre for larger groups, is also being completely refurbished. The two new electronic beds have been much appreciated as we continue to upgrade our fully accessible rooms and the basin taps in all bedrooms are being made easier to operate. We are also keen to keep everyone warm this winter and have replaced the boiler!

Look out too for our new online booking system which will go live next month! We really appreciate your feedback which helps us to make Ammerdown the best it can be!

Debbie

Debbie Tutchell, Deputy Lead Manager



Home time!

In August, after seven and a half months at Ammerdown, we bid farewell to Angela as our House for Duty Chaplain.

Angela writes 'It was a good time. I met lots of lovely people and made new friends. I shared in many interesting conversations. I enjoyed working with all of the staff, all with their different strengths and ways of doing things, but Otto (my labradoodle) particularly loved working with Ingrid as she often had treats in her drawer especially for him!

I learnt new skills - how to be a barmaid, how to use the pressing machine, how to lay up the hospitality trays and how to use a card machine, amongst many other unusual things! I had just about figured out where all the rooms were and which key fitted which lock, just in time to come home! I am missing the walks in the woods and the quiet of the grounds. I am missing the company and the opportunity of talking to people. I loved the birdsong and the sight of swallows and martins swooping around the garden. This Elephant Hawk Moth dropped in to see me one evening!



Our thanks to Angela for caring for the staff and guests, for the idea of replacing the glass in the Chapel, for holding Ammerdown in prayer, for ideas, fun and laughter! Angela has already been back to Ammerdown to co-lead Caring for Creation and has now returned to her former role as an Ammerdown Trustee.

Angela
Canon Angela Townshend



Folksy Theatre are back!

This time they are bringing us their version of The Little Match Girl...

The Little Match Girl wanders the street on New Year's Eve, trying to sell her match sticks. Everyone is busy celebrating with fires, Christmas trees and delicious food but outside the girl is cold, sad and alone, that is until she lights one of her matches to keep warm and visions come to life before her very eyes!

Join the Little Match Girl on a magical journey, filled with live music, puppetry and multimedia. This is a family Christmas show not to be missed!

FOLKSY
THEATRE

The Little
Match Girl

A NEW FAMILY
MUSICAL
ADAPTATION

Filled with
live music, puppetry & multimedia!

The Ammerdown Centre, Radstock
Wednesday 15th December, 7pm
Tickets - www.folksytheatre.co.uk.uk



NHS Chaplaincy Staff Rest and Recuperation at Ammerdown

As a thank you to those who were on the front line during the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have been offering a fully sponsored three day stay for NHS Chaplaincy Staff.

On the 17th August we had our first group of 28 hugely deserving Chaplains join us and here is what one of them had to say -



"Huge thanks for organising the retreat for us, everyone is raving about it and saying how special it was and how important it was for us. Today several of us have been in work and 5 of us were talking over lunch about how important and special it was, and how special it made us feel. None of us have ever been treated so well when on retreat, ever!"

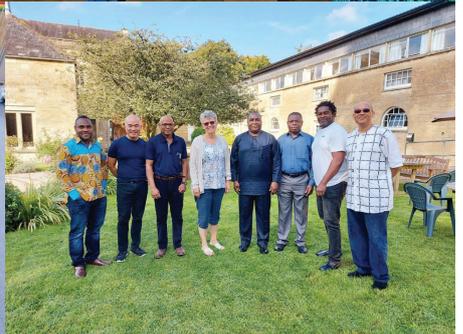
Today I have been with a Muslim man and his terribly sick child, I have blessed a baby who sadly died after being born too soon, I have financially helped a mum struggling to walk to get into hospital, I have listened to a woman mourning her son, I have supported the mum of a daughter on ECMO waking up from a coma, and tried to make sense of a spending plan and occupational health regulations for people to return to work after contact with Covid relatives. Been a full-on day but throughout it all little snippets of lush greenery and a sense of Ammerdown calm has permeated through. Can't say thank you enough."



The September group of 30 Chaplains had an equally refreshing and enjoyable stay and want to come back again next year! Ammerdown has also been richly blessed by their presence and hopes to welcome them back in 2022!

If you would like to sponsor a Chaplain's stay or make any contribution then please head to our Just Giving page on the front page of our website.





Caring for Creation



12 of us met in the glorious sun-drenched surroundings of Ammerdown. Our first event was to introduce ourselves by writing our names on a lovely globe beach ball, and to listen to Ken and Ros Durrant who talked about Jonah and Jeremiah as inspiration for our eco pilgrimage. We recalled the story of Jonah, explored in Ken's first book, noting the connection with the events of the natural world, people's different reactions and God's mercy in the story. We spoke of the inspiration of the Young Christian Climate Network Relay to COP26 in Glasgow in November, along with the Caminotocop which is just beginning.

We then shared some stories of our own: Sally showed an interview with her grandson who spoke about his four year involvement with Action For Conservation and how enthusiastic he was about the rewilding they were doing in Wales (<https://www.actionforconservation.org/schools/>); Norma shared her image of a melon, representing the globe with all the seeds of new life inside; Paula her Damascene conversion with the Walk for Water in Lent, and how she and her parish, including her priest are now going for a Live Simply Award, the Cafod equivalent of Ecochurch; Bella took us through the Laudato Si Chaplet, expanding on the roles of air, water, fire, earth and all creatures (<https://laudatosimovement.org/download/laudato-si-chaplet/>), she shared some books and letters with us and described a sewing project her parish had been involved in, making an altar cloth celebrating creation for the Season of Creation.

A number of people had contributed their ideas of celebrating creation. The centrepiece involved seven 'petals' or the seven aspects of a programme the Catholic Church is about to unveil on 4th October to invite all institutions of the church, educational, health, parishes, families, dioceses, charities and businesses to take part in a 7 year project of getting to zero carbon (<https://laudatosiplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/>). This unites both conservation and social justice and demands a radical reappraisal of how we live, personally, politically and economically, and is rooted in spirituality, and what the Pope calls 'ecological conversion'.

After a lovely song in the garden, 'In beauty may I walk' and supper, we watched the inspiring film 2040 which looked at positive solutions now available for making a different world, imagining what it would be like for the children we know now who would be young adults. A particularly inspiring example was of locally produced and shared solar energy (<https://whatsyour2040.com/>). On the following day, after a beautiful morning prayer, we listened to Billie Anderson from Tear Fund who shared films of the havoc climate change is wreaking in Nicaragua, as well as some inspiring campaigns against single use plastic being discarded, and even with the companies producing the plastic.

In our summing up we came up with a '**Charter for Ammerdown**' which we humbly offer, as we have had such an invigorating and somewhat hectic experience of the urgency of action. In the charter, we encourage Ammerdown to ask:

- **Is there a lot of food waste and what happens to it? Is it possible to reduce it? Is food composted?**
- **What happens to the single use plastic? Is it possible to cut down on sachet use?**
- **Would it be possible to change to a majority vegetarian diet, either by going meat free on several days a week, or by announcing that Ammerdown was primarily vegetarian and people could ask for a meat option, much as vegetarians used to have to?**

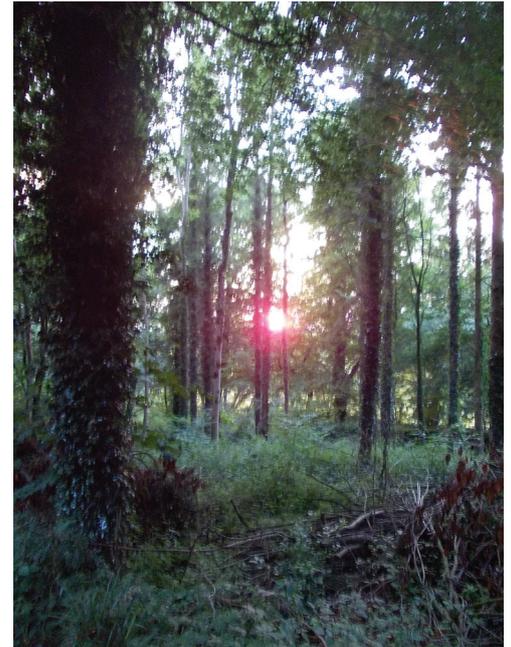


- Would it be possible for food to be locally sourced and seasonal with any meat or fish certified animal friendly?
- Could parts of the gardens become wildflower meadows, with bug hotels, i.e. corners where wood and leaf mould is allowed to rot, and provide for insects and wildlife?
- As Ammerdown intends to become more ecofriendly, with Fairtrade coffee and tea and good recycling bins, could the signage be more prominent?

Perhaps these ideas could be the basis for a Green Charter which could be celebrated. We finished with a beautiful service and committed to continue our group for Caring for Creation. We would like to thank the Ammerdown staff for making our stay such an enjoyable one, and to all who contributed to the retreat.

Bella Harding

This age needs people like trees filled with a silent peace, rooted at the same time in solid ground and in the open sky
- Olivier Clement



Christmas is coming to Ammerdown

This year we are pleased to announce that our Christmas lunches will be from Monday 13th to Friday 17th December. There will be optional Christmas readings and Carols in the Chapel, 12:15-12:45pm. Please look out on our social media and website for more information. Please phone the Centre to book.

Come and join us for our Candlelit Christmas Carol Service on Thursday 16th December at 7pm in the Ammerdown Gardens. Donations in support of Afghan Refugees.





The 100 club is a monthly draw where you pay a minimum donation of £12 for the year, to be assigned a number. Each month one number is drawn and the winner receives £50 of the money. The rest is donated to the Ammerdown charity. A cheque is posted to the winner and their name is featured in the Quarterly Newsletter. Please contact the centre for information on joining the club.

P Gibbons – June 2021

W Harbert - July 2021

B Smith- August 2021

Meet Jamal

Jamal shared his story on Zoom with us during Refugee Week. Although he was granted refugee status many years ago, he has been waiting to be resettled.

He lives in Jakarta, Indonesia and, as Indonesia is not a signed up member of the UN Convention on Refugee rights, Jamal has no rights to work or study in Indonesia.

After he spoke to us, people generously gave donations for Jamal, so that we were able to send £300 to him. Jamal has also just received the great news that he is to be resettled in the USA!



Celebrating the Life of the late John I'Anson

Please do join us on the 14th of November at 3pm in the Ammerdown Chapel to celebrate the life of John I'Anson, a much loved and valued member of the Ammerdown Team. All are welcome.

