



You may have noticed that as the temperatures drop, and evenings draw in, flocks of small birds are gathering to feed on the fields and hedges. When this food runs out, it is time for volunteers and landowners from Farmland Bird Aid Network to start scattering small seed in the 22+ sites in Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Finstock, Hailey, Leafield, North Leigh, Stonesfield, Wilcote and Wootton.

Farmland bird populations have declined by almost half since 1970, due to a variety of factors, including practices such as immediate ploughing and drilling after harvest and cutting hedgerows annually which reduces the farmland bird's food sources and safe habitat for roosting and breeding.

The Bird Aid project aims to support feeding farmland birds such as chaffinches, linnets,

yellowhammers and reed buntings through the winter.

This local charity, started in 2003 by Louise Spicer, is growing the number of feeding sites, and supported by a passionate and growing band of over 40 volunteers, many from Stonesfield and Charlbury who hand feed the birds daily from November to May. Local farmers including Ollie Stobbo, Michael Green and Dave Holloway also provide feeding sites, grain and storage. A huge thank you to everyone involved.

We would welcome more volunteers to feed, undertake bird surveys or help run the project.

See [www.farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org](http://www.farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org) for further information on how to get involved, or contact [info@farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org](mailto:info@farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org)

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## Dates for your diary

### November

1,4,8,11,15	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
1,8,15,22,29	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
2	Community Flu Clinic	Village Hall	2-3pm
2	North Leigh History Society	Memorial Hall	7.30pm
2,9,16,23,30	Coffee	Reading Room Combe	8.45-10am
2,9,16,23,30	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
2,9,16,23,30	Zumba Strong	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
3	Parish Council Meeting	St James' Centre	7pm
3,10,17,24	Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
3,4,10,11	HIIT Class	Village Hall	7.15pm & 8.15pm
3,10	Folkdancing	Village Hall	8-10pm
5,19,26	Baby & Toddler Group	Village Hall	10-11.30am
6	Royal British Legion Cake Sale	Pendle Court	8am
6	Scouts Coffee Morning	Village Hall	9am
6	Afternoon Teas	Methodist Church	2-5pm
7	Craft Fayre	Village Hall	12noon-6pm
8	Gardening Club Talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
11	Service of Remembrance	War Memorial	10.45am
11,18,25	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2.00pm
12,13	Stonesfield Players Production	Village Hall	7.30pm
12	Witney Music Society	High St. Methodist Ch	7.30pm
17,18,24,25	HIIT Class	Village Hall	7.15pm & 8.15pm
17,24	Folkdancing	Village Hall	8-10pm
18,22,25,29	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
19	Scouts AGM	Village Hall	6.30pm
27,28	Christmas Art & Craft Show	Grey Cat Studio	10am-3pm

### December

4	Coffee & Croissants	St James' Centre	9-11am
17	Scouts Christmas Bingo	Village Hall	7pm

# Notices & news

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## **Frank Hall**

I was shocked and saddened to hear that Frank Hall had unexpectedly died in the early hours of Sunday 3 October. He had been taken to the JR Hospital a couple of days earlier.

To say that Frank will be sincerely missed by many in the village and further afield is to understate the affection that so many of us held for him. In towns and villages across the land, there are to be found one or two whose character, temperament and friendliness make them stand head and shoulders above the rest. Frank was one such.

He injected laughter and a sense of bonhomie into so many situations and groups of people - forgotten he will never be.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jean, his children Stephen and Rosemary, his sisters Marion and Mary and all members of his extended family. Whatever sadness and sense of loss we may feel at his passing, it is as nothing compared to the empty void which his family are experiencing.

Of some comfort, later if not immediately, is the knowledge that Frank has left an indelible mark on the lives of so many of his friends and neighbours. Safe journey, Frank.

Richard Bishop. A friend.

## **The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2021**

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for 2021 will run from Thursday 28 October to Saturday 13 November with Remembrance Sunday falling on 14 November 2021.

Door to door collections will be held this year and static boxes distributed to local businesses and organisations, so please purchase a poppy.

Following on from a very successful cake sale last year another will be held outside the shop on Saturday 6 November starting at 8am and continuing until sold out.

Anyone who would like to support the appeal by baking cakes etc can contact myself or Sarah on 898193. You can also donate online at [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)

Your continued generosity and support are greatly appreciated.

David Brown, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Organiser for Stonesfield

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## **Lunch Club needs your help!**

Volunteers are urgently needed for Stonesfield Lunch Club. Our club provides a warm and friendly place for our older members of the village to socialise and enjoy a hot home cooked meal. We need drivers to collect and return some of our members, helpers to make tea and clear away, plus good cooks and kitchen helpers. You do not need to be experienced and we are all very friendly, it is a great way to get involved with your community.

We run every Wednesday at the St James' Centre and any offers of help will be greatly appreciated. Please call Kate Harris 01993 898781 or email kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk.

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## **Afternoon Teas at the Methodist Church**

The Tea afternoon will be held on Saturday 6 November, from 2-5pm, raising funds for the Church. There will be cream teas, cakes, hot and cold drinks along with gift stalls and a 'bring and buy'. Please get in touch if you have any items to donate, they will be very much appreciated.

Come and enjoy a scrumptious tea, everyone is warmly invited and help with transport can be arranged.

Kathleen Alb rt (891733)

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## **Lest We Forget**

### **Thursday, 11 November 2021**

We will gather at the War Memorial on Woodstock Road at 10.45am.

The short service of Remembrance, and the reading of the Village Roll of Honour, will be conducted by our Rector Ralph.

If you can, please join us.

Richard Bishop (891414)

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## **Village Hall News**

It is so lovely to have so many exciting things to look forward to when the weather becomes darker and cooler, it makes us forget that summer has moved on!

We have had a lovely start back after the summer holidays, with the groups all back up and running and new groups starting up. We now have HIIT Classes on every

Wednesday and Thursday at 7.15pm, and soon we will also be welcoming back the Cubs and Beavers before the weather turns again.

In addition to that, we hosted a very busy day for the Macmillan Coffee Morning, it was the Folk Dance Group's 49th Weekend this year, and we had our Halloween event at the hall at the end of October, so a massive thank you to all who supported and attended those events.

We have taken the decision to postpone the Careers Fair until 2022, purely because we have so many things to fit in already over the next few months, but we will let you know when we have a confirmed date.

**Coming Up:** There will be a Community Flu Clinic run by Woodstock Surgery in the Village Hall on Tuesday 2 November 2-3pm. Please book your appointment via the surgery 01993 811452.

The Scout Group are running the first Community Cafe to fundraise for the new Scout Hut on Saturday 6 November from 9am - Please come along and support them in any way you can.

To get us all in the festive mood after an incredibly hard year, we have the Craft Fayre - Sunday 7 November 12noon-6pm with a range of beautiful artistic creations including; wax melts, glassware, jewellery, ceramics and many other gift and bespoke items, to browse and purchase.

Don't forget the Stonesfield Players production "In Our Defence" will be running on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 November at 7.30pm. This will be performed to a limited audience so please make sure you get your tickets early, so you are not disappointed!

We are so excited to have such lovely events on our calendar, and we cannot wait to see everyone there. For further information please contact Jacqueline on 01993 898919 or stonesfieldvh@gmail.com

Jacqueline Carthew  
Secretary and Booking Clerk

**Cattle on the Common**

Cattle are once again on the Common. They are the same cows as last year with new calves. Grazing the Common is an essential part of managing this Site of Special Scientific Interest. Please observe the following simple rules:

- Keep your dog close, under control, in sight and on a short lead around cows and sheep.
- Cows are noseey and may come to investigate, especially if you have a dog with you.
- Don't panic or run if cattle follow you - stay calm and walk quickly and quietly around the herd.
- Remember cows can be protective of their young. Never get between cows and

their calves - go around the herd and rejoin the path as soon as possible.

- If you are threatened by cattle release your dog so you can both get to safety separately.
- Dog poo can spread disease to farm animals. Bag it and bin it – there's a waste bin by the road gate.

Thank you for controlling your dog while there are cattle on the Common and ensuring the gates are closed, and bagging and binning dog poo.

Richard Morris (898210)

**Reverse Advent Calendar**

It goes against the grain to mention Christmas at the beginning of November (and I'm writing this in October), but we've all heard about the looming price increases heading our way (food, fuel, heating etc.) and the impact that is likely to have on households who are already facing hardship.

After your fantastic response to last year's reverse advent calendar, when we collected 39 parcels, we are asking YOU to be a Stonesfield community hero once again. It



Taking a snooze on the Common

is really simple - download our reverse advent calendar guide ([www.backthewhitehorse.com](http://www.backthewhitehorse.com) - Reverse Advent Calendar), wrap an empty box in festive paper and from the last week in November add the daily suggestion on the calendar to the box. You can mix it up, include something you like to eat at Christmas, but please don't add perishables and avoid products with nuts.

If you let us know you're taking part we'll arrange to collect your box at the beginning of w/c 20 December so that Stonesfield Mutual Aid ([www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/](http://www.stonesfield.online/covid-19-information/)) can deliver them with their usual discretion to those in need in and around the village by Christmas Eve. Thank you!

Susan Rudlin

Stonesfield Community Pub Limited

[susan@backthewhitehorse.com](mailto:susan@backthewhitehorse.com)

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## **Pasada – A Mexican Christmas tradition is coming this way!**

Mary and Joseph (knitted by loving hands!) are coming to Stonesfield from 1st to 24th December.

St. James's Church, Stonesfield, is looking for 24 families (with or without young children) to welcome the Holy Family into their homes. The idea is that Mary and Joseph stay from teatime on 1st December with one family. During the next day this Stonesfield family can take Mary and Joseph to accompany them to any family activity (e.g. piano lesson, watching Octonauts, or sitting on the stairs with the cat!). Then they send a photo of Mary and Joseph with members of the family in this activity (and with the family's permission) to the church via

[rector@scbenefice.org](mailto:rector@scbenefice.org). The photos will be displayed in church.

At teatime on 2nd December Mary and Joseph would be handed over to another family, who would repeat the pattern, then another – until, and including, 24th December.

**What happens then?** Everyone is invited to come to church for our special services at Christmas, and especially our **Crib Service** at 3.30pm on Christmas Eve. All the families who have taken part will be invited to celebrate Mary and Joseph's village journey at a special Pop-up Tea and candlelit Christingle Celebration/Service on Sunday 16th January 2022 at 4pm.

Any family who would like to make a small collection for the Children's Society will be invited to take a special collection box from church in readiness for the Christingle Celebration service.

If your family would like to take part, please email [stablyardalison@gmail.com](mailto:stablyardalison@gmail.com)

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## **Christmas Art and Craft Show**

On November 27 and 28 this popular show by local artists returns this year with both indoor and outdoor areas. Paintings, prints, felt work, jewellery and other crafts. Work by Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson, Kerry Burniston, Jenny Lines and Griselda and Becki Sherlaw-Johnson.

10am - 3pm

Grey Cat Studio,  
Woodlands Rise, Stonesfield OX29 8PL

We recommend the wearing of masks, especially for the indoor galleries.

Becki Sherlaw-Johnson

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## Christmas Coffee and Croissants

Do come to the St James' Centre for coffee and croissants (or mince pies if you prefer) on Saturday 4 December, from 9-11am! There will be cake and gift stalls, and plenty of festive spirit!

Organised by the Parish Church, all the money raised will be given to Cecily's Fund (our own local charity which makes education possible for orphaned and vulnerable Zambian children).

Lindsey Sellar

stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

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## Step Up for Stomas

Following my request for donors to support my challenge to raise money for Colostomy UK by taking 160,000 steps during the month of September, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to those who donated.

During the month, I actually completed 227,393 steps and raised £900.

Thank you everyone.

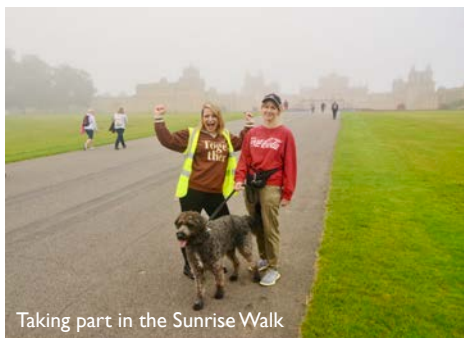
Tony Taylor (07702 152781)

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## Sunrise Walk Raises More Than £2,500 for Grief Support Charity

A sponsored sunrise walk at Blenheim Palace in memory of loved ones has raised more than £2,500 for a grief support charity working with children and young people in Oxfordshire. The event, which was organised by SeeSaw, Blenheim's charity of the year, attracted 130 people. The fundraiser is a chance for people to walk with others and celebrate the lives of family members and friends, whether they

died recently or many years ago, as the sun rises over the estate.



Taking part in the Sunrise Walk

"We are so grateful to Blenheim Palace for hosting our misty morning stroll last weekend," said SeeSaw's Director, Judith Mulligan.

"Huge thanks to all the Blenheim staff, the wonderful SeeSaw volunteers and everyone who joined us for our second Sunrise Walk," she added.

Participants could opt for either a 1.5 mile circular walk around the Queen Pool, or a 4.5 mile walk around the Park perimeter.

"We were delighted to host SeeSaw's second Sunrise Walk and welcome a huge range of walkers to enjoy a dawn wander around the estate," said Blenheim's Samantha Vaughan.

"It was wonderful to see how the different groups came together and chatted and provides an inspirational way to celebrate and remember loved ones while raising money for a fantastic cause," she added.

Blenheim's Charity of the Year scheme is part of an ongoing commitment to more than double its charitable contributions to the community within 10 years. Since its launch in 2000, SeeSaw has supported over 7,000 children from over 4,000 families to reduce the emotional,



psychological, and mental health consequences of bereavement.

As a registered charity, it relies on its own fundraising for over 85% of its grief support running costs. The cost of running the service is approximately £425,00 a year for which it depends on widespread support from individuals, local communities, businesses and trusts.

For more information about SeeSaw please contact Maddie Bain at SeeSaw on 07732 494379 or visit: SeeSaw Grief support for children and young people in Oxfordshire.

## **Pollution in the Evenlode and Windrush**

The campaign group, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP), have produced a very detailed report detailing the discharge of untreated sewage into the Windrush and the Evenlode.

Depressingly, our Witney constituency was the 6th worst in England by total hours of spilling to watercourses at 13,295 hours in 2019. Chipping Norton sewage works, which is in the AONB and discharges to the Evenlode, was identified in the report as spilling on 69 days between Jan 2020 and April 2021, with 26 of these spills illegal.

Here's the link to the full report: [www.windrushwasp.org/single-post/a-house-built-on-sand](http://www.windrushwasp.org/single-post/a-house-built-on-sand) and another link to the Oxford Mail who reported it. There were also articles in the Times and the Financial Times. [www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19636270.new-report-criticises-thames-water-sewage-discharges/](http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19636270.new-report-criticises-thames-water-sewage-discharges/)

Richard Morris  
Chair, Sustainable Stonesfield  
[sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com](mailto:sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com)

## **Campaigning again – Back The White Horse**

Stonesfield villagers call on new owner to reopen their last pub:

Stonesfield residents and supporters of the Back The White Horse community pub campaign, turned out in force on 2 October to show their continued commitment to securing the future of the last pub in the village.



During the height of Covid and lockdown in 2020, the community gained worldwide media attention with their fundraising campaign to save the White Horse for the benefit of the community. They successfully raised almost half a million pounds from supporters around the world, but their bid was ultimately unsuccessful as the pub was sold to the CEO of JCB Real Estate, Jonathan Bowers.

Despite changing hands in January of this year, the pub remains closed nine months later with no indication of when it might reopen. Alongside fears that an application for change of use might be being planned, there is growing concern over the state of repair of the building and the safety threat it poses to passers-by. Both roof tiles and the pub sign have recently fallen down into the public highway and there are signs of potential flooding and damp inside.

At a standing-room only meeting in the Village Hall on Saturday 2 October, Stonesfield Pub Group chair Steve Callaghan said it was a tragedy that despite very obvious enthusiasm for a vibrant pub in the village, the new owner had not responded to offers of support.

“There are no signs that it is being prepared for reopening,” Mr Callaghan said, “nor any advertising for a tenant to run it. We have offered to share our business plans and the research that we carried out with the local customer base, and we have also repeated our offer to buy the pub several times to Mr Bowers, should he reconsider ownership.”

“Since July, many other pubs in the area have made a considerable amount of effort to recover from Covid. Some have shown that a little creativity, flexibility, and a real eye for what makes a pub successful, can attract customers back. As a community pub, The White Horse could benefit the community even further.”

“The strong show of support at our public meeting, proves this village still wants a pub as the hub in our community. We urge Mr Bowers to reopen the White Horse or to reconsider selling it to the community.”

Councillor Graham also addressed the more than 100 villagers present with a strong statement of personal support, highlighting the work he had already done

to ensure the officers in West Oxfordshire District Council are aware of the situation and doing all they can to achieve a satisfactory outcome for residents. “This campaign is a real tribute to all the residents of Stonesfield,” he said. “You have shown the world what can be achieved when communities really pull together and how important a pub can be to community life. It is now time for the authorities to see what we can do to support you.”

West Oxfordshire District Council have said they will be investigating Mr Bowers’ use of residential accommodation at the pub while it remains closed. Mr Callaghan also said the group was taking legal advice regarding a potential application for a compulsory purchase order.

The group is aware that their campaign could take time, but they are committed to seeing the pub reopen as soon as possible.

“There are a number of cases of local pubs that have been boarded up for a decade or longer,” said Mr Callaghan, “It would be in no one’s interest to see the White Horse in Stonesfield become another name on that list.”

For more information about the campaign please visit [www.backthewhitehorse.com](http://www.backthewhitehorse.com) or email Steve Callaghan at [steve@backthewhitehorse.com](mailto:steve@backthewhitehorse.com)

## STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Volunteer drivers are available to take you for local medical appointments, vaccinations and to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury.

We can usually provide a lift at short notice (for an appointment the same day) but this cannot be guaranteed.

Full COVID-19 precautions are in place to ensure your safety.

**Trips for COVID vaccinations are free;**

**for all other trips (including flu jabs) we welcome a donation for expenses.**

Please call Viv Kendall (01993 891803) to book a lift in November.

# Politics & local affairs

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## **Stonesfield Parish Council**

**From the meeting held on 6 Oct:**

**Parish maintenance:** Call for maintenance help! There seems to be a shortage of people with availability to do small maintenance jobs. Are there any tradesmen / small businesses in the village who are skilled (and insured!) who would like to quote for small jobs around the village for the Parish Council?

If so, please contact the clerk with details that we can contact you on and what maintenance skills you can offer (carpentry, tree services, hedge cutting, fencing, minor brickwork / building maintenance etc.)

**The Old Lockup:** We need your help on the history of the lock up. We are trying to establish ownership of this vital historic building in the village. Does anyone know who originally owned it or have any information that could help? We would like to get some urgent maintenance done on the lockup but need to try and establish the ownership, at the moment we have no concrete evidence for this. Help us piece this together, contact the Parish Clerk

**Parish information:** WODC planning department now has an enforcement officer at District level.

County Council 20 mph is being rolled out gradually across the county. Stonesfield Parish 20mph will be one of the first (hopefully November).

The Parish Council has asked Oxfordshire County Council about the charges for putting rubbish in the recycling centres. It is putting people off using the centres and is potentially leading to fly tipping and more waste going in household waste.

The future cemetery plot will be cut next month or later this month as we didn't want to cut while the flowers still looked pretty.

A resident asked about streetlights in the village. It was confirmed that in the past there had been 2 referendums (70s), second referendum (80s) and also discussions in the community plan (in the 00s). The village to date has not wanted streetlights but we always welcome views on this.

The cows are back on the common – please respect them but let Parish Clerk know if any issues or if any cows need attention (although they are being checked regularly).

**Financial Matters:** The parish council approved the grant request for the Scouts for the sum of £1,000 (one thousand pounds). It was noted that the Scouts are a great asset to the village.

Councillors agreed £200 contribution towards grass cutting in the church yard.

Council will start 2022/23 budget setting in November.

**Planning Applications:** There was no objection to application 21/03189/HHD.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** The group met in September - next steps: the group to meet with Charlbury in the next two months to progress this.

The date of the next full council meeting is 3 November 2021 at the St James Centre, 7pm

Karen East, Parish Clerk  
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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## West Oxfordshire District Council

### From our District Councillor

**Recycling:** Nearly all the recycling stations across West Oxfordshire have now been removed. This was a decision taken before my time on the council but one of the main reasons for this was the increase in fly tipping seen across the district at these sites.

All the recycling that could have been disposed of at the stations can now be collected curbside every fortnight with the blue bin collection. I have regularly been asked about clothing, these too can be bagged up in clear bin bags and left with the blue bin or, alternatively, there are still charity 'bins' located in Woodstock Fire Station and Tesco's Kidlington Car Park.

**Garden Waste:** No new garden waste licences will now be issued until mid-February 2022. Concern was expressed at a district council meeting by a colleague, but it seems that maximum capacity has been met. A major factor in this is the lack of available drivers at this time. Although WODC/UBICO are just about coping with the staff they have now, the decision was taken to not put any further pressure on them by increasing the workload.

Sorry about such a 'rubbish' update this month.

I reiterate once again, please contact me with anything you feel I could help with.

Mathew Parkinson  
Mathew.parkinson@westoxon.gov.uk

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## More news from West Oxfordshire

**Witney High Street:** The Council's Cabinet met in October to consider keeping traffic restrictions in place on Witney High Street after 64% of respondents to a local survey said the restrictions should stay in place. The Council ran a survey in August to ask local residents for their views on the High Street with over 1,300 people responding. Over 64% of respondents to the survey felt the extra pedestrian space should be retained with only 36% saying it should return to the pre-pandemic state. The feedback was largely positive on the traffic restrictions with over 60% saying they felt safer as a result and 54% who thought they had a positive impact on the town.

Councillor Suzi Coul, Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "Residents have been really clear with us in their response to our survey that they feel the limit to traffic in the High Street benefits the town and they would like to see it kept."

"Many town centres across the UK have seen great success as a result of a better environment for pedestrians and we only have to look down the road to Oxford to see the benefit it can have for visitors and shoppers."

"This would still be a temporary arrangement and we would look to work with the county council, local businesses

and residents over the coming months to develop a much more comprehensive strategy for improving Witney Town Centre and a more permanent solution to improving pedestrian space in the High Street.”

“We do recognise some of the concerns highlighted in the survey, particularly those raised by businesses, and we would want to work closely with them and others to consider those views as we look at a longer-term solution. As a result of the feedback we have received, we are also proposing that we make some improvements to the current set up by removing the guard rails and using more attractive planters instead.”

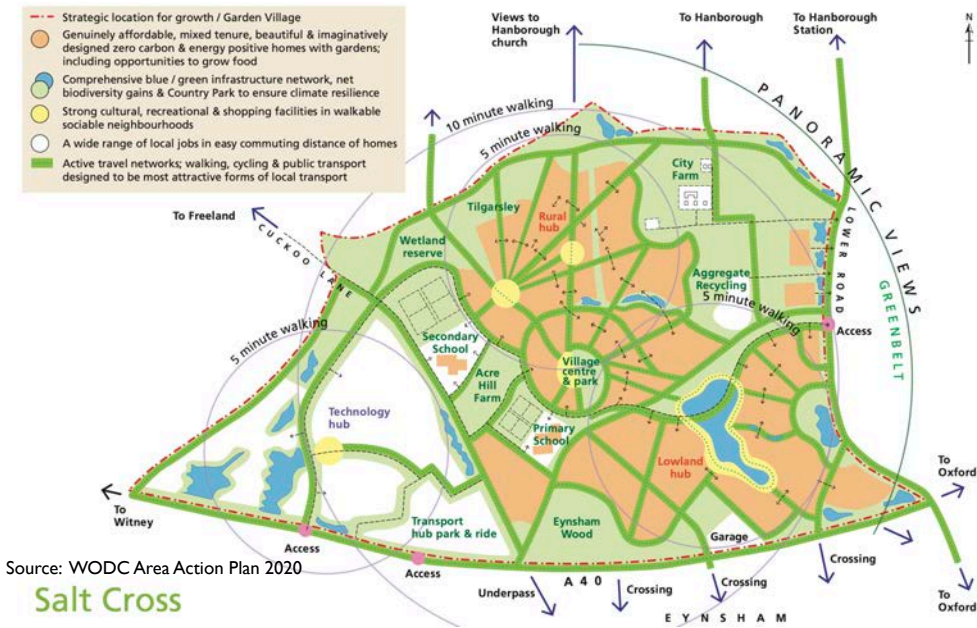
Oxfordshire County Council are the highways authority responsible for implementing any permanent changes to highways, such as pedestrianising areas, and the District Council will be working with the County Council on any proposals for permanent changes in future. The

current traffic restrictions were put in place during the pandemic to help people socially distance when visiting the high street, making it safer for local residents to continue to use local businesses. The restrictions were retained as lockdown eased to continue to make it easier for people to socially distance and help reduce Covid-19 levels. It also gave time to ask residents what they would like to do with the restrictions.

**Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP):**

Following the Council’s submission of Salt Cross Area Action Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in February, examination hearing sessions were held 28 June – 8 July. Subsequently, the Inspector paused the examination and invited the Council to undertake some further work on the phasing of community infrastructure.

Once this work is complete, the next stage is to move towards publication of ‘main modifications’ of Salt Cross Area Action Plan which the Council will consult on to



Source: WODC Area Action Plan 2020

Salt Cross

give everyone the opportunity to comment on the modifications made to the Area Action Plan through the inspection process, before it is adopted by the Council.

**Hanborough Station Masterplan:** The District Council and Oxfordshire County Council are working closely to scope out a brief and invite consultants to prepare a new masterplan for Hanborough Station.

The masterplan will build on and develop previous work prepared for the District Council which looked at initial opportunities for enhancing the role of Hanborough Station as a key transport hub.

[communications@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westoxon.gov.uk)

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## From our MP

I've had a wonderfully busy few weeks out and about across West Oxfordshire! The House of Commons has not been sitting the past fortnight to allow for party conferences, giving me the opportunity to visit and support many of West Oxfordshire's excellent local businesses and projects. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting with local people and promoting everything that makes our area so special.

James Bond 007 filmmakers were granted special access to key assets and personnel at RAF Brize Norton, using it as a major backdrop in the new Bond film! I would encourage all to go and watch No Time To Die, to witness a little bit of our very own RAF Brize Norton on the big screen.

**Bruern Farm Estate:** It was a pleasure to visit the beautiful Bruern Estate recently to discuss their commitment to sustainable farming and learn about how they are promoting biodiversity gain at the farm.

Thank you for the enjoyable visit and interesting discussion.

## **Riverbank Tree Planting Project to Improve Water Quality:**

I warmly welcomed the announcement by the Government that over 3,000 hectares of new woodlands are set to be planted along England's rivers and watercourses. Planting trees on and around riverbanks, or allowing them to grow naturally, can help to improve water quality by blocking the runoff of pollutants into rivers, manage flood risks by slowing the flow of water, boost biodiversity by creating new habitat corridors and make our rivers more climate resilient by providing shade and cooling water temperatures.

The Woodlands for Water project is funded by the Government and is backed by organisations such as the Forestry Commission and the Rivers Trust.

**Freedom of the Press:** It was a pleasure to visit Freedom of the Press for a tour of their winery set in the beautiful West Oxfordshire countryside.

The passion that Gavin has for world-class English wine is clear to see and I was so pleased to hear about the strong start this new start-up business has made under difficult circumstances. Thank you for the warm welcome and excellent wine!

## **Discussing Road Safety and A40**

**Upgrades with BBC South:** It was great to appear on BBC South recently to discuss road safety and explain how the A40 upgrades we secured in 2019 will help to improve safety on this important West Oxfordshire A-road.

**Enstone Airfield:** Great to meet the Take Flight Aviation Team at Enstone Airfield recently and be able to congratulate Nick

and Mike on their recent world record breaking flight for most UK counties visited in 24 hours.

They started at Perth Airport, Scotland at 3.55am and made their way south. They eventually stopped at Newquay, Cornwall 18 hours later at 9.50pm making a total of 50 full stop landings in 50 different UK counties- a very cool achievement!

**Huffkins Bakery:** It was a pleasure to visit Huffkins Bakery's new site in Witney recently. Huffkins was established in Burford back in 1890 and continues to have a strong presence in West Oxfordshire, supporting jobs and our high streets.

I always enjoy catching up with the team and it is great to see them going from strength to strength and bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic.

**Out and About in Chadlington:** Braved the rain recently to do a spot of shopping at the fantastic Chadlington Quality Foods before catching up with the Chadlington Brewery team at their wonderful pub The Tite Inn.

**Families Learning:** Thank you to Susannah from Families Learning for taking the time to meet with me in Witney recently. It was useful to learn more about Families Learning and discuss its potential for helping children catch-up from the disruption of recent school closures.

**Aston and James:** Great to stop by Aston and James's Wellbeing Pop-up in Witney recently. Really useful to hear about how they are helping businesses and employees to adapt to hybrid working arrangements and changing workspaces. It was also fun to try their exercise bike/desk

hybrid which enables you to exercise while you work!

**School Visits:** I attended Carterton Primary School, Bampton Primary School, St John the Evangelist CE VA Primary School and Queen Emma's Primary School in recent weeks. I always have a great time hosting my interactive 'How Parliament Works' assembly for pupils! I also want to give a big thank you to all teachers and staff who always make my visits so enjoyable.

If there is anything at all I can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Robert Courts MP  
robert@robertcourts.co.uk

## Neighbourhood Watch

The October edition of Our News is out and can be read at [www.ourwatch.org.uk/news/october-2020-our-news-now-out](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/news/october-2020-our-news-now-out)

In this edition we are thrilled to announce that Hannah Ingram-Moore, daughter of Captain Sir Tom Moore and Co-founder of The Captain Tom Foundation, is working with Neighbourhood Watch and Co-op Insurance to find the nation's most remarkable neighbours in the 2021 Neighbour of the Year Awards.

This edition also features articles on hate crime, anti-social behaviour, fraud trends and our new safety initiative for students termed Student Watch.

Neighbourhood Watch Network, Central Support Team

# Education, culture & more

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## **Stonesfield Pre School**

Time flies when you are having fun, and that is exactly how that feels to us at Stonesfield Pre School. Term 1 has flown by and we have all settled well, started to make new friends, and learning new skills, such as pedalling a bike, throwing a frisbee (onto the roof!) and using scissors to cut.

Term 2 will see us making good use of the outside learning environment. We are so grateful to the school and very lucky to be able to use their Forest School area one session a week. Outside learning has many benefits as it will create a new versatile environment for the children and staff. The last time we were able to use this area was before lockdown and we are so excited to use it again.

This term we look forward to the celebrations of Diwali and Christmas and other seasonal celebrations from around the world. We will be noticing the changes in the seasons and continuing to make new friendships. We hope to discuss and explore feelings with the children and encourage them to be able to talk about how they feel and notice how others are feeling.

Here at Pre School we are so pleased that the village toddler group has been able to start up again, thank you to Sarah for organising. These younger children are the starting blocks of so many of the village groups and clubs. Once they have been through Pre School and School, they will become our future football team, cricket

team, tennis player, scout group member or just go on to enjoy village life.

If you are interested in your child attending our Pre School please contact our administrator, Zena Rozee (898012) [stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com)

Finally, we are pleased to announce our 100 Club winners for the October draw.

1st Prize – Elizabeth Wharton £25.00

2nd Prize – Nicky Holland £10.00

Congratulations to you both!

Louise John, Pre School Manager  
[stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com)

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## **Stonesfield Primary School**

I am delighted with the way our children have settled back into school life after the disruption of the last two school years. Fortunately, we have kept coronavirus at bay this half-term and everyone has benefitted from a return to normality. Recent visitors have all commented on the lovely purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and how children are responding to excellent teaching.

A reminder for parents of children born between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018 (inclusive) you will soon need to apply for a primary school place for September 2022. Primary school applications will open online on the [oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) website on 2 November 2021 and will close on 15 January 2022. If you have a child starting school next



September, I would love to show you around our wonderful village school and give you a flavour of the fantastic education and experiences on offer to our children. Please contact the school office via email ([office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)) or phone (01993 891687) to arrange a tour.

Finally, we have a brilliant team of volunteers (parents and villagers) assisting the school with our Forest School programme on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. If you are interested in helping, please contact the office for more information. Hot chocolate, biscuits and curious children provided!

Ben Trevail, Headteacher (891687)  
[office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)

## Stonesfield Library

The library has returned to its usual opening hours, which are published below. We have so many new titles in stock that I hope there is something for everyone's taste. Have you seen our new carpet yet? So much to see that is new! We look forward to welcoming you. If you would like to join our volunteers who help run the library for you, then you would be very welcome indeed. Please contact me for further details.

### Opening Times

Monday	2.30-7pm
Wednesday	10-12 noon
Thursday	2.30-5pm
Saturday	10-12 noon

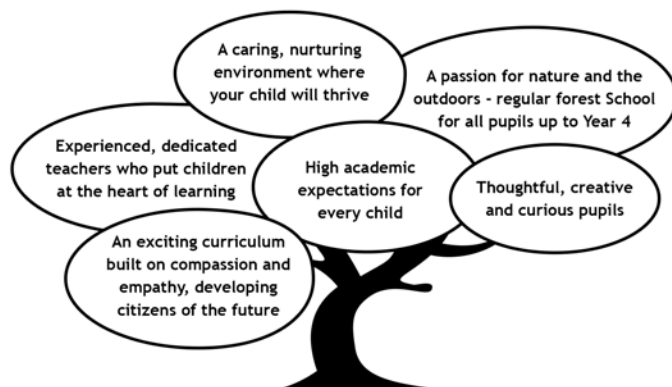
Mike Pollitt (891856)

## 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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## **North Leigh History Society**

In a change to our previously advertised programme, on Tuesday 2 November we have a talk by Frank Ledwidge about 'Enstone's Black Lancasters - Myth, Mystery or State Secret?' Are we about to discover the truth about UFOs? Or is this about one of the secret operations of the Second World War that is only now seeing the light of day? Come and find out more at our meeting. In December we are branching out and we have invited the Launton Handbell Ringers to our meeting on 7 December, when we will be getting into the Christmas spirit in St Mary's church in Church Road, North Leigh, OX29 6TX.

Our November meeting will be in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA and all our meetings start at 7.30pm. Members free, visitors £4. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at [kyterobert@gmail.com](mailto:kyterobert@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you soon.

Angela Kyte

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## **Combe Mill Christmas Market**

### **Saturday 11 Dec 11am-4pm**

It is nearly that time of year again, so why not come and share in the Christmas atmosphere, at the last fundraiser of the year for Combe Mill. There will be a range of stalls selling a whole selection of items to fill Christmas stockings - or tummies! There will be hot and cold food on offer from our BBQ and tea room, along with mulled wine, hot chestnuts and a never ending supply of tea/coffee/cake/mince pies. Our very own gift shop will be selling some items made by our blacksmiths -

unique presents made with love and a bit of hard work on the anvils in our forge.

There will be a raffle with lovely prizes that will give you something to look forward to in 2022. A four-ball golfing day, a meal and pudding at the Oxfordshire Yeoman, a family day out at Blenheim, a family day out at the Bus Museum, a gin tour at TOAD, beer from Little Ox Brewery and other prizes. We will of course add a family pass for our very own Mill and a Blacksmith Experience – who could want to win more for just a £1-a-ticket gamble? Please let us know if you would like some tickets.

For a very small charge, Santa and his elf friends will have set up a story telling grotto in the Foreman's office. We are pretty sure the children/grandchildren will enjoy this thoroughly. Santa's sack of gifts has been kindly sponsored by our Mill neighbours at Burnside Partnership, for which we are truly grateful.

We would like to put some magic back in to a traditional Christmas experience, for visitors of all ages, and make some valuable income for the Mill. See you there!

Tony Simmons

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## **Witney Music Society**

The next concert of Witney Music Society's 2021-22 season is at 7.30pm on Friday 12 November at High Street Methodist Church, Witney. This will be a welcome return visit by the internationally renowned pianist Leon McCawley who'll be performing sonatas by Mozart, Haydn and Schubert.

Tickets are £14 and should be purchased in advance because of limited availability at the door. Phone 01993 898020 for

payment details and for more information about the concerts or see our website: [www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk](http://www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk)

Jean Richards

Chair, Witney Music Society

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## **Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust – Chairman steps down**

Brigadier Ian Inshaw DL, longstanding Chairman of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust, has stepped down after 15 years, which have seen the creation and establishment of one of Britain's leading military museums in Woodstock, and the only such museum in Oxfordshire.



A career Army Officer, Ian spent his last five years of Service as Commander of the Bicester Garrison and on retirement joined the Trust to help create a new concept for a military museum: telling the stories of how conflict has affected the lives of people in Oxfordshire. Ian also held the position of Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire. His time as Chairman brought together the strong military heritage of Oxfordshire, which includes its two former County Regiments, the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars and the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, and its

strong links with the Royal Air Force and the US Air Force, and many components of the Royal Logistic Corps.

From early beginnings in 2009 Ian was committed to the creation of a museum that was attractive, unique and sustainable. Today's purpose-built modern museum, in the attractive grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock, is his legacy; it is the result of his leadership and determination to ensure that the stories of Oxfordshire's soldiers, airmen/women and their families and communities should be accessible to all.

The Museum is once again open to the public after a Covid-enforced shutdown and the Trust's team of museum professionals has created an exciting programme of events for the year ahead.

The Trustees of the Museum have embarked on a search for Ian Inshaw's successor, and in the meantime, new Trustee Major General David Shouesmith has taken over as interim Chairman. The Trustees are hugely grateful for Ian's unstinting passion and commitment to the museum and are delighted that Ian himself will continue to work with the Trust as a Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum Ambassador.

SOFO Museum Ambassadors are volunteers who also act as advocates for the museum, representing the museum at official events, or spreading the word within their own networks at corporate and personal levels. More information about becoming a SOFO Museum Ambassador, Volunteer, as well as available Trustee positions, can be found at [www.sofo.org.uk/](http://www.sofo.org.uk/).

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## RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2021

We have just returned from exhibiting at a truly wonderful (and very tiring) RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2021. Postponed from May 2020, RHS Chelsea 2021 was a historic event. Held, for the first time in its 108-year history, in September. Despite the challenges this posed to designers and growers, the planting throughout the Show site was beautiful: a strong naturalistic planting theme with masses of perennials (definitely the year of the Echinacea!) and grasses. There were also two clear messages running through the gardens: Hope and Sustainability.

One of our favourite gardens was the *Finding Our Way: An NHS Tribute Garden* Sanctuary Garden which, amidst the hustle and bustle of Chelsea, was a haven of calm. Hidden within the planting, the garden was connected by a series of rills and pools. Conceived by Professor John Frater, after a shift on the Covid-19 wards at the John Radcliffe Hospital, and designed by Naomi Ferrett-Cohen, the garden was designed to celebrate the relentless work of the NHS to provide care and support during the Covid pandemic whilst the UK universities were working flat out to find treatments and vaccines. The plants from this garden have now been donated to Katherine House Hospice for staff, patients and their families and visitors to enjoy.

In addition to the traditional Show and Sanctuary Gardens, the RHS introduced two new garden categories for 2021, Balcony Gardens and Container Gardens. The Balcony Gardens challenged five new-to-Chelsea designers to create a lightweight, workable outdoor space (2m

wide, 5m long), incorporating planting to improve wildlife corridors in our bustling cities and towns.

The Container Gardens, or pocket gardens, provided innovative examples of gardening above the ground – perhaps for those renting who need to take materials with them when they move on. The array of differing containers used again reflected the sustainability theme, with one using old oil drums, and another IBC containers.

Understandably the Grand Pavilion had fewer exhibitors than in previous years. Instead, to reflect the autumnal timing, there were beautiful harvest displays with apples, chillies, dahlias, gourds and pumpkins.

Anything that was lost, or different, due to the Show's September timing, was more than made up by the new show garden categories and the joyous feel of the whole event. It was so lovely to be back exhibiting at Chelsea, and to witness friends and family members meeting up, huge smiles on their faces, everyone just so pleased to be able to be there. We met a family whose members (a mum and her three grown-up daughters) had travelled from all over the UK, hundreds of miles, reunited, to enjoy a day out together at Chelsea. The sentiment of hope created in the gardens was reflected in the visitors' smiles.



Tony, Genny and Jane

We were delighted to be awarded an RHS 3-star award! Our friend Jane, whose help is invaluable at these larger events, was there as well.

So, that's Chelsea done for another year! But thankfully, we only have to wait 8 months for the next one (24 – 28 May 2022). If you would like to see photos of all of the gardens mentioned above, do please visit our RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2021 blogpost on A Blackbird Sang's website.

Genny Early & Tony Davis, A Blackbird Sang  
[www.ablackbirdsang.com](http://www.ablackbirdsang.com)

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## Chainsaw Artist Creates Bee Bench at Blenheim Palace



Matthew at work on floral-inspired bench

A champion chainsaw artist has unveiled a pair of nature-inspired carved benches from fallen trees at Blenheim Palace. Wood sculptor Matthew Crabb created a bee bench and a flower bench for the Oxfordshire UNESCO World Heritage Site. The bee bench, which was inspired by the estate's wild honeybee populations, overlooks the lake, while the floral seat is located beside a tree on the Palace's South Lawn. Based in Somerset, Matthew works mainly on large scale wood sculptures. Each of the Blenheim benches took about 50 hours for him to complete.

"Every wooden sculpture that I create is part of a progression that inspires the next.

I want to be impressed by the finished result as much as my clients are," said Matthew. "Each work of art is inspired by the particular properties and characteristics of the wood I am working with - therefore no two pieces are ever the same," he added.

Last year Matthew also sculpted an oak tree bench within Blenheim's ancient High Park woodland, and it was this that prompted the estate to commission him to create the two new benches.

"Matthew's work really is extraordinary and we're absolutely delighted with these two new benches," said Blenheim's Head of Gardens, Hilary Wood.

"His attention to detail and ability to follow the natural lines and grain of the fallen trees to inspire the finished artwork makes each of the benches entirely unique". "They're also really comfortable and provide the perfect place to sit back and admire the stunning views across the estate," she added.

Matt started the Matthew Crabb Sculpture Studio in 2006. In 2012 he won both the Sandringham Cup and the English Open Chainsaw Carving Championship.



Matthew Crabb

# Clubs, societies & sport

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## 1st Stonesfield Scout Group

**Funds in:** We are very excited to receive a grant from Blenheim for £4000 to help support the new Scout Hut. We have more grant applications in, and we look forward to hearing from them soon. We also raised an amazing £3,009 from the Duck Race to support the local Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, as well as to help build the Hut. If you know of any groups or individuals looking to support local charities please point them our way, or email us at: [fundraising@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk)

**New Website:** We have recently launched a new website: [www.stonesfield-scouts.org](http://www.stonesfield-scouts.org) where you can find details about what goes on at Scouts, how to support the new Scout hut build and how to get involved with the group.

**Buy A Brick:** We are also launching our buy a brick campaign for the new Scout hut. Show your support by sponsoring one or more bricks in your own name, a company name - or simply write a message! By sponsoring a brick in the Donors Wall, you'll be helping to ensure a sustainable future for scouting in our community and inspire younger people to value and enjoy our beautiful local area. All the details can be found [www.stonesfield-scouts.org](http://www.stonesfield-scouts.org) or in leaflets from the shop, Scout leaders or our upcoming events.

**Get involved:** We are organising lots of events for you in the upcoming months to hear about what we are doing, drink some tea, and have some fun!

Sat 6 Nov from 9am – Tea, Coffee and Cake, Village Hall

Fri 19 Nov from 6.30pm – Annual AGM, Village Hall

Fri 17 Dec from 7pm – Christmas Bingo!

Sat 5 Feb from 9am – Tea, Coffee and Cake, Village Hall

Thanks for all the support and see you around the village soon.

1st Stonesfield Scout Exec Committee  
[chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk](mailto:chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk)

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## Stonesfield Gardening Club

Rob Jacobs from Waterperry Gardens came to give us a very interesting talk about propagation of various plants. He went through the year, telling us what sort of cuttings could be taken in which month, when to collect seed and when to split and divide our treasures. All to ensure we have plenty of plants to fill our gardens as well as to pass on to friends and sell at our plant sale!



The group looking after the War Memorial have done a good job with the summer planting, ably assisted by Rob Atkinson who has very kindly taken on the task of edging and mowing the grass. Thoughts are now turning to the plants and bulbs needed for the winter.

On November 8 we will be joined by Neil Clennell, CEO of the Wychwood Forest Trust, which works to restore natural habitat in the area that was once the Wychwood Forest. We look forward to hearing about some of their projects. Do come along if you are interested, we only charge £3 for visitors – or you can join the club for £8 which will take your membership into 2022.

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

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## **The Stonesfield Players**

### **In Our Defence**

Come and see the Stonesfield Players new Radio Play written by David Lines and Becki Sherlaw-Johnson at the Village Hall on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 November at 7.30pm.

It is summer 1941 and Britain is desperately rearming after the losses at Dunkirk and the effects of the Blitz. A small troop of mostly green Royal Artillery Gunners is posted to Crewkerne in Somerset with a new Bofors anti-aircraft gun - only no one is quite sure why.

Where are the strategic targets? The factories? The major railway junction? The important bases?

Why are they there?

When will their ammo arrive?

And can they actually hit the one lonely Messerschmidt that flies over every day?

With a Captain fresh from behind a desk at HQ, the formidable force of the local W.I. and a bevy of very determined female mechanics, anything is possible.

In Our Defence is inspired by and drawn from the war time memories of Charles Lines (David's father). At least some of it might have an element of truth in it!

Pre-booking is required as seating is limited. There will be no tickets available on the door. Tickets are available online or by phone from [andrew.tacon@outlook.com](mailto:andrew.tacon@outlook.com) or 01993 891217 and cost £10.

COVID info: The Players will be operating a range of precautions to keep audience, cast & crew safe. Face coverings should be worn unless personal exemptions apply.

The Stonesfield Players

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## **Stonesfield Football Club**

The old heads in the club should always be looking over their shoulders at the youngsters and help them make that transition to adult football. Two players who have caught the eye recently are Eden Rice (Reserves) and James Mathias (Firsts), hopefully they'll feature strongly in these reports in the coming months. Eden is a product of The Rice Academy, where their Mum Ursula demands that they have pace to burn and their Dad Niall cooks the sausages to fuel that pace! Eden has already notched his first goal for the club with a fabulous volley from just inside the box in a 3-2 defeat at Leafield. That was just one of several close defeats for the reserves recently, at home to Witney Royals (2-1) then away at Aston (3-2) and Freeland (2-1). Don't underestimate the



importance of the need for the old heads in the Reserves with the likes of Dave Holloway rolling back the years against Freeland. Maybe if Dave could last 90 minutes those narrow defeats could become victories. Great to see Eden making progress in the Reserves but he is not alone: Adam Holmes and Noah Drew are also doing well. My view is that the results will come, but this is a season for these fellas to improve and learn.



James Mathias has made that difficult step-up from playing with The Strikers to starting in midfield for the Firsts and doesn't look out of place! Folks we have a potential serial Fredo Award winner here. In the Fred Ford Cup against Leafield, James played alongside the evergreens Nick and Tom Higgs and had a great game. A Cary Rice hat-trick and a Jack Barker special, sealed a 4-0 win. The month started badly with defeat at Hook Norton (4-1), but that disappointment was soon replaced by sheer and utter joy with a tumultuous 2-1 win at arch-rivals Charlbury. They also ran riot against Union Street (Oxford) in the Junior Shield, winning 8-2. As with the Reserves, the old heads in the Firsts are playing their part with the Higgs twins combined age of 78, cool heads and sage advice: our youngsters are in good hands.

It was a tough Fredo Awards meeting this month with Eden Rice, James Mathias,

Nick Higgs and Cary Rice in contention. History was made as it went down to a secret ballot! All 4 got votes but the man who just edged it was Cary Rice: that hat-trick against Leafield couldn't be ignored. His third was a penalty where he was hacked down. He showed true grit by taking the ball off Nick Higgs and making the art of scoring from the spot look easy. Enjoy your Fredo, Cary, well deserved! With the likes of young Eden and James snapping at your heels and your big brother, Raffy, currently resting a split toenail, The Fredo Awards have suddenly become difficult to predict. Long may that continue.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

## JUNIOR TAE KWON-DO

### The Korean art of Self-Defence

Develop your children's self-confidence, concentration and help them to learn respect for themselves and others.

New lessons developed to be fun and informative for ages 5-17.

Stonesfield Village Hall

Mon and Thur: 5.30-6.30pm

**\*\*Come and try a complimentary session\*\***

ITF registered international instructor  
James Kumar CRB vetted

Further information, contact James  
01865 772883 07788 583 965  
Jameskumar@hotmail.co.uk



# 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)

**Rector:** Rev Ralph Williamson,  
[rector@scbenefice.org](mailto:rector@scbenefice.org), 01993 891872

**Churchwardens:** Lindsey Sellar and Rachel Severn  
[stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

For any enquiries or help, including pastoral support, please do contact us.

### **From the Rector: Earth's Future**

Over the last six months, as I have so enjoyed meeting people in the two villages of Stonesfield and Combe which make up this 'Benefice', I have been trying to build a picture of the needs and concerns of our communities. Throughout that time, the social backdrop has been the COVID crisis, but also, rather more alarmingly, the challenges facing our planet and environment which will be addressed at the COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow this month, and which is likely to dominate the news.

For many people here, housing is the greatest problem. There is little affordable housing for people who have grown up here and want to remain in the village. Every year we lose local families to other areas because there is nowhere for them to live. People wishing to move to the countryside, as I have this year, cannot

find affordable property either, as the new homes being built in this area are so expensive. We would like our great schools to have plenty of children attending them, but we are unwilling to allow more new building in our tranquil villages, which would create more traffic and noise.

There is a great care for the environment here. Many people tend allotments with love or grow vegetables and flowers in their gardens. We love our local wildlife, we want our river to be clean for children, dogs and adults to enjoy, and we value our fresh air and dark starlit skies. We would like the oceans to be full of life and the rainforest to be saved. But we would rather not give up our diesel cars and log burners, and we enjoy cheap food transported from around the world, manufactured items produced in low wage factories, delivered to our doors, and electricity produced in French nuclear plants. All these things shift environmental damage to other countries, and even some of our rubbish is exported. We struggle with these contradictions, and on top of this we know that, free of fire, famine, earthquake or flood, our situation here is so much better than that faced by people in many other countries, and in other parts of Britain too.

The Bible has many references to the beauty of the created earth and our stewardship of what God made, for example in the psalms which celebrate the harmony of the created order. The profound teaching of Francis of Assisi and the nature-loving spirituality of Celtic

Christianity also celebrate our closeness to nature. But the church, with its concern about personal morality and the afterlife, has been late to come to the environmental table. I am relieved that this is changing, and that the churches, and also the leaders of other faiths, are now engaging with the environmental crisis too.

A few weeks ago, our Archbishop Justin Welby, Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (of the Eastern Orthodox churches) issued an historic joint statement on the environment as part of the preparations for COP 26, and this was followed on 4 October by a gathering of faith leaders from across the world in the Vatican, and the issuing of a new joint statement by all the world’s religions.

Together, the leaders from the world’s faith traditions have recognised the crisis which faces our common home. They appeal for urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to improve financial support for fighting climate change and to preserve biodiversity. Faith leaders recognise that the followers of religious traditions (who make up around 84% of the world’s population) have a crucial part to play in addressing the crisis of our common home. So, they commit to much more serious action and to recognising our obligation to future generations, to the poorest who are suffering most, and to young people.

Faith leaders and scientists implore the international community to take speedy action, saying: ‘Future generations will never forgive us if we miss the opportunity to protect our common home. We have inherited a garden; we must not leave a desert to our children.’

We look forward with hope to a new commitment on the part of all people to

the future life of our beautiful planet, despite its great challenges.

Rev Ralph Williamson, Rector

**Services in November**

For the latest information please go to [www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org](http://www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

**Sunday 7 [Third Sunday before Advent]**

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	All Age Worship
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship
5pm	Combe	Thanksgiving service for the recently departed

**Sunday 14 [Remembrance Sunday]**

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
10am	Combe	Remembrance Sun followed by War Memorial 10.45am
10am	Stonesfield	Remembrance Sun followed by War Memorial 10.45am
5pm	Stonesfield	Thanksgiving service for the recently departed

**Sunday 21 [Christ the King]**

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

**Sunday 28 [Advent Sunday]**

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

## **Mondays**

8.45-11.30am      Monday Coffee in  
St James' Centre

10am      Combe      United Benefice  
Communion

## **Wednesdays**

9.30am      Stonesfield      Holy Communion  
(every week)

11am      Combe      Morning Prayer  
(10th and 24th Nov)

## **Thursdays**

7.30pm-9pm Housegroup. All welcome –  
for details please contact Linda Soderberg  
at [churchwarden@combeparishchurch.org](mailto:churchwarden@combeparishchurch.org)  
.....

## **Roman Catholic Worship**

### **November: A month of darkness and light**

November is a month of both darkness and  
light: the clocks go back at the end of  
October, so we must manage months of  
more night than day. At the beginning of  
November, we have 'Halloween' which is  
'All Hallows' (All Holy) which had its  
origins in the ancient Celtic festival of

Samhain, when people would light bonfires  
and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. Like  
many early pagan festivals, it was  
subsumed into Christianity in 8<sup>th</sup> century  
as the Feast of All Saints, with November 1  
the designated date on which we remember  
the dead – dark times for many.

With 5 November – Guy Fawkes Night -  
with its fireworks and bonfires, is good fun.  
However, it is very easy to forget that this  
too had its roots in the one of the darkest  
times of our history with much persecution  
by Christians of other Christians.

Then on Sunday November 28 we have  
Advent, one of the oldest of the Christian  
feasts, with its first celebration in late 5<sup>th</sup>  
century France (Gaul). Advent prepares us  
for the that wonderful feast of light and  
hope: Christmas. Advent helps prepare us  
for Christmas, not so much about gifts,  
decorations and turkey, but more about  
how we prepare ourselves to welcome  
Jesus who banished darkness for ever.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the  
Word was with God, and the Word was  
God. He was with God in the beginning.*



St. Teresa's Church, Charlbury

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome. John 1:1-5*

## **Holy Mass**

**Sunday Mass** at 9.15am. No need to book, but please wear a mask if you can.

Weekday Mass times

Monday/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)

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.*

Confession by arrangement with Fr. Clive as below

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

For parish updates, any further information and further support, [www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/) or contact Fr. Clive Dytor: [chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com](mailto:chair.stteresaschurchcharlbury@gmail.com)

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

## **Stonesfield Methodist Church**

### **Services for November**

7 Nov 11am Mr Keith Crawford

14 Nov 11am Mr Owen Carney

21 Nov 10.30am Mr Andrew Maisey  
(United Service at Charlbury Methodist Church - No Service at Stonesfield)

28 Nov 11am Mr Peter Allen

### **The World Day of Prayer – Vanuatu!**

My thanks to all who came and supported the Service held in October.

Kind donations amounted to £110, and this has been sent to the W.D.P.Charity.

Each year the Charity allocates grants to many worthy projects around the world. If you would like to know more about those projects, go to Homepage - World Day Of Prayer ([www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)).

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Brambling in Stonesfield: Martin Gascoigne-Pees



Yellowhammer at Kingswood Brake: Martin Gascoigne-Pees



If you have photographs of Stonefield that you would like to see published then please do send them in to [Slate-Pub@stonesfield.online](mailto:Slate-Pub@stonesfield.online). We will do our best to include them.

Please ensure you include your name, photo title and a description.

## Apologies to our advertisers

A production error resulted in eight pages of advertising being omitted from the printed version of October's Slate. The online version was unaffected.

We offer our deepest apologies to the advertisers affected. We reassure our readers that they all remain in business and that their details can be found in this month's Slate.

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# BLenheim



## Sunrise walk raises more than £2,500 for grief support charity

A sponsored sunrise walk through our Park in memory of loved ones has raised more than £2,500 for SeeSaw, a grief support charity working with children and young people in Oxfordshire, and our charity of the year. It was wonderful to see how the different groups came together and chatted. It provided an inspirational way to celebrate and remember loved ones while raising money for a fantastic cause.

## Jack Savoretti and his wife, actress and artist, Jemma Powell attends launch of our charity photographic exhibition

The Oxfordshire couple, who are great supporters of the charity, attended the event, which is being staged by Zuleika Gallery in our new Stable's Café. It features images by Oxford photographer Joanna Vestey, who was also at the launch. Running until December, and sponsored by Bonhams, MASKED is a series of limited-edition portraits of 24 leading figures in the arts, education, communications and law all portrayed wearing masks.

## Christmas at Blenheim Palace, 19th November 2021 – 2nd January 2022

Two festive experiences, one unrivalled setting. Your very merriest Christmas starts at Blenheim Palace with a brand new route and theme for 2021! Whether you are coming along to The story of The Nutcracker inside the Palace or the Illuminated Trail in the great outdoors, your adventure begins at the Christmas Market (running from 19th November – 19th December) in the Great Courtyard. It's free to enter with a pre-booked ticket, wander through the boutique chalets filled with an assortment of hand-picked, hand-made, irresistible gifts and tempting treats for foodies.

Keep up-to-date with our news and latest events by signing up to our newsletter at **[blenheimpalace.com](https://blenheimpalace.com)**

**Buy one day, get 12 months free\***

\*Terms and conditions apply. Registered charity number 1166164



## Great Experience Travel



Now that travelling is getting easier, thoughts are moving towards winter breaks, and especially where, when and how to see the incredible natural wonder that is the Northern Lights. Amongst the places where your chances are at their best is in Finnish Lapland.



In addition to hunting the Lights, there are other great activities such as snow-mobile safaris and husky-rides to keep you occupied.

And, of course, if you have children wanting to visit a certain jolly gentleman and his famous reindeer, this is the only place to go.



For the best advice about your Lapland adventures, come in for a chat. There are a few places left for trips in 2021, but Santa breaks for 2022 are already on sale and some dates are booked out already,

**Waterloo Walk, High Street, Witney, OX28 6EU**

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