



St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Loving God, Loving Others, Loving the World



Parish Magazine

April 2025

PARISH DIRECTORY

General inquiries: in the first instance, please contact the parish office.

Parish office: sthelensashby@gmail.com // 01530 411607

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Opening times: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10am - 1pm

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St Helen's Church is part of the **Ashby Churches**

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Ashby Methodist Church	01530 412298
Holy Trinity	01530 412339
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Donations can be left in the boxes at the back of St Helen's Church, in the porch of Holy Trinity or the Congregational Church, or at any of Ashby's Co-ops. Thank you to everyone for the continued support.



FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

Dear friends,

We are just emerging from what seems to have been a very cold and long winter. I thought I was just feeling my age saying that, but I saw a young wedding couple last night who were saying the same thing! A quick walk around my garden gives evidence for this as I seem to have lost quite a few plants with the heavy frosts we have had. But, we are now beginning to experience more light and the clocks go forward on Sunday. The air is generally less cold and we can begin to feel the warmth of the sun on our skin which lightens our mood and helps us to look forward.



As I write this, we are just about half way through the season of Lent and on Sunday we celebrate Mothering Sunday which is also known as Refreshment Sunday – the day when servants would have returned home to their families and their home churches, and when simnel cakes are baked. In a season where we remember the struggles of Jesus in the wilderness and where we fast in some way in order that we can devote more time to prayer, we have glimpses of the joy and the new life that is to come in the season of Easter. This is the hope of new life and of joy as we anticipate the resurrection of Jesus.

We have a way to go yet, because we cannot appreciate the depth of Easter joy until we can journey with Jesus through Holy Week to the Cross.

Those of you who have walked alongside those who are suffering will know that, even in the depths of that suffering, there are moments of joy – moments where the love of others gives peace and comfort in the midst of sadness and grief – and it is those glimpses of hope that keep us going. It is that joy that we can anticipate at Easter having gone through the season of preparation and penitence and journeyed through Holy Week.

We have that opportunity across the Flagstaff churches as we join the crowd with our Hosannas on Palm Sunday but then gather with the disciples

to hear Jesus preparing to leave them on Maundy Thursday, witness his sense of abandonment in the Garden of Gethsemane and prepare to walk the final steps to the cross on Good Friday before celebrating the Good News of resurrection on Easter Sunday.

I always find Holy Week a most moving and deeply spiritual time as we hear again that familiar story of the passion. A list of our services is here. Please do join us.

With my prayers,
Sue Field

A LIGHT IN THE WORLD

The next in our series highlighting the ways we live out our faith as a church, through our various ministries and the organisations we support. Here are some further updates from Pat about her involvement with Loughborough Town of Sanctuary.

What have you 'given up' for Lent?

Judith Lewis' address at the recent Lent meeting in Coleorton suggested that we are often way too reserved - even deeply embarrassed - when it comes to speaking up about our faith. I went home thinking about when and where I find myself admitting that I am a Christian, or even going further and talking about what that means to me.

I realised that the most frequent conversations I have about my faith take place with my asylum-seeker and refugee friends at Loughborough Town of Sanctuary. Most of them have grown up in a society very different from the increasingly secular UK one described by Judith. Some are Christians who have escaped persecution for their faith and many are devout Muslims. Either way, they understand what it is to be part of a community of faith - and our conversations arise naturally from a genuine respect and curiosity about our respective beliefs and religious practices. I volunteer at the weekly English conversation sessions and I often choose a topical context for our chats. Recently, the arrival of 'pancake day' seemed too good to miss as a topic - especially as our family WhatsApp group had

shared photos and hilarious videos of us all tossing pancakes (with various levels of success!).

And of course, the Muslim members of the group were in the middle of Ramadan, so 'fasting' was a very relevant subject! But here's where, I have to say, my efforts of 'giving up chocolate' and trying to follow the daily C of E Lent reflections, both seemed to pail into insignificance compared with the Muslims' adherence to the Ramadan fast. It asks Muslims to wake before dawn for 'breakfast' - and then to eat and drink absolutely nothing during the hours of daylight. It has been humbling, to say the least, when we come to the 'tea break' to see our Muslim friends insisting on making *us a cuppa and offering us a biscuit, even though they themselves are not imbibing even a sip of water.*

And to return to Judith's question, we often do compare notes about our different faiths, both Christian and Muslim - and what they mean to us. My friend *Basim and I often agree to pray about something and he frequently asserts that: 'you and me Pat - together, we pray good!' Are we praying to a different God? I really don't think so. I am sure God's love for each of us is way bigger than our tiny minds can imagine and that He listens with the same compassion to each of us. Let's be prepared to talk to others about our own faith then (we don't exactly have to face persecution after all!) ... and also let's listen to the faith experience of others and see what we can all learn from each other. I've certainly learned as much as I have taught when it comes to our English sessions at LToS - and not just about language!

Pat Stafford



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

MESSY CHURCH

At last month's Messy Church we re-enacted the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness and thinking about 'that little voice in our heads that sometimes tell us to do bad things'.

Can you identify which bits of the story are represented in each of the activities?

The next Messy Church is at St Helen's Heritage Centre on 27th April - but there are lots of events across the Flagstaff churches over the Easter period.

Look forward to seeing you at some or all of those!



PRG

After our Mothering Sunday service, our young people's group PRG hosted a bake sale in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association. Cakes were sold to members of the congregation and, afterwards, to passers by in the church yard. Thanks to everyone who baked something and to everyone who donated- you were all very generous!





Earlier in the month, PRG also marked Shrove Tuesday with some expert pancake flipping.

If you know a young person who may be interested in joining, they generally meet every other Thursday, 5-6.30pm in the community heritage

centre and new members are always welcome.



Thanks go to the ladies who worked hard to prepare the posies for our Mothering Sunday service. Much appreciated by all.

ASHBY YOUTH FOR CHRIST

If you would like to sign up for regular updates either follow this link <http://eepurl.com/dvVqrj> or email helen.davis@yfc.co.uk. Alternatively you can scan the QR code. Thank you for all your prayers and support.



Rock Solid apprentices:

Last week we thought about persecution. There are hardships associated with being unfaithful to God and there are trials if we are faithful. We read about and discussed an episode from Elijah's life in which he experienced, pain, vulnerability, fear, threats, loneliness, shame, doubt and deep gloom. A lot of this suffering was the result of being hated by those opposed to God - who didn't like to be reminded of their unfaithfulness by the faithfulness of Elijah.

On our ascent of the old Man of Coniston last Saturday (see pic) one of the things we chatted about was persecution. The web contains stories of recent Christian martyrdoms. Interestingly this chatting was accompanied by a debate about how secular we as followers of Jesus should be - or how much we should watch / listen to / read / access content that may be damaging to us and others. I was thankful that those who are more developed in their thinking about this were willing to share some of their questions and inspire those less developed to think about this too.

Father, thank you for stirring some of this fine group of young people to think deeply about what it is to be faithful to you. Thank you for the way you are growing their corporate faith. Please continue to water these seeds of faith within them, that they may grow together and produce much fruit for your great pleasure. In Jesus' name we ask, Amen

Vernon and the Rock Solid apprentices

Midlands Unite:

During March, a group of AYFC staff, trustees and volunteers headed to a youth leader training day organised by Midlands Unite– aimed at gathering youth organisations from across the midlands for equipping and encouragement. We attended some valuable seminars held by the Message Trust and Reign Ministries, focused on how churches can better engage with young people within the wider community. It was encouraging to have two of our now 18 year old apprentices with us as they continue to develop their gifts and serve their younger peers this year.



There was also time to sample some outdoor pursuits, so the AYFC flag made its way down the zipwire and up the gladiator course. The flag is heading out and about on all our adventures this term as we seek to raise the profile of AYFC across the area and raise funds for our vital work with

young people.

Emily

Sk8ers

Recently we revisited Palm Sunday and continued the story to include the events of the trial of Jesus. We watched an animated telling of the story. Our young members watched and listened.



After the intro Bible and prayer there was pool, Greggs, crochet and much chat. These young people seem remarkably happy chatting to us about all sorts of things. They harm the uncommunicative teenager stereotype. Perhaps it's because we are separate from their weekly activity and relationships. Perhaps it's because they have the opportunity to pause and step back from the usual effort, tensions and defensiveness that the rest of their week requires. Perhaps it's because we are a bunch of old people that they don't feel they need to impress.

Sue, Karen, Jean, Beverley, Lisa, Frank, Josiah and Vernon



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TEXTILE EXHIBITION WEEKEND

During the early May bank holiday weekend, from Saturday 3rd– Monday 5th, St Helen's will be hosting embroidery artist Rev. Dr Romola Parish.

Rev Dr Romola Parish is a former academic specialising in mountains and deserts and a former environmental lawyer. She is currently a Deacon in the Diocese of St David's in Wales. Her ministry is focused on the use of creative arts as a means of engaging with faith and developing a more profound experience of the divine. She uses art in schools to facilitate mental wellbeing in young people and runs retreats at St Non's and St Beuno's in Wales.

Saturday 3rd May

The Exhibition will be open in church from 10 am to 4 pm. Refreshments will be available between 11 am and 3.30 pm.

Workshop with the Artist- 10.30 am - 3.30 pm.

This contemplative and reflective workshop will begin by looking at pieces in the exhibition, then responding creatively. Cost: £10. Places limited - Booking essential, via the church website.

Sunday 4th May

The Exhibition will be open from 10 am to 3 pm.

From 6 pm - 8 pm we hold our '**Sunday Soiree,**' at which Romola will preach, with refreshments in church.

Monday 5th May

Monday 5th May

The Exhibition will be open from 10 am - 2.30 pm. Refreshments will be available from 10 am until 1 pm.

Discussion Tour with the Artist 10am - 12 noon.

A guided tour of the exhibition where the artist will talk about her techniques and her spiritual inspiration, with plenty of opportunity for questions. Free tour but donations encouraged. Places limited - Booking essential, via the church website.

Lunchtime Concert 1 pm - 1.45 pm.

Piano duets with Rev. Sue Field & Andrew Chapman



St Helen's Church

Embroidery Exhibition: 'Crying in the Silicon Wilderness'

by artist Rev Dr Romola Parish
Saturday 3rd May - Monday 5th May



For more information visit the What's Coming Up page of our website -
www.sthelensashby.net

Lower Church Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AB
Facebook - St Helens Ashby de la Zouch
Instagram - thekensheritage

OUR WORSHIP IN APRIL

	am	pm	Wednesday
1st Sunday 6th April		3.30pm All age service 6pm Evensong + soiree	1st Wednesday– 2nd Holy Communion 10.30am In Church
2nd Sunday 13th April	10.30am Palm Sunday Holy Communion + stepping stones		2nd Wednesday-9th Holy Communion 10.30am Prior Park Community centre
3rd Sunday 20th April	10.30 am Easter Day Holy Communion		3rd Wednesday– 16th Morning prayer 10.30am In church
4th Sunday 27th April	10.30 am Holy Communion	3.30pm Messy Church St Helen’s heritage centre	4th Wednesday– 23rd Holy Communion 10.30am St Helen’s In church
			5th Wednesday– 30th Holy Communion 10.30am In church

Regular activities:

- Monday mornings - Little Fishes 9.30 - 11.30am during term time
- Mondays - Pilgrim group
- 1st Wednesday - We’re in stitches – 2 till 4pm
- Thursdays - Choir practice – 6.30 till 8.30pm
- Fridays - Heart- warming Space 2-4pm
- Saturdays - Parish Prayers – 9.30am in the Hastings chapel
- 1st Saturday - Pause for Paws– 10.15-12.15 at the tower door.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY// APRIL

St Helen's Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Tuesday 1st April 2025, at 7pm in the heritage centre. Anyone on the electoral roll is eligible to vote during this meeting or to stand for election onto the PCC.

Sunday 6th April– Choral Evensong + recital by Hannah Matthews— 6pm

Join us as the choir lead us in a service of choral evensong, followed by refreshments before a recital by Hannah Matthews on Trumpet, accompanied by Catherine Matthews and Jude Radley. The programme will include music by Goedicke, Gershwin and Hubeau.

Services for Holy Week and Easter:

Sunday 13th– Palm Sunday

10am– Procession with donkeys around the churchyard

10.30am– Holy Communion with reading of the Passion Narrative–
Activities for Children in the heritage centre.

Service of compline- – Monday 14th

Tuesday 15th

Wednesday 16th

Thursday 17th April– Maundy Thursday Holy Communion– 7.30pm

Friday 18th April- All age service for Good Friday– 10am

Walk of Witness– 11am

An hour at the cross– Breedon Church– 2pm

Service of reflection– 7.30pm

Saturday 19th - Experience Easter—Breedon Priory Church– 2-4pm—Easter activities for children.

A SAFER CHURCH FOR ALL

At St Helens we will be having our APCM in April and this is a good time to check if your Safeguarding training is completed or needs updating. If you have not completed the required training for your church role, please could you do so as soon as you are able.

A copy of the PDF outlining which training needs to be completed for your role can be obtained from Liz Smith.

All volunteers are required to complete the Basic level of training. Members of the PCC and those working with Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults should also complete the foundation training.

The link to the training portal is at the end of the information. Please follow the instructions for completing the courses.

This training is the action taken by the church of England to promote a Safer culture in all our churches..

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

I appreciate that you all have busy lives, so thank you for setting aside the time to complete this and contributing to our church being a safe place for all.

Elizabeth Smith

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GARDENING TIPS FOR APRIL

In April the weather remains unpredictable and so we can experience a heatwave to ground frosts, or even snow. So, be prepared to protect your tender vegetable and bedding plants with horticultural fleece, cloches, or store in the greenhouse or warm space. On warmer days the slugs and snails are, “Out and About”, and they will view the young shoots of Hostas, Delphiniums, Lupins and Lettuce as the equivalent to Caviar (or in our case Sausage, Mash and Mushy Peas). We have found that the use of Nematodes continues to be eco friendly and a natural method to control these garden pests.

If you are fortunate, Daffodils are still in full bloom with Tulips to follow together with blossoming trees. Last month was cold, but we can expect sunnier and warmer days ahead – with the occasional April shower. It is an exciting month as the indoor-sown seeds will be well into growth and it is also time to begin sowing annuals, herbs and wild flower seeds outdoors. Sowing seeds outside is an easy, inexpensive and fun way to grow new plants.

Dead-head current bedding plants, such as Primroses, to encourage prolonged flowering. Also, dead-head faded Daffodils and Tulips but leave the green foliage in place as this will feed the bulbs for next year. Remove dead leaves from around the base of alpine plants to prevent rot. In the greenhouse (after it is cleaned of course) you can start to pot up your Dahlia tubers and begin sowing seeds of Sunflowers, Sweet Peas, Cosmos and many types of vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, peas, broad beans and main crop potatoes.

If growing from seed is not your preferred garden task (too time-consuming and not a guaranteed success) then go for plug plants either online or from a garden centre. Get busy with the vegetable garden tasks in April. Firstly, it is a good idea to prepare the vegetable beds by removing any weeds. Then dig a 5cm minimum layer of compost, or well-rotted manure, into the beds. If this has already been done then now is the time to plant out Pea and Bean seeds and Carrot seedlings.

Early April is the traditional month for planting out salad and early potatoes. Continue chitting second early and maincrop potatoes until the end of April. Potatoes take up a lot of space in borders, so consider growing them in large pots or sacks. Remember to keep potato growing areas moist and cover with fleece if frost is predicted. Finally, consider planting out onion and garlic sets, as well as broad beans which are the hardiest of the bean family. Also sow herbs like Dill, Fennel, Coriander and even Basil undercover this month. Sow outdoor varieties of Tomatoes, Chillies and Courgettes in pots undercover so they are ready to plant out in late May or June.

In your fruit garden, remember to protect blossom from late frosts by covering them with horticultural fleece on cold nights. It is a good idea to mulch fruit trees with garden compost taking care not to place the mulch around the trunk. Oh! Be careful not to uncover tenders before May. If you do just keep an eye on the weather forecast and cover again if needed (we most certainly do that with our Tree Ferns as we have learnt from past experiences).

As Alison would say, “Don’t cast a clout till May’s out”.

Alan and Alison Cross

Gardening Working Party– Saturday 12th April– 10am

We are planning to have a working party to tidy and weed the flower borders around the church, and would be grateful for volunteers to help on the day. If you would like to join us please let Caroline Millward or Susan Boardman-Weston know.

Spring Cleaning Working Party– Friday 4th April 2-4pm & Saturday 5th April 10am-1pm

Our dedicated team of church cleaners serve the church faithfully with their weekly cleaning, but it is a big building with lots to do. So, as we approach Easter, wedding season, the return of our Soirees and an exhibition in church, we are planning to do some serious spring cleaning. Please join us if you can. Even an hour or two of help will make a difference to our buildings as there will be a lot to do!



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BLESSED IS HE

It's not often that something hits you between the eyes and you fall down, especially when it's in church. That's what almost happened to me recently when this verse was read out:

"I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,'" said Jesus.

It's the '... you will not see me again until you say ...' part that astonished me, because it seems to explain why Jesus has not yet returned. Throughout the last 2000 years, people have been predicting the imminent return of the Son of God, but I don't expect it in my lifetime. However, if Jesus does come back today, I won't complain, as it's out of my hands. I might welcome him and be glad, or be surprized and amazed. Let's now look at the quote in more detail.

When these words were originally spoken by Jesus, as recorded in Luke 13.35, the listeners would be mainly Jewish. As we know, most Jews still don't accept Jesus unequivocally as the Son of God, so I doubt Jesus will be returning anytime soon. But many theologians differ with this point of view.

It's worth mentioning in passing that the *Blessed is he...* phrase comes directly from Psalm 118, and Jesus probably assumed his listeners would know the whole Psalm. In ancient Israel, it would be sung at Passover time to greet the king as he entered Jerusalem in majesty. Nowadays, Christians view this psalm as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the person coming in the name of the Lord. Indeed, we say these words each week in our liturgy as both a celebration and a prayer.

Let's move on to something more interesting, namely, how does it affect me? Imagine this. You turn up for the morning church service ten minutes early. To your amazement there is Jesus, standing at the front, looking at you. There is no doubt in your mind. You point him out to your friend, who says, 'There's no-one there!' You realise you can see him, but he's invisible to everyone else. How do you react? With joy, or not relaxed at all? Chatty? Probably not. Observant, yes, awake, yes, and wondering what's

going to happen next.

Admittedly, most of us would freak out if we came face to face with Jesus in real life. It would be difficult to have a rational thought, and that's possibly why Jesus doesn't appear to us in human form. At least, not to me. It may also explain why Jesus hasn't returned yet – we'd all be freaked out! Having said that, I'm sure Jesus does come to us in a spiritual way, but your experience will be different to mine. And what we feel and experience is often hard to put into words, which probably explains why we rarely speak about how close we feel to God. Too showy as well.

Note that the words 'he who comes' is in the present tense. Therefore Jesus comes to us every day, at any time, maybe many times. This same idea is used by Matthew to close his gospel story: '...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age...'

One last point. As with a lot of scripture, the words *blessed is he* ... can mean something slightly different when we hear them in a group setting like church, and when we read or say them aloud on our own. In the latter case, we have time to ponder the meaning for ourselves in more depth. For myself, I'm still wrestling with the verse and trying to find its meaning or meanings for me.

To conclude, at this time of Easter, we find the words somehow familiar and comforting: *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

Richard Vann

THE COURT LEET

On Wednesday 24th November 1886, the Ashby Court Leet met at the Queen's Head.

At one time, most villages and towns had a Court Leet, also known as a court of Frankpledge. It was an ancient manorial court under the jurisdiction of the Lord of the Manor, who in the case of Ashby was Lord Donington. Originally, in medieval times, the Court Leet's jurisdiction was granted by the King's Charter to a Hundred, Lordship, Manor, or Borough. It held wide-ranging responsibilities including dealing with crimes like assault, arson, burglary, larceny, manslaughter, murder, treason, and every felony at common law. It was also responsible for regulating trade. Some of the misdemeanours dealt with in the past might seem rather amusing to us today. For example, in Wymeswold 1723, the Court Leet recorded that "We do present Will Greenwood for harking houses (eavesdropping). It is agreed that any person or persons seen to harken any house after daylight shall forfeit 1 shilling to the Lord of the Manor and 1 shilling to the informer." In the town of Loughborough in the 16th century the jury of the Court Leet found that "John Luffe is a common eavesdropper under the neighbours' walls in the night." He was fined 4d (four old pennies).

The criminal jurisdiction of Courts Leet was gradually superseded by the Justices of the Peace, and the Court Leet's legal criminal jurisdiction was abolished in 1977 by the Administration of Justice Act. By that time, local authorities had long since taken over its other responsibilities. At the Ashby meeting in 1886, those involved were summoned to the Queens Head at 11 o'clock by the bailiff of the manor, Mr J Reed. A set of jurors was elected and Captain Perry was elected Mayor. There were fifteen jurors and they included such familiar names as George Bullen, Thomas Smithard and F Boden (landlord of the Queen's Head). Having been elected, they proceeded to "walk the bounds" of the town and take note of all obstructions and encroachments on the highway. This included noticeboards put out by shopkeepers and tradesmen. Such people were probably aware that the jurors would be coming round that day and made sure there was nothing outside their establishments. However, two

or three offenders were spotted. Their names (not given in the report) were read out when the jurors returned and they were fined “sums appropriate to the enormity of their offence”.

The people who were to fulfil certain official positions for the year were then chosen. They were: Constable: Captain Perry, Officer for the coroners of the market: Mr T Bosworth, two head-boroughs: Mr Bullen and Mr Walter Webb, Ale taster: Mr Richard Smith, Two Pinders: Mr G Barlow and Mr S Taylor, Leather searcher: Mr George Spencer and a town crier: Mr G Barlow.

A pinder was responsible for impounding stray animals. The Town-crier was obviously the local news-bringer and announcer of the day. The other roles mentioned would have been responsible for inspecting the quality of the various goods in their jurisdiction such as ale and leather and for seeing that the market was being conducted in a fair and lawful manner. Following the official proceedings, those present were treated to a lavish dinner, provided by Mr and Mrs Boden of the Queen’s Head and paid for by Lord Donington with contributions made by the Mayor, Head-boroughs and Colts (according to the report, those initiated that day into the mysteries of the Court Leet). This was followed by a number of toasts to the members of the Royal Family, the armed forces and to Lord Donington. The latter was not present due to the recent death of his son. Entertainment was provided by various members of the company who sang and played instruments and the evening was rounded off with the singing of the National Anthem.

The Court Leet was held again in the week before Christmas 1887 but only made a brief paragraph in the Leicester Journal. By 1892, it was still meeting but the dinner was held a few days later in connection with the Mayor’s Civic Dinner.

I have been unable to discover when the last Court Leet was held in Ashby, but one was held in Swannington in January 1911. The Hinckley Court Leet survived until at least 1960. In December of that year, it met at Burbage for the purpose of settling entitlements to stints (rights to pasture animals) on Burbage common. After their final abolition, certain places were allowed to continue to hold Court Leets for ceremonial purposes only. Henley-in-Arden and Alcester still hold a ceremonial Court Leet to this day.



St Helen's Church & Community Heritage Centre

On the first Saturday of every month:

Pause for Paws



Drop in on
1st Saturday of the month
between 11:30 & 13:00
at St Helen's church
(west door of the church)
Refreshments will be provided

4 Church Yard, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics, LE65 1AA



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**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Saint
Helen, Ashby de-la Zouch, Charity Number 1200922**