



## Save our pub!



After weeks of rumours, it has been confirmed that a buyer is being sought for The White Horse. If a buyer is not found, a change of use application could mean we lose the village's last pub for ever.

We face the risk that a valuable part of community life is lost through redevelopment for housing. While this would be resisted by the Parish Council, it would mean losing a vital part of the character of the village.

Several residents have asked Parish Councillors about this. The pub is listed as a community asset, which gives some protection if a change of use order is sought. The Parish Council will renew its interest in the pub when that is due in October, but the Council could not purchase the pub.

In mid-July the West Oxfordshire District Council gave formal notice of the pub's owner's intention to offer it for sale. Clearly a public meeting for residents to express their views is not possible.

The community could make an offer to purchase the pub or support a bidder. This would have to be led by an active community group outside the Parish Council. Such an initiative has been successful in a number of locations in the local area, where pubs are now in the hands of their local community. The asking price for the White Horse is £395,000. Any eligible community group intending to bid for the White Horse must communicate that intention to the District Council by 20 August.

Some village residents have started a community group to look at options and over 200 people have joined their Facebook group: Save Our Pub, Stonesfield. They also now have a website [www.whitehorsestonesfield.com](http://www.whitehorsestonesfield.com) where you can contact them or sign up to be kept updated.

For sharing your views with the Council, please contact the Parish Clerk ([clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk)) or Cllr Wendy Gould ([w.gould@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:w.gould@stonesfieldpc.uk)).

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## Some phone numbers to call for help

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
Mental health line (24hr)	01865 904 997 (adults) 01865 904 998 (children and young people)

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

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## Important reminder to contributors

Please note that contributions for inclusion in the Slate should be emailed to [slate@stonesfield.online](mailto:slate@stonesfield.online). This replaces the old website address, WHICH HAS CLOSED.

handwritten copy may be left at the village shop (in an envelope marked 'Stonesfield Slate'); if using this facility, please let the Editor know – the telephone number is listed below.

For residents without access to email,

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Current and past copies of the *Slate* available at [www.stonesfield.online/slate](http://www.stonesfield.online/slate)

# Coronavirus updates

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## Face coverings

Wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets in England was made mandatory from 24 July; for adults and children aged 11 or over. Those who fail to comply with the new rules will face a fine of up to £100, or £50 if paid within 14 days.

Face coverings have been compulsory on public transport in England since 15 June, and since mid-May, people have been advised to wear coverings in enclosed public spaces, where they may encounter people they would not usually meet.

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## NHS test and trace service

The NHS test and trace service is now live. Everyone over the age of five presenting symptoms should have a test, which can be requested by calling 119 or online at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/).

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## Test and trace for businesses

Businesses where customers are potentially in close contact are being urged to ensure they follow the NHS Test and Trace rules. This means that pubs, cafes, hairdressers and places of worship are encouraged to take names and numbers of visitors to ensure they can be traced in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19. The recommendation also applies to hotels, museums, cinemas, zoos and facilities provided by local authorities including town halls, community centres, libraries and children's centres. It does not apply to places where a service is immediately taken off the site, e.g. takeaway food outlets.

Guidance for businesses can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace).

### STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

We have suspended voluntary transport to medical appointments because of the need for social distancing and to protect both our clients and our drivers. However we are monitoring the Government's changing regulations closely and will keep you informed.

**If you are in need of transport for medical appointments, and are unable to find this from your own household, there are one or two other possibilities.**

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

# Notices & news

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## **Cynthia Royle**

It is with sadness that we record the recent death of Cynthia Royle, who died peacefully in hospital.

Cynthia retired to Stonesfield after a career in teaching. After graduating from Oxford, she taught in a school in Harrow and afterwards became deputy head of Holt School in Wokingham. Her elder sister retired at the same time and together they had many holidays both in this country and abroad. Cynthia was a key figure in the Stonesfield Society; she volunteered for many years with the Stonesfield Lunch Club and was latterly a member. Whilst living here she was involved in an archaeological dig and used to go and help each summer. She was a valued and regular volunteer at the Oxfam Bookstore in Oxford from its beginning, using her classics background to classify Latin books for them. She was also a volunteer guide at Rousham.

Here in Stonesfield Cynthia will be remembered out walking her dogs. She was devoted to her rescued dogs, all of whom found a safe and happy home with her.

Mary Hughes

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## **Stockey Woods – could we lose our right to roam?**

In 2016, Blenheim Estate posted notices in Stockey Woods under the Commons Act 2006. They hoped to establish that there was no automatic right of access to the woods according to law. If successful,

Blenheim could close off access to the whole of Stockey Woods, leaving just one public footpath.

In response, a group of Stonesfield residents applied to register Stockey Woods as a 'Village Green'. If successful, this move would maintain access to the woods 'as of right', rather than by the permission of Blenheim Estate. Over 70 villagers supplied witness statements testifying to continuous use of Stockey Woods over many years.

Last August, in response to Stonesfield's application, Blenheim submitted a formal objection to the County Council (the Registration Authority). Jim Astle replied, as solicitor on behalf of the applicant (in effect the village), rebutting their objections. The County Council has now appointed an Inspector to hold a public inquiry, and to report what he thinks the decision should be and why. There is to be a pre-inquiry meeting in mid-August to determine the issues, number of witnesses, length of the inquiry, procedures etc.

Sustainable Stonesfield, which didn't exist in 2016, is now supporting the campaign to get the woods made a Village Green. Blenheim will no doubt be represented by experienced, specialist and very expensive lawyers. To give the village the best chance of success, it may be necessary to pay for specialist legal advice – £4,000 to £6,000 – although we hope to get much of our legal advice 'pro bono' (no charge).

The purpose of this article is to ask villagers if they would be willing to pledge £25, £50, £75 or more to fund the campaign. We don't need the money right now, though we may need some soon, but we do need to know how many people would be prepared to contribute to the campaign, and how much. Please email your pledge to [sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com](mailto:sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com).

The matter at issue is Blenheim's protested right to close off the whole of Stockey except the one public footpath. They may be unlikely to do so, but who knows what they will do if they have the power? Remember, they tried to block the Bagg's Bottom footpath. If a Village Green is registered, the right of villagers to walk their dogs, study nature, play on swings in the Dell, walk the myriad footpaths not currently on the definitive map, etc. would be enshrined in law. That's something worth fighting for.

Richard Morris  
Sustainable Stonesfield

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## Village Hall News

Things are moving along now with legislation changing rapidly regarding the reopening of community and village hall spaces.

We have been in contact with our regular clients to see what they need, and how we can help them, and it would appear that even if we could open and be COVID safe, the way the new legislation is laid out to groups means it would be very difficult for any activity to make a safe return unless, as well as having their own risk assessments in place, they massively reduce the numbers attending to fit the space that we can offer them.

The summer period for the hall is usually very quiet as most classes work to the school time table, so after discussing the situation at length we have decided that for the amount of work involved, it is not financially viable for the hall to reopen until September when the majority of the classes start back up again.

We will of course look at helping any group that can fulfil all the criteria required.

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)  
Secretary & Booking Clerk for Stonesfield Village Hall  
[stonesfieldvh@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldvh@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/stonesfieldvillagehall](https://facebook.com/stonesfieldvillagehall)

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## Combe Road closure

Combe Road will be closed day and night from 24-28 August for drainage works.

Access will be maintained for emergency service vehicles and for frontages within the closure area, subject to the progress of the works and liaison with the works supervisor.

Further information regarding the works is available from Matthew Timms, Highways and Drainage, Oxfordshire County Council on 0345 3101111 or 07718 656916.

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## Allotment stall

A produce stall has gone up near the road on Churchfields allotment. If you have spare produce, please feel free to leave it on the stall. It is then free for anyone to help themselves. We are particularly hoping those without gardens and those who don't grow fruit and veg will make use of the fresh produce.

We are also acting as a pot recycling point. Please put any pots you don't need under the stall, and if you are looking for pots:

help yourself. We are trying to reduce the need to buy plastic pots and to get long-term use of pots in the village. The curtain is not a development for amateur dramatics in the village: it is to protect the stall from the morning sun (when needed).



We are looking ahead to apples and pears, and would be interested if anyone has a tree they don't pick or that may have spare produce...could we come and pick them? And add them to the stall. Please let me know. So far the annual courgette glut is disappearing and we hope you are enjoying them.

John Sampson  
john.sampson9@icloud.com

## Stonesfield Common

Our Common is a very important and rare habitat in Oxfordshire – it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is one of the largest remaining areas of unimproved limestone grassland in the county, with a wide variety of plant species supporting many insects and a rich bird life.

In order to keep its 'special' status we need to manage the Common, and that means grazing it. There is an invasive species of grass that we need to control – tor grass – that blankets out other grasses and flowers. Sadly sheep don't like eating it so we are

now going to graze the Common with cattle from late summer to March. Volunteers will also be scything and brush-cutting tor grass in the autumn, and working to keep the invasive blackthorn under control.

The Common has two distinct habitats: the top and bank that is the unimproved limestone grassland and the flood meadow, also known in the village as the cricket pitch. A fence is being erected at the bottom of the bank to separate these two areas so we can manage stock more effectively. Cattle will want to eat the richer, more tasty grass of the flood meadow when we want them to be grazing the top and banks. We also want to ensure that cattle cannot get on to the meadow when the river is flooded. Pedestrian access will be in place at both ends of the fence, so people will be able to walk along the riverbank.

We hope you enjoy the Common this summer and see the rich flora and fauna that is on our doorstep. The very rare Meadow Clary has just finished flowering. Thanks to the efforts of Gill Barrett and Genny Early they have successfully managed to spread the sites of Meadow Clary from a single area to a number of different spots, and the plants are looking very healthy despite the very dry spring. Throughout the area where scything has taken place there are larger numbers of species such as wild thyme, rock rose, quaking grass and large swathes of bedstraw. The pyramidal orchids were very small this year and sadly no bee orchids were found.

Richard Morris

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## **North Leigh Roman Villa mosaics open in August**

On two weekends in August: 8-9 and 22-23 – the mosaic house of North Leigh Roman Villa will re-open 11am to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday. These are Oxfordshire's only Roman mosaics still in their original location.

A new team of local volunteers is working with English Heritage who manage the site. As the mosaics are housed in an enclosed space, access will only be by timed ticket, available on the day, at the site. The site is entirely free and large enough for safe social distancing during your visit. There is room to picnic (please take your litter home) but currently there is no WC on site.

Donations to the work of restoring and enhancing the North Leigh site are most welcome. To become a Friend of North Leigh Roman Villa, which is free and allows you to keep up with future developments and events on the site, please contact [NLRVols@gmail.com](mailto:NLRVols@gmail.com).

For more details about the openings please visit: [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa/) or Facebook: @northleighromanvilla.

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## **Are we related?**

About twenty-five years ago, a cousin of my mother researched our family tree. The two areas our ancestors lived in were Devon, where I live, and London. A few years ago, my daughter and family moved back to England after many years of living abroad and settled in Stonesfield by chance; it being the only village at the time in reasonable commuting distance of Oxford with two places at the primary school and a

house to rent. A couple of years ago I was looking at the family tree and noticed that a small branch had lived in Stonesfield.

My great, great, great, great grandfather Samuel Houndslow (b 1 August 1754) was born, married and died in the village. He married Martha Cox – I have no dates or place of birth for her. They had a son, Caleb (b 18 Nov 1787), who married Anne Edens on 17 Oct 1808. They had a daughter, Mary Ann Houndslow (b 10 May 1812), who then married Matthew Taylor and had a son, Henry Thomas Taylor. At that point the family records I have become vague, as they married outside the village and on into St Giles, Devizes, and further afield.

We have found a couple of graves in Stonesfield churchyard and we would love to know if anyone can also claim them as relatives! Could 6 degrees of separation be true?

Helen Sims  
[helenmaysims@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helenmaysims@yahoo.co.uk)

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## **Farmers' Markets**

Here's a reminder that many of our local artisan makers offer quality food and produce at farmers' markets. Currently the dates and times for our local markets are:

### **Charlbury**

2nd Saturday, 9am-1pm

### **Chipping Norton**

3rd Saturday, 8.30am-1.30pm

### **Witney**

4th Friday, 8.30am-1.30pm

### **Woodstock**

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 8.30am-1.00pm

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## Blenheim Palace re-opens

Blenheim Palace opened its doors to visitors again from Saturday, 4 July.

Daily visitor numbers are limited and timed admission is only via online pre-booking. Visitors will be welcomed at a safe distance; all transactions are cashless and staff in key engagement areas will be wearing personal protective equipment and be behind protective screens. New signage, barriers and extra temporary outdoor toilets with washing and hand sanitising areas have also been set up. Al fresco dining is available in outdoor marquee pods in the Italian Garden.

To book time slots to visit go to [www.blenheimpalace.com/tickets](http://www.blenheimpalace.com/tickets), or to book one of the marquee pods visit [www.blenheimpalace.com/visitus/cafes-restaurants/orangery/](http://www.blenheimpalace.com/visitus/cafes-restaurants/orangery/)

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## Blenheim Palace online events

Blenheim Palace is launching a programme of online events to give virtual visitors the chance to interact in real time with a range of experts and gain exclusive insights into the 18<sup>th</sup> century palace.

Led by Blenheim's social historian Antonia Keaney, virtual VIP specialist tours will be limited to a maximum of six people and incorporate a range of topics from the Palace's contribution to WWII and the life of servants to fashion through the ages and the life stories of some of Blenheim's most illustrious women.

In addition, fortnightly online seminars on Zoom will feature celebrated authors speaking on aspects of Blenheim, the Dukes and Duchesses of Marlborough and Sir Winston Churchill. Further information

is on [www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/virtual-seminars.html](http://www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/virtual-seminars.html)

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## Oxfordshire Garden Village plans

The developer Grosvenor Britain & Ireland has lodged an outline planning application for the Oxfordshire Garden Village to the north of Eynsham. The plan provides for 2,200 homes, new primary and secondary schools, sports facilities, parks, allotments and 57,000 square metres of employment space. The site was one of 14 garden villages endorsed by the Government in 2017 to help meet the UK's housing need. Grosvenor was appointed in the same year by local landowners to bring forward a planning application for an inclusive and sustainable scheme.

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## Kind thoughts

Unsurprisingly, I have been doing a lot more reading recently. This has prompted much thoughtfulness in me – a good thing, as having *thought* about it, thoughtfulness is not something to which I have been able to devote sufficient time in recent years. Without doubt, the current crisis has afforded us all more time to think and ponder on ‘the meaning of life’.

Many people have mentioned their hope that when (if?) this crisis passes it will make the human race kinder and more compassionate. Indeed, I think many of us would say we have experienced acts of kindness from our friends, neighbours and communities since the beginning of lockdown. *The Independent* reported (11 June) that many of us think that the lockdown restrictions have made Britain a kinder, more compassionate nation. A recent opinion poll found that 36 per cent

of Britons believe they have become kinder people since the coronavirus pandemic began and 92 per cent say they have carried out acts of kindness such as dropping off food for friends or family.

I have just finished reading the second volume of Jan Morris's diary jottings. Jan, who is now 93, speaks with the wisdom of her years but retains the freshness and energy of her younger voice. As one would expect, there are many observations on the physical and mental challenges to be faced when one reaches such a great age but she speaks of them with acceptance and great humour. Interestingly, although the diary was written well before the pandemic, many of her observations on religion, agnosticism and kindness resonate with the current situation. In particular, being an agnostic, she has come to regard 'The Way' as being Kindness – with a capital K. She says:

*'Yet Kindness is, to my mind, as loyalties of all sorts lose their magnetism, the one abstract conception that might persuade us all of our fundamental human unity'.*

I wanted to share this particular diary entry:

### *Day 83*

*Here's a lovely thing that has happened to me. When they made my first collection of these diary pieces into a book, I added a dedication, thus:*

*For  
One and All  
Kindlily*

*(and yes, there is such a word!)*

*Well, last night I went into town in a misty, rainy dusk to collect a load of firewood, and as I began to load it up a*

*vague, burly figure emerged unexpectedly out of the half-light to carry it all to the car for me. I don't know who he was. I didn't recognise him – could hardly see him really – and when he finished the job he just melted into the mist again without a word. I called after him through the darkness to thank him for his great kindness, and after a pause his voice came back to me there.*

*'I try to behave kindly', it said, and then after another pause, more faintly still: 'And yes, there is such a word.'*

*Never in half a century of the writing life have I been so delightfully quoted.*

Jan Morris, *Thinking Again*

I should add that I wrote to Jan Morris seeking permission to include these extracts and she said that she would be most delighted and flattered to be quoted in the Slate.

Trisha Williams

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## **More please**

Do you have local memories or family stories about the village? Perhaps your family ancestors were part of the slate mining or gloving industries that were the mainstay of Stonesfield in the past. Perhaps your family were farmers and you can tell of how the village was once a collection of farms...

The *Slate* is made possible by articles contributed by Stonesfield residents. If you have something to share, please send an article to the Editor at [slate@stonesfield.online](mailto:slate@stonesfield.online) or deliver it to the village shop (in an envelope marked 'Stonesfield Slate').

Slate Publisher

# Politics & local affairs

## Stonesfield Parish Council

We hope that everyone is coping well during the continuing COVID-19 situation. Please continue to contact us with any enquiries and reports.

The Common requires some fencing work and the external drinking bay also needs to be fixed. A water pump (pasture pump) will need to be installed for the cattle too. Bill Bachelor will be carrying out this work in July following the quotation process. Cattle will arrive soon and there will be signage installed when cattle arrive; they will leave around October. Two of the willows on the Common will also be pollarded.

It should be reminded that no fires are allowed on the Common under any circumstances. Genny Early has kindly provided and installed signs for us to remind users of this, huge thanks to Genny for this.



River safety – there have been many people swimming in the river. The Council would like to remind people that rivers can be dangerous and it is not something that the Parish Council endorses.

Cllr Powell, Cllr Heduan and County Cllr Ian Hudspeth met on 15th May to look at roads within the village. They discussed considering a 20mph zone in the village; this is ongoing. Cllr Heduan has put together a comprehensive SAFER report with Paul Bates. There is regular speeding down Church Street and Churchfields, so SAFER surveys will be done in that area. It was agreed that the SAFER team can get going again, keeping social distancing in place and subject to their risk assessment.

You will see that verge cutting has been carried out by WODC in June; the next verge cut will be in about 2 months' time (late August). Only Parish land had the cut and it was required. We did find an iron post within the verge during the cut, which we have had removed for safety reasons. The clerk will make landscapers aware that there are slowworms in our area and that they are a protected species.

It has been noted that some of the verges maintained by OCC need cutting – the clerk has reported to OCC on the verges as you come from North Leigh and Combe (the corners are very overgrown) and from Fawler to Charlbury junction. Well Lane is also overgrown (bridleway). Also the corner of Akeman Street and the B4437 (Stonesfield Straight).

## Planning

In its July meeting, Councillors discussed the following planning applications:

Application no 20/01416/HHD: Erection of bike store with car port and EV charge

point, Town and Country Planning Act; Adina, Woodstock Road Stonesfield. Applicant: Mr James Wiltshire, registered: 8 June 2020 – there are no objections to this planning application.

Application no 20/01511/FUL: Conversion of existing office premises to six residential apartments, Town and Country Planning Act; 1 Farley Lane, Stonesfield. Applicant: Mr Richard Dennis, registered: 28 May 2020.

Councillors had concerns over additional parking with planning application 20/01511/FUL. It is felt there are too many dwellings on this site, although six affordable dwellings would be beneficial for youngsters or single persons in this area. The Council OBJECTS to this planning application of six developments on the basis of over-development but feels it would be more acceptable to have a smaller development of these apartments with a better design (current design with laundry room downstairs could cause noise for neighbouring properties; there are concerns over fumes entering the building from the neighbouring business; lack of windows in a room upstairs is of a concern to the Council). The current proposal would cause an increase in parking, which would be a problem in this already congested area and particularly so if emergency vehicles required access. This response has been filed to WODC by the clerk.

## **Finance**

The precept figure for 2020/21 (annual budget that SPC requests from West Oxfordshire DC) is formally recorded as £32,180. This was submitted to WODC in January 2020.

Councillors approved the audit report and AGAR (Annual Governance Statement 2019/20) forms that had been circulated ahead of the July meeting, including the Accounting Statements 2019/20 for Stonesfield Parish Council. The clerk will submit them to the external auditor and a notice of public rights will be placed on the noticeboard from 10 July 2020.

A COVID-19 grant request of £245 was received from the Playing Fields Association for hand sanitizer. Andy Tacon attended this section of the July meeting to assist with questions and provided an explanation regarding Playing Fields reserves. Councillors discussed it and the grant request was approved.

Stonesfield Parish Council had issued the following grants in their June meeting: Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme grant of £90 to contribute to the cost of DBS for their drivers and the Pre-School were awarded a grant of £478.78 towards an urn and wipe-clean sofas.

## **Standing Orders**

Councillors were asked to adopt the updated Standing Orders at the July meeting and these were adopted. A copy will be made available on the website.

## **Climate Emergency Group**

There were no updates, but Cllr Powell and Cllr Baldwin plan to meet again in September.

## **Playing Field Association Update**

The children's playground and the MUGA (multi-use games area) will be opening in line with government guidance. Some of the football teams are training there now. There is no update regarding the fence planning on the new piece of land – this is in progress. Cllr Baldwin noted that to get

the new piece of land to a playing field standard could cost up to £30,000. Grants will need to be applied for, as this is not a fund the Parish Council could cover.

**Library**

The clerk has contacted Oxfordshire County Council to see when the library facility can be reopened. It is noted that this is missed by some members of the community. [See report from County Councillor – Ed.]

**The White Horse**

The White Horse pub in the village is up for sale, and several residents have contacted Councillors. We can renew our interest in the pub as a community asset when that is due for renewal in October. The Parish Council could not purchase the pub; the asking price is £395k. It is not clear if it is to be sold as a pub or with the intention of a change of use at this stage, but the PC is monitoring. The community could get together for a purchase (like Bladon has) but an active community group would need to be set up outside the Parish Council to look at options and raise the required funding. If members of the Parish are interested in being part of a community group, they can contact the clerk via email or contact Cllr Wendy Gould to register interest, and those people will be connected. Cllr Gould will be the Parish Council contact for this.

The Parish Council was notified on 15 July 2020 that West Oxfordshire District Council has been given notice by the owner of The White Horse, Stonesfield that they intend to sell the public house (listed as an Asset of Community Value further to Stonesfield Parish Council's nomination of this property) and have provided notice of

this intended sale as required under the Localism Act.

Please note that the deadline for an eligible community interest group to express an interest to be treated as a potential bidder for the public house (and the end of the initial moratorium period) is 20 August 2020. A disposal notice has been issued and is displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard, on [www.stonesfield.online](http://www.stonesfield.online) and [www.whitehorsestonesfield.com](http://www.whitehorsestonesfield.com).

The District Council is in the process of introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is a charge on redevelopments (housing). Consultation is between 10 July and 21 August. The Parish Council will submit a formal response when it has had time to consider the documentation.

It came to the Parish Council's attention that Judy Franklin has been making masks for the community – over 400 masks donated: well done to Judy.

Date of next SPC meeting: Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 7pm – a Zoom virtual meeting. (There is no August meeting, but Councillors and the clerk can still be contacted and will be working.)

Karen East, Clerk to the Parish  
[clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk)  
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**Police and community support**

For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact [woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)  
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**If you need to report something...**

Did you know you can pass information to Crimestoppers and stay anonymous?

Crimestoppers are not interested in who you are, just what you know, and the more detail you give them, the better. Your IP address and location are not tracked or traced. Nobody will know you have helped keep your community safe.

So, if you are worried about something that is happening in your community or maybe you have seen something that you think the police should know but are worried about speaking out, it's easy to pass on the information.

Visit [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) or ring 0800 555111.

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## **Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

For information see [www.facebook.com/StonesfieldNHW](http://www.facebook.com/StonesfieldNHW).

If you are interested in joining our scheme, please follow this link and ensure you click 'Join a scheme' then select 'Stonesfield' to complete your request: [www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join](http://www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join).

Also see the excellent Neighbourhood Watch July newsletter on [www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-07/July%20Our%20News.pdf](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/2020-07/July%20Our%20News.pdf).

Deanna Blakeway Asplundh

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## **From our District Councillor**

Now that the chains of lockdown are at last being weakened, the District Council is intent upon formulating its plans for the recovery period.

Given the Council's responsibility for delivering services to over 100,000

residents, COVID-19 has been an unprecedented challenge that changed everything overnight. From the onset of the virus, the Council reacted quickly to provide support for local business and economy, both the voluntary and community sector and additionally give support to our residents. Alongside our partners, Ubico and Publica, we have maintained all essential services.

The way in which we have worked has also changed dramatically, with the vast majority of staff now working from home and with all Council meetings being held virtually. In all this we have been ably supported by a dynamic and inspiring community sector response right across West Oxfordshire. A Community Hub team works effectively with voluntary sector partners and with an army of volunteers.

Thankfully, there has been a strong collaborative effort to tackle a disastrous and almost vicious virus. Coordination and finely tuned communication has emerged between the County, City and District Councils, aided by the NHS and OXLEP, supporting the vulnerable in our communities.

Recovery from COVID-19 will take time and patience and will be complex. West Oxfordshire will be guided by a Local Recovery Plan which will allow the needs of this work to feed into the preparation of the Budget for 2021/2022. It is intended that a Cabinet Advisory Group will be established to advise on a Recovery Strategy.

It is anticipated that the Local Recovery Plan will provide a framework for three distinct phases of recovery activity:

- Re-start (taking between 0 and 6 months)

- Recover (anticipated to be between 6 and 18 months)
- Re-new (expected to take 18 to 36 months)

The Council's approach to recovery will also take into account:

- The vision and key priorities of the recently adopted Council Plan
- Government instruction/guidance
- Collaboration from local community and town support, right across the county.

Council Plan (adopted January 2020) objectives:

- Climate Action - protecting and enhancing our environment;
- Healthy Towns and villages;
- A vibrant District Economy;
- Strong Local Communities;
- Meeting the Housing Needs of our changing population especially 'affordable'.
- Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance.

WODC has already provided Grants and financial support to approaching 2,000 local businesses. In this context, it is important to remember that COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the Council's finances. Current forecasts indicate additional costs of £850,000 for 2020/2021 financial year, together with income losses of around £1,764,000. The Government has provided funding of £1,135,083. So, the net impact on WODC budgets and reserves is around £1.5 million. Thankfully, due to an efficient fiscal policy over the last few years, the Council has sufficient reserves to cover this unexpected impact.

I have taken time and space in this edition to give you an overview of the current

position, which I hope will give you some idea of the ramifications of this horrific virus. Of course, additionally to all this is the huge and long-lasting human cost and the sadness of those whose lives and loved ones have been irrevocably changed. The Council, its staff and its Councillors are very aware of the anxiety and sense of sadness which have been injected into our lives. As one, we send our best wishes and hopes for the future to you all.

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

## Other advice from WODC

### Household waste disposal

Residents are being reminded to check what they place in recycling bins, as the WODC has noticed an increasing number of nappies, food and plastic bags in the blue-lidded bins. Recycling crews will be checking bins and any containing non-recyclable items will not be emptied. It will then be up to the householder to remove those items before the next collection.

### Affordable homes consultation



WODC has launched a consultation on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, which sets out guidance on improving affordable housing delivery to help balance demand and supply across a mix of housing and tenure

types. Demand for affordable housing continues to increase with 1,997 applications to the Council's Homeseeker Plus system as of January this year.

There has been a major escalation in the building of affordable homes over the last year since the adoption of the Local Plan, and the new draft SPD is a blueprint to ensure the Council continues to meet demand. The consultation invites opinions from residents, housebuilders and all other interested parties.

The draft Affordable Housing SPD is available to view online at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/), or hard copies are available from a number of locations; see: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/).

Comments on the consultation document should be emailed by 5pm on 21 August 2020 to [planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk), or posted to West Oxfordshire District Council Communications Team, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB.

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**Other advice in West Oxfordshire**

**Cold callers**

Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards has been receiving an increasing number of complaints about cold callers offering to cut down and lop trees, resulting in bills for large amounts of money, requested in cash. Some of the callers are being aggressive towards householders and no paperwork is being issued, so the business is untraceable.

Trading Standards are advising residents to be very wary of agreeing to have work done by doorstep callers: to challenge them, check the name of the company, contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen for a scam, and if you feel threatened, call 999 or report to Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

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**From our County Councillor**

Oxfordshire County Council is in the process of drawing up the bid for Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund, which must be submitted by 7 August. There has been widespread engagement with County Councillors across all parties to best understand what would be required in the different divisions. One of the key requirements is that the bid will allow cycling in particular to replace journeys previously made by public transport, and will have an essential role to play in the short term in helping avoid overcrowding on public transport systems. Longer term, it will also help deliver significant health, environmental and congestion benefits.

I have put forward 20 mph speed limits throughout Woodstock and the villages in the division, along with additional cycle racks. If you have any thoughts on schemes, please send them to me to put forward for consideration.

Oxfordshire County Council is planning a phased approach to the reopening of public buildings, with every precaution being taken to make sure that this happens safely for the staff who will work in them and people who visit them.

Due to the continued need to respond to COVID-19, the operation of libraries and registration offices will differ in key ways

from how they operated in normal times prior to lockdown. Customers will be requested to limit their enjoyment of browsing, borrowing and returning their library materials to 30 minutes. They may use the public computer network for 30 minutes, and staff have the discretion to extend that time if a customer is partway through a Universal Credit application or similar. Printing, scanning and photocopying will be available, as will bus pass and blue badge validation. In common with much of the retail sector, payments will need to be made by card or online; however, photocopiers will still be operated by coin.

To comply with social distancing measures, most soft seating and tables will be removed. Staff will stand behind Perspex screens to respond to customers' queries. Public toilets won't be available.

Face-to-face programmes and events e.g. Rhymetimes and author talks will be re-established once government advice says it is safe to do so. These will continue to be delivered virtually via social media where possible, and we will continue to provide online services including ebooks, eaudio books and reference materials.

Witney Library will reopen on 13 July, with Kidlington reopening on 20 July. Opening dates for Stonesfield and Woodstock library will be notified, but it's important that both staff and customers feel safe and comfortable.

I've continued to take some of my daily exercise by walking round the villages in my division to report any defects on roads or pavements. If you notice any then please report them on Fix My Street, as the repair teams are still working. The app is easy to use and provides an exact location along

with a photograph, or you can log any defects, at:  
[www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/)

Traders in Oxfordshire are being warned by Trading Standards not to sell low-tech face coverings as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or make claims they provide protection against COVID-19. Trading Standards legislation controls the sale of these products and requires producers and sellers to meet certain requirements.

Anyone involved in making or selling face coverings should refer to the Trading Standards: face coverings guidance to ensure they are compliant with the law. Follow-up advice can be requested by contacting Oxfordshire Trading Standards on 01865 895999 (Option 2) or email to [Trading.Standards@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Trading.Standards@Oxfordshire.gov.uk). Oxfordshire Trading Standards is regularly monitoring online sites such as Facebook Marketplace and will be actively engaging with sellers to ensure any face coverings are safe and legal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me and keep safe.

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

# Education, culture & more

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## **Stonesfield Library**

Although Stonesfield Library remains closed for the moment and we have no information on when it may be permitted to reopen, some other larger libraries in the county are beginning to emerge from the lockdown. The following libraries are now open: Oxfordshire County Library, Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Cowley, Didcot, Henley, Kidlington, Thame and Witney.

Not all of the usual services will be available when your libraries reopen. They will initially provide a lending service and limited access to computers; also offer a validating service for bus passes and parking permits by appointment only. The full schedule of programmes and events will be re-established when government advice informs us it is safe to do so. What you can count on is a warm welcome from our staff! Naturally, you may borrow a book from any of the open county libraries and return it to any other open library in the county.

Mike Pollitt (891856)

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## **Stonesfield Primary School** **From the Head Teacher**

We have reached the end of an extraordinary and unprecedented academic year. Looking back over the months since March I feel so proud of what we have achieved as a school community in unbelievably challenging circumstances. I'm incredibly proud of our wonderful

children: those who have adapted to home learning and shared their fantastic work with us online, and those who have adapted to our 'new normal' and brought smiles and laughter into school. I'm incredibly proud of our brilliant staff: putting themselves and their families at risk to keep the school open; working around the clock providing online learning and virtual meets; juggling their own childcare and work commitments with partners; accessing virtual training; and designing our ambitious sparkling curriculum ready for September. I'm incredibly proud of our parents for the dedication shown to support and motivate their children with their learning. Our school motto 'Learning together to achieve our best' perfectly sums up the last few months.

The Government has published detailed guidance for the full opening of schools in England from September. Safety and minimising the risks associated with COVID-19 are essential and some aspects of school life will still be a little different: class bubbles, lunch sittings, staggered start and collections, limited sharing of equipment. We can't wait to welcome our pupils back and be a community together once more.

Finally, I would love to hear from anyone with stories and experiences of the Windrush generation or with an interest in BAME culture and history please drop me an email.

Ben Treval, Headteacher (891687)  
head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

## **From the School Governors End of Term Message**

The Governors would like to mark the end of this most challenging academic year by saying a big thankyou to all of the parents of Stonesfield, for their support and understanding during these difficult times. The staff at the school have shown real dedication and commitment in continuing to provide education to those children who have attended school through this period and also to those who have been learning online. This has involved introducing the Google Classroom learning platform which has become part of the 'new norm'.

Staff, children and parents have risen to the challenges and opportunities the technology has provided, so that Stonesfield has continued to bring learning to our pupils throughout lockdown, no

mean feat for a small village school! This would not have been possible without the training and continuing technical support provided by the team at 123ICT - and we want to thank them publicly for their support.

Next year we hope to build on this foundation and to provide some additional support on using the online systems, so that children and parents can get the most out of them. It will doubtless bring new challenges. Teachers are already working to develop a new and exciting curriculum. Meanwhile we would like to wish everyone an enjoyable and restorative summer holiday.

If you have a child who you believe would benefit from our caring, ambitious and inclusive village school please get in touch with our headteacher, Ben Trevail.

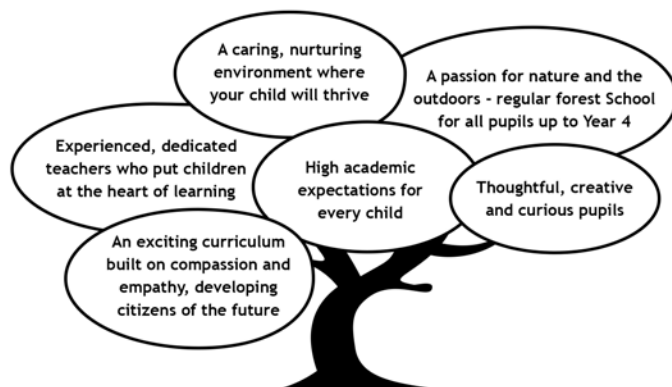
Stonesfield School Governors

## **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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## **Stonesfield Pre-school Fond farewells and new beginnings.....**

As I write this, it is the last week of term and also the last week of pre-school for our older children who will be leaving us to start their new and exciting adventure just across the road from us at Stonesfield Primary School! Over the years we have particularly focused on building a strong relationship with the school. Together with the reception class teachers, Mrs Ede and Miss Rivett, we have developed a seamless transition for the children from pre-school to big school. We are very proud that the children leave our pre-school more than ready to start a new chapter in their lives because they are very familiar with the primary school, especially the Early Years area. Even though this year has been far more of a challenge, we have still managed to visit school with the children for socially distanced waves and chats across the fence with their new teachers!

During the holidays the pre-school will be given a makeover ready for the start of the new term. We are very much looking forward to opening our doors again in September: a fresh start with quite a few new little ones joining our pre-school – such an exciting prospect for the future of the pre-school. We will keep you updated with our progress.

We also continue our fundraising quest, which is so vitally important now more than ever, and you may be interested in joining our new 100 Club. It's a great way for you to support your local pre-school whilst having a bit of a flutter! You complete our annual membership form and make a payment of £6. We will have 6 draws a year with the chance of you to win

a first prize of £25.00 and second prize of £10.00. If you would like a membership form please telephone 01993 898012 or email: stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com

Thank you for supporting Stonesfield Pre-school.

Lizzie Wharton (Manager)

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## **Nature Notes**

### **Butterflies of Stonesfield**

The warm, sunny spring appears to have benefited many butterfly species. By early March there were spectacular numbers of colourful Commas, Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks in and around the village, followed a few weeks later by Green-veined Whites and Speckled Wood butterflies. In gardens, delicate Orange Tips, Brimstones and Holly Blues were a common sight; later joined by Small Whites, Red Admirals and the occasional Large White, the latter being the bugbear of many gardeners.

During April good numbers of the Dingy Skipper were about on Stonesfield Common and by mid-June Large Skippers were a common sight flying with the first Marbled Whites, gliding over the grass downland. The latter species was in profusion by the end of the month, accompanied by Ringlets and Meadow Browns along with the first Essex and Small Skippers...not only on the Common but along hedgerows, and occasionally making their way into gardens.

Along the Woodstock Road several graceful Silver-washed Fritillaries were seen gliding along the verges next to Blenheim woods, and by mid-July exquisite Purple Hairstreaks could be observed flying over the tops of mature oak trees within the woods. Unfortunately the Blue butterfly

species have not fared so well this summer, possibly a result of the wet winter, resulting in low numbers of the Common Blue, Brown Argus and Small Blue, and there have been no sightings as yet of the Small Copper. It's too early to report on the situation regarding the Chalkhill Blue butterfly on our Common; last year numbers were down so let's hope they have recovered somewhat this year.



Dark-green Fritillary: Martin Gascoigne-Pees

On a more positive note, several beautiful Dark-green Fritillaries, a butterfly rarely seen in our area, were seen nectaring on scabious flowers on the Common in early July. After 30 years of recording butterflies in our area I saw my first Green Hairstreak (in May) in the same area. How lucky we are to live in such a butterfly-rich area.

Martin Gascoigne-Pees

## Ants

Often it is the unexpected in nature that opens the way for new understanding. Taking the lid off a compost bin has many surprises: all the worms feeding away, occasional mice, a face full of flies and once two slow worms basking in the rising heat. Today I didn't know what to think – it looked as if someone had scattered small baked beans over some rhubarb leaves I had added two days ago. I watched as a couple of ants wandered around and an earwig scuttled to the darker depths.

Steadily more black ants appeared and started to move the baked beans out of the light.

Black ants are one of the commonest UK ant species; a colony forms around a queen who can live 15 to 30 years. Colonies can be as many as 10,000 ants, and they manage the temperature for the eggs, larvae, pupae with tunnels and chambers; moving them up in the day and back down at night. The whole colony can be moved to get the right conditions. The small baked beans I saw are the pupae, wrapped in cocoons which protect them against lethal fungi.

Each ant has a particular task working for the colony; no ant can survive on its own. As we poke our heads out of lockdown, this feels an apt metaphor for our species. We cannot survive alone; we have to respect our living planet and all who live with us. Our grandchildren's fortunes do not depend on steel, tarmac, concrete and oil; the dead stuff of civilisation.

One of Stonesfield's iconic birds, the green woodpecker, flies by, no doubt looking for its next meal of ants.

John Sampson

## Local history

### William Buckland's Way

From around 1800, the Stonesfield slate miners started a lucrative sideline in selling the fossils they found in the Jurassic limestone from which the slates were made. Many of the young gentlemen of Oxford had taken up the fashionable collection of these wonders of nature, and a description of Stonesfield in the middle of the century mentions many fossil shops.

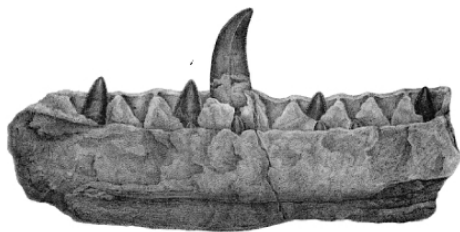
The fashion was new, and indeed the science was new: geology, the science of

the structure of the earth and how it came to have its present form was just beginning to develop. It had only recently been suggested that the earth might have a history other than the conventional Bible story, and that the age of the earth might be rather more than 6,000 years. The Edinburgh naturalist James Hutton is regarded as the father of modern geology: in a 1788 article, after considering the earth and its history at great length, he concluded that 'We find no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end.' The same year saw the word 'geology' first used in its modern sense. The new science was boosted by the Industrial Revolution, with its demand for mineral resources. And the canal surveyor William Smith was the first to map the rock strata of the British Isles in 1815. The suggestion that since the strata had been laid down successively, the deeper the strata the older the rocks, was made by the French naturalist Georges Cuvier.

William Buckland (1784-1856) acquired an interest in fossils as a Devon schoolboy, and he developed it throughout his Oxford undergraduate education in classics and theology, which led to his ordination as a priest. Once he had graduated and secured a college fellowship, he took further steps: from 1810 he attended the lectures of John Kidd, Reader in Mineralogy, and when Kidd moved to the more prestigious Readership in Anatomy in 1816, Buckland was made a substitute lecturer, until in 1818 he was appointed Reader in Mineralogy and Geology in his own right. He used this base to become one of the foremost British pioneers of the new geology.

His lectures in the Old Ashmolean Museum (now the Museum of the History

of Science) were enlivened with animal noises and imitations, and jokes that were considered too coarse by some of the more proper listeners. They were extremely popular. Sometimes he gave them in the field, on the hills or in the quarries around Oxford: he would have been well acquainted with Stonesfield and its fossils. By around 1820 there were enough of the huge specimens that were found there from time to time to attempt a description of the animal.



The first published dinosaur illustration: a one-foot section of the lower jaw of *Megalosaurus*

Buckland reported his findings about 'The great Fossil Lizard' to the Geological Society in London (of which he was President) in February 1824. This was the first scientific description of a dinosaur. The bones had come from different mines at different times, and from several individuals. The teeth showed the animal to be an enormous egg-laying 'lizard'. A thigh bone, ten inches around at its narrowest point, suggested that the whole animal was more than 40 feet long, so vast that Buckland named the genus *Megalosaurus* (giant lizard). The more general term *Dinosaur* (terrible lizard) was coined by Buckland's protégé, the anatomist Richard Owen, in 1841. The various parts of *Megalosaurus bucklandii* (as it is now called) can be seen in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, which should be reopening in

September 2020. The animal is considered an ancestor of *Tyrannosaurus rex*; its remains seem to be found nowhere other than Oxfordshire.

Besides Megalosaurus, other significant finds in the Jurassic were jawbones of the tiny ‘Stonesfield opossums,’ which the visiting Cuvier helped Buckland to identify as the oldest mammals then known. These were representatives of the little animals which coexisted with the dinosaurs, and formed the basis for the subsequent evolution of all the mammals.

The bones of Megalosaurus came from deep mines, as much as 40 feet deep; presumably there are more still down there. On the surface, lesser fossils can still be found. Stonesfield’s scientific fame was short lived: once the hunt for dinosaurs took off, many more spectacular discoveries have been made all over the world. One by one, the Stonesfield fossil shops would have closed, just like the extraordinary number of pubs that catered to the slate miners, leaving the peaceful (but dry) Cotswold village that we know today.

Nick Fisher

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**Survival**

Waking after a long dark winter's sleep, the first lukewarm rays of the sun cause us to stir.

Is it time to see if the snow has gone and the cold winds have subsided?

Our roots stretch down into the ground and gain sustenance from the nutrients beneath.

Our petals unfold and reach out to the watery sun above.

What is happening this year? We feel unrest and uncertainty as our beauty becomes slowly visible.  
Even so, our colours, shapes and smells delight the earth once again  
and we have survived the winter shutdown, rested but returned as usual.  
Changes are inevitable, some are an improvement, nature survives.

The pleasure we give to humans has been eagerly awaited and they embrace the return of spring and freedom.  
Our beauty which was denied to them during the long months of winter has returned  
along with promises of peace, hopes and survival for the future.

We have woken to a world of fear, change and even death, yet nature never lets them down, we have shown that survival is possible.  
Tiny daisies, buttercups, cow parsley, bees and other vital insects are here again, surviving the darkest moments beneath the soil  
but we have bloomed yet again.

Despair is not in our vocabulary – we are showing you that life goes on, so enjoy and celebrate with us because our world is magnificent, strong and beautiful.  
The seasons show us the way forward through their vivid, lively and courageous example of survival.  
Diana Letchford

# Clubs, societies & sport

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## **Stonesfield Gardening Club**

Well, Stonesfield is definitely gardening, as you can see from the very attractive plots in the village, and the productive allotments too. We are also fortunate in that we all know our neighbours well enough to chat and swap experiences over the garden wall. We can even, as of the beginning of July, invite a couple of friends in to the back garden for a drink and a chat and show off what we've been doing. What we can't do unfortunately is hold our Gardening Club meetings and outings, and I know we are all missing them.

Ruth Madder from Bridewell was meant to be visiting us last month and we are hoping that we can visit their garden soon. When I have details, I will let members know.

In the meantime, keep weeding, deadheading, mowing and enjoying the fruits of your labours!

Diane Bates  
diane@bateshome.co.uk  
www.stonesfieldgardening.info

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## **Stonesfield Tennis Club**

The Coronavirus caused the end of all sport when the lockdown was first imposed in March. However, the Government relaxed the lockdown for golf and tennis in May. Since then Stonesfield Tennis Club has flourished with more than 100 people joining the Club, and the courts being used more than 25% of the time – not bad for a very small club. Our courts have the latest artificial carpet surface which are a joy to

play on, and with an extremely low joining fee we have attracted members from other villages.

If you'd like to join the Club, the individual adult fee is £20, family membership is £40 and children under 16 are £5. We use the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) online membership system, so if you want to join please email [richard.morris@zen.co.uk](mailto:richard.morris@zen.co.uk) in the first instance to say which membership you want to take out. I will register you with the system and the LTA will contact you directly for your fee.

A Government condition of play resuming is that members must book a court in advance rather than turning up on spec and hanging around until a court becomes vacant. When you join, in addition to getting the code to the court gate, you will also get a link to the LTA's court booking system which you must use.

Coaching for adults and juniors is now available, for individuals or groups. If you would like to join the club and take up coaching, contact Andy Tacon ([andrew.tacon@outlook.com](mailto:andrew.tacon@outlook.com)) and he will give you the coach's details so you can make your own arrangements.

Richard Morris (898210)

# Church news

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## **Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield**

**(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)**

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

For any enquiries or help, including pastoral support, arrangements for funerals etc, please email: [stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org) or contact the Area Dean: The Rev Jeremy Auld, Rector of Woodstock and Bladon (810749), [www.woodstockandbladon.com](http://www.woodstockandbladon.com).

**Parish Letter :** On 4th July, after fifteen weeks of lockdown, the Government permitted the easing of some restrictions, though several others still remain in force.

Whilst the lockdown created many problems, difficulties, and anxieties, for many people, it also brought out a lot of good, indeed the best in many people, in terms of looking out for and caring for one another. This is what Christians are called to do at all times, to 'love one's neighbour as oneself', and love is shown by acts of kindness.

Over the past few months some posters, prepared by Stonesfield Primary School, showing some themes from a book called *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy, have appeared on some telegraph poles around the village. One of the posters shows the boy and the mole sitting on a branch of a tree and the mole asking the boy what he wants to be when he grows up, and the answer is: 'Kind', said the boy.

Many neighbourhoods have told of how the lockdown has brought people together (whilst social distancing), as people have shown great kindness to each other, especially to those having to isolate themselves.

The frontline workers of the NHS, the emergency services, the Police and the armed forces, postal services, delivery drivers, refuse collectors, railway and bus services, and everyone who has helped to maintain essential services during this pandemic, have all been showing great kindness.

And throughout the nation people have taken opportunities to express their appreciation.

'Kindness' is specifically mentioned in the Bible, such as in that familiar passage on 'love' in 1 Corinthians 13, (often read at weddings), where we read '*love is patient, love is kind...*' And again, in Colossians 3:12, we read '*As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*' and, in Galatians 5:22, speaking of the evidence, the manifestation of God's Spirit, we read '*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*'.

So let us all, even after the confinements of lockdown are eased, continue (in the words of St Paul in Ephesians 4:32), to '*be kind and compassionate to one another*'.

Rev Ian Farrow

Good news! Church services have now resumed in Stonesfield!

### **August services**

Sunday 2 August [Trinity 8] 11am  
All Age Worship

Sunday 9 August [Trinity 9] 11am  
Parish Communion

Sunday 16 August [Trinity 10] 11am  
Parish Communion

Sunday 23 August [Trinity 11] 11am  
Parish Communion

Sunday 30 August [Trinity 12] 10am  
United Benefice Morning Prayer

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### **Stonesfield Methodist Church**

Sunday Services will hopefully begin in September, and in such a way as will be safe and comfortable for everyone. The online Worship Services are very helpful indeed, and a huge thank you to those who make them possible.

So much is found online these days and quite recently I came across a photo of a wild bee orchid, spotted locally. I set off that afternoon to seek a view of one for myself, walking footpaths and grasslands. Sadly my search was in vain. But no matter! there were plenty of other delights to see – and many of them on village verges. Chelsea flower show in Stonesfield!

Jesus speaks of searching to seek God's delights, offering His words of wisdom. *'Ask and it will be given to you: Seek and you will find: Knock and the door will be opened.'* St. Matthew's Gospel 7:7

Kathleen Albért (891733)

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### **Roman Catholic Worship**

*'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'*

Karl Marx: Critique of the Gotha Programme 1875

Who would have thought that a slogan that helped form a part of the Communist Manifesto could also be used as an interpretation of the contributions made by Saints Peter and Paul, whose feast was celebrated on Monday 29 June? St Peter was by all accounts, including his own self-assessment, an uneducated fisherman but he was blessed by perceptive faith and steadfast loyalty after his own transgressions and betrayal of Christ before the Crucifixion. Peter pursued enlightenment through his loyalty to Jesus and his message, abandoning his life as a fisherman to become *'fishers of men'* (Matthew 4:18–19, Mark 1:16–17), and as such was the one chosen by Jesus to lead the early Christian communities. Each Pope since is acknowledged as St. Peter's successor.

Paul, on the other hand, was a high-born Pharisee from Tarsus, and a Roman citizen with authority to persecute Christians. Paul never met, and nor was a physical companion of, Jesus. His conversion was through that famous vision on the road to Damascus. Paul understood profoundly the transformative nature of Jesus's message, and his enduring gift to us was to convey it for us through the ages.

These two pillars of the Church have been linked together in their unlikely partnership, demonstrating that principle of synergy: that together in unity, we are always stronger than the strongest single person among us. Unlike in so much, but united together, they brought us Jesus's message of eternal redemption through his

death, that 'Good News' and created the foundations of Christianity that we can still all share.

St. Teresa's will be closed for Holy Mass until further notice, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it is open for private prayer. Please check the St. Teresa's website for updates: [www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/2015/02/09/welcome-to-the-website-for-st-teresas-roman-catholic-church-charlbury/](http://www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/2015/02/09/welcome-to-the-website-for-st-teresas-roman-catholic-church-charlbury/).

Currently the church is open:

Wednesday: 10-11.45am  
Saturday: 9.30-11.15am  
Sunday: 9.30-11.15am

Holy Mass is being live-streamed on Sundays from a number of different churches:

**St. Chad's Cathedral**, Birmingham: 11am

**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)

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*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.*

Deacon Clive Dytor's ordination: this has now been confirmed as 12 September at St Chad's Cathedral. More details will be available for parishioners who wish to

travel independently to St. Chad's to celebrate Deacon Clive's ordination.

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: please see [www.wstteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://www.wstteresaschurch-charlbury.com/) or contact Clive Dytor: [chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com](mailto:chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com)

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield – Keep praying.

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## New Church thought

Life right now is hard in many ways. Some probably think 'Where is God in all this awfulness?' I say, 'Look for the helpers.' Another way of looking at it: 'God's work, our hands.'

I'm humbled to see that here and across the world, right alongside the grim things happening, lots of people are doing what they can, however big or small, to help others get by, feel supported, find something to smile about. Seems to me that this shows humanity as it was intended to be. Our debt to those many helpers is huge. Even more humbling, sometimes they expect nothing in return; the feeling of being useful to someone else is enough.

This extract from Swedenborg puts it another way: 'God loves each and every human being. He cannot benefit them directly, but only indirectly by means of other people. He therefore breathes into people His love.'

Stay safe, look out for each other, and pass forward the helpfulness where you can.

Dale Morris

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## **The office in Witney is open again for business!**

**We are open for general enquiries  
10am – 2pm, Monday – Friday,  
and by appointment only outside of these times, and Saturday mornings.**

**To make an appointment, please call:  
David on 01993-627713; Mandy on 01993-627814, or Sally on 01993-627712;  
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**We will help with holiday advice and information about the destinations that  
are open to visitors from the UK. We will also keep you updated on how the  
Government's quarantine regulations might affect your holiday plans.**



**To comply with safety requirements, we are limiting the number of visitors to the office  
to 4 people at any one time.  
Even though staff will be sitting behind safety-screens, we request our clients wear face-coverings  
when visiting the office, alternatively these can be provided, if required.**



