



## New Year, new vaccines



Photo: Daniel Schludi

### Vaccinations are under way...

The news that the first local people – those over 80 – are now receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations is undoubtedly the best news for a very long time.

In Stonesfield we are unusual in that residents have a choice of three local GP surgeries. At the time of writing (mid-January), the most elderly patients are being given their vaccinations not at the surgery itself, but at regional centres.

Patients who normally go to Charlbury surgery are being invited to Carterton Health Centre and Woodstock patients are going to Islip Village Hall. The first Long Hanborough patients went to the Windrush Health Centre, Witney, but vaccinations are starting at the surgery itself (although please note

that these arrangements may change again). It is expected that vaccinations will be given at the other surgeries as soon as that is possible.

As well as the special priority groups like those in care homes and the frontline workers, all three surgeries are working progressively from the most elderly, downward through the age tiers according to the Government's vaccination rollout plan.

The GP surgeries are contacting eligible people directly to invite them for vaccination. They are all asking people **NOT to contact** the surgeries to ask when their appointment will be available. If you need transport for your vaccination, please see the article on the Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme, this issue, page 4.



**Happy New Year** from the editors, publishers and distributors of *The Stonesfield Slate*.

A big thank you to all our advertisers who have continued to support the *Slate* and appear in this first issue of the new year. To local businesses that currently do not advertise, please consider using the *Slate* in 2021.

Also we appreciate all the people who have taken time to write articles, send in news and generally ensure the *Slate* is a source of useful information. Please continue to do this as without you the *Slate* would be infinitely poorer.

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# Notices & news

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## Covid news: Stay at Home

Since 6 January, in accordance with the law, you must stay at home. You may only leave your home for the following reasons:

- To shop for food and necessities, for yourself or a vulnerable person.
- To go to work if you are a key worker, critical to national infrastructure or absolutely cannot work from home.
- To seek medical assistance or avoid risk or harm. This includes fleeing domestic abuse.
- Attend education or childcare, for key workers, key workers in training, and vulnerable children.
- Exercise once a day. This can be done with your household or one other individual. You should not leave your local area.
- To provide support, care or assistance to a vulnerable person, or to your support/childcare bubble.

All schools will be shut from Tuesday 5 January. Vulnerable children and children of key workers should continue to attend school. Children receiving free school meals will continue to receive these during lockdown. More devices will be provided to support online learning.

You cannot meet other people socially indoors, unless you live with them or are part of a support bubble.

This is not an exhaustive list. Please see the official guidance at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) where you can find the rules in full.

I know how difficult this lockdown will be for so many. Please let me assure you this was an absolute last resort, as it should have been. However, if we do not act now, there is a real risk of the NHS being overwhelmed, as reflected by the Covid Threat Level rising to 5. We now all have a collective responsibility to do what we can to protect the NHS and save lives.

Robert Courts, MP

More information about help available locally is on pages 4 and 11 plus at [www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/](http://www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/)

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## Thank you

We would like to thank and acknowledge the support that the Community Trust has given to our son Samuel, and us as a family.

Just before Christmas Samuel received a TriRide, which is a hybrid handcycle attachment for his wheelchair. The Community Trust very kindly provided 50% of the cost. The TriRide is invaluable to Samuel, it gives him independence, allows him to do as others do and explore our surroundings, keep fit and be an active teenage boy.

This is not the first time that the Community Trust has supported Samuel and we appreciate their generosity.

The Appleton Family

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## Dear friends

We would like to thank everyone for their very great kindness since David's death.

We have been deeply moved by the number of gifts, cards, and letters of caring support that we have received. This is truly a wonderful village in which to live.

Jenny, Jonathan and Andy Lines

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## Looking for our forever family home

We've lived in the wonderful village of Stonesfield for 5 years now and we're looking to buy a family home.

We've purchased our shares in the pub and we're invested in this wonderful community. We'd love to stay here, we just need space to accommodate our family and working from home.

Perhaps you are thinking of moving this year and may be interested in selling to us?

If you might be interested, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact us at: [findingourfamilyhome@gmail.com](mailto:findingourfamilyhome@gmail.com)

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## Woodstock Rd closure: 25-26 Feb 2021

To facilitate carriageway patching works, OCC will close the Woodstock Road, from the war memorial up to just before the Combe turning, and impose a 'No Waiting' restriction.

The diversion will direct cars from the village to go through Combe and past the Akeman Street farm to rejoin the Woodstock Road beyond the roadworks.

The temporary closure will operate from 25 Feb from 9:30am to 3:30pm. The anticipated completion date is 26 Feb.

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## Suriya Express shop hours

As we are experiencing a very low volume of customers after 7pm these days, we decided to revise our opening hours for the shop as follows (until mid-February):

Mon-Fri: 7:30-19:30

Sat: 8:00-19:30

Sun: 8:00-19:00

The Post Office remains open as usual for you. The opening hours are: Mon-Fri: 9:00-17:00, Sat: 9:00-13:00, Sun: closed (even though myself or my wife Rekha are happy to serve you anytime during the shop opening hours)

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## Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme has RESTARTED

We are delighted to let you know that we are now able to drive you again for your vaccinations or for other medical appointments. Full Covid-19 safety precautions are now in place, to protect your safety and that of our drivers. If you need to book transport, please call me at the number below.

We have not been able to offer lifts since the first lockdown last March, as most of our existing team had to step back to safeguard their own safety. I would like to express my huge thanks to all those former drivers who gave so willingly of their time to help transport people in the past, and to say if you would like to join us again whenever things return to normal, you will be more than welcome.

I also want to thank all our newly recruited drivers, who have faced a mountain of new information, form-filling and guidance before they can even start. It's no small ask to meet all the requirements of today's

difficult environment, and I am sure that many Stonesfield residents will be grateful for your services.

Many other people have helped us get up and running again. I would like to thank particularly David Brown and Karen East from the Parish Council, Mat and Rekha at the shop, and Lindsey Sellar and Kate Harris for spreading the word. And finally, a big thank you to Sarah Walker, Catherine Jones and all the Scouts for delivering information about us with their Christmas card deliveries.

Viv Kendall (891803)

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## #backthewhitehorse Campaign Update



The community in Stonesfield and surrounding villages, as well as supporters from a number of countries around the world, enthusiastically backed our fundraising campaign to save The White Horse. We were able to open purchase negotiations in early December, but the selling agent notified the Stonesfield Community Pub committee on 12 January that the owner has decided to accept an offer from another party.

This was very disappointing news for everyone who has supported this campaign, particularly since the owner wrote to us last summer to say that he would sell to the community if we could meet his asking price. Thanks to the

extraordinary generosity and goodwill of all our members, that is exactly what we did. We also met all his requirements during negotiations. This meant not only offering the full asking price, but also committing to complete the contract paperwork as quickly as possible and absorbing the significant building repair costs identified in our surveyor's report.

We do not know who the new owner is. We would very much welcome it if he or she opens The White Horse again to run as a proper village pub. If that is not their intention, we stand ready to discuss the possibility of still bringing it into community ownership or if needed to challenge vociferously any application to convert it into a residential property.

For now, our next steps are to try to make contact with the new owner to learn more about their plans. We thank everyone who has supported us so far and hope you will still back us as we continue to try to save our White Horse.

#BTWH Committee  
[info@backthewhitehorse.com](mailto:info@backthewhitehorse.com)

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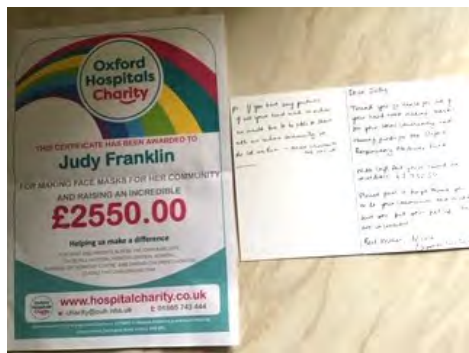
## Community Face Covering Tree

As you know it's been a long journey for me with making face masks for the Stonesfield Community Face Covering Tree. It started with my Mum (85) having to visit the hospital and worrying about Covid, so I made her some masks. So, in June I was making Masks non-stop with any spare fabric I had and giving them away by hanging them outside on the 'Tree' (fence) outside my house. The line was replenished twice daily until October, people had kindly left donations of fabric, thread, elastic and money.

I decided to donate all the money to NHS Oxfordshire Hospitals Charity (respiratory unit, Churchill Hospital).

Then in October, I had to slow down as I was exhausted, as I am also a 24/7 carer in my home and my family deserved more than ready meals every day. So, from October I started asking for donations of at least £2 per mask and only put them out on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Then in late November I introduced 'FESTIVE MASKS' which I did up until the last weekend before Christmas, then finally called it a day.

I had made over 3000 masks and had even been gifted some from other people. A total of £2,550.00 was sent off to the charity and today I received a lovely Thank you card and certificate from them, telling me that with Gift Aid we as a community had raised £2,932.50.



I can't thank you, the Community of Stonesfield and surrounding areas, enough. What an achievement we have done, making something out of this terrible time we are in.

Can't explain how doing all of this has made me feel, it's been a fantastic journey is all I can say. I have also received so many thank you cards, flowers and chocolates that it's been overwhelming and

I'm not afraid to say I have shed a tear or two.

However, due to demand, masks are still available from my doorstep for a cash donation of your choice, just leave it in the Loyalty Box.

My fabric stash is now so big that my husband has fitted me up with a craft room (something I have wanted for 20 years, but never got around to doing), so no more donations of fabric please, though it has been wonderful with all the support received.

Judy Franklin, Community Face Covering Tree, Woodstock Road

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## David Lines – my dear friend

2021 started with the sad news that David Lines died on New Year's Day morning. With great stoicism he'd been fighting prostate cancer for a number of years.

Over the years he lived in Stonesfield he contributed to many community organisations and activities. David would be the first to say that he didn't make much of his schooldays in London. He made up for what he lacked in formal qualifications throughout his life, eventually becoming a senior manager at the Halifax bank, then in OCC. He used his managerial abilities and his financial acumen when he became a Stonesfield Primary School governor. He brought the same skills to Cecily's Fund as a trustee, and to the village Tennis Club, successfully winning Lottery funding for a third tennis court.

David was an invaluable member of the Sustainable Stonesfield committee fighting the CALA planning application, analysing housing figures and ensuring our communications were to the point. Anyone

present at the Public Inquiry will never forget his impassioned speech, cutting through the developers' legal and planning mumbo-jumbo and getting a rousing round of applause.

David loved his home county, Cornwall, although he was born over the Tamar in Plymouth. He had a passion for all things relating to the industrial revolution, especially Brunel, one of his great heroes. Coming from Plymouth, another hero was Drake, and throughout his life David sailed all sorts of different craft. I'm privileged to have sailed with him on numerous occasions. There was nothing so enjoyable as sailing across Plymouth Sound and up the Yelm to have a pub lunch before racing back home on a broad reach, or more frequently gently drifting back because the wind had dropped and putting the world to rights. He was good at that.

David got involved with the Stonesfield Players, initially helping build sets and doing the lighting, but then he adapted Nevil Shutes' No Highway, performed as a radio play in the St James Centre to great acclaim. This started a whole new activity for him – writing. The next radio play, The Shadow of the Desert, was his own work showing another hero of his, Lawrence of Arabia, during his time in Plymouth after the war. At the end of last year he finished writing another radio play with Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson, In Our Defence, to be performed later this spring in his memory as an online radio play.

Finally another of David's heroes, this time musical – Stan Getz. David was a great lover of jazz and for him there was only ever one saxophonist – Stan – despite me suggesting other sax players were available. So, it was no surprise that David

took up playing the sax. He played regularly with The Village Idiots, and many will have fond memories of him playing and MC'ing at the Septemberfest.

This is my personal reminiscence of David, but many others will also regard him as a great friend, he was that kind of chap. Stonesfield will miss him – he was happy to chat to anybody and everybody and lend a helping hand – so generous. Our thoughts are with Jenny, his sons Andy and Jonathan, and his grandchildren.

Richard Morris (898210)

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## Village Hall News

I am so pleased that we managed to put on the Christmas Market, back at the beginning of December. I think we all needed the escapism of a festive event, just to give us a tiny bit of normality, and to see our friends and neighbours, albeit in a very socially distanced way.

I wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone involved in organising, and attending, we really are so lucky to have such a supportive and lovely community!

This is never a great time of year with its lack of daylight hours, and the cold, so it's such a shame that we are unable to run clubs or groups in the current lockdown situation.

Moving forward we are looking forward with hope, that in the next few months there will be some positive strides to a little more freedom of movement, taking us back into the direction of normality.

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)

Secretary & Booking Clerk for Stonesfield Village Hall  
Stonesfieldvh@gmail.com

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## Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2020

As you are all aware, due to Covid-19, fundraising for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2020 was severely curtailed this year with no door-to-door collections and static boxes only out for a few days.

However, that has not stopped the wonderful people of Stonesfield from raising funds and the magnificent total of £1,797.29p has been raised and deposited with the Royal British Legion. This is about £150 less than we would normally collect so this truly is an extraordinary effort by the village.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed or helped to raise this money and can assure you it will be used wisely. Your continued generosity is greatly appreciated.

David Brown (898193)

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Organiser  
for Stonesfield

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## Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Do you have a relative living in a care home in Oxfordshire? If so, Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear about you and your loved one's experiences during Covid-19. The county's independent health and social care watchdog would particularly like to know what contact you've been able to have with your relative since the first lockdown last March, and what impact this has had on you and them.

You can share your experiences by completing a short anonymous survey at [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/carehomefamilies/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/carehomefamilies/) If you would like a paper copy or a translation of the survey you can contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire

on 01865 520520 or  
at [hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

Healthwatch Oxfordshire will report what it hears to social care decision-makers, so this is your chance to have your voice heard.

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## Very nearly a prize...

*The Slate* publishers submitted the Feb and March 2020 editions to the National Parish Magazine Awards competition. Out of 262 competition entries, *The Stonesfield Slate* achieved 10th place in the A5 category. Pretty good going – well done *Slate* team!

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## Definitely a prize – an OBE!

A newcomer to Stonesfield, John Liversidge (a retired police officer) has been awarded an OBE for his extensive work for Thames Valley Partnership in supporting victims of domestic abuse. Here are some details of the work he's been involved with:

The TecSOS project, part of Vodafone's 'Mobiles for Good' initiative, is active in almost every police force across the UK and in several countries overseas. The technical device behind it, supplied to high-risk victims of domestic abuse, provides an immediate response in times of crisis and emergency.

John and his team developed the Bright Sky App to provide advice and support to victims of various types of abuse (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual abuse, forced marriage). The App is available to download for free and enables victims, or those concerned for potential victims, to identify their risk and find local help and support. The TecSOS device has been



provided to over 20,000 people in the UK alone, with almost every activation meaning a life is saved.

You can download the UK Bright Sky app in Google play and Apple Store for free, or view a basic version via your internet browser: [www.bright-sky.org.uk](http://www.bright-sky.org.uk).

If you have any enquiries about Bright Sky, email [brightsky@tecsos.co.uk](mailto:brightsky@tecsos.co.uk).

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## Thames Valley Police

... has issued a warning to motorists following an increasing number of thefts of catalytic converters. These contain precious minerals from which criminals are profiting. Offenders most commonly target parked Toyota Prius, Toyota Auris, Honda Jazz, Honda Civic, Honda CRVs and Lexus RX400 vehicles. There are a number of steps you can take to try to protect your vehicle's catalytic converter:

- If it's bolted on, have the bolts welded shut
- If parking in a car park, try to park against a wall and/or not at the end of a row
- At home, park in a locked garage or as close to your property as possible
- Mark the converter with a forensic marker.

Please speak to your vehicle's manufacturer to establish what locks and guards are available.

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## Road safety

I have become increasingly concerned by the behaviour of everyone using our village roads and the attitude of some relating to other users. Everyone has a right to use the roads equally under the law. However, that does not override the duty of care and

common sense which keeps us all safe, nor does it override common courtesy for others. There seems to be a dangerous attitude of self-entitlement emerging that will most likely lead to accident, incident and injury. I really hope no worse... Drivers, cyclists, walkers and other road users need to modify their behaviour to manage risk for themselves and others.

Having been a villager for many years, I have driven, cycled, motorcycled, walked, ran and stumbled on these roads; there is now a very different environment from when I arrived. The increase in houses and people has changed the environment, with increased traffic and little investment in infrastructure, all leading to a sharp increase in risk.

All I ask is for greater consideration for others and especially that everyone takes responsibility for their own behaviour and safety. There is no comfort in blaming others, after being injured or worse, when you can manage your own risk. We all want a safer Stonesfield – for that, we must all take responsibility for ourselves.

(name & address supplied)

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## Community Speedwatch

Morelock have loaned the Parish Council a second Speed Indicator Device (SID). This will be used to monitor vehicle speeds around the village until it has to be returned.

Covid restrictions mean that Community Speedwatch can not operate and record details of individual vehicles exceeding the speed limit. This will resume once Thames Valley Police and insurers allow.

SAFER  
[www.stonesfield.online/safer/](http://www.stonesfield.online/safer/)

# Politics & local affairs

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## **Stonesfield Playing Field Association CIO – Tractor Appeal**

The playing fields in Stonesfield are managed by the above charity run by local trustees and volunteers. The facilities are extremely well utilised, hosting the Strikers and the men's football and cricket clubs.

The tractor that is used for ground maintenance was donated many years ago and has done fantastic service. However it is now over 50 years old and lacks a cab which make winter use a test of endurance. The trustees have therefore decided to look for a replacement and have been advised that a reasonable budget would be in the region of £24,000.

The charity's financial position is not such that it can make this purchase out of its own funds, although through a combination of grants and own reserves the trustees have currently raised £14,000 towards the likely cost.

We are therefore putting a funding appeal out to the local community through CrowdFunder at the following link [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funding-for-a-replacement-tractor](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funding-for-a-replacement-tractor)

We hope you are able to support us. Please contact Andrew if you have questions or would like to know more.

Andrew Tacon  
[Andrew.tacon@outlook.com](mailto:Andrew.tacon@outlook.com)

## **Stonesfield Parish Council**

### **From the January meeting**

Cllr Hudspeth circulated his report ahead of the meeting. He also discussed the drive to push for 20mph on some of our roads, including Stonesfield. The SAFER team have also pushed for 20mph limits.

The Covid situation is rapidly changing; we are currently in a national lockdown. The vaccine is being rolled out – see front page for details. **People must wait for the surgeries to contact them.**

Legal – It was agreed that we would push through the land transfer to the Playing Fields Association. We are trying to get that done as soon as possible.

Precept / Budget – The budget was circulated for 2021/22 ahead of the meeting. Councillors considered an increase to the precept following the finance committee meeting in December. Cllr Baldwin opposed the precept figure on the basis the increase should be higher. All other councillors voted in favour of the increase. The precept (budget) will increase to £33,993 per year. This equates to approximately a 5% increase per Band D property.

It was noted that there was excess surface water in the Ridings Close. The clerk has contacted 'Fix my street'.

Criminal damage on Ollie Stobo's land – The PCSO has had damage reports. Councillors would like to meet him on site

when Covid permits. Members of the public are reminded to keep to footpaths.

Cllr David Baldwin reported that Stonesfield Mutual Aid ran the reverse advent calendar programme which was very successful (40 boxes donated). Thanks to the village for their contributions. Separately, some fundraising and gifts were gathered and given out, distributed along with approx. 50 food parcels from the Chippy Larder. People really needed these and it went very well. Approx. £400 worth of £50 emergency grants were also given during the Christmas period. More people will need to be supported ongoing.

Cllr David Brown advised that David Lines has sadly passed away. This is a big loss to the village. Our condolences are with his family.

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## **Other news from the Parish Council:**

### **Loneliness – Do you know your neighbours?**

There are many people within our area who live alone and may be lonely. That's not to say that everyone who lives alone is lonely of course. Many people who live alone have great friendships and social connections. Some do not and some people in a busy household can sometimes feel lonely. Some people are very scared of the whole Covid situation and may appreciate a friendly chat. Please look out for people who may be lonely or scared and if you cannot help please contact Stonesfield Mutual Aid so that we can make contact with them (confidentially) to check they are OK.

If you are able to help, starting a conversation could make all the difference. You can knock on the door and stand back

(due to Covid), telephone or pop a note through their door.

**Age UK Oxfordshire** 0345 450 1276 also have many good support services.

**NHS Support:** You can call for yourself or someone you are concerned about. In emergency call **111** or for longer term support please call 01865 901222. Young people can access the same services or can contact Young Minds by texting YM to 85258.

**Food / Emergency funding help (Stonesfield Mutual Aid):** Stonesfield Mutual Aid can help you in complete confidence. We can provide advice and small emergency grants if you find yourself unable to meet an essential bill. Do not delay contacting if you need help, don't think you do not deserve help. Lots of people who are normally OK are finding themselves in temporary need. MANY people in the parish and surrounding areas are struggling as the Covid situation continues. Please contact Cllr David Baldwin (d.baldwin@stonesfieldpc.uk, 07957 497513) if you need support. If you would like to donate funds, the link to do this is: [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/david-baldwin-3?utm\\_term=B5WxjbyEVe](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/david-baldwin-3?utm_term=B5WxjbyEVe). If you would prefer to do a bank transfer, the details are: Sort Code 20-65-20 Account no 93964256. Please contact Cllr Baldwin if you have any questions.

**Other Help:** Citizens Advice are able to give emergency help and advice and can access emergency grants – see [www.citizensadvicewestoxon.org/contact-us/contact/](http://www.citizensadvicewestoxon.org/contact-us/contact/) If you cannot find the advice you need, they can be contacted on their Adviceline on Freephone 0808 2787908.

## **Transport help – Covid vaccinations:**

Doctors' surgeries have started to call people for Covid vaccinations. See front page of the *Slate* for where you will be asked to attend. **You will be contacted by your doctor when it is your turn – please do not call the surgeries.**

If you are unable to get to the vaccination appointment there is a group offering transport (although not guaranteed, as volunteer led): Volunteer Driver Service – 45 pence per mile (to cover fuel costs) – contact 0300 303 0125 to see if they can help you with transport. See also Stonesfield Voluntary Transport note on p.4.

## **24/7 Mental Health Helpline for Oxfordshire – FREE**

Adults: 0800 783 0119 or 01865 904 997  
Children and young people: 0800 783 0121 or 01865 904 998

It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for people who need mental health care when their situation is not life-threatening. It will support people of all ages including children and older adults.

[www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/](http://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/) is also available for ANYONE who needs support. FREE.

**Domestic Abuse:** If you're experiencing domestic abuse, TVP can put you in touch with other support organisations that understand your specific needs. Below is a list of organisations who can assist you.

**The police:** Call the UK police non-emergency number, 101, if you need support or advice from the police and it's **not** an emergency. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use our textphone service on 18001 101.

You can reach the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service Helpline by calling 0800 731 0055 between 10am and 7pm on weekdays.

The **National Domestic Violence Helpline** is free, confidential, and available 24-hours a day. Call 0808 200 0247.

**West Oxfordshire District Council:** If you, or someone you know, is in urgent need of help and support you can contact us on 01993 861077 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. If you need more general advice, please email [community.support@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:community.support@westoxon.gov.uk). If you require urgent Covid-related support over the weekend or outside of these hours, please call 0151 34 32 945. (This will be charged at the national rate.)

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## **West Oxfordshire news**

**Broadband:** More than 10,000 rural homes and businesses in West Oxfordshire now have access to ultrafast full-fibre internet, providing them with some of the fastest broadband speeds in the world. This milestone for the District has been delivered by rural broadband provider Gigaclear, in partnership with WODC and the Government's broadband agency Building Digital UK (BDUK). Many of these properties were part of the Connecting West Oxfordshire Project which has seen WODC and BDUK invest £3.1m between them with Gigaclear adding a further £5m. The remainder were delivered by Gigaclear commercially.

**Hanborough Station:** WODC's Cabinet approved the £15,000 funding which will come from the unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant and will be used to match-fund a £15,000 contribution from Oxfordshire County Council. The aim

is to see a range of improvements introduced to boost its importance as a key transport hub, reducing pressure on the A40. The Hanborough Station Sub-group, part of the North Cotswold Line Task Force, is hoping for additional trains between Hanborough and Oxford.

**An NHS Covid-19 testing centre** has been built in Witney to improve support for residents. The building is situated in the Woodford Way car park and is expected to remain for at least three months. The site will operate from 8am-8pm. It means that around 80 long-stay car-parking places will be out of action. However, all short-term parking will remain in place for shoppers. Alternative long-stay parking is available on levels 7 and 8 of the nearby Marriott's Walk multi-storey car park and Zone G of the Woolgate car park, while the Council will make provision for an additional 75 long-stay car parking spaces at its Woodgreen and Elmfield offices.

**Electric vehicle charging points:** Six car parks across the District will be part of the first phase of the Oxfordshire Park and Charge project. They will provide a total of 35 charging points capable of charging 70 vehicles. Installation work is expected to start in the spring with the project set for completion by the summer. The car parks set to install charging points are Woodford Way, Witney; Back Lane, Eynsham; Black Bourton Road, Carterton; Hensington Road, Woodstock and New Street, Chipping Norton. WODC will also create five charging points at its offices in Woodgreen, Witney.

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## From our District Councillor

Another and even stricter lockdown! Absolutely necessary as the infection figures are rising and the death rate is breath-taking. But not all gloom and despondency – Covid-19 vaccinations have started to roll out in our two villages. At the time of writing, 9 January, the Woodstock surgery team is hard at work in Islip injecting patients from its surgery lists who are elderly and deemed vulnerable. Reports I have received today congratulate the teams for their efficiency, speed and welcoming atmosphere. Having experienced it myself, I can only endorse these comments. Well done all of you at Woodstock Surgery!

WODC has urged local businesses to be patient with regard to the grants available as a result of the lockdown. So far, some £1,059,264 has gone out to 642 businesses in our area. A further £38,340 has been given to 45 pubs which have suffered closures. Now, because of the latest restrictions, businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure field can claim a one-off grant of up to £9,000 per property. Although a goodly proportion of this money comes from central government, an unexpectedly large amount has been culled from West Oxfordshire's reserves. That this is possible is primarily due to the good housekeeping policies of the Conservative majority's policy of wise and considerate local government. One only has to look at Northampton's plight to see the dangers of excessive expenditure without wise investment. Our District Council has managed to preserve all services without loss and maintained all grant facilities for our residents.

Council is in the process of publishing a revised affordable housing planning document which will go out for public consultation shortly. The consultation period will last for 6 weeks.

Preparations for the Budget for 2021/2022 are progressing apace. Hopes are high that all facilities and opportunities for our residents will be fully maintained for the coming year.

May I, on behalf of all my colleagues and friends on the Council, wish you all well in the coming days. Life will not be as we know it, nor as we would wish it to be, but I know that in the final analysis we will pull through. We must all hunker down and follow the national guidelines. This will add as much strength to the fight against this horrid disease as possible and will ensure that the wonderful work done by our scientists is successful.

Keep strong, keep safe and keep smiling.

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

## **Oxfordshire County Council**

Our partnership with NHS Test and Trace has been improving through the autumn. I will continue to lobby to have real time information so that we can reduce the spread of the virus at an earlier stage.

OCC is working with the local NHS team and City/District colleagues to manage how the vaccine will be administered to residents across the county. I would like to caution, however, that even after the rollout of the vaccine is underway, the threat from COVID-19 still remains real. We are therefore continuing to underline the need for people to follow protective measures to minimise the risk. These include washing your hands, covering your face and increasing ventilation in enclosed settings, and maintaining a social distance from others where possible.

We are in the process of setting the budget to go before Full Council 9 February.

The parking situation in Woodstock needs to be addressed, I will work with the Town Council, District Council and other key partners to find a solution. This is not just about the centre of Woodstock as there is displacement parking on other local roads, with visitors to Blenheim also parking in and around Brook Hill and Old Woodstock. All these areas need to be considered if there is to be more enforcement. The solution will not be easy and will not please everybody, but the current situation is not sustainable.

Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ian Hudspeth (07956 270 318)  
ian.hudspeth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME IS RESTARTING**

Volunteer drivers are now available to take you for vaccination or other medical appointments. Full COVID-19 precautions are in place to ensure your safety.

As ever, there is no charge but we do welcome a donation for expenses.

**Please call Viv Kendall 01993 891803 to book transport.**

# Education, culture & more

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## **Stonesfield Pre-school & Daycare**

If you have a child of 12 months or over and will be looking to send them to our village Pre-School, to help us forward plan with sessions and staffing, we would be grateful if you could contact us so we are able to put your child on our waiting list.

Please contact us via email - [stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com) with the following details: child's full name, date of birth and a contact telephone number. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Mrs Zena Rozee, Pre School Administrator**

We are pleased to announce that we have been able to remain open during this new lockdown. Early years is regarded as a safe environment with few cases of the virus in the under-fives.

With our dedicated staff we have welcomed the children and their families back after what was a very unusual Christmas and New Year break. We have installed a few new boundaries with regard to the government guidelines and safety, such as parents and staff wearing masks, increased hand washing and cleaning and a strict drop-off and pick-up routine.

But this has not stopped us having a fun packed Term 3, the first in 2021. As you can imagine it started with us hearing all about Santa's visit, gifts he had left and how Santa managed to get into houses without chimneys, very important when you are 3!

Our theme this term has been 'Helping Heroes'. We started by understanding how important it is to be kind to other people, to be heroes in our own way and then we talked about other heroes such as the wonderful NHS, Firefighters, the Police, Bakers, Postmen and any other Heroes that the children could think of, we even approached the fantasy world.

It has also been important that we approach the dreaded Covid subject. Whereas staff wearing masks back in June 2020 was not required for fear of upsetting the children, we now feel this has become part of their little lives and they need to be reassured about this subject that has been part of all our lives for some time now and will probably continue. So, we do talk about it, explain the importance of hand washing, not sharing toys in quite the same way and that some toys may be isolated for 72 hours. Understanding that germs cannot be seen, but are there, has scared some children but they now get it, talk about it and we are so proud of them.

Here are our 100 Club winners for the December draw – congratulations to you both. 1st Prize Richard Jones £25, 2nd Prize Paula Hedges £10.

**Louise John, Deputy Manager**

## Nature Notes

### Redwings and Fieldfares

These birds are two beautiful thrushes. We see them as primarily wintering birds but they are also very rare breeding birds in the UK.

On still clear autumn nights during migration, Redwing calls can be heard in varying numbers heralding the onset of winter.

Our wintering Fieldfares are from Scandinavia, Finland or north west Russia. Redwings that breed from Scandinavia to east of the Ural Mountains winter widely in Western Europe.

Cold spells can see them move into gardens where apples placed on bushes, hedges or on the ground near cover can see them returning daily until the weather eases.

It is also worth noting that the Blackbirds you see in the garden feeding on those same apples may have come from Norway and the Baltic region.

Bird migration is a truly amazing thing.

Paul Wren

### Winter Wildlife Tips

Winter flowering shrubs such as viburnums, lonicera and mahonia provide vital nourishment for bumble bees and other pollinators. Hollow stalks like sage, dead nettle, allium, fennel, goldenrod will be home to insect eggs and larvae during the winter so don't tidy them out of your garden. Wood piles are important habitats for beetles and other insects that are the bottom of the food chain and scrubby areas of the garden provide refuge for small mammals and amphibians who need shelter from predators (especially cats).

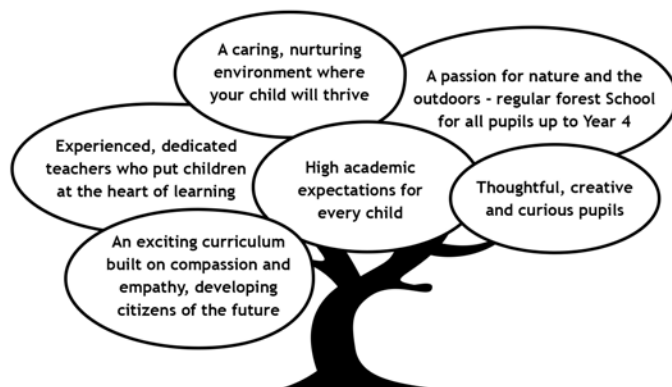
## Stonesfield Primary School

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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)



When buying bulbs for the spring, use suppliers who don't treat their bulbs with pesticides which will harm pollinators along with the other insects they are designed to kill.

In general, if you maximise the biodiversity of your garden, you will have a healthy predator/prey web which means that the critters you don't want around (e.g. aphids) will be taken care of by their natural predators (e.g. parasitic wasps). If you use chemicals to kill aphids, the wasps will be killed too.

Looking ahead to the spring, your lawn doesn't need to be carpet-perfect (unless you are a bowling or golf club!). If you leave the moss it will keep the moisture in your lawn so you don't have to water it so often. If you don't cut it so short and allow clover, daisies and dandelions to flourish you will be providing welcome food for pollinators.

More information can be found:  
[www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/resources/](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/communities/resources/)

## **Oxfordshire Libraries**

E-book short story competition: closing date 21 February

Here's another chance to become a published author; this is the competition's seventh year.

The short story competition categories are:

- Children – aged 5–11 years
- Young Adults – aged 12–17 years
- Adults – aged 18 years+

The competition is free to enter and entries, between 500 and 3,000 words, can

be submitted now. The closing date is Sunday 21 February 2021.

The winner from each category will see their short story published as an e-book, available via the library website to be borrowed and read all across Oxfordshire. Get thinking, get writing!

Full terms and conditions as well as instructions on how to submit your entries can be found on the Oxfordshire Libraries website: [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shortstorycompetition](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shortstorycompetition)

## **The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock**

### **Cabaret Mechanical Marvels**

27 February – 18 April

An exhibition featuring modern automata with intricate mechanisms and humorous scenes celebrates the fascinating world of the automata and showcases exhibits from some of the UK's finest contemporary automata makers.

The collection illustrates the creative interplay between simple mechanisms and skilled craftsmanship. Each automata is a masterpiece of creative thought and execution as the cams, gears, cranks, and other simple machines combine in a moveable sculpture that moves a character through a short, often humorous, story.

Containing hands-on interactives, push-button electrically operated automata, original artefacts, video footage of the automata artists at work, and visitor workshop programmes, this exhibition is a fun-filled educational entertainment for all.

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## Local history: Kiddington Hall

### 4 miles North West of Stonesfield

Kiddington Hall is a large Grade II listed manor house built in 1673, and in the 18th century Capability Brown laid out the gardens.

The hall and its adjoining orangery are listed Grade II on the National Heritage List for England, and Kiddington Park is also listed Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

The house is built of pale, honey-coloured Cotswold stone. The entrance and staircase lead to five main reception rooms, a Rococo-style drawing room; a morning room; a richly decorated dining room with twin columns and carved marble fireplace; a library with its Neoclassical friezes; and a panelled billiards room that overlooks the gardens. The main 18th-century staircase leads to two bedroom suites, seven further bedrooms and three bathrooms on the first floor. The back stairs lead to the second floor and 10 attic rooms.

The Reverend Thomas Warton, a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, who was rector of Kiddington for 20 years and poet laureate from 1785, pictures the coming of spring on the estate in his April Ode with *'swallows skimming the village green and rooks swarming in the oak trees round the manor house'*. Estate owner Sir George Browne provided the real-life inspiration for *'Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain'* in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*.

In 1840 the estate passed to Mortimer Ricardo, youngest son of the political economist David Ricardo. In 1850 he commissioned the architect Sir Charles Barry to remodel the house in his

trademark Italianate architecture style, build a new stable courtyard adjoining the hall to the north, and create formal terraced gardens to the south and west, overlooking Brown's park. Barry rebuilt the house so completely that no external trace of the original building is visible. He also built a magnificent new stable courtyard adjoining the hall to the north and created formal terraced gardens to the south and west, overlooking Brown's park.

Beyond the Victorian orangery to the south, a gate leads to the square-towered 14th-century church of St Nicholas, where stained-glass windows commemorate the former High Sheriff of Oxfordshire Henry Lomax Gaskell and his wife, Alice, whose family lived at the Hall from 1855 to 1953.

In 1950 Lawrence Robson, founder of accountancy company Robson Rhodes, rented Kiddington Hall, and then bought it in 1953. On the death of Sir Lawrence in 1982, his son Maurice Robson, a City financier, inherited the house. In September 2009 Maurice placed the entire Kiddington Estate on the market for £42 million after the hall was at the centre of a bitter divorce battle between him and his wife Chloe.

Jemima Khan bought Kiddington Hall in Autumn 2010 for a reported £15 million. The property had nine bedrooms, five bathrooms, five reception rooms, an orangery and tennis courts and there are three further houses and cottages, a farm, woodland and lake on the estate. Since it was purchased it has undergone a major refurbishment.

The remainder of the estate, encompassing 1,600-acres plus several farms and houses was sold separately. The park encloses the Hall, gardens and pleasure grounds which

are surrounded by pasture and woodland, with areas of meadow flowers added recently. There are clumps of mature trees and single specimens, including several mature cedars. The whole is dominated by the serpentine lake formed from the River Glyme. Part of a ha-ha survives, which runs south-east down to the lake from the main terrace. A further lake, formed in the mid-20th century, lies to the north of the footbridge across the north end of the main lake. The landscape park and its remaining features are undergoing sympathetic maintenance to what would appear to be Brown's design for the park.

Although footpaths run close to the house and lake, the house and grounds are not open to the public.

Paul Bates, *Stonesfield Slate* Publisher



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## News from Blenheim Palace

**Beehive:** Blenheim Estate is building its own natural beehives to help protect dwindling colonies of wild bees on its 12,000-acre estate. Its Rural Team are creating the hives from wood from their timber stacks, many with rot or holes in, which mimic the types of sites wild bees would naturally choose to nest.

As a large estate, much of Blenheim's woodland and grassland has remained relatively untouched for centuries. This makes it a haven for native bee species, which can forage on the estate's extensive natural flora and wildflowers.

**Bursary:** A £50,000 Blenheim Bursary is available to all charities and organisations based within a 20-mile radius of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Grants will focus on six main areas: wellbeing and outdoor activities, education, creation of green spaces, supporting community infrastructure, communal projects and charity work utilising outdoor spaces. The bursary scheme is part of Blenheim's ongoing commitment to more than double its charitable contributions to the community within 10 years.

For more information please contact  
Niamh O'Sullivan  
[NO'Sullivan@blenheimpalace.com](mailto:NO'Sullivan@blenheimpalace.com)  
or  
Samantha Vaughan  
[SVaughan@blenheimpalace.com](mailto:SVaughan@blenheimpalace.com)

**Virtual talk and tours:** For more details of live specialist talks and virtual tours of Blenheim Palace see p.38 and [www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/virtual.html](http://www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/virtual.html)

# Clubs, societies & sport

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## **Stonesfield Gardening Club**

The beginning of a new year and we're all hoping that the spring will soon be with us. Meanwhile our thoughts can turn to seed packets and chitting potatoes, and what we will be growing in the coming months.

In common with lots of other clubs and societies, we have been wondering how to keep in contact with members and to foster our sense of community. We decided that if the Queen (and the Allotment Society!) can work over Zoom then so can we, so we will hold our AGM virtually this year. It will take place on Monday 8 February. All papers and an invitation to the meeting will be sent out beforehand via email. Details also available on our website.

We have also arranged for Timothy Walker to talk to us over Zoom in March - we can look forward to another of his entertaining talks. Again, all details will be sent out to members beforehand. For those new to the village or to the club, please go to our website for details of how to join.

Happy gardening!

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

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## **Stonesfield Football Club**

Here we are, in lockdown, no games played, nothing to report, or so I thought. Just to be sure, I checked the league web site and noticed that some games were allowed to be played in December after the mini-lockdown in November! The Firsts

picked up 4 points with a battling draw (1-1) at home against Tower Hill, followed by a fabulous away win at Milton (4-1). They currently sit in mid-table with 7 points from 6 games. They've recovered well after a tough start to their league campaign. The Reserves also played two games in December and it gives me great pleasure to report that they've won both! A battling performance away at Sherborne Harriers saw them edge it (3-2) in a 5-goal thriller. They had it easier away at Ascott RR where another 5 goals were scored... all of them by our boys! They also sit mid-table but with 10 points from 6 games. Sadly, with both teams doing well, Oxfordshire was plunged into Tier 4 which meant that ALL grassroots football was suspended. This season is looking like a washout and it may be impossible for it to be completed. While we all love our football, we have to respect that as a contact sport it contributed to transmission of the virus and therefore had to be suspended in the best interests of all. The truth is, lives are at stake and football has to shoulder its fair share of disruption to help us all get through this horrendous period in our lives.

No surprise that with football suspended, so is the much-loved Fredo Award! A personal note to one and all: take care everyone, stay safe, stay positive and may you all test negative.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

# 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 contact either a churchwarden or the Area Dean:

Churchwardens: Lindsey Sellar and Rachel Severn

[stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

Area Dean: The Revd Jeremy Auld, Rector of Woodstock and Bladon (810749)

[www.woodstockandbladon.com](http://www.woodstockandbladon.com)

### **Parish letter**

We are delighted to announce the appointment of the Rev Ralph Williamson as the next Rector of the Benefice of Stonesfield and Combe. Ralph will move here in May 2021 and will be licensed at a special service on Saturday 1 May (time to be confirmed).

Ralph is currently vicar of a busy city church in Westminster, and was previously college chaplain at Christ Church, Oxford and even earlier a team vicar in rural Herefordshire.

Ralph says: 'I am very much looking forward to sharing the life of the church and community in Stonesfield and Combe as Rector... The focus of my ministry has always been pastoral care, and a desire to help each person to live abundantly.' And we are equally much looking forward to

welcoming Ralph and his wife Rachel to our Benefice!

### **Church services during the**

**lockdown:** It is with sadness that, in order to remove any possible risk of Covid-19 being spread through gathering at church, all services are now cancelled until it is safe and wise to restart – this could possibly be mid-February but might well be more into March.

For the latest information please see the notices in the church porch or visit the church website at

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

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## **Stonesfield Methodist Church**

A new year is upon us with little change in its favour, but joy is to be found! It is especially heart-warming to hear news of the many acts of kindness and the selfless deeds, carried out each day during these strange and disturbing months.

The last Service held here on 3 January was conducted by The Reverend Richard Donoghue, our retired Minister, most fondly welcomed back. The message Richard shared was far reaching and centred around light, Christ's light, the light found in all darkness even during the long days of Covid-19, and for ever after. Richard's words brought hope and comfort, and much more on that day. Sadly there are no Sunday Services planned at present and the World Day of Prayer Service normally held on the first Friday of March may take place later in the year. On line and Zoom Services are

arranged each week. Just get in touch if you would like the details.  
I hope Services will return very soon and until such a time, stay safe, happy and peace-filled this 2021.

Kathleen (891733)

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## **New Church thought**

Many of my thoughts right now are with my struggling and divided homeland, the USA. ‘...What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?’ Micah 6:8

Dale Morris (898210)

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## **Roman Catholic worship**

**Grace** is the Hebrew word ‘chanan’ or the Greek word ‘charis’, meaning “the state of kindness and favour toward others”. Many religions share a belief in ‘grace’ as a divine influence which inspires, regenerates and sanctifies. For those who believe in grace, we see it as a manifestation of God’s mercy in our lives triggering beneficial impulses, giving strength and fortitude and prompting us to virtue. Grace is a manifestation of God’s endless love for us, demonstrated by giving humanity his Son to save us. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, ‘grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life’.

*‘Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need’* Hebrews 4:16 and *‘But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble”.* James 4:6

## **Holy Mass during lockdown 3**

Sunday Masses are suspended during the current lockdown (Jan 2021). Weekday Masses will continue. No need to book – all welcome.

### **Mass times**

Monday: 9.30am

Tuesday: 9.30am

Wednesday: 7pm (followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament)

Thursday: 9.30am

Friday: 9.30am (followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament)

[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/)

Confession by arrangement with Fr. Clive as below.

### **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.*

Fr Tony Joyce can be contacted at [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 Fr. Clive Dytor: [chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com](mailto:chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com)

Roman Catholic community in Stonesfield

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[at gabrielekern31@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielekern31@gmail.com)

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Mobile: 07533 806087

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Do you work long hours and feel that your dog is not getting the attention and exercise that it needs? I run a dog-walking service for Stonesfield and surrounding areas. I have public liability insurance for peace of mind. Please feel free to call for a quote.

Katrina 01993 891131 / 07824357690

[katrinamoss1979@icloud.com](mailto:katrinamoss1979@icloud.com)

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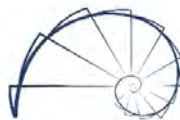
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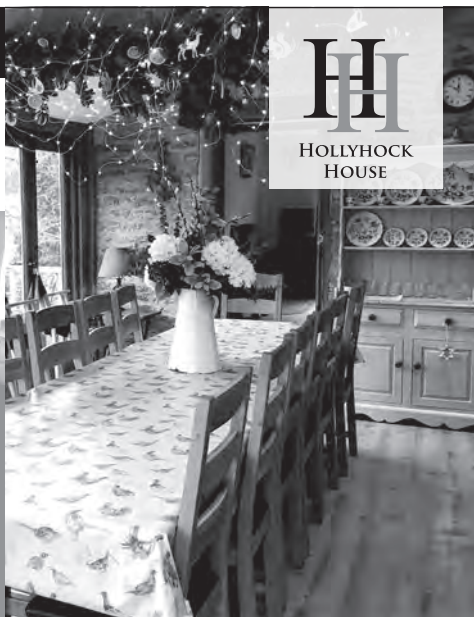
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**2021 certainly hasn't got off to the start that we had all hoped for, and sadly there is no immediate prospect of people being able to get away on holidays, even within the UK, for the next couple of months.**

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