

A Report on the 2025 Arlington Bluebell Walk, Farm Trails & Garden

Every year is unique, and this year was no exception! We were open for five weeks, with each day being dry, as there were only two nights, we experienced rain. So unusual, as parking without cars getting stuck, used to be the annual challenge!

This was the spring for the white wood anemones, as they were the best I have ever seen them, and they just lasted and lasted. When the bluebells finally emerged, the tree leaves were quickly opening, so Beatons Wood darkened, which shows it is always nature not us, that dictates how successful will be our annual Arlington Bluebell Walk!

I must mention the multitude of key road closures we experienced, both for sudden water leaks and urgent road repairs. Those Duty Charities who experienced them, felt it impacted on their foot fall, as we were never given any prior notice, but must not complain as we certainly need our roads kept in good order.

The use of our mobility scooters rise each year, as this year we are well on the way to 600 visitors making use of this free service. I am anxious to locate a two person mobility scooter, similar to ones available at Sheffield Park, as often those with limited sight or excessive frailty, have to be pushed in a wheelchair, which can be tough on the pusher?

Various reasons meant visitor numbers were slightly down on last year, but the 28 involved charities did raise just under £96K. To date Arlington Village Hall and Church have now raised £308,956.00, quite a significant sum for a relatively small Sussex village. It was Carolyn who first came up with the idea of the Bluebell Walk in 1972, so as I get older I must ensure her legacies of both the Bluebell Walk and Bates Green Garden, which she designed and planted, both have an assured future. If all goes to plan, in 2027 which is my 90th year, the Arlington Bluebell Charitable Trust will be created. The named trustees will be responsible, that Arlington Village and other charities benefit from visitors who come to enjoy nature's annual spring display and that Bates Green Garden is maintained, so it continues to be an RHS Partner Garden.

This year the map of the five Farm Walks over the Appleton Families farms was refreshed, to try to make it easier for our visitors, but still more improved signs are required for 2026! I am always grateful that the Appleton's make this facility available to many of our visitors, so we look forward to seeing Parkwood Farm's new state of art milking facility next year.

We have a good team who help me in so many ways. Their animals create much interest, the websites are kept updated and are brilliant, the Photographic Competition attract more entries, so thank you all for ensuring our standards are kept high. I must

mention Stuart, as he continues to be the person I rely on, for his many ideas and practical help.

John McCutchan