

The Stonesfield Slate

Issue No 498 December 2019 / January 2020



Dates for your diary – December

2, 9, 16	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
2	Santa's Sleigh visits Stonesfield		from 6.30pm
4, 11, 18	Country Dancing	Village Hall	8-10pm
5, 12	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
5	Christmas Bingo	SSSC	eyes down 7.30pm
6	Scouts Christmas Bingo	Village Hall	eyes down 7pm
7	Christmas coffee morning	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
7, 8	Artists Christmas Show	Grey Cat Studio	11am-5pm
7	Band Night Them Combe Boys at SSSC		9pm
9	Gardening Club Social	St James' Centre	7.30pm
12	General Election voting	Village Hall	6.30am-10pm
12	Over 60s Christmas Party	Village Hall	12.30 for 1pm
18	Oxford Utd v Man City on Sky at SSSC		7.30pm
20	Christmas Quiz, Meat Draw & Xmas Draw at SSSC		8pm
21	Christmas Jumper Party	SSSC	8pm
22	Carol Service	St James's Church	6pm
24	Christmas Eve,	SSSC	open noon-midnight
25	Christmas Day,	SSSC	open 11am-2pm
26	Boxing Day,	SSSC	open noon-11pm
31	New Years Eve Disco	SSSC	8pm-1am

Dates for your diary – January

1	New Years Day,	SSSC	open noon-11pm
6, 13, 20, 27	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
9, 16, 23, 30	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
9	Over 60s New Year meeting	Village Hall	2pm
19	Quiz Night	SSSC	8pm

For this issue

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Dale Morris

For February issue

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Note changes to deadlines & emails

Copy:

Deadline for next issue 15 January

Please email copy to
slate@stonesfield.online or
hand it in at the village shop
(Suriya Express).

Advertising:

Deadline for next issue 10 January.

Advertisements to
slate-ads@stonesfield.online

Notices

Christmas things



Seasons Greetings from the editors, publishers and distributors of *The Stonesfield Slate*

Greetings

Phil, Tina, Curtly and Donna would like to wish all our family and friends a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy Peaceful New Year 2020. We will again be making a donation to Sobell House Hospice Charity instead of sending Christmas cards.

The Slatter family

I would like to wish all my friends a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year 2020. I will be sending a donation to Sobell House Hospice Charity again instead of sending Christmas cards.

Judy Oliver

On behalf of Mary and myself, Ron Evins would like to wish all our friends Peace, Love, Health and Happiness this Christmas and throughout the coming year. Grateful thanks also to everyone who sent or wished the family condolences and sympathy after Tim lost his brave battle with cancer on 19 September. Gone too soon but never forgotten and always in our hearts.

Kind regards, John Evins (Avalon, Peaks Lane, Stonesfield)

Christmas Coffee Morning – Saturday 7 December

Everyone is very warmly invited to come along to a Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 7 December, 10-11.30am, St James' Centre. Organised by the Parish Church, all the money raised will be given to Cecily's Fund (our own local charity which makes education possible for orphaned and vulnerable Zambian children).

Coffee and mince pies - time to chat - cake and Christmas gift stalls! Do come!

Christmas Show - Local Artists

Come and visit 6 Stonesfield artists at our open studio event on 7 & 8 December at this popular annual informal event. Lots to see and buy, plus chat and refreshments with Rachael, Becki and Griselda Sherlaw-Johnson, Jenny Lines, Kerry Burniston and Ann Lowe at Grey Cat Studios, Woodlands Rise, Stonesfield OX28 8PL. This year we have paintings, prints, textiles, books, cards, crafts and jewellery. Lots of unique present ideas. The studio is open between 11am and 5pm on both days.

Quiet time and the Christmas rush

When we stop and think about the Christmas celebrations we may ask, 'Why are we doing all this?' We know we have two very good reasons: we do it for each other of course, to show our friends and

family that we value them, and also to enjoy being in company especially now it's colder and the days are shorter. We want to be generous in all kinds of ways.

In the church, hearing the traditional Christmas Story is central to our celebrations when Christ came as a man to join this human family and to share God's love with everyone. It's true that God the Father wants to renew His love for each one of us, especially at this Christmas time.

'Great!' you might say - but where's the quiet time we all need in our busy lives? Well, here's one way to find a bit of quiet, reflective time. The Parish Church, open daily between dawn and dusk, is a warm and welcoming place, and will give us a private space this December for a moment of quietness and thought. It's billed as a 7-door 'Advent Calendar' Walk-around in

the church, from 2nd through 16th December.

You will find at each stop around the church a small 'door' that opens with questions about how we ourselves are doing, about our insecure world, about others perhaps less fortunate than ourselves, our feelings about the Christian faith, our own strengths and what we can do to support our planet corporately and individually.

Here, at the Parish Church, we want to provide a quiet time for thought and prayer as well as a reflection on our traditional Christmas-time celebrations.

Drop in and see! No one will bother you – it's all yours – it's all ours!

Revd Roy Turner and all at the Parish Church



Bring Wellies & Gloves!

Charlbury
CHRISTMAS TREES

Locally Grown • Established 1997

**Come and choose your own Christmas tree growing in the field.
Thousands to choose from – Norway Spruce and Belgian Spruce.**

Open the last weekend in November to choose for collection later
and then December weekends until Christmas to choose and collect.

9.30am - 4.00pm

Halcyon Honey Farm
Woodstock Road, Charlbury, OX7 3ET
Tel: 01608 810260 Mob: 07969 208518

Turn off A44 onto B4437 to Charlbury and look out for the banners!

Other notices

Slate approaches 500

March 2020 will be the 500th issue of *The Stonesfield Slate*. The publishers would like any of your stories or anecdotes that may then be included in this milestone issue.

Please send your input by 10 January to slate-pub@stonesfield.online

Gratitude

When we came to Stonesfield in 2011, it was not long before we received a copy of the *Stonesfield Slate* - and what a delightful introduction it was to all the many activities and interests that make up village life. Eight years on and we have grown to value even more this unique expression of the character of our village and we want to say thank you to Simon and Jenny for all their sustained hard work over many years as the *Slate's* publishers. We wish them well as they relinquish this role that they have performed so magnificently.

Henry Hollanders and Wendy Lynch

Thank you Bernard Barrett

Since we moved to Stonesfield 15 years ago our great delight has been to take our visitors down the Brook Lane path to the river and the bridge so that they could say how lucky we were to have ended up in such a beautiful place. The Brook Lane path is full of treasures, but it never lets you see them all at once. The path where the brook in flood has etched a deep channel into the rock, the wild flowers on the banks, the exposed layers of *Stonesfield slate* showing what is underneath

everything and the oak which has grown with a hole big enough for a small child to hide in.

It has been maintained for the last 40 years by Bernard Barrett. Many of us have seen Bernard out in all weathers trimming the banks and hedges or removing fallen trees. Single handed and on a totally voluntary basis he has done what was needed to keep the path accessible and beautiful. He has now decided it is time to call it a day and will not be doing the path anymore. I'm sure that all of us in the village who use the path will join me in saying a very heartfelt and sincere thanks to Bernard. Hopefully, others, inspired by his example, will carry on his good work.

Jon Gordon

Stonesfield triumph

Congratulations to the two who ran and cycled and also to the stalwart few who walked, sat, welcomed and gathered donations for the Ride & Stride, which took place as always on the second Saturday in September. Oxfordshire Historic Churches Association raises funds to help keep historic churches of all denominations at the centre of our Oxfordshire communities. This could be contributing to repair roofs, create kitchens, repair stained glass, build loos, etc. etc. The sum raised by our two activists amounted to £475 (to which a further 25% will be added) in aid of St James's Church. The Methodist Church was also open all day.

Congratulations to all on a great community action! We look forward to more Riders and Striders next year!

Alison Eastwood stableyardalison@gmail.com

Climate Emergency meeting

I'm looking for ways in which I, as an individual, can respond to the climate emergency. You may be, too. Here in Stonesfield, we have a strong community, and it's time we had a forum for people to get together to share ideas on how we can adjust our lives and spending habits to reduce carbon emissions.

I'd like to propose a meeting once a month at which we share information on specific topics: household shopping, buying/exchanging clothes, transport, gas/oil/electricity, choosing holidays, choosing banks, eliminating plastics, supporting Extinction Rebellion ... and more. We would then write up our shared information, tips and ideas and post them online for all to see.

If there is anything you do that you think others could copy, come and tell us about it. If you don't know where to start, come and listen!

Our first meeting is on Monday 2 December at 7.30 pm in the St James' Centre. Please drop me a line if you intend to come. Many thanks.

Caroline Friend (caroline.v.friend@gmail.com)

Please support your local foodbank!

The North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank is a voluntary group formed by members of local Christian churches. It provides food parcels to people in need within the Kidlington, Woodstock, Chipping Norton and Charlbury area. The parcels contain essential food for individuals and families in case of emergency, covering the time it takes for

other social care infrastructure to come into play.

The Parish Church has been supporting this initiative for a few years now and organizes a schedule of drivers who take food weekly to Kidlington Baptist Church, where it is processed and bundled up by a team of enthusiastic volunteers.

It is a sad fact that food is still desperately needed. Any food you can give will be very warmly received. There are collection boxes under the table just inside the church, which is normally open during the day. Thank you.

For more about the Foodbank, please visit the website at:
www.northoxfordshirecommunityfoodbank.org.uk

Simon Haviland

Sorry for the inconvenience

Apologies to our neighbours and passing village traffic for all the builders' kit outside our home in Church Street over the past two months. Hopefully the families going back and forth to school liked watching the builders at work...

Richard & Dale Morris

Dear Editor

Like those of Stonesfield and Combe, Fawler residents beg those who speed through our hamlet to slow down. We too believe that 20 is best.

Most drivers are considerate and aware of the potential dangers of our road but occasionally some travel too fast, a few of whom having been recognised as living in Stonesfield.

I'm sure that the reason is often only a spasmodic loss of concentration but at the last Fawler Parish Meeting residents again expressed their constant concern and fears about walking on a road which not only has no pavements, but is too narrow to allow two vehicles to pass without difficulty.

We therefore ask if we might draw the attention of your readers to our difficulties and to request that they drive through our hamlet with even more care. Thank you.

Hilary Stacey: Chairman, Fawler Parish Meeting

Election on 12th December

As you will all be aware by now, the elections have been confirmed and booked, so voting will be held in the Club Room of the Village Hall on 12 December from 6.30am to 10pm. Don't forget your polling cards!

Village Hall News

We have lots of activities running every week, but please do bear us in mind if you are needing a bigger space over the Christmas period.

New Year, new resolutions, so why not join one of the activities we have running, or start a group of your own:

Pickleball: Tues 10am / Wed 6pm

Tae KwonDo: Tues 5.30pm / Thurs 5.30pm

Zumba: Tues 7pm

Zumba Strong: Tues 8.15pm

Pilates: Wed 9.30am / Thurs 7.30pm

Folk dancing: Wed 7.45pm

Babies and Toddlers: Thurs 10am

We also offer a Discounted Children's Party Booking Fee of £50 for 3 hours in the Main Hall at weekends!

Thank you for your continued support, and wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and bright New Year 2020.

Jacqueline Carthew, Secretary & Booking Clerk
for Stonesfield Village Hall (898919)

Vulnerable and elderly adults within our community.

I've recently had to report an incident regarding rogue traders and intimidation, and was advised to let people in the local community know so that they could be aware and also look out for neighbours and friends around them.

I was absolutely mortified when so many people responded to my online posts, with knowledge of others locally that had similar experiences.

Because we live in such a quiet and peaceful little village, it's easy to sometimes forget that we aren't in a bubble, and that we are just as at risk of crime and horrible incidents as anywhere else.

There are a number of safeguards that can be put in place to help protect people from doorstep menaces such as :

- Display 'No Cold Calling' signs.
- Don't answer the door to people you don't know.
- Ask the caller to come back another time.

According to Age Concern, utility companies run a Password Scheme via a Priority Service Register for the vulnerable or elderly - utilise this if it is available to you.

Call 999 if people are being persistent or you feel threatened.

More in-depth safety information can be found from a number of sources but I found the following particularly useful.

www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukigo1_staying_safe.inf.pdf

Jacqueline Carthew

Stonesfield Community Trust

It's doubtful that the people who originally founded Stonesfield Community Trust some 33 years ago could ever have foreseen the rate that it has grown at, or the scale of the village now. So with that in mind, heading into 2020, we wonder what other changes and challenges are going to evolve in our ever-growing community.

We hope that with our affordable housing scheme, and the support of grant applications provided to various organisations over the year, we have continued to be of some value and assistance, and hope to continue this work in the future.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2020.

Minute of silence

2019 marked 100 years since the two-minute silence was first observed on Armistice Day on 11th November 1919. In Stonesfield on 11th November the victims of war were remembered by a short reading and minute silence at the war memorial.



All passing car and van drivers came to a halt during the minute's silence. A big thank you for this. The residents who turned out were able to show their respect in peace.

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

arranges car transport to doctors' and dentists' surgeries in Woodstock, Charlbury, Long Hanborough and Witney, and to Water Eaton Park & Ride (for buses to JR, Nuffield and Churchill Hospitals)

If you need a lift for a medical visit in DECEMBER or JANUARY please ring

Viv Kendall (891803) or Nigel Collier (891372)

Every effort will be made to find a volunteer driver for you, but please give as much notice as you can. This is a free service, but donations to costs are welcomed.

Politics & local affairs

Local vandalism

Stonesfield subscribers to the Oxford Mail will have been dismayed to read that paper's recent report on vandalism to cars in Church Street overnight on Thursday 24/ Friday 25 October. In fact damage was more extensive than reported and cars were also 'keyed' (paintwork scratched deep by a sharp instrument) on the Cross and in Boot Street. The vandals seem to have followed a clear path up through the village creating thousands of pounds worth of damage en route. Motor insurers will only offload these losses on all our policies and we will all end up paying extra. These are damaged cars which ordinary residents need for essential journeys to work/ shopping/hospital visits and for which they do not have the luxury of off-street parking. They mistakenly thought they could park safely in the street in our village.

Police at Thames Valley have been informed of all this mindless damage and have issued a number of crime incident numbers. Thames Valley Police Kidlington can be reached on '101' (crime ref no. 43190333117) or anonymously at CrimeStoppers on 0800 555111. They will look into CCTV but advised that Stonesfield should consider more CCTV and some street lighting in strategic places. They made the relevant point that criminals thrive under cover of darkness.

Neighbourhood Watch

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch is a scheme that welcomes all residents from the village to join. The scheme is there to increase awareness about what is happening around us and to also make sure we are looking out for each other, in particular the elderly and more vulnerable members of our community. It is important to get to know who your neighbours are.

By working together as a group, we can help to tackle local issues, including anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, which can help to reduce crime.

You and the scheme members could help:

- Promote home security and other measures to reduce crime
- Encourage members to report suspicious activity to the Police
- Support vulnerable people in the community and help them avoid becoming victims of crime
- Encourage neighbourliness and closer communities

It's all part of improving our village and making Stonesfield a better place to live. If you are interested in joining Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch please email: NHWstonesfield@gmail.com giving your name, address and contact number. You will then receive an email inviting you to sign up to the scheme; you will then receive your membership pack.

Deanna Asplundh, NHW Co-ordinator –
Stonesfield

Sustainable Stonesfield

SUSTO are delighted to announce that CALA Homes have abandoned their appeal to the High Court.

After our victory was announced in June, we were dismayed, but not altogether surprised, when we learnt that CALA were taking the decision to the High Court. The Parish Council then bravely and shrewdly took a barrister's Opinion on whether SUSTO plus the Parish Council plus the Cotswold Conservation Board (ie the "Rule 6 parties") should join the High Court proceedings as a distinct party, or put our evidence before the High Court in the form of a witness statement for WODC, who were defending the High Court case. The barrister sensibly advised the latter because we thus avoided the risk of costs against us if CALA won. The Rule 6 Party spokesman therefore provided WODC with a witness statement setting out our case and exhibiting all the Rule 6 parties' evidence.

There was then a "sifting process" in which a single High Court Judge considered the papers. He found CALA's Grounds of Appeal were not sound. CALA still had the right to argue the case before the full Court but they have decided not to do so. So we have won. There is no further right of appeal on this case. CALAmity has been avoided. Not only have we prevented the outskirts of our village from being ruined by an ugly, unwanted development, but we have put down a line in the sand for other settlements seeking the protection of their AONB status.

Please, however, remember we did not achieve this without a huge amount of work and the support of the Parish Council and the Cotswold Conservation Board.

Developers have massive resources so it was a true case of David v Goliath, David in this case being a very small band of volunteers who put in enormous amounts of time and energy on the fight.

Figures CALA produced at the Planning Appeal showed planning permission would have resulted in gross profit to CALA of between £12 million and £20 million. That "unremarkable field" on the edge of our village could yet prove a gold mine to someone, and we are pretty sure that CALA or another developer will sooner or later be back. Let's celebrate this great victory – but bear in mind we may well need your support again.

With that last thought in mind, SUSTO and the Parish Council will in the next few months be deciding whether to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Stonesfield. NPs work alongside the District's Local Plan and give the residents of a community a say in what houses should be built to meet real local needs, not give a national house builder vast profits.

Caroline Friend

West Oxfordshire District Council

Another election! Let's hope there is not only a good turnout but also an acceptable result.

At District, the collective mind has been concentrating on good housekeeping and preparations for the 2020/21 budget. As you may remember, I have publicised the Community Facilities Grants which WODC has managed to offer again to parish and town councils. In this accounting period, Chadlington Parish Council has been given a grant to resurface the car park of the

Memorial Hall. Burford has been given the ability to convert an 18th century barn into an Archive Centre. The Porter Recreation Ground Charity has received help install outdoor playground equipment. Money is still available for parishes if there are urgent projects which will benefit the local community.

The Council has developed a strong strategy to deal with long-term empty property, so that buildings can be returned to full domestic use.

A new post has been created so that the Council now has a dedicated climate change manager who is keen to further the work that the District can achieve towards that end.

New electric charging points are hoped to be installed in the spring of next year.

I hope none of our residents have been affected by the torrential downpours of recent days. One can only feel for the poor folks in Derbyshire and the surrounding counties.

I have spent some time recently dealing with some housing issues where residents in our villages have urgent need of accommodation. If any of you have issues which you cannot easily solve yourselves, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will put your needs to the correct officer and try to find an acceptable solution.

Richard Bishop (891414)
richard.bishop@westoxon.gov.uk

Most of your Christmas waste can be recycled - we'll even collect your excess...

Extra recycling: We will recycle all your extras like biscuit and sweet tins, Christmas crackers and cards. Just put your extra recycling out in clear open bags or cardboard boxes. Please keep your glass bottles and jars separate in your recycling box.

Extra food waste: We collect your food waste every week. We'll even take leftover sprouts and turkey bones. Simply put your kitchen caddy out for collection too if your food waste bin is full. If you need a food waste bin or caddy, please get in touch.

Christmas & New Year collections:

Normal collection	Revised date
Tues 24 Dec	no change
Tues 31 Dec	Thurs 2 Jan
Tues 7 Jan	Wed 8 Jan

Normal collection resumes Monday 13 January.

Council Partnership wins award enabling design and delivery of carbon-neutral homes

Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and Forest of Dean District Councils have been awarded £30,000 from the Local Government Housing Advisers Programme to develop a toolkit to aid the delivery of highly efficient carbon neutral homes. (The Programme for 2019-20 is designed to support councils seeking to innovate in meeting the housing needs of their communities.)

This year, each of the partnership councils declared a 'climate emergency' with the

aim of achieving carbon neutrality in their areas within the next decade. Now they have made a successful bid to secure expert advice to assist in the production of a toolkit (similar to a residential design guide) that will guide how carbon-neutral developments could be achieved. Work towards the toolkit will run alongside the production of local plan policies with an aim to introduce the toolkit for publication by spring 2021. This toolkit will assist developers, housing providers, existing homeowners, self-builders and local communities wishing to work with the councils to bring forward sustainable carbon-neutral applications.

Pothole reporting

If you have seen a pothole that needs fixing (and who hasn't) then did you know you can report it via the internet in a few simple steps.

- Log on to the website
- Click on the map to show location of hole
- Add photos (optional)
- Give your name & email

You can then track progress. I found this worth doing as I was told 'your pothole is fixed' and it wasn't! The website is: www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Paul Bates
Secretary SAFER
www.stonesfield.online/safer/



Evenlode in flood at Stonesfield: November 2019

Education & culture

Nature-friendly Christmas (Stonesfield Pre-school)

We all want to prevent waste and look after our environment. Many of us have been thinking of ways to do this over Christmas, when household waste increases by around 30%. At Stonesfield Pre-School, we have been talking with staff, children and parents about how to make Christmas more 'nature friendly', including the Pre-school Christmas Party!

Trees: Trees are tricky. Real or plastic? Maybe some decorative twigs or branches from your garden instead?

Gifts: Many of us would prefer less 'stuff' in our homes. Changing the type of gifts we give at Christmas or running a family Secret Santa can help. Wrapping gifts can be problematic too – glitter, foil and plastic make much giftwrap impossible to recycle. Using cloth (a scarf or tea towel) with fabric ribbons or reusing children's artwork are attractive alternatives.

Some gift ideas: a stainless steel lunchbox / Lush toiletries / an e-book / a plant or tree / a bee hotel, bird feeder or hedgehog house / a course or experience day / an IOU for a task or homecooked meal / a donation to a charity.

Food and Drink: Food waste is rife at Christmas. But with a little care we can enjoy festive meals without wasting food: write out a meal plan, build a shopping list around it, and stick to it. Let guests plate up their own food and store leftovers in reusable containers to eat over the next few

days. Traditionally farmed organic local food reduces food miles and packaging; it's better for the environment overall and supports local farming.

The Table: Use natural materials (pine cones, dried flowers) to dress the table, fabric napkins and a tablecloth that can be used every year.

Energy: With the extra power that we use on winter's dark nights (and our twinkly Christmas lights), it's a brilliant time to switch energy supplier to a 100% renewable energy company. Options include Good Energy, Ecotricity, Green Energy or Octopus Energy – future bill payments will be used to fund British renewables.

Party clothes: Could we hire or borrow clothes instead of buying? There are great places to hire clothing locally, and plenty of options online. If buying, get something second-hand that you will wear often. There are many good charity shops in Eynsham and Witney.

Pre-school Christmas party: We will be trying out lots of these ideas at our Pre-school Christmas party. We are planning crafts (e.g. making crowns and tree decorations) that use natural materials and avoid glue and stickers. We will be using our own (reusable) cups and plates, and decorations saved from Christmasses past. The food is carefully planned to avoid waste and food miles (no strawberries this year!) and we are inviting the children to choose a small toy or book of their own to

give to a friend, which we'll help them to wrap in pretty cloth and ribbons. We will let you know how it goes!

Frances Mortimer (parent), Lizzie Wharton (Pre-School Manager) & Rachel Hemingway

Stonesfield Primary School

Beech and Rowan classes, Years 4-6, have been writing about the Apollo 11 mission to the moon. Here is an extract from The Lunar Landing by Finn Carpenter.

'As the trio of astronauts gazed up at the Moon, they thought about the next few days. Soon they would be up there. Walking with the stars - that crowded around the Moon - and planting the flag for America. The Moon was particularly bright that night, it shimmered with an enchanting glow, its pearly-white surface illuminating the deserted city. As the sun went down, the Moon shone brighter, its creamy-white light casting a gentle, serene aura over the dilapidated roads of Texas. Like a halo of mystery, it flowed across the sky, lighting up the silvery tears on each astronaut's cheek, its many seas shining in unison, like a single harmonic note. Then they remembered, on July the 17th 1969, they were going to the Moon.

The next day, the team of astronauts walked out into the open, breathing in the sweet, succulent air with a sigh. They walked up to the rocket towering above them, its steely-white glaze shining in the morning sun. They took a moment to wave back at the cheering crowd, then they took the elevator up to the top, where the Columbia was waiting. They stepped out of the elevator, taking a final glance at the apple-green landscape, then, they stepped into the rocket. It was time. They strapped in, and took a deep breath - possibly their

last. The countdown started. 5-4-3-2-1-BLAST OFF! The rocket shook as its engines spat flames, scorching the dry tarmac. The crowd erupted into cheers, watching the take-off with open eyes as the rocket became airborne -like an unsteady angel - rising into the silvery clouds.'

Ben Trevail, Headteacher

Witney Music Society

In the next of our 2019-20 season of concerts, the acclaimed pianist Clare Hammond will make a welcome return visit to Witney with a recital featuring works by Bach, Myslivecek, Schumann, Szymanowski and Rachmaninov. The recital will be at High Street Methodist Church, Witney at 7.30pm on Friday 13 December.

In January, the Piatti Quartet will be playing string quartets by Haydn, Shostakovich and Beethoven. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 11 January. Tickets (£12, £1 for under 19s) will be available at the door from 7pm or in advance online or in person from Greenway Antiques or Rapture in Witney. For more information please telephone 01993 702296 or visit the Witney Music Society website www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

Woodstock Music Society Winter Concert

Gounod: St Cecilia Mass and Méditation
Fauré: Dolly Suite
Debussy: Marche Écossaise
Helen Lacey, *soprano*; Joseph Buckmaster, *tenor*; Richard Weston, *bass*

Friday 13 and Saturday 14 December 2019
at 7.30pm, St Mary Magdalene Church,
Woodstock.

Clubs & societies

Stonesfield Gardening Club

Our November meeting was a visit from Rob Jacobs who works at Waterperry Gardens, taking us through a typical year of the garden started by Beatrix Havergal in 1932, as a way of getting more women into horticulture.

Now a thriving garden open to visitors which produces much of what it sells in its plant centre and café.

The garden is particularly well known locally for its wonderful display of snowdrops in February followed by the Snake's Head fritillary meadow in April. These are followed by the herbaceous borders during the summer, then the asters and orchard fruits in the autumn. Rob was a delightful speaker, full of anecdotes and with wonderful pictures to show us.

Our December meeting will be our annual social and quiz on 9 December at 7.30 pm.

There will be no meeting in January. Our calendar for 2020 is as follows:

Monday 10th Feb AGM + Wildflowers on the Common – Genny Early

Monday 9th March How to be a 21st Century Gardener – Timothy Walker

Saturday 25th April Plant Sale at Four Acres, Pond Hill 8.30am – 11.30am

Monday 11th May Making great displays in pots – Harriet Rycroft

Monday 8th June Walk – Stonesfield Gardens – Members only – 7.00pm start

Monday 13th July Bridewell Gardens – Richard Woods

Monday 14th Sept Visit – Ashwood Nurseries

Monday 12th Oct Propagation – Rob Jacobs

Monday 9th Nov Wychwood Project – Neil Clennell

Monday 14th Dec Christmas Quiz & membership renewal

Diane Bates, secretary;
diane@bateshome.co.uk
www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Stonesfield Players Pantomime

Friday / Saturday, 7 & 8 February

The Players are pleased to announce that they will be performing *The Wonderful Story of Mother Goose*, a traditional pantomime for all ages. This will take place in the Village Hall on Friday evening and with a matinee and evening performance on Saturday. Tickets, costing £10 for adults and £8 for juniors up to the age of 16, will be available in the village stores in the New Year (details to follow). However, they can be booked online beforehand at andrew.tacon@outlook.com

So practice your boos and hisses, make a date in your diary and get ready to come along for a great deal of fun and laughter.

David Stevenson

1st Stonesfield Scout Group

It's been a busy term for the scout group with plans to demolish the scout hut starting to take shape. The leaders have been emptying it and uncovering photos and memorabilia of scouting through the ages in the village. We are very grateful to Dave Holloway for allowing us to store kit at Callow Farm.

Two patrols from our scout troop took part in the County Patrol Camping Weekend, with one patrol coming third out of over 60 patrols at the Desert Island themed competition. We have welcomed a number of new scouts, both from Cubs as well as from the waiting list, and are now up to a full complement again. Scouts have organised various evening activities by themselves, including a Master Chef evening; we have had an Expedition Challenge skills day at Youlbury and we'll be bag-packing in Sainsbury's to raise money for the scout hut in early December.

Despite not having permanent leaders, Cubs have still managed to run with Beaver and Scout leaders covering a varied programme of activities, including pioneering, a night hike and a visit to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire museum.

Beavers are now back in the hall. They joined Cubs at the museum to learn more about why we observe Remembrance Sunday and have also been learning about Beaver Scouts around the world as well as working on their Health & Fitness challenges.

Come and enjoy the fun and refreshments at our Christmas Bingo night on 6 December at the Village Hall - doors open at 6.30pm, 'eyes down' at 7pm. Donations on the night for the raffle will be gratefully

received, all proceeds from the evening will go towards the new scout hut and equipment for the Scout Group.

Post boxes for senior citizens' Christmas cards will be available from 1 December at Amlu's shop, the Derby & Joan, and Lunch Club as usual. Please ensure that cards are fully addressed with house names and roads, for delivery within the village only, by 16 December.

If you're looking for ways of beating the winter blues, meeting new people and want to make a difference for the young people in our village, then get in touch and we'll find a way for you to help the scout group, whatever your skills or experience! Contact us at info@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk if you or someone you know would like to get involved.

Season's Greetings from 1st Stonesfield Scout Group

Stonesfield Sports & Social Club

Come along to our Christmas Bingo on 5 December - special prizes. On Wednesday the 18th come along and support our local team OXFORD UTD against premier side Manchester City. On the 20th we are holding a Christmas Quiz Night + Meat Draw + Xmas Draw. On the 21st there's a Christmas Jumper Party with Music prize for best male and female jumper. On all events, non-members welcome. Any problems with the above feel free to ring me on 891770.

The Sports & Social Club would like to wish everybody a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Brian Clarke, Sports & Social Club

Stonesfield Over 60s Club

It was good to see so many at our 14 Nov. meeting, just a couple of apologies from some not able to be with us, we hope you will be back next month for our party. As usual we had our pre-Christmas Bingo, thank you to the ladies who shopped for the prizes. Final numbers were taken for the Party and the raffle tickets sold.

There were a few announcements: Please note our December meeting will be 12.30 for 1pm on Election Day 12 Dec. - you could vote first!! We have entertainment booked afterwards. Next year our first meeting is booked for 9 January at the normal time of 2pm.

Tea/Coffee & Cakes were prepared and served by the 'A' Team, as usual our meeting ended with the raffle.

The members would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year & send a Big Thank you to Simon and Jenny.

Stonesfield Folk Dance Club

Anyone fancy some exercise over these dark winter months? Then please come and join us. If the age of some dancers is anything to go by dancing must be good for both brain & body. No partner, then no worry as one of our sociable dancers will

guide you through the moves. Only three nights dancing in December:

4 December - Peter Vallender calling with The Quarry Turners 8–10pm.

11 December – David Sandford calling with The Quarry Turners 8–10pm.

18 December – Stonesfield Christmas Dance with The Donkey House Band 8–10pm.

Did you know the Club is now in its 48th year!

For further information see www.stonesfieldfolkdance.danceorg.uk or on Facebook.

Email stewart.nicholls@virgin.net or phone 01295-730271

North Leigh History Society

3 December: *24 Square Miles* - a film based on a 1943 study by the Agricultural Economic Research. The meeting includes festive refreshments.

Turner Hall, Church Road, North Leigh, OX29 6TX at 7.30 p.m. Visitors £4, Members free. Further details from Diana Power 01993 882301.

Please note, the first meeting we are holding in 2020 will be on 4 Feb as we don't meet in January.

FoSL: Friends of Stonesfield Library

Open to anyone who wants to help keep our village library open. We have been providing voluntary cover for half of the existing library hours (about 6 hours a week) since the library service was cut back.

For further details, or to join us, please contact Tony Scott on 01993 891380, tonyandrachel.scott@virgin.net

Sport

Stonesfield Football Club

It will be no surprise to anyone to learn that this has been one of the wettest Autumns on record, so you'll be less than shocked to discover that our teams have played very few matches this month. Having said that, The Firsts have been involved in two cracking games! In the league they entertained Minster Lovell at home and in a pulsating encounter a goal from Mike Phipps and a double from Raffy Rice saw our boys take full points in a 5-goal thriller. That was a great result, but it got even better when Hardwick Sports from Banbury came calling in the second round of The Oxon Junior Shield. A lacklustre performance in the first half saw our lads a goal down, but oh boy, did they turn it around in the second half! Spurred on by the ever-green Nick Higgs, the irrepressible Jordan Newman and selfless hard work from Carry and Raffy Rice they fought back to send Hardwick crashing out of The Shield. Jordan was the man-of-the-moment as he thundered in a stunning free kick from all of 35 yards, then went one better with a 40-yard pile-driver that had 'goal-of-the-season' written all over it! The fans were jubilant but they had to endure a tense final 10 mins with Hardwick on the front-foot, Mike Phipps sin-binned (tut, tut) and our boys down to 10 men, Jordan and Nick held firm in midfield and denied them the equaliser! If our lads can keep that central midfield pairing together then we could be in for some great games in the coming months.

The Reserves were also called upon to perform heroics in the 1st round of The Jack Busby Memorial Trophy away at their eternal bogey-team, Chadlington Res. In a fantastic encounter, goals from Liam Harris, Luke Burns and Dan Thomas saw our boys record something of a shock in a 3-2 win. If they can keep up that kind of fighting spirit, then the immediate future looks bright!

No real surprise on the Fredo award this month: Jordan Newman's winning strike against Hardwick in The Shield was one of the most memorable goals seen on the field in recent years and good enough to win any game of football. Great to see Nick Higgs and the dynamic Rice brothers having such a great season so far, but the accolade goes to Jordan, step forward that man, The Fredo belongs to you. Christmas time is fast approaching so on behalf of your football club, allow me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope Mr Claus is good to one and all!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

Church news



Anglican Worship in the Parishes of Stonesfield with Combe Longa

Rector: The Revd Roy Turner

The Rectory, Stonesfield, Witney, Oxon, OX29 8PR

Telephone: 01993 898552 – Email: revroystonesfield@hotmail.co.uk

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Stonesfield Churchwardens: Neil Melrose (891566) and Kate Harris (898781) Combe

Longa Churchwarden: Andrew Hobson (891273)

BCP=Book of Common Prayer: CW=Common Worship

For pastoral help please contact the Rector



7) *Practise caution.* Within little more than a decade we will have had two thousand years of Christianity, a fact that should encourage every

From your Parish Priest

I hope you are all getting ready for the great day and our Christmas celebrations. We have all sorts of opportunities to get ready through our Advent offerings both at Stonesfield and at Combe. Do please check out our services and quiet reflective meetings to get ready for what does amount to a very busy time on the 25th. Last month I shared with you an abridged version of dear Canon J. John's suggestions of how to get ready and prepare our faith for this coming month. I shared with you the first five; now here are the second five for us all to consider.

6) *Practise self-examination.* Paul, writing to Timothy, says, 'Watch your life and doctrine closely' (1 Timothy 4:16). It's a wise, if often overlooked, practice to keep checking on how you are doing. Losing your faith is like finding you have a flat tyre. It may be because of some sudden dramatic puncture but, more likely than not, it's due to a slow, steady and unnoticed leak. Don't store up your doubts or problems: find someone who can wisely guide you out of them.

believer to stay firm in the faith: what we believe has been tried and tested over a very long time. This means that almost every new idea will, almost certainly, have been tested and tried in the past. As a first principle, the maxim 'If it's new, it's not true; if it's true, it's not new' has much to commend it. 'Historic' or 'mainstream' Christianity has survived precisely because, over centuries, it has been proven to provide safe and wholesome pastures for God's flock.

8) *Practise humility.* Pride is one of the subtlest and most powerful evils and is often a major factor with those who leave the faith. Be very wary of any sense of superiority; of seeing yourself as better than other people, more educated, more at home in the culture. In 1 Corinthians 10:12 we read, 'So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!' Use every opportunity to serve, and where it is at all reasonable, count others as better than you.

9) *Practise honesty.* In reading what some of the more outspoken ex-believers have said, I have come across reasons but, more commonly, excuses disguised as reasons.

So, for instance, although many of them talk about being 'disillusioned by the church', often what they are referring to is a specific branch of Christianity, a specific local church or even particular individuals. It's dishonest and unwise to turn away from all that Christianity is, on specific events and individuals!

10) *Practise solidarity.* One of the most successful innovations of the Roman army was the way that its soldiers had shields which could interlock in order to create an

almost impenetrable barrier. There is a great wisdom in this standing together. Pray for others and be prayed for by them.

Finally, ultimately, practise *perspective*. This life is short and eternity is very long. Jesus asks that his followers stand firm in their faith not for ever, but only until he comes to us, or we go to him. And that may be sooner than any of us think. *Stand firm!*

Have a great and harmonious Christmas every one and God bless, and of course D.F.T.W.

Services for December:

Sunday 1 December [Advent Sunday]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe Longa	All Age Worship - Christingle
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship

Sunday 8 December [Second Sunday of Advent]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe Longa	Matins [BCP/sung]
1am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion [CW/sung]

Sunday 15 December [Third Sunday of Advent]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
19.30am	Combe Longa	Parish Communion [CW/sung]
11am	Stonesfield	Communion Service for all ages

Sunday 22 December [Fourth Sunday of Advent]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe Longa	Parish Communion [CW/said]
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion [CW/sung]
3pm	Combe Longa	Village Carol Service
6pm	Stonesfield	Village Carol Service

Christmas Eve: Tuesday 24 December

3.30pm	Stonesfield	Crib Service – for all the family
10pm	Combe Longa	Midnight Holy Communion
10pm	Stonesfield	Midnight Holy Communion

Christmas Day: Wednesday 25 December

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe Longa	Family Service with Holy Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Family Service with Holy Communion

Sunday 29 December [First Sunday of Christmas]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
10am	Stonesfield	United Benefice Communion [CW/sung]

Services for January:

Sunday 5 January [Epiphany]

8am Stonesfield
9.30am Combe
11am Stonesfield

Holy Communion [BCP/said]
All Age Worship
All Age Worship

Sunday 12 January [Epiphany 1]

8am Stonesfield
9.30am Combe Longa
11am Stonesfield

Holy Communion [BCP/said]
Parish Communion [CW/sung]
Parish Communion [CW/sung]

Sunday 19 January [Epiphany 2]

8am Stonesfield
9.30am Combe Longa
11am Stonesfield

Holy Communion [CW/sung]
Parish Communion [CW/sung]
Communion Service for all ages

Sunday 26 January [Epiphany 3]

8am Stonesfield
9.30am Combe
11am Stonesfield
6pm Combe Longa

Holy Communion [BCP/said]
Parish Communion [BCP/said]
Parish Communion [CW/sung]
Evensong

Sunday 2 February [Candlemas]

8am Stonesfield
9.30am Combe Longa
11am Stonesfield

Holy Communion [BCP/said]
All Age Worship
All Age Worship

Mid-week Communion Service [said]

Wednesdays 9.30am at Stonesfield. Everyone is most welcome.

There will be an opportunity at the Carol Service on Sunday 22 December to donate to The Porch, a charity helping the homeless in Oxford.

At the Crib Service, children often like to place a gift under the Christmas tree - we would be grateful if this could be a gift of money for the Children's Society, instead of a toy. It would be fun if children wrapped up a parcel of money to look like a present! Thank you.

Rev Roy

.....

Roman Catholic Worship

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Why did those angels sing so? Because they were rejoicing for humankind about that momentous event that changed and still changes the course of our global history. After two thousand years, the rejoicing, celebration and causes to sing aloud have not dimmed or changed. The churches might be emptier, people more cynical and Christmas itself more commercialised than ever before, but we can still find gladness in our hearts at the birth of that baby boy to that young woman.

Luke tells us (Luke 2,6:14)

'Now it happened that, while they were there, the time came for her to have her child, ⁷ and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the living-space.

⁸ In the countryside close by there were shepherds out in the fields keeping guard over their sheep during the watches of the night.

⁹ An angel of the Lord stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Look, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.

¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

¹² And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'

¹³ And all at once with the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favours.'

In our confusing, complicated world, this one simple fact of this birth can still make significant differences to our lives and those around us, by listening to His words and reflecting on His life and how He died to save us.

Fr Tony Joyce can be contacted on holytrinityrcchippy@gmail.com or telephone (01608 642703)

For Parish Updates and any further information, www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/ or contact Clive Dytor chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

Xmas Service Times at St Teresa's

15 December	3pm	Carol Service
24 December	8.30pm	Mass of Christmas Night with carols
25 December	9.15am	Mass of Christmas Day

For times of confession: see the weekly newsletter on: stteresaschurch-charlbury.com

Mass Times

SUNDAYS

St Teresa's, Charlbury: 9.15am

St Kenelm's, Enstone: 9am, second Sunday of every month

WEEKDAYS

St Teresa's, Charlbury: 9.30am, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, preceded by Morning Prayers at 9.15am.

CONFESSION: Confessions will be at 10am after morning Mass on Saturdays, and on request.

Stonesfield Methodist Church

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

Sun 1	11am	The Reverend Rose Westwood Holy Communion
Sun 8	11am	David Sarbutts
Sun 15	11am	Jude Levermore
Sun 22	3pm	The Reverend Rose Westwood Carol Service
Sun 29	10.30am	Service at High St. Methodist Church, Witney. No Service at Stonesfield

SERVICES FOR JANUARY

Sun 5	11am	Andrew Maisey
Sun 12	11am	The Reverend Rose Westwood
Covenant Service		
Sun 19	11am	Penny Fowler
Sun 26	11am	Rachael Prince

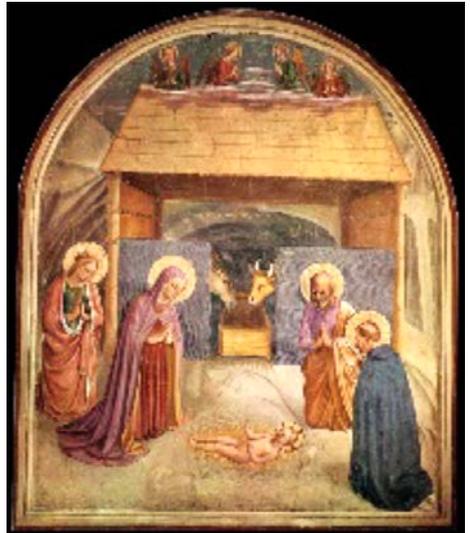
New Church thought

The verse below is not specifically a New Church thought, but it seems relevant as the country goes to vote in a General Election: where is the ultimate seat of government?

‘For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.’ *Isaiah 9:6*

Wishing you a peaceful and contented Christmas season.

Dale Morris



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Line ads can also be delivered by hand to Diane & Paul Bates, Waterloo Barn, Laughton Hill, Stonesfield, OX29 8DY.

All advertisements must be paid for in advance.

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Please contact me with any further enquiries or questions on my phone/email. I look forward to meeting you!

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