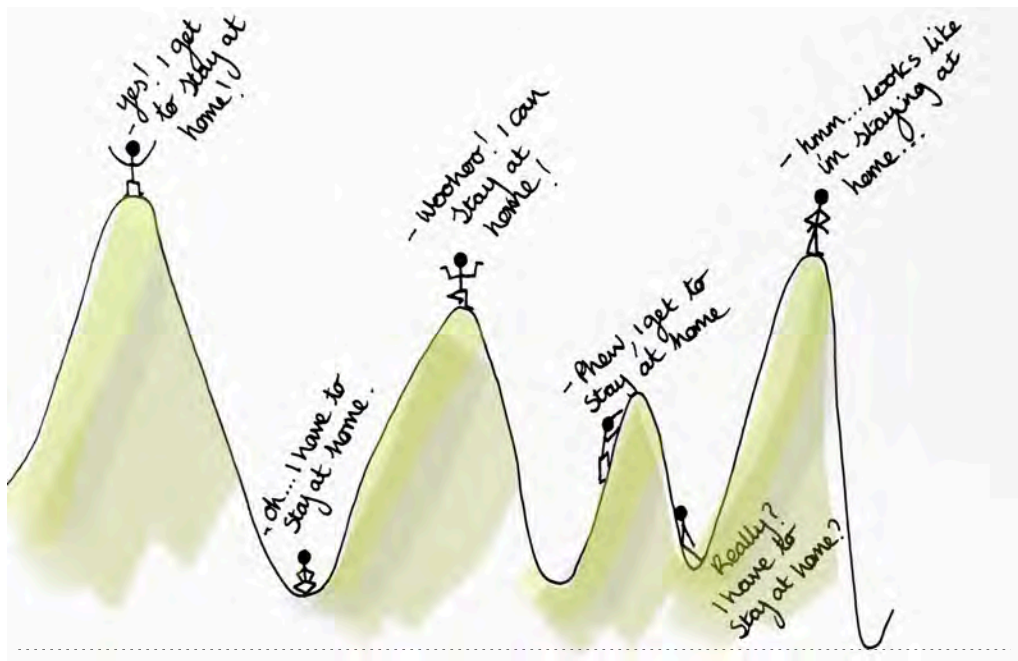




Issue No 502 May 2020



## The Slate in difficult times

We would like to thank the *Slate* delivery team, who have been joined by some new volunteers, without whom this edition would not have reached you. Our thanks also to Windrush Press for working in these difficult times and printing the *Slate* as usual. However without the amazing contributors there would have been nothing to fill this issue, so a big thanks to them as well.

As would be expected this issue contains more advice and useful contacts to deal with the issues created by Covid-19. There are also many items expressing appreciation for help that has already been given.

Clearly sports, clubs, schools and cultural events have had their activities restricted but many have gone 'online' to keep people engaged. An example is Oxford Art Weeks which will be entirely digital in May 2020. There is also good news from Stonesfield Pre-School, Stonesfield Primary School and others to cheer us all up.

We have also included new items such as a children's story, writing challenge (supported by Stonesfield Primary School), crossword and more.

We hope you continue to find the *Slate* both useful and entertaining.

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## Important note

In view of the current Coronavirus COVID-19 advice, any events are liable to change or cancellation. We strongly suggest you check with the organisers of all events.

For this reason we have not included a diary in May's *Slate*. The diary will return when restrictions on gatherings have been lifted.

The information on Covid-19 was up to date at time of printing but is liable to change. Please follow the latest government advice, available on [www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)

For more links to useful phone numbers / websites about Covid-19 and how to look after yourself and the community go to [www.stonesfield.online](http://www.stonesfield.online)

## Support local businesses

The *Slate* is funded by the advertisers you find on these pages. To ensure they keep going you are asked to support them where possible. As well as ensuring we have a thriving community you will be helping continuation of *The Stonesfield Slate*

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## 24/7 mental health helpline

This makes it quicker and easier for people in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire to get the right advice they need for their mental health.

For adults

01865 904 997

For children and young people

01865 904 998

## Other useful numbers

West Oxfordshire District Council:	01993 861000
Oxfordshire County Council:	01865 792422
Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire:	03444 111 444
Age UK Oxon Free Telephone Support:	01865 411288
Witney and West Oxfordshire Foodbank:	01993 890000
Volunteer Link-Up:	01993 776277
Samaritans:	116 123
Talking Space:	01865 901222
Mind UK:	01865 247788
Shelter:	0808 800 4444
Debt Advice (Stepchange):	0800 138 1111
Crime Stoppers:	0800 555 111
Action Fraud:	0300 123 2040

**Find more information at [www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/](http://www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/)**

If you think you have a neighbour who might want help, then fill in and cut out the card below. Then pop it through their letterbox

**HELLO!** If you are self-isolating, I can help.

**My name is**

.....

**I live locally at**

.....

**My phone number is**

.....

**If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping   | <input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies |

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

**Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.**

**#ViralKindness**



## Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home
- Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.



- Don't be pushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- Only purchase goods and services from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious for request for money up front.
- If someone pressurises you into accepting a service, they are unlikely to be genuine.
- If you are unsure, check with friends and family before accepting offers of help.

# Coronavirus updates

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## **Kindness is contagious too**

Stonesfield Mutual Aid is our community group that has been set up to help Stonesfield residents in need during the Covid-19 outbreak. We recognise that everyone is at risk of being affected by this pandemic, but that a pandemic doesn't hit everyone equally. That's why we're organising to support the most vulnerable, including the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions or anyone in urgent financial need during the outbreak.

We can help by assisting with shopping errands, collecting prescriptions, information distribution or checking in with regular phone calls. We can also provide access to foodbanks. Nobody should go hungry at this time. To support this we are raising funds via Just Giving where all funds raised will go directly to the residents who need it most.

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/david-baldwin-3?utm\\_term=B5WxjbyEVe](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/david-baldwin-3?utm_term=B5WxjbyEVe)

Thank you to all of those who have already donated and to Stonesfield Parish Council for their grant.

We have made an arrangement with the Co-op in Long Hanborough to take orders and payment by telephone for those who are vulnerable, elderly or self-isolating and which can then be collected by volunteers. Please contact Kate Harris for details of how to register for this service.

Kate is also able to provide details of other suppliers (for example greengrocers, butchers, wine cellars, providers of ready meals, tea and coffee merchants) many of whom will deliver.

Please ask if you need help in complete confidence. We will find a way to support you.

For help, contact any of us in complete confidence: Sharon Acum (07766 424088), Deanna Asplundh (07956 905610), David Baldwin (07957 497513), Kate Harris (898781) and Kate Maroney (898235) or join our Facebook group (search for Stonesfield Mutual Aid.)

## **STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME**

As you know, we have had to suspend our service of voluntary transport to medical appointments because of the Government requirements for social distancing and to protect both our clients and our drivers.

**However, if you are in need of transport for medical reasons and are unable to find this from your own household, there are one or two other possibilities that may be able to help.**

**For further information please phone Viv Kendall on 01993 891803.**

# Notices & news

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## Simon Haviland

A thoughtful, gentle gentleman, Simon Haviland will be missed by many, now that he has 'put his hand into the Hand of God, ... [and been] led towards the hills and the breaking of day.' (From his funeral order of service – part of a verse by M.L.Haskins.) Simon died at the end of March, just four days short of his 85th birthday.

Simon knew about words. He had worked in publishing for Phaidon Press, and took the skills of editing, designing and publishing into his retirement. He had two small printing presses on which he made special cards for friends, posters, leaflets etc., and every December he and Jenny printed their own Christmas cards. Stonesfield Press (i.e. Simon) published a few books, including *Oxfordshire Churches* for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust in 2000.

Simon was a quiet stalwart of St James' Church in the village. For his funeral, a friend created a large shepherd's crook of white blossoms on the ground of the cemetery – a tribute, surely, to his faith and service. He and Jenny were bell ringers for many years, and Simon spearheaded the bell restoration appeal in 1997. Each autumn, he encouraged villagers to take part in the 'Ride & Stride' campaign in support of the Historic Churches Trust.

When the village millennium project – *Stonesfield: from slates to chips* – took shape, Simon took on the lead role of

editing / proofreading the final text. Later, the Havilands were publishers of the *Stonesfield Slate* for nearly 15 years. Simon was a calm and level-headed back-up for the occasional difficult issues that arose, yet always worked as a team member, seeking consensus on final decisions. Years ago, he also served as a Parish Councillor.

When seeing Simon and Jenny out walking their little dogs, we've always enjoyed chatting for a moment or two. Now it will just be Jenny and one dog, but Simon will be with us in spirit. He has been an inspiration for how to be a good person.

Dale Morris

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## Leigh Edgeler

On behalf of Leigh's whole family, I would like to express our huge thanks for the immense kindness given to us since Leigh was tragically taken from us in February. The community of Stonesfield has always been close to Leigh's family's hearts and seldom more so than at Leigh's funeral and wake on 27 February when so many of you came to pay your respects. Our family's association with the village started in the late 1960's when Leigh was born, the same year her parents Fred and Joan took over running the Black Head public house.

In May 1970 my own branch of the family, headed by my mum and dad, Rene and Ted Edgeler, had the pleasure of running the Black Head for a fortnight so Fred, Joan and baby Leigh could go on holiday. This was the start of several similar happy stays

over the years running the Black Head and helping run the bar at Village Hall functions.

Leigh's legacy is that she will be remembered for her happy, enthusiastic, energetic and bubbly personality. Her interests were too many to list here and I know everyone who knew Leigh will have fond memories to keep forever. Thank you so much for all your kindness.

Charlie Edgeler

8 February 2020 was a very sad day for me and I believe also a large number of the residents of Stonesfield. Leigh grew up happily in Stonesfield surrounded by her parents, friends and cousins, Edward, Elizabeth, Charlie and Peter who were regular visitors and indeed helped look after the Black Head public house and the Village Hall when functions were held there.

As Leigh grew up she had a very successful academic career and interests in horse-riding and breeding and judging boxer dogs. Leigh was my half-sister as we had the same father. Although we did speak once in about 1990, we never met due to family circumstances.

When I heard about Leigh's passing it took quite a while to sink in but when we arrived at the crematorium and it dawned on me that all of the 200+ people were there to remember Leigh, any doubts that I had about her life were rapidly dispelled. She clearly had many friends to whom she meant a great deal and she had obviously had a very happy life in Stonesfield.

I was rather bewildered by the number of people who came up to speak to me about Leigh at the wake, especially when I

realised that I was probably the only person there who had never met her.

I just want to thank firstly, Ted, Elizabeth, Charlie and Peter and their families who made the arrangements for her farewell and to you, all her friends and acquaintances, for making her such an important part of your lives and I look forward to seeing some of you again when the current crisis is over. Thank you everyone

Ian Edgeler

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### **A note of appreciation to our village shop**

On behalf of many in Stonesfield, I would like to thank Rekha and Matt for their heroic efforts with regard to running the village shop.

The shop remains open keeping to its normal hours at this difficult time and their service, along with that of their occasional helpers, is always friendly, welcoming and carried out with good humour; they all work so hard. In recent weeks Matt has frequently had to 'scour the land' to find supplies – normally readily available but swept away by excessive demand - in order to keep the shelves well-stocked.

On top of that, young Suriya being out of school at present is champing at the bit for friends and fun, and the tiny twins are making the usual demands of newborn babies.

Stonesfield is very fortunate to have this lovely family in its midst offering such a great service.

Lorna

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## Toads on the Roads, Fawler, Spring 2020

This year's patrol started on 8 March when the toads were stirred by the full moon and wet, warm weather. We helped 89 in the first week and 50 in the second. After that, the weather changed to being cold and dry, conditions which the toads dislike so the efforts of our volunteers were not needed. We expected to be busy again around the next full moon period of 8 April but lockdown came and we were instructed to pack up our torches and buckets.

Although we saved only 140 toads this year compared to over 200 last, the lack of squashed toads on the road has given us hope that more reached their breeding pond safely.

As always the efforts of the volunteers are hugely appreciated and a special mention goes to Viv from Finstock who used her car as a bucket on more than one occasion!

Hilary Stacey

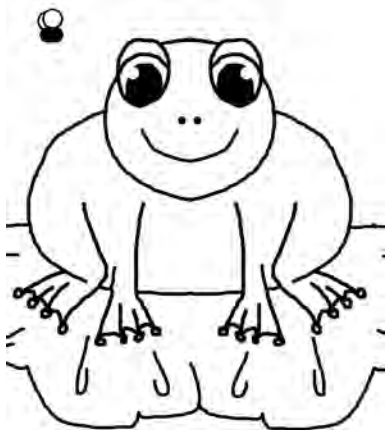
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## Belated thanks from HBH Hairdressing

I am sorry there has been such a long delay due to professional obligations but I can now write to say how grateful I am for the incredible support I have received since deciding to become freelance. Also, thank you to all the people that I wasn't able to see before my departure - apologies for this but factors outside my control prevented me from being able to do so. To everyone who approached me in the street, flagged down my car, put notes through my door or emailed my husband's company, and to all the new clients I have met, the support has been amazing.

I appreciate your continued and much valued support as we navigate through this difficult time. Keep safe and well and I will see you on the other side. With best wishes.

Cheryl Hitchcox (07884 412534)  
HBH Hairdressing





# Politics & local affairs

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## **From our District Councillor, West Oxfordshire District Council**

Although I can remember most of the traumatic events (exciting for a young boy) and the hardships of the Second World War and, indeed, the occasional crises since, none of them compare with the current situation here and world-wide. The curtailment of our freedoms of liberty, work and pleasure are truly unprecedented. However, this is where we are and we must grin and bear it with as much tolerance and good humour as we can muster, trusting and praying that neither we nor our loved ones, friends and neighbours succumb to this dreadful new virus.

The duties and responsibilities of the District Council are being fulfilled with as much expertise and professionalism as ever, even with a somewhat depleted staff. All essential services are covered and the facilities emanating from WODC are being maintained. Meetings, as we know them, have been suspended for the duration, but virtual meetings are proceeding so that officers can keep in touch with their departments. Hopefully, to the residents of West Oxfordshire, little has changed and local government carries on unabated.

I and all my colleagues and friends on the Council wish all our residents all the very best and hope that you are all keeping safe and well, albeit staying at home.

It seems very strange to me, on a personal level, to be writing in this vein. I fully expected to be taking my leave of you all this month as your District Councillor, having completed my term of office. But, as you will know, all elections at all levels have been postponed until 2021 so I shall remain in post until then. In the interim, I must thank so many of you for making my years 'on the District' so full of interest and opportunity – opportunity to alleviate some of your concerns and difficulties. It has been and will continue to be for another year, a privilege and a pleasure to serve you all.

Stay well, stay safe and look to the future with hope and confidence.

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

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## **Other advice from WODC**

ASDA's 'bring site' in Carterton: WODC advises that ASDA have closed their 'bring site' at Carterton due to the increased volumes of fly-tipping during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Closure of front desks: WODC advises that front desks at its offices are now closed. Advice and support is available at [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk) or Customer Services on 01993 861000.

Business Grants Awards process: WODC advise that the Council is making every effort to process applications quickly. If the Council got in touch with you because your business is eligible for a grant and you

responded before 3 April but have not yet received a payment, please call 01993 861070 for an update on the progress of your application.

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### **From our County Councillor**

These are unprecedented times: we all need to take care and follow the latest Government advice. Staff at the County Council are working flat out as we cannot simply close down or ask everybody to work from home; we are there to support and protect Oxfordshire's residents, particularly the vulnerable. We are prioritising our work and where possible staff are working from home. There are some areas that will see an increase in demand at a time when some of our staff will become ill with the virus. There will be some changes as we have to prioritise our work to key areas.

The main area of work in Social Care, both adult and children's, has to continue on a 24/7 basis protecting around 7,000 residents. We expect the number of people requiring care to increase as informal carers become ill and are unable to continue care. This work is vital as it's important we keep as many people as possible out of hospital.

We are working closely with the NHS to provide care and facilities for those patients who do not require acute care to be cared for away from hospitals or at home, freeing up beds for those that most need them. This includes the group that we need to shield from the virus who are thought to be most at risk across the county.

The Government are shielding approximately 1.5 million extremely vulnerable people across the country - full

details can be found on the website: Extremely vulnerable.

Currently those people identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable will be contacted by the NHS by letter, email and/or text to say that they need to isolate themselves at home for the next 12 weeks. They will be asked if they have any help to collect prescriptions and food; this service may be supplied by one of the brilliant local groups that have been set up. If they have no help then they will be told to contact the Council who will arrange a contact who may come from one of the local groups. As you will see from the document, these are certain groups within the population but there may be others who need help such as those in self-isolation which is where the volunteers will help. If somebody thinks they should be on the list but have not been contacted by Sunday 29 March, then they should contact their GP or hospital clinician.

To assist in the logistics across the country, there are Local Resilience Forums in the Thames Valley based around the police authority area. These are where the blue light services link in with the NHS and local authorities to consider the high-level strategy. These then delegate down to the County to work with WODC and other Districts to coordinate the local hubs. The Government have seconded military planners to assist in the hubs, which is where the local community groups come in to the local networks. This is about working together to ensure that we do not duplicate provision or, even worse, miss a vulnerable resident.

The organic growth of the community networks or hubs that are being set up is fantastic. These groups are providing some

excellent services to local residents who are self-isolating or do not have relatives locally. It's important that they are community-led but we need to avoid duplication, so the County Council and Districts are working with Oxfordshire Volunteers to list them all and provide support where needed. If you are approached by people wishing to volunteer, they can register at: [www.oxonvolunteers.org/vk/volunteers/index.htm](http://www.oxonvolunteers.org/vk/volunteers/index.htm)

Unfortunately, there are some cases of people taking advantage of vulnerable residents so Trading Standards are working with the Police to monitor the situation and will take action should there be a need. Should you become aware of anything, please do not hesitate to contact me.

This is a very fast-moving situation so please use the OCC, NHS and Government websites for the latest information.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the residents who continue to work to help us get through this difficult time. Above all please take care, stay safe and follow the advice.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth (07956 270318)  
[ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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## **Other advice in West Oxfordshire**

### **Citizens Advice**

Citizens Advice is converting their face-to-face advice service to assisting over the telephone and they have also created a new email advice service. To seek advice online, please visit: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/coronavirus) in the first instance. If your

enquiry cannot be answered via the website, please telephone 0300 330 9049.

## **Witney and West Oxfordshire Foodbanks**

The Witney foodbank is situated at Cottsway House, Heynes Place, Avenue Two, Witney OX28 4YG and is open Monday-Friday 10am-12noon. Foodbanks also operate in Charlbury and Woodstock. Please visit [info@witney.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@witney.foodbank.org.uk) or telephone 890000 for more information.

## **Climate Action Group**

Consultation for Transport & Connectivity: Oxfordshire residents are invited to join in an engagement activity as the initial part of the consultation for the new Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan. This can be done via a survey which will close on 17 May:

[www.consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/ltcp.engagement/respondByQuestionnaire](http://www.consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/ltcp.engagement/respondByQuestionnaire)

Oxfordshire Friends of the Earth are also setting up an online discussion group. To feed in to this email [climate@oxfoe.co.uk](mailto:climate@oxfoe.co.uk) with 'transport plan' in the subject line.

'Tiny forest' planted in Witney: A 'tiny forest' – said to be the first of its kind in the UK – is being planted in a bid to tackle urban wildlife loss. 600 native trees will fill a 200sqm plot – about the size of a tennis court. The small, fast-growing and dense forest will mimic woodland. It is being planted by environmental charity Earthwatch and Witney Town Council. The charity also has plans underway to create another mini-forest in Oxford.

# Education, culture & more

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## **Stonesfield Pre-school**

We are delighted to let everyone know that our village pre-school will continue to open its doors, we will not be closing indefinitely and our young children and families will have a warm and nurturing pre-school to return to, offering a welcoming familiarity after the Coronavirus restrictions are gradually lifted.

All the staff and committee of Stonesfield Pre-school would like to shout out a huge heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated via our Just Giving campaign to help save the pre-school which has been offering care and education to the early years children of Stonesfield and beyond since 1968. A total of £4,200 was raised in just ten days which is incredible considering we are in the depth of a worldwide crisis which is having a great impact on everyone's daily lives. Your generous donations have exceeded all our expectations. The messages of support and comments posted on our Just Giving page from members of the community, including past, present and future parents, demonstrated to us the strength of feeling for the future survival of the pre-school.

We have also received two substantial monetary donations from village families for which we are enormously grateful. All the donations we have received will help to lay down secure foundations, cementing the pre-school's future for many years to come.

We look forward to getting back to some type of normality in the not-too-distant future and one of our aims will be to offer support to the community by bringing families together through fun events, for example at Christmas time if possible. We are also looking at ways we can reach out to families during and after the crisis in which we all find ourselves. We will continue to keep you updated.

Please contact the pre-school via email at [stonesfieldps@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldps@outlook.com) if you are interested in registering your child with us. We have places available for children aged 2 to 4 years. You may be entitled to government funded childcare, details of which can be found at: [www.workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/free-childcare-for-children-aged-two-three-and-four/](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/free-childcare-for-children-aged-two-three-and-four/)

Lizzie Wharton (Manager) and Simon Hopkins (Chairperson) on behalf of the staff and committee of Stonesfield Pre-school

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## **Stonesfield Primary School**

Under normal circumstances our school summer term would be in full swing. Summer term when the school truly comes alive: May Day dancing, Sports Week, trips and fun days, and of course preparing to move up to the next class or moving on to Marlborough. Of course, our current circumstances have thrown all school routines up in the air. Back in March, within the space of 48 hours we closed the school for the majority of pupils, including sad and surreal goodbyes, not knowing

when our children would return. Would we see our Year 6 pupils again before they transfer to Marlborough? By the following Monday, following government guidance, we effectively reopened as a childcare facility to allow our parents who are critical workers to continue with their jobs and support the country's efforts in tackling Covid-19.

Over the last twelve months the school staff have been working hard to develop a strong vision and purpose for the school. In challenging times this vision could have been ripped up and rendered obsolete. However I feel that the challenges we have faced has cemented our core purpose as a school: mental health, welfare and wellbeing of our pupils and staff should always be our number one priority. We understand the anxiety caused by Covid-19. We understand the stresses and strains currently on families: juggling work commitments and home schooling while also being full-time parents. Children need love from their parents during these anxious times: expecting parents to be teachers too is unrealistic and changes the family dynamic. So in many ways the national curriculum is on hold but I believe children will learn so much during this lockdown. We've been keeping in touch with children online through Google Classroom and it's been a pleasure to see children sharing their creative and imaginative endeavours. Our teachers have been incredible throughout the last six weeks, adapting as their role has changed significantly: sending positive messages home, reassuring children, getting to grips with Google Classroom, and putting themselves at risk to keep the school open [we have a rota of 2 staff in at a time].

Speaking as a parent myself, I hope we don't look back on this time with regret. Challenges bring opportunities and this has been an opportunity to reconnect, create wonderful memories with our children and families and support our local community. I do hope Stonesfield School can reopen before the summer but myself and governors will have to be 100% satisfied that it will be safe for our children and staff to do so.

Ben Trevail, Headteacher

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### Stonesfield Library

Although the Library is closed until further notice, the Friends of Stonesfield Library received this message from James Hazelwood, Senior Officer of Oxford Library Services: 'Be assured no customers will incur overdue fines during this closure - and any outstanding reservations will be rolled over. We should be grateful if you would share this information via any local networks you have, as we are receiving a large volume of calls from concerned borrowers. Please follow us (Oxfordshire Libraries) on Facebook and/or Twitter for updates.'

.....

### North Leigh Roman Villa

English Heritage's volunteer group is pleased to announce that the Roman mosaics at North Leigh Roman Villa will shortly be open to the public for the first time in nearly 30 years. At the time of writing, it is planned to open on the second weekend of every month between May and September. However, please note that these arrangements may be subject to change depending on restrictions with regard to Covid-19.

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## Oxfordshire Art Weeks

Oxfordshire Art Weeks is still taking place in May! From 2-25 May you can enjoy the festival online with virtual exhibitions, live video-streaming and online sales. Visit [www.artweeks.com](http://www.artweeks.com) and enter the 'Galleries' to see work from painters, potters, silversmiths, textile and glass artists, furniture makers and more. Stonesfield artists Claire Fyfe-Jackson, Jenny Lines, Rachael and Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson, Kerry and Sonja Burniston are among those showing and selling their work. Enjoy!

Sonja Burniston  
[sonjburnie@gmail.com](mailto:sonjburnie@gmail.com)



Sonja Burniston preparing ink for a Screen Print

### Jewellery from Claire Fyfe-Jackson



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## Once upon a time in a Pub: Black Head, Church Street

The Black Boy burnt down c. 1850 when it was in the care of Thomas Stewart and was rebuilt as the Black Head, the name it retained until closure in 2010.

In November 1865 the Stonesfield Friendly Society celebrated their centenary with the church bells ringing and bands playing in the street. In the afternoon Mrs. Sarah Davis, the landlady, provided an excellent repast, and she was highly complimented. The evening was spent with speeches, music and song, until the celebrations ended at about 8pm. The Society was said to be in a prosperous state and had 130 members.

Many activities took place in the Black Head. Auctions were held on a regular basis.

In May 1878 the Black Head itself was for sale by auction, with the adjoining cottage. Inquests were another common activity. A very sad one was held in the Black Head in September 1905. Thomas Dore, aged 33, committed suicide by hanging. His employer, Mr. Collier, had just sacked him from his job as a gardener without reason. The verdict was hanged himself while of unsound mind.

The Black Head in the twenty-first century had an unlikely owner, the Nomura Bank of Japan, which owned the Wellington Pub Company. The pub was a free house, offering, amongst other things, four real ales. Bob Hamerton, the licensee, kept the ales in such good condition that the pub gained an entry in the Good Beer Guide in 1999 and 2001. The entry read: 'Two-bar pub: the front bar is the larger, with pool table and darts, while the back bar is

quieter and more cosy. A busy, friendly pub, it offers guest beers not usually available locally, and is a rare outlet for beers from the nearby Wychwood Brewery.'

Thomas Stewart is the first landlord I have found. He was at the Black Boy from 1840 – 1850. Strangely about the time the pub burnt down! He died in 1851. John Hunt was mine host from 1868 – 1881. Alfred Victor Barnes from 1930 until 1952. Fred and Joan Edgeler from 1969 until 1985 and the last landlords were Chris and Karen Bannister from 2008 until the pub close in 2010.

More information about the pubs of Stonesfield may be found  
[www.stonesfield.online/stonesfield-life/](http://www.stonesfield.online/stonesfield-life/)

Douglas Rudlin

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## Sharing Stonesfield history

Douglas' article is the first in an occasional series of articles on Stonesfield history.

We would like as many contributors to this series as possible.

Are you able to contribute?

Does your house have an interesting story?

Do you have some Stonesfield history to share?

If so please send in an article to the Editor using **[slate@stonesfield.online](mailto:slate@stonesfield.online)** or place it in an envelope (marked clearly Stonesfield Slate) and leave at the shop.

Slate Editor

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## Silver Linings

Write something hopeful, they say,  
so in these strange and unprecedented  
times

I search for hope and meaning, finding it  
in unexpected places, like dusty china  
at the back of an unfrequented cupboard.

It is in the beauty of friends' faces  
carried on digital airwaves, as different  
from a text message as TV to radio;  
it is in the slow planting of carrots;  
in contemplating seedlings unfurl  
with their promise of colour and scent  
or rich harvests in due time;  
in the intensity of coffee  
when it is in short supply;  
in the quiet roads, where it is safe to walk  
and the distance between neighbours  
is spanned by the warmth of our greetings.

I am learning the art of community,  
sharing in the village #ClapForCarers  
under a clear sky with Orion winking back,  
and understanding the gifts  
of giving and receiving.

Romola Parish

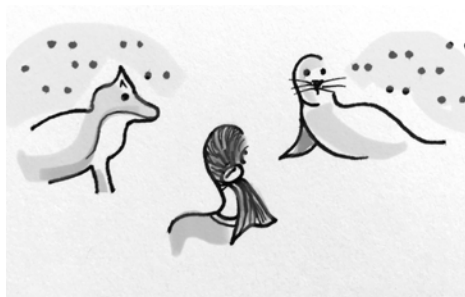
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## 'The classroom of snow and ice'

Mrs McKilser reached above me and  
pushed the door open. "Go on in and sit  
with the Transitions," she said. "I'll be  
there in a minute."

My eyes blurred as I stepped through the  
doorway of my new classroom. The door  
had shut heavily behind me before I saw  
that this didn't look like a classroom.  
Where were the chairs and tables, and the  
other children? I stared around. What? I

seemed to be standing on a huge sweep of  
ice in an arctic desert. Just ahead of me  
(although it seemed very far away) there  
were two piles of snow, which looked as if  
they were covered in black pips. As I  
looked at them, I saw that the pips were  
pairs of eyes. There on the pile to the left  
were sitting rows of spiteful-looking arctic  
foxes! On the pile to the right, were those  
baby seals?



I had no idea what was happening, but I  
knew I had to sit down before Mrs  
McKilser came back. Which were the  
Transitions, though: foxes or seals? I took  
one step towards the foxes and my heel slid  
away from me on the ice. The foxes  
scratched their claws on the ice with glee as  
I staggered about. I slithered the rest of  
the way over. Just as I got there, one of  
them pushed itself up on its forelegs:

"You can't sit here. You're a Kindergarten.  
Go and sit on the Kindy mat!" I went red  
and wobbled off to join the seals.

Mrs McKilser came in as I sat down. It was  
strange, but where she was walking, the  
snow started to melt. A green floor started  
to appear. I could smell crayons and  
disinfectant. Then she stopped.

"Georgina! What are you doing over there  
with the Kindergarten? I told you to sit  
with the Transitions!"



My eyes blurred and it was all ice again. I seesawed up to my feet, took a step, and slipped again. Waving my arms, sliding about, I started to do that big breathing that you do when you're going to cry. No! I screwed up my brain and remembered the last squeeze my Dad had given my hand this morning before he left me in the school office. That did it. Somehow I righted myself and skidded over to sit down with the foxes just as Mrs McKilser started to take the register.

As she called out their names, the foxes and the seals became two groups of children, sitting on two separate carpets. As she explained what we were doing that morning, the ice and snow melted. I saw that we were in an ordinary classroom, with walls covered in pictures and tables with pots of pencils on. There were still lumps of snow thawing in the corners and a few pairs of mean foxy eyes looking at me. But by the time I pushed the door open and came back in after break, there was just a normal classroom waiting for me, and I knew which carpet I belonged on.

Georgie Steele

### Writing challenge.

Has Georgie's story inspired you to become a writer? Here is an opportunity to see your story in print.

We are looking for more stories to print in the *Slate* over the coming months. The writers of stories printed will receive a book token as a thank you. **There are three categories.**

Up to Year 2:	200 word limit
Year 3-6:	500 word limit
Years 7-13:	500 word limit

### The topic of your story should be 'Discovery in Stonesfield'.

Stonesfield has an amazing history of exciting discoveries. In 1824 William Buckland announced the incredible discovery of fossil bones of a giant reptile which he named *Megalosaurus* ('great lizard'). A dinosaur had been discovered in Stonesfield! Over one hundred years before that, on 25 January 1712, a farmer called George Handes was ploughing his field when he discovered an elaborate mosaic pavement. Roman remains had been discovered in Stonesfield!

During these difficult times we are all enjoying our daily walk and enjoying the sunshine. Imagine while you are walking around Stonesfield you make a discovery. Where are you in the village? How do you notice it? What does it look like? What do you think it is? What does your family think?

We would love you to write a story about your discovery and **send it in to the *Slate* by 31 May**. First stories will be published in the July *Slate*.

Please email your stories to **[Slate-pub@stonesfield.online](mailto:Slate-pub@stonesfield.online)** or hand it into the village shop in an envelope marked 'Stonesfield Slate Story'.

Which ever way you submit your story please include the writer's name and category, plus your address and a contact number (which will only be used to send awards). Please note that handwritten stories will not be returned.

We can't wait to hear about your fantastic discoveries!

Slate Publishers

## Put it on the List (Covid-19 emergency version)

Put it on the list, put it on the list,  
I'm pretty easy going but on this I insist –  
When you use the last packet, or tin, box or jar,

Please note down that item on the shopping list – ta!

If the cupboard is bare of a vital ingredient  
Your dinner will be spoiled 'cos you missed that expedient.

So don't kindly explain when I'm back from the trip,

That I've missed the main point and you've got the gyp.

For the sake of our health, I'm not driving back -

We're told to shop just once a week and there isn't any slack.

So put it on the list, just put it on the list

So we maintain social distance and continue to exist.

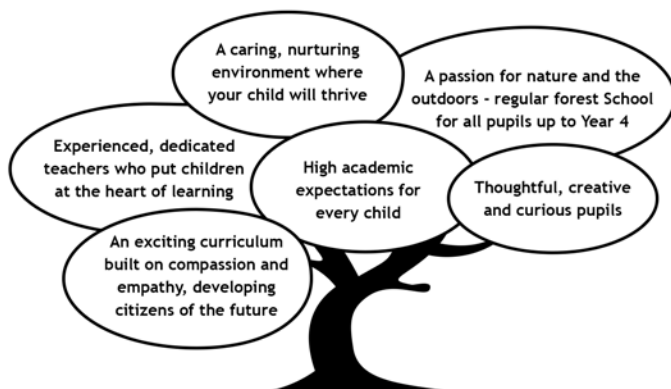
Nicky Holland  
30 March 2020

## Stonesfield Primary School

Learning together to achieve our best.



Looking for a friendly, inclusive, local school for your child?  
Stonesfield Primary School has places in all year groups - we would love to show you around.



To arrange a tour with the headteacher, Mr Ben Trevail, please contact the school office.

Tel: 01993 891687

Office email: [office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)  
Headteacher email: [head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)

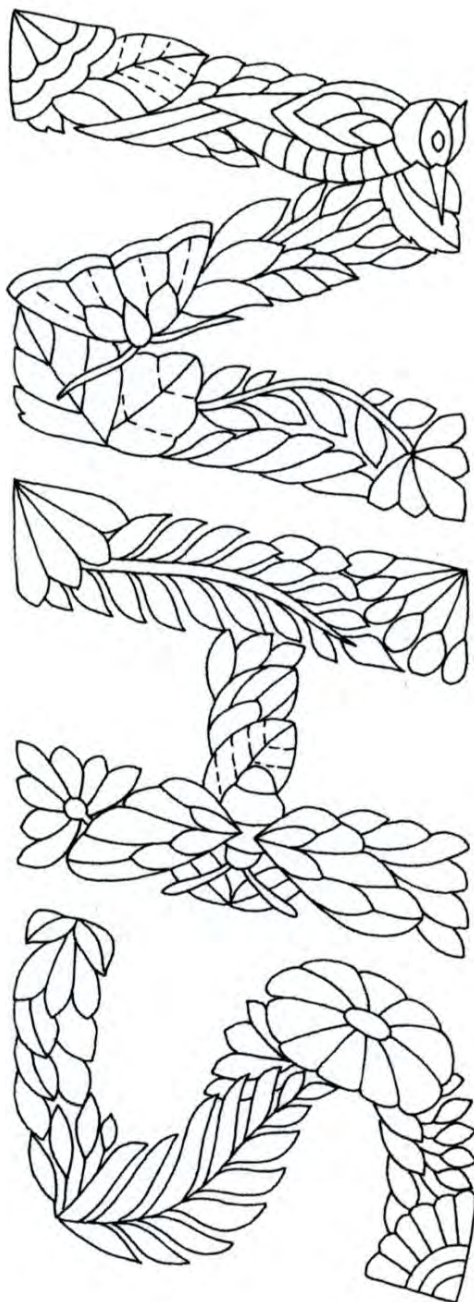


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**Have fun colouring this!**

Colour in and place in your window

Support



Staff

.....

## **No-one's knocking on my door (no more)**

*No-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

It could be hellish lonely, I could be full of gloom

Now we're each staying on our tod

Living in the living room

*And no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

But - I can dry all my undies on the hallway radiator

Cos no-one's coming round my house,

Neither now nor later,

*And no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

I can do naked yoga without drawing down the blind,

They're so starved of entertainment

None of the neighbours mind

*And no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

I get my kicks vicariously by watching the TV,

See walkers getting nabbed by cops,

I'm glad it isn't me

*And no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

If ever I got bored I could run the Hoover through

But that isn't going to happen.

Why? I'll give you all a clue -

*Cos no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

I could hold a revolution and declare a separate nation,

The government can't make war on me -

They're in Covid isolation

*And no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door*

I can live the way I want to, I don't have to give a damn

The outside world can go to hell,

I'm happy where I am!

*Cos no-one's knocking on my door no more,*

*No-one's knocking on my door.*

(Ask me again how I feel in a week's time ....)

Nicky Holland

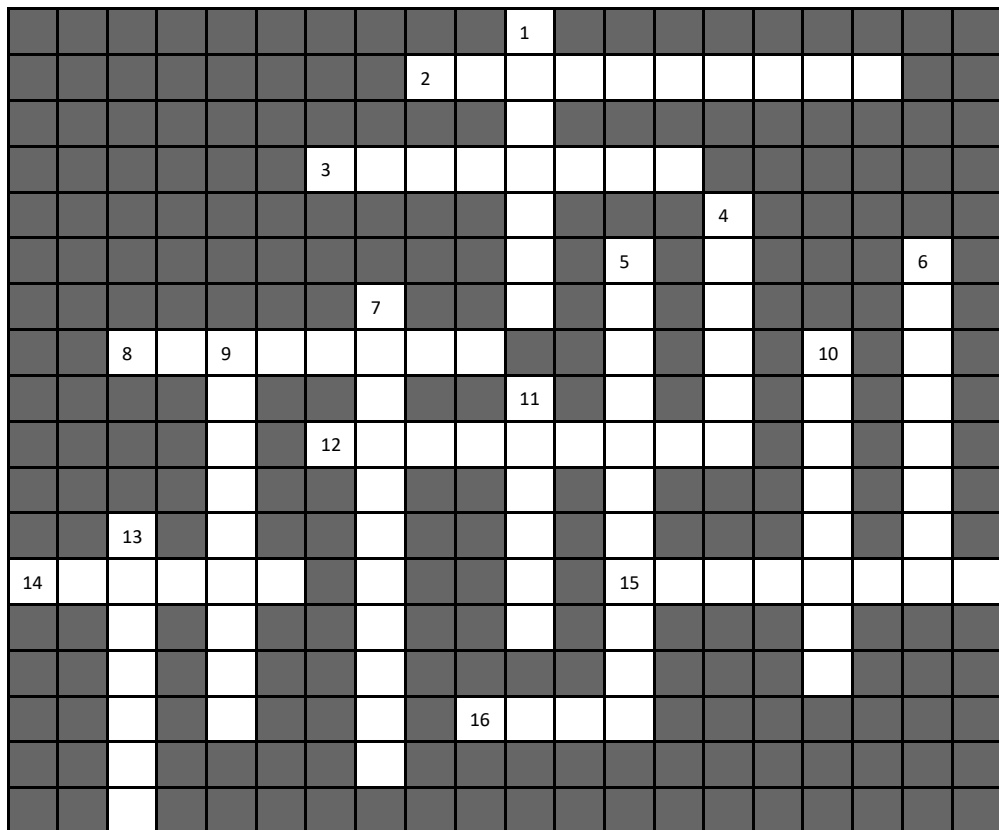
2020: end of week 2 isolation

## **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.

**Please note: Until further notice the library is closed.**

For further details, or to join us, please contact Tony Scott  
01993 891380, [tonyandrachel.scott@virgin.net](mailto:tonyandrachel.scott@virgin.net)



## ACROSS

2. Stonesfield \_ \_ \_ \_ Village History  
(4,6,2,5) plus 1 down
3. Palace (8)
8. Found Megalosaurus (8)
12. Pub closed in 2010 (5,4)
14. Stockey (6)
15. Local river (8)
16. She created 1<sup>st</sup> Duke (4)

## DOWN

1. See 2 across
4. Town and Gown (6)
5. Might have walked this way to  
The Globe (11)
6. Ancient forest (8)
7. The Duke (11)
9. AONB (9)
10. Churchill's wartime hideaway (8)
11. Roman road (6)
13. Local church (2,5)

Answers in next month's *Slate*

# Clubs & societies

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## **Stonesfield Gardening Club**

What a difference a month brings! We've had lovely weather and plenty of time to work in our gardens but we can't invite friends and family to join us to enjoy the fruits of our labours.

Gardening Club members have been growing plants for our annual sale which was due to take place at the end of April but obviously that was cancelled. What we have done instead is to take orders from those who would like our produce and we will try to match up buyers and sellers. We will be asking that you make a donation to a local charity in lieu of paying us directly.

In the meantime, enjoy your own garden and the spring flowers that we are so lucky to have in abundance in local fields and hedgerows. We must take pleasure where we can.

*Diane Bates (898841)*

[diane@bateshome.co.uk](mailto:diane@bateshome.co.uk)

[www.stonesfieldgardening.info](http://www.stonesfieldgardening.info)

---

## **Allotment Association**

After the seemingly endless wet and windy winter we have been able to profit from the recent spell of warm and dry weather to catch up with the preparation for the new season. Allotment holders, like farmers, are never totally satisfied with the weather and it wasn't long before there were complaints about how dry it was. The lockdown has emphasised how lucky we are to have allotments. Good exercise in

the open air and the opportunity to chat to friends and neighbours at a safe distance.

Churchfields. Water was turned on at the beginning of April in time to help early sowings and young plants. This is the first spring where we could water freely without worrying about conserving supplies for later in the year.

Woodstock Road. Part of the Blenheim Bursary is earmarked for improvements to the water collecting capacity of the site. We have done some of the preliminary work for replacement of the rabbit proof fence, but haven't been able to continue with the work as members who are going to do the work have more pressing concerns at the moment. One of the available allotments has now been taken, but there is still one free. If you would like to have an allotment, contact me and I'll show you around.

*Jon Gordon (8988803)*

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## **Book Break Online**

We have maintained Book Break by setting up an online conversation between members of the group rather than using a video link. This involves written exchanges in response to a set amount of weekly reading from our novel *Warlight* by Michael Ondaatje. Whilst we are all missing the spontaneity of the spoken 'live' discussion we enjoy when we meet, we are pleased to be keeping the interaction between group members during this period of social distancing.

*Wendy Lynch*

# Sport

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## **Stonesfield Football Club**

In these extraordinary times, The FA have decided that the grassroots football season 2019-20 is null and void. What does that mean? In terms of the record books it means that no games took place, no leagues were won, nobody held any cups aloft in triumph (unless it was in the kitchen). The Witney and District FA have (in a sense) kept the results of league games played as only 'semi-null and void' and intend to use them as a guide for deciding who plays in which league when the next season starts. To me that doesn't make sense as 'null and void' has a very specific meaning: if no games were played, then all teams should start again in the same league with no promotion and no relegation. So, all those goals scored by The Rice brothers in helping our Firsts into second place in The Premiership didn't happen and those stalwarts in The Reserves who were in a dog-fight over relegation have their best efforts rescinded but could still be relegated? That does seem harsh on everyone involved but when you view it against the backdrop of what's happening in people's lives at the moment, it seems a trivial issue and (of course) it is. The Firsts will start in The Premiership and I doubt The Reserves will be too bothered whether they play in Division 3 or Division 4, all they want to do is get back to playing football again.

What of the much-loved Fredo awards, do we null and void them? To paraphrase that famous Scotsman Mel Gibson, "They can

null and void our season but they'll never null and void our Fredo Awards!" Fredos are won for outstanding achievements on the field of play and The Club will not stand by and allow those awards to be declared 'null and void'. Anyway, they've all been scooped long ago! While there's been no games played there have been Herculean efforts in our small community during these horrendously difficult times, so this month The Fredo Award goes to those essential workers, in our midst, who are doing all they can to ensure that when football does return (and it will) it can do so in a safe and healthy environment. A small gesture, but a heart-felt one: take a bow all OUR essential workers, this month's Fredo Award goes to every one of you!

Finally, the message from The Football Club is the same as it was last month: play the game and stick to the rules ... keep washing those hands, observe social distancing, stay at home as much as is practical and show respect for those essential workers who do their jobs on our behalf. Above all, stay safe, take care and look out for the vulnerable and those who live on their own. We will get through this Pandemic and we will play football again!

Tom Flanigan (891979)



# Church news

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## Roman Catholic Worship

*‘Jesus’ means ‘God saves’*

*Jesus as Son of God is God made man, and as God Jesus promised that powerful and miraculous deeds would be performed in his name (Mark 16: 17-18).* We pray for miracles all the time: to be richer, more beautiful, good exam results, to be more loved or some disaster to be averted. Right now we are praying, for the pandemic to end miraculously swiftly with less loss of life, with a vaccination and cure speedily found. We could also pray that for other miracles: that hard hearts will be softened, generosity will prevail and that we all use this time to evaluate our lives.

As Pope Francis said to an empty St. Peter’s on Easter Sunday: ‘a world already faced with epochal challenges and now oppressed by a pandemic severely testing our whole human family,’ Francis spoke of ‘the contagion of hope.’ The Pope acknowledged that for many, ‘this is an Easter of solitude lived amid the sorrow and hardship that the pandemic is causing, from physical suffering to economic difficulties.’ Acknowledging those who face an uncertain economic future and fears of unemployment, the pontiff called on political leaders ‘to work actively for the common good, to provide the means and resources needed to enable everyone to lead a dignified life and, when circumstances allow, to assist them in resuming their normal daily activities.’ ‘Indifference, self-centredness, division and forgetfulness are not words we want to

hear at this time’ said the Pope. These words ‘seem to prevail when fear and death overwhelm us’, and we want to ban them forever, he added. Pope Francis concluded his Urbi et Orbi message with a prayer: ‘May Christ, who has already defeated death and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, dispel the darkness of our suffering humanity and lead us into the light of His glorious day. A day that knows no end’. God Saves.

St. Teresa’s will be closed until further notice due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Holy Mass is being live-streamed on Sundays at a number of different churches:

Blackfriars, Oxford, 9.30am

St. Aloysius, The Oxford Oratory,

**Monday–Saturday:** 8am (EF Low Mass); 6pm (English Low Mass with sermon)

**Sunday** 8am (EF Low Mass with sermon); 11am (Latin Sung Mass with sermon); 5:30pm (Vespers & Benediction)

Prayers of spiritual communion: *O my divine Jesus, how great is my desire to receive your sacred body! Oh, come now into my soul, at least, by a spiritual communion! O Jesus, my divine Saviour, save me. O my God, hiding myself with a humble confidence in your dear wounds, I give up my soul into your divine hands. Oh, receive it into the bosom of your mercy. Amen*

Parish pilgrimage (to be confirmed):  
Saturday 18 July to St. Chad’s Cathedral,

Birmingham on the occasion of Deacon Dytor's ordination. For further information please contact Suze Mathews, 01993 891720 or email [suzemathews899@btinternet.com](mailto:suzemathews899@btinternet.com)

Fr Tony Joyce can be contacted on: [holytrinityrcchippy@gmail.com](mailto:holytrinityrcchippy@gmail.com) or 01608 642703

For Parish updates, any further information and further support:

[www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/)

or contact Clive Dytor:  
[chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com](mailto:chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com)

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield  
– Keep praying.

Suze Mathews (891720)

---

## Stonesfield Methodist Church

The Church remains closed at this time.

The good news is that there are plenty of great worship services online as well as Sunday services on TV and radio. Why not spend a little of this strange time to listen in to some of these inspirational people who seek with their hearts and voices to uplift and strengthen us during these weeks of isolation and uncertainty. I love this from a Minister at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster: She suggests 'hand prayer' – alongside thorough handwashing of course! Your five most heartfelt prayers she says – one for each digit – and pray them every day.

*Be strong and courageous, do not be terrified for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9.*

Kathleen Albert (891733)



Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson

# Anglican Worship in the Parishes of Stonesfield with Combe Longa



Rector: To be appointed  
The Rectory, Stonesfield, Witney, Oxon, OX29 8PR  
email: [stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

[www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org](http://www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

Stonesfield Churchwardens: Neil Melrose (891566) & Kate Harris (898781)  
Combe Longa Churchwarden: Andrew Hobson (891273) & Linda Soderberg (891177)

BCP=Book of Common Prayer: CW=Common Worship

**For pastoral help please contact the Rector**



Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all church services have been cancelled for the time being, and the church building itself is closed. Should any restrictions be lifted, this will be advertised on the church porch noticeboard and the church website at [www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org](http://www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

For any enquiries or help, including pastoral support, arrangements for funerals and so on, please contact one of the churchwardens: Kate Harris (898781) Neil Melrose (891566) or email to [stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

In the space of just a few weeks, our world, and our personal worlds, have been completely turned upside down and changed. Little did we think, when Roy took his final church services on 15 March, that these would be the last ones for the foreseeable future.

Since then our work, our social activities, our travel, our education system, our priorities, have all been dramatically affected as we are either staying at home or heavily involved on the front line of providing services.

We are learning lessons about how to adapt, how to be resilient, how to enjoy simple pleasures, how to care better for others, how to value life itself, which is so fragile.

Times of uncertainty and stress can also help us to learn, or re-learn, about faith – faith in a loving God, a God who is there through all our difficulties.

One of the books of the Bible is a collection of 150 psalms (songs and prayers to God), a number of which were written in times of great trouble. Many of the psalms are just as relevant today as when they were written, and we can use the words as prayers and a source of comfort at this time – here is Psalm 23:

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will follow  
me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
forever.*

## Advertisements

For boxed ads please email **slate-ads@stonesfield.online** for full details of availability, sizes, requirements and cost. Line ads: £2.00 per 30 words.

Advertisements should be emailed to **slate-ads@stonesfield.online** by 10th of the month.

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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The editor and the publishers reserve the right to edit, shorten or omit any article submitted for publication.

## BLENHEIM

We are thinking of our community during this challenging time and hope you are all keeping safe and well.

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There are currently a number of local groups in our community doing vital work to support those in the most need at this uncertain time.

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We are proud to be doing what we can to offer support alongside these fantastic organisations and groups of extraordinary local people.

---

We've been able to contribute the use of one of our vans and donated office space, bottled water and 15,000 chocolate bunnies to those in need.

---

We hope we can **#stayconnected** with you by sending weekly e-newsletters full of recommendations and activities to keep you healthy and happy at home.

---

If you'd like to sign up for these e-newsletters, visit **blenheimplace.com**



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