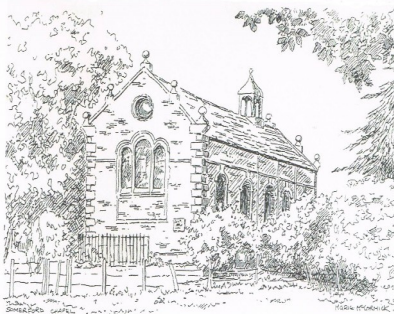
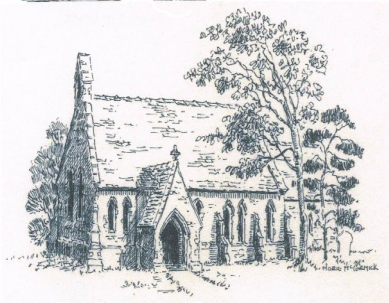
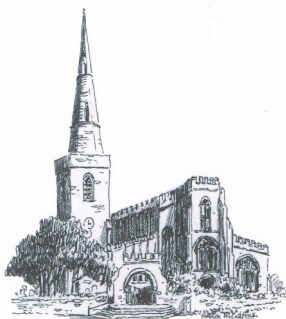


Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

October 2025

Price £1



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Telephone 01260 702512 email revdheather@astburychurch.org.uk

Assistant Priest – Rev Steph Morris

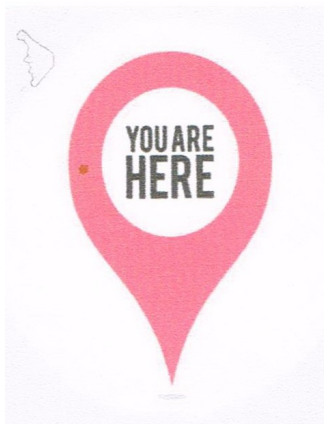
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Telephone 07957 961140 email a_bevington@sky.com

Reader – Andrew Bailey

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I know you've been there!

A holiday visit to a new area, a trip to the 'big shopping centre!' Trafford Park maybe? You walk through the door and just stop. It's overwhelming: the sheer size of it all, 'Where are we?' you shout. Layer-after-layer of shop-after-shop punctuated by the odd food stop. 'It all looks the same,' you declare in dismay – you are totally lost. That's until you spot the Mall map board which clearly states, with a reassuring 'blob' . . . 'you are here.'

Knowing where we are is important in so many ways, none more so than a starting point allows you to plot a route toward an end point. St Mary's leadership team are asking just this question, 'Where are we?' Where are we in our church life, fellowship and ministry? How well do we answer God's great callings upon us to love, reach out and serve in His name? There are some areas we think we should look at, under eight headings:

Empowering Leadership

Gift-Oriented Ministry
Passionate Spirituality
Effective Structures
Inspiring Worship
Holistic Small Groups
Need-Oriented Evangelism
Loving Relationships

We believe that if we can understand these eight elements of our life together we can begin to figure out where we are starting from.

Why is that important?

Once we know where we are, we are better prepared to navigate our journey forward. We all face many challenges, and our church life is no different. We look after a Grade I listed building which has stood to the glory of God for hundreds of years. Its fabric declines, like all buildings, and its costs, more than £12,000 a month just to stand still, seem to go up every month. It's easy to get distracted from our calling to love and serve by all the needs of our building and fabric. In real terms, and we must be realistic, we are possibly the least qualified people to care for a place of this historical importance and age. We don't have the skills or the money to even scratch the surface. And yet it is here that God has called us. It is our responsibility. And we thank God that in our weakness His strength and glory can be seen. But that is perhaps the real point. We need to ask 'to what extent has our responsibility distracted us from our calling?' Our Church has helpfully distilled our calling into the Five Marks Of Mission:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

This is what we are going to look at over this next few months. Our Purpose is to define, firstly, ‘where we are.’ When we have this we can begin to invest in the areas where God calls us to invest, and yes, this will include our building but also the mission which our building should, and in many ways does, serve.

What Can I Do?

I’m glad you asked. We have a call to prayer. Prayer is our secret weapon. ‘Test God’ the bible says, test Him and He will be good to His word, and much much more. So you can pray. Pray for:

- Our leadership team (Priests, PCC, Standing Committee)
- Pray for generosity and provision from those who call St Mary’s home
- Pray that God will ‘open His store house’
- Ask God how you can help us flourish in our Marks Of Mission:
 - To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
 - To respond to human need by loving service
 - To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
 - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Bev

Editor – Mr W. Ball

The Old Vicarage, Reades Lane, Congleton, CW12 3LL.

Telephone 01260 279276 Mobile 07710 234943

Come and Sing Choral Evensong: On Sunday 14th September, nearly 30 singers spent the afternoon learning the music for a full choral evensong: an introit ‘I will thank thee’ by Daniel Purcell, an anthem ‘Almighty and everlasting God’ by Orlando Gibbons, a Magnificat and

Nunc Dimittis in F by George Dyson, and responses by William Smith of Durham. Quite a few singers were unavailable or there would have been at least 40 in the choir, and unfortunately the weather meant that the congregation was smaller than usual. But we were able to sing our praises to God, ‘lustily and with a good courage’, as John Wesley recommended, and we are already planning another event – next spring when the weather has warmed up again.

In the meantime, if you would like to join the choir for the Advent and Christmas carol services please do contact Sally: 07977 903561, or music@astburychurch.org.uk.

Come and Try the Organ: To date we have held two successful Saturday morning sessions, supporting the Royal School of Organists, who have designated 2025 ‘Play the Organ Year’. Only one person had played the organ before but after a brief introduction everyone was able to have a go and some even managed the opening of Bach’s Toccata in D minor. (If it’s good enough for Bill Bailey at the Last Night of the Proms, Astbury can do just as well!)

More sessions are planned, so if you would like to try playing our amazing Binns three-manual pipe organ, do please contact Sally: 07977 903561, or music@astburychurch.org.uk.

Heritage Open Days: Over ten afternoons we had 151 visitors. Most, whether local or from further afield, had never been inside St Mary’s before and were fascinated by its size and history.

A special thank you to the stewards, who made everyone so welcome – including some of the wider group who usually help with fundraising events. Next year the Heritage Open Days will be from 11th to 20th September, so make a note in your diaries now.

Sally Drage

Astbury Ladies’ Fellowship: It was good to meet up again after the August break. It was a sunny autumn day and the chairman welcomed members and Rev Anne Freestone who was our speaker. We said the Fellowship Prayer and thought of members who couldn’t be with us

that day. Our treasurer Christine has at last had a date regarding her knee – a consultation at Oswestry on 13th October Her daughter Nick will have a procedure done on her eye on 29th September. June Taylor is now at home and no longer needing to wear the irksome neck brace. There have been many birthdays – many happy returns to Pam Robinson and Pamela Price. Pamela and Neville have also celebrated their Diamond wedding. Anita, our tea hostess, is celebrating hers on holiday. Ina has had a very special birthday – 96 – and had many cards and flowers and enjoyed a host of visitors. We have sent a shrub rose to Brenda and Eric Sutton for their 70th wedding anniversary, and Brenda has sent us a thank-you picture of it. With your green fingers, Brenda, it looks fantastic.

For her talk, Rev Anne Freestone had brought with her the vessels and cloths which are used on the Communion table for a service. She showed us two lovely stone cups bought from Holy Island and a big wineglass she would use for a home communicant. She had taught in a special school and showed us some of the amazing pictures the children who had difficulty in reading and writing had painted. It was a wide-ranging talk and she took plenty of questions from members.

We had a cup of tea – thank you Margaret Pearson and Gwen for standing in for Anita. We remembered our member Kath Wainwright, who had sadly died almost twelve months ago from motor neurone disease. The speaker asked for her fee to be donated to this charity, and we remember Kath's energy and enthusiasm in everything she undertook.

We drew the raffle – if anyone could donate a raffle prize it would be much appreciated. Our Harvest Festival service will be on Sunday 12th October, with hot refreshments as last year. There will be a concert by the Little Moreton Singers on 7th December from 4.00 pm at Biddulph Old Hall by the kind invitation of Mr Brian Vowles – tickets £25, some and enjoy mince pies and mulled wine. Get in touch with me if you want a ticket – 077484 525829. The speaker at our next meeting on 15th October will be Peter Aston who will tell us about 'The Old Saw Mill – Chapter 2'. Visitors would be very welcome to

join us at 1.30 pm in the Village Hall. I hope everyone is well and I look forward to seeing you.

Carole Goodwin

Astbury Women's Institute: When Astbury WI met for their September meeting, there was plenty of fun and laughter as members and their guests were welcomed to another busy friends and family evening.

The meeting opened in the usual way with the singing of *Jerusalem*. Congratulations were extended to Philippa Carr and family, on the birth of their new baby girl. Cath Cunliffe was thanked for the birthday buttonholes which were given to members with their birthday being this month.



Norma Tweats with her birthday buttonhole presented by Margaret Pearson

The business of the evening included the usual correspondence items and news of forthcoming WI events at county, group and local level.

Catherine Pedley reminded us of the Autumn Group Meeting which would take place on Thursday 16th October at Goostrey Village Hall. The History Wardrobe would present 'Mary Quant Fashion Icon' and the Competition will be 'The Swinging Sixties'. She also reminded us that the Dane Valley Carol Service would take place on Sunday 30th

November at St John's Church Smallwood. Joan Proctor and Jane Tarrant had bowled earlier in the day at The Dane Valley Bowls Fun Day at Jodrell Side, and Margaret Pennington had gone along to support them and mark for their matches.



Carol Steer mans the raffle

At a very busy meeting, our first of the Autumn, there seemed to be lots to look forward to. Along with our usual group activities, strolling, striding, knitting and nattering, new group activities ranging from British Sign Language to crochet and a book club were being investigated. It really is a case of 'Watch this space!'

Members were encouraged to sign up for an Autumn Meal to be held at The Crown Inn, Goostrey on Tuesday 14th October at 6.00 pm for 6.30. There were also opportunities to sign up for our Pie and Pea Supper, preceding our AGM on Wednesday 5th November and our Christmas Party at The Plough Inn, Eaton on Tuesday 9th December.

Our sales table proved popular as usual with lots of delicious jam, preserves and produce for sale.

The highlight of the evening was the performance by The Inn Ringers; we were treated to a potted history of handbell ringing, and their particular group, the interactive and highly entertaining

performance was called ‘Bells and Banter.’ We thoroughly enjoyed the evening . A couple of the Inn-Ringers judged our competition for ‘ A Bell in any Medium’ which was won by Carol Steer with Maureen Steele in second place.



Kate Naylor enjoys bells and banter with the Inn Ringers

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 1st October when our Speaker will be Ruth Jones who will talk to us about The history of the Poppy Appeal. The competition will be ‘Poppies in any Medium.’

New members are always welcome. For further details please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Margaret, or secretary, Liz. Phone Margaret on 07581 095418, or Liz on 07766 738004, or Kate on 07875 691170. You can also message us through our Astbury WI Facebook page.

Margaret Pearson (President)

Sartor's Quiz (Answers on page 18)

1. Whose Latin translation of the Bible was called the Vulgate? a. Eusabius of Caesarea; b. Jerome; c. Martin Luther; d. Erasmus.
2. The hours within which marriage may take place in an English parish church, formerly 8.00 am to 12 noon, were extended in 1886 to what time? a. 2.00 pm; b. 3.00 pm; c. 4.00 pm; d. 5.00 pm.
3. In which year were they extended to 6.00 pm? a. 1934; b. 1944; c. 1954; d. 1964.
4. Who ruled Israel from 1010 to 970 BC? a. Saul; b. David; c. Solomon.
5. Who was the father of Rehoboam and Jeroboam? a. Saul; b. David; c. Solomon.
6. Which of these groups shared with Christians belief in the resurrection? a. Samaritans; b. Sadducees; c. Levites; d. Pharisees.
7. When John was an old man he had a vision. In which book of the New Testament is his vision recorded? a. Gospel of John; b. 1 John; c. Revelation; d. Romans.
8. What was the name of the ship on which Sir Richard Grenville, the naval commander, was fatally wounded? a. Reason; b. Repulse; c. Redoubtable; d. Revenge.
9. Which book title is the odd one out? a. Whisky Galore; b. Something Fresh; c. Joy in the morning; d. Pigs Have Wings.
10. How many nations play Test cricket? a. 6; b. 7; c. 8; d. 9.

WORDS OF WIT & WISDOM

Items, produced by church ladies with typewriters, that have appeared in church magazines, sent to Sartor by Susan Bayley of Montreal:

Next weekend's Fasting and Prayer Conference in Whitby includes all meals.

Sunday morning sermon: 'Jesus walks on the water.'

Sunday evening sermon: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring you husbands,

(Humorous writers complain that they can't compete with real life.)

Forty years on, when afar and asunder,
Parted are those who are singing today,
When you look back and forgetfully wonderful
What you were like in your work and your play,
Then it may be there will often come o'er you
Snatches of notes, like the catch of a song.
Visions of boyhood shall float them before you
Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.

Harrow School Song, as remembered by Sartor, who is not, unlike
Jonathan Sharples, an Old Harrovian

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. Psalm 19, 7-8

Never underestimate the power of a kind word or deed. Remember that what you give will afford you more pleasure than what you get.

H. Jackson Brown Junior, *Life's Little Instruction Book*

Keep your home peaceful and in good repair, for out of it come the joys of old age.

UCB *Word for Today*, Friday 20th January 2017

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Coming for to carry me home?
A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home.

Spiritual: *Swing low, sweet chariot*

FASCINATING FACTS

When it came to the Oxford Examination Schools, Evelyn Waugh's Third Class was typical of his circle. Only one member of it, Richard Pares (later a distinguished historian), achieved a first; Thomas Greenidge, Claud Cockburn and Graham Green managed Seconds, Robert Byron, Cyril Connolly, Christopher Hollis and Anthony Powell got Thirds. Harold Acton took a Fourth in Modern Languages and Osbert Lancaster the same class in English. Several people did not take their degrees at all: Alan Pryce-Jones, Henry Yorke and Edward James; and John Betjeman was sent down for failing persistently in 'Divvers', the compulsory examination in Holy Scripture. His tutor, C. S. Lewis, told him, 'You'd have only got a Third.' Maurice Bowra suggested that since Betjeman was devoted to ecclesiastical minutiae and 'Divvers' was notoriously easy, he must unconsciously have wished to fail.

They had none of them needed the intellectual stimulus and training that Oxford claimed to offer. They had already acquired it at school. Connolly was immensely well read in classical literature by the time he came up to Balliol. Waugh had learned the cadences of the English language from Roxburgh at Lancing; Acton was immersed in European culture to a degree that few Oxford dons could rival; Betjeman had devoted himself to the study of architecture; Yorke was already writing his first novel. Oxford teaching in the early 1920s was at a very low ebb and reforms were too late for the Brideshead generation.

Humphrey Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, pp 126-7

Currently there is confusion in people's minds about life after death, and this is reflected in the funeral practices that have grown up, or reappeared in our own day. The practice of putting objects in coffins along with the dead, to comfort or help them in the life to come, was until recently described by students of culture as a practice now abandoned in the modern West; but gifts for the dead are making a comeback, with photographs, jewellery, teddy-bears and the like being placed in coffins. Nigel Bailey relates stories, told by a crematorium official, of widows placing in the coffin a packet of digestive biscuits, or the deceased's spare glasses and false teeth. On one occasion a widow put into her husband's coffin two cans of the spray adhesive that the dead man had used to paste on his toupée, causing an explosion which bent the furnace door.

Tom Wright, Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrews and previously Bishop of Durham, *Surprised by Hope* p 18



Gilly McKeane with Jane Tarrant and Jen Fagan chatting in the background at the WI meeting

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Astbury & Smallwood Parish News

Publication & Copy Dates 2025/6

Publication is on the last Sunday of the preceding month –

The November issue will be published on 26th October

Last Date for material 17th October

The December issue will be published on 30th November

Last Date for material 21st November

The January 2026 issue will be published on 28th December

Last Date for material 19th December

The February issue will be published on 25th January

Last Date for material 16th January

The March issue will be published on 1st March

Last Date for material 20th February

The April issue will be published on 29th March

Last Date for material 20th March

The May issue will be published on 26th April

Last Date for material 17th April

The June issue will be published on 31st May

Last Date for material 22nd May

The July issue will be published on 28th June

Last Date for material 19th June

The August issue will be published on 26th July

Last Date for material 17th July

The September issue will be published on 30th August

Last Date for material 21st August

The October issue will be published on 27th September

Last Date for material 18th September

T

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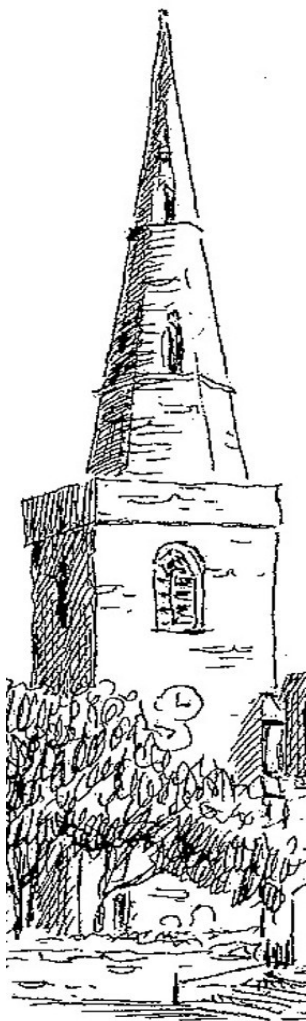
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ASSISTANT PRIEST		Rev Steph Morris	07703 587003
READERS		Andrew Bevington	07957 961140
		Andrew Bailey	01260 640616
CHURCHWARDEN		Dr Sally Drage	01260 270217
CHURCHWARDEN ELECT		Mr Trevor Massey	01260 271254
SERVICES	8.00 am	1st & 3rd Sundays	Holy Communion BCP
	8.00 am	2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays	Morning Prayer BCP
	11.00 am	1st & 3rd Sundays	Morning Praise CW
	11.00 am	2nd & 4th Sundays	Holy Communion CW
	11.00 am	5th Sunday	Benefice Service
	6.30 pm	1st & 3rd Sundays	Compline
	6.30 pm	2nd & 4th Sundays	Evensong BCP
Wednesday	11.30 am	every Wednesday	Holy Communion CW
	2.45 pm	every Wednesday	Community Worship

Funerals and Services of Holy Baptism & Holy Matrimony by arrangement with the Wardens

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Hon. Secretary	Mrs M. Chapman	
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CO-OPTED PCC MEMBERS	Miss P. Blythe, Prof Denise Morrey-Carter	
SIDSEPEOPLE	see ASTBURY ROTAS	
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FLOWERS	Mrs B. Cook.	
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Chairman of Governors	Mrs K. Moore	01260 290135

WEBSITES www.astburychurch.org.uk

CHURCH KEYS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

Astbury & Smallwood Parish News – October 2025

Astbury Church choir meets to practise every Friday evening
between 7.00 and 8.00 pm.

Astbury Church bellringers meet to practise every Wednesday evening
between 7.30 and 9.30 pm.

ASTBURY ROTAS for CLEANING & BRASS – *currently suspended*

ASTBURY ROTAS

		8.00 am	11.00 am	6.30 pm
September	28th	Bill Ball	Andrew Bailey	Peter Snape
October	5th	Jean Nadin	Sally Shaw	Peter Snape
	12th	Bill Ball	Carole Goodwin	Peter Snape
	19th	Jean Nadin	Brenda Cook	Peter Snape
	26th	Bill Ball	Sally Shaw	Peter Snape
November	2nd	Jean Nadin	TBA	Peter Snape

Answers to Sartor's Quiz this month (page 10)

1 – b; 2 – b; 3 – a; 4 – b; 5 – c; 6 – d; 7 – c; 8 – d; 9 – a; 10 – d.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Burial of the Dead

September 16th	Elizabeth McDaid	90
September 19th	Peter Tarran Bentley	72 ashes

JOINT PARISHES CALENDAR FOR THE COMING WEEKS

SEPTEMBER

Sun 28th TRINITY XV

8.00 am	Astbury	October <i>Parish News</i> published
9.30 am	Smallwood	Morning Prayer (BCP)
11.00 am	Astbury	Worship for all
1.00 pm	Astbury	Holy Communion
6.30 pm	Astbury	Holy Baptism
		Evensong (BCP)

OCTOBER

Wed	1st	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service
		7.30 pm	Astbury	Women's Institute

Sun 5th TRINITY XVI

		8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
		11.00 am	Astbury	Morning Praise (CW)
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Compline
Wed	8th	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service

Sun 12th TRINITY XVII

		8.00 am	Astbury	Morning Prayer (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	All Age Service
		11.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Evensong (BCP)
Mon	13th	7.30 pm	Astbury	PCC Meeting
Wed	15th	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		1.30 pm	Astbury	Ladies' Fellowship
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service
Fri	17th	6.00 pm		Copy date for <i>Parish News</i>
Sat	18th	10.00 am	Astbury VH	Baptism Preparation

Sun 19th TRINITY XVIII

		8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
		11.00 am	Astbury	Morning Praise (CW)
		1.00 pm	Astbury	Holy Baptisms
		6.30 pm	Astbury	Compline
Wed	22nd	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service

Joint Parishes Calendar, continued

OCTOBER

Sun 26th TRINITY XIX

8.00 am	Astbury	November <i>Parish News</i> published
9.30 am	Smallwood	Morning Prayer (BCP)
11.00 am	Astbury	Worship for all
6.30 pm	Astbury	Holy Communion
		Evensong (BCP)

Wed	29th	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service

NOVEMBER

Sun 2nd TRINITY XX

8.00 am	Astbury	Holy Communion (BCP)
9.30 am	Smallwood	Holy Communion (CW)
11.00 am	Astbury	Morning Praise (CW)
6.30 pm	Astbury	Compline

Wed	5th	11.30 am	Astbury VH	Holy Communion (CW)
		2.45 pm	Astbury	Community Service
		7.30 pm	Astbury	Women's Institute

ASTBURY & SMALLWOOD PARISH NEWS

is also available in large-print format.

Please let Mr Ball know if you require such a copy.

Editor – Mr W. Ball

Telephone 01260 279276 email wbbtov@gmail.com

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