



Raw sewage dumping



Stop dumping in the Evenlode

Thames Water Utilities Sewage Treatment Stations (STTs) routinely discharge large volumes of untreated sewage into the river Evenlode and its tributaries in order to protect their inadequate sewerage systems from overflowing. STTs hold Environment Agency permits to do so under exceptional circumstances of very severe rainstorms. But in practice TWU STTs spill raw sewage as often as they wish and they do this with near impunity.

In 2020 they pumped untreated sewage into the Evenlode and its tributaries for 8710 hrs. This has devastating ecological consequences and adverse effects on human health. Yet, the recent environmental bill failed to make

polluting rivers with untreated sewage illegal. Communities close to the Evenlode river will no longer tolerate these reckless and abhorrent practices.

We need strong local support to make TWU take their responsibilities as a public service utilities company seriously, and to hold WODC to account for allowing development of large housing estates in the absence of any parallel plans to ensure sewerage systems expansion.

Please sign the petition: www.chng.it/TBKHWvwbxt

Dr Lidia Arciszewska, Church Hanborough resident

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Publishers

Diane & Paul Bates,
Waterloo Barn, Laughton Hill,
Stonesfield, OX29 8DY
(898841)
slate-pub@stonesfield.online

Editor for March issue

Trisha Williams
(891960)
slate@stonesfield.online

Copy:

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Please email copy to
slate@stonesfield.online
or contact the Editor.

Editor

Dale Morris
(898210)
slate@stonesfield.online

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February 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Dates for your diary

February

1,8,15,22	Zumba	Village Hall	7–8pm
1,8,15,22	Strong Nation HIIT Class	Village Hall	8.15–9.15pm
2	Parish Council meeting	St James' Centre	7pm
2,9,16,23	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30–10.30am
2,9,16,23	Hannah Bathe Fitness	Village Hall	7.15–9.15pm
2,9,16,23	Folkdancing	Village Hall	8–10pm
3,10,17,24	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30–2pm
3,7,10,14,	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30–6.30pm
3,10,17,24	Hannah Bathe Fitness	Village Hall	7.15–8.15pm
4,11,18,25	Baby & Toddler Group	Village Hall	10–11.30am
5	Community Café	Village Hall	time TBC
7,14,28	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45–11.30am
7	Gardening Club AGM	St James' Centre	7.30pm
12	Parish Council meeting	St James' Centre	7pm
15	Tennis Club AGM	Village Hall	6.30pm
17,21,24,28	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30–6.30pm
21	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10–11.30am

March

2	Parish Council meeting	St James' Centre	7pm
4	World Day of Prayer service	Methodist chapel	2.15pm
5	Community Café	Village Hall	9–12pm
14	Gardening Club talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
28	Village mtg for Neighbourhood Plan	Village Hall	7pm

Notices & news

Thanks from Salon Copenhagen

Salon Copenhagen would like to wish everyone a very happy & prosperous new year and thank you for all your ongoing support especially over the last 2 'Covid' years. These have been difficult times for us all but as a much valued village service we continue on, your support is very much appreciated.

As of 7 February we will be opening on Mondays from 9am to 1pm, Tuesday to Friday as usual and Saturdays will now be by appointments only. We are happy to welcome old and new clients, with all aspects of hairdressing services offered. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sally Smith (891101)

Thanks for Christmas cheer

Happy New Year! It has been a real pleasure and a privilege to once again collect 30 reverse advent calendar parcels from our neighbours within the village and surrounding areas – we've met lots of new and established residents. Everyone has been so generous and the parcels were all wrapped so very differently giving each one that special dusting of Christmas community spirit.

Stonesfield Mutual Aid have delivered them to the households in need of a little extra help this Christmas. It's been a hard year for some of our residents and they have been overwhelmed by their

neighbours' thoughtfulness, kindness and generosity.

So from us, to you, a very BIG THANK YOU! We hope that 2022 brings you peace, joy and happiness.

backthewhitehorse.com working with
Stonesfield Mutual Aid

Stonesfield Mutual Aid would like to thank everyone who has supported our efforts over the past year. It was a joy and a privilege to distribute the Christmas Parcels to neighbours around the village. These are really appreciated and I have had numerous messages of thanks from recipients.

We must thank the Backthewhitehorse team for their fundraising on our behalf. It is very much appreciated.

As always we stand ready to help anybody in the village who needs a little support. Complete confidence guaranteed.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped.

Stonesfield Mutual Aid

Deliveries struggling

Some delivery drivers are struggling to see house numbers which is making delivery of parcels tricky for them.

Please can residents try to ensure their house numbers/names are visible from the road.

Stonesfield Parish Council

Pat Ibbotson

We were sad to learn that Pat Ibbotson, our much-loved long-time member of the Players, died peacefully on 24 November. She had moved out of her house in Malsters a year or so ago, and gone to live in a nursing home in Shipton-under-Wychwood. She was 95.

Many of the Stonesfield Players will remember Pat's unstinting service as our official prompt. There was barely a production that didn't see her ensconced in the corner with her script and her torch, tidily set up at a table draped in black and, in the good old days, hidden under a black cardboard shelter she made herself, so that she was truly invisible. We didn't feel safe unless Pat was in her place, and I can recall her valiant intervention when I unwittingly skipped from the end of Act I to the start of Act V in *Twelfth Night* – she saved the show.

Prompting is a demanding job. You can't take your eye off the page, yet you have to check whether the actor is merely pausing or looking lost. Your voice must carry to the actors but be inaudible to the audience. You must give enough of the line to get the actor going again, but not so much that you take over, and not so little that the prompt is meaningless. Pat was a very good judge of all that.

Prompting the performances was a tiny fraction of Pat's contribution. She would attend all the rehearsals as well, for weeks and weeks, giving actors their lines as they struggled to get 'off book'. I can remember going to her house and running through my lines with her one-to-one; especially when there was something huge like an Alan Bennett monologue – she not only rehearsed me tirelessly, but gave me a

frank opinion of whether I'd got anywhere near the character.

In the very early days, before we had computers, Pat used to write out schedules, scripts and programme notes in her bold italic script, with copious underlinings – a discipline and art left over from her days in the Civil Service. She was devoted to the Players, and long after she became unable to continue as prompt, she came to our shows which she enjoyed enormously and critiqued with a twinkling eye.

Pat had a long and fruitful life, filling it with drama, art and writing, and her family in Jersey to whom she was devoted. We remember her with great fondness and gratitude, and are proud of all that she gave to the Players.

Caroline Friend

Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme

It is with great regret that the Voluntary Transport Scheme has been suspended while the numbers of Covid Omicron cases are so very high, to ensure your safety and that of our drivers.

Normally, volunteer drivers are available to take you for local medical appointments, vaccinations and to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury, and our service will be restarted as soon as the situation improves significantly. Please watch the Stonesfield Slate and NextDoor Stonesfield for further information, or call me for an update.

Viv Kendall (891803)

Monday Coffees – a caveat

Hopefully the dates in the diary (page 3) will be possible, but of course it all depends on the state of Covid infection rates in the area. If a planned session has to be cancelled, a notice will be posted on the front door of St James' Centre.

Community Café

Saturday 8 January was an unrelentingly grey, wet day, so it was very heartening that determined villagers pulled on their wet weather gear and joined us at our Pay as You Feel Café for warming seasonal soups, homemade bread and sweet treats. It was especially lovely to catch up with villagers given the current circumstances we find ourselves in. Together we raised £170.00 for Stonesfield Mutual Aid.

There were a lot of volunteers that pulled together to make the event happen and there is a phenomenal amount of work that needs to be done (ingredients shopping, food prep, venue set-up, serving, washing up, the list seemed never-ending), so here's a very BIG thank you to: Helen Atkinson, Kim Lander, Nicky Holland, Rachael Naylon, Mary Casey, Celia Woodfine, Kate Winstanley, Matt Carpenter, Carol Knight, the Village Hall who sponsored the space, and Jenny at The Duke who kindly found salt/pepper sachets and saved us from having to buy 1000s.

Looking forward to the next one, hope to see you there. :-)

Susan Rudlin, #backthewhitehorse

1 Jan 2022 Stumble

Early rain deterred some of this year's less hardy stumblers, but at least 42 were macked up to tackle the balmy New Year

weather. Some had travelled from the Dominions of Canada and Australia and they were joined by newcomers to the village.

Heading towards Harry's Plantation



A stiff early pace spread the gaggle into a straggle and so we were suitably socially distanced, even more so when a small number took a short cut. Whether this was because they were the worse for wear after the previous night or were in a rush to get to the Social Club, I don't know.

The White Horse was closed



We finished in a timely manner outside the dilapidated White Horse. No room at the Inn, no cheery welcome, no sign of life. To be fair it was a bit like that when it was open under the previous owner, but now it is very shut. !! words were spoken (edited) and we moved on to the Social Club which was very welcoming indeed.

Looking forward to the New Year Stumble 2023 already.

Graham Rutson

Village Lock-up

Stonesfield PC is preparing to organise some remedial work on the Lock-up and whilst researching its origins discovered it was probably built by the community of Stonesfield – the Stonesfield Friendly Society called The Club. It was members of this Society who acted as village constable and also looked after the maintenance and use of the building.



I understand from my source that the last village constable was a slate-digger called John Croxford. Does any long-standing village family know of this chap or have any information on the Stonesfield Friendly Society? If so I would love to hear from you.

Wendy Gould (898091)

White Horse Update

Thank you all for your ongoing support for our campaign to save The White Horse and your messages of encouragement following the member email we sent out just before Christmas. The situation as described in that update has not changed and is summarised below for anyone who missed it.

According to the West Oxfordshire District Council's website there is still no premises license application and it seems no tenant

has been appointed yet. The first advertisement for a tenant has appeared, but not with an agent who specialises in pub lettings and to date a lettings board has still not appeared outside the building. The terms of the tenancy also seem unrealistic in the current market; for example, the advertised rent would only be competitive if a tenant generated almost double the level of turnover that our independent valuation of the pub said careful management could achieve.

Nonetheless, we live in hope that 2022 will bring us some good news and of course, if not, then our offer to step in to buy the pub and run it in the community's interest remains open to Mr Bowers. We always anticipated it would take a while, and we thank you all for your continuing backing of our efforts as we work towards achieving a long-term happy resolution.

If you'd like to be kept up to date with any developments regarding the White Horse, we invite you to join our email list via www.backthewhitehorse.com/contact

White Horse Committee

Cold weather alert - advice

1. If bad weather is forecast, make sure you have everything you need. Check you've got enough medication and food in case it's harder to leave the house. A bottle of water could be handy if the water supply is interrupted.
2. Have torches handy around the home in case of a power cut. And some spare batteries too!
3. Keep emergency numbers nearby. Call 105 in the event of a power cut – you can report a power cut and get information and advice if there is one

in your area. You can also register with your supplier so they'll call you in the event of a power cut.

4. Take extra care if the ground is slippery. Wear shoes with good grip [heavy socks over shoes also help - editor] and consider keeping salt and sand mixture handy to grit paths. You could ask neighbours for help to clear paths or driveways in bad weather – most people are more than happy to help.
5. Plan ahead when driving. Try to avoid going out in the car in bad weather if possible, and make sure you follow advice on driving conditions near you. If you do need to go out, pack up the following kit in case you get stuck: blankets, a bottle of water or flask of hot drink, some snacks, a shovel, a de-icer or scraper, a mobile phone and charger.

Age UK Oxfordshire
www.ageuk.org.uk

Village Hall News

Thank you for supporting all our activities on the lead up to Xmas and in January.

New to exercise, or just want to try a different activity? We have a number of classes running that might appeal to you:

Tuesdays - STRONG Nation and Zumba classes

Join Katie and a friendly bunch of guys and gals on Tuesday evenings in the hall for 2 very different workout classes. One is dancey; the other is fierce – but both are fun!

STRONG Nation™ is a high intensity, total body workout that will give you the

confidence you need to get you up and get moving. The high-energy routines tone every muscle group by combining plyometric movements like high knees with isometric movements like lunges.

Zumba is a dance-party cardio workout that uses rhythms and beats from all around the world to create an electric atmosphere, where participants are sweaty and smiley!

All levels welcome. £6 pay as you go (or £10 for both) Tuesdays 7–8pm Zumba, and 8:15–9:15pm STRONG at Stonesfield Village Hall.

Contact Katie on katieamiri@gmail.com. Whether it's a burpee or a boogie you're after, we've got you covered!

Wednesdays – Folk dancing

This year Stonesfield Folk Dance Club celebrates 50 years of Folk Dancing at the Village Hall. We warmly welcome new members and it is much better to come along on Wednesday evening at 7.45pm to see if you will enjoy traditional English Folk Dancing. Tuition is given for each dance and we invariably have a live band and refreshments, all for £2.50. Partners are not required and all ages welcome. If you can walk, you can dance!

Wednesdays & Thursdays - Fitness

Hannah Bathe Fitness run small ladies-only classes on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The classes are based around Circuit, HIIT and body weight training. Hannah believes that training should help the mind as well as the body. She offers a friendly, supportive environment where you can get fit and smile. Classes are booked in 8-week blocks and free taster sessions are available. For more

information Hannah can be contacted on 07974 100076.

We also have *Taekwondo* for kids running on a Monday and Thursday, and *Pilates* on Wednesdays.

If you think there is something else that you would prefer to try, let us know and perhaps start a group of your own? New Year, New Starts

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)

Secretary & Booking Clerk, Village Hall

stonefieldvh@gmail.com

facebook.com/stonesfieldvillagehall

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Stonesfield Repair Cafe

Have you got something which needs repairing but you don't know how to do it? The upcoming Stonesfield Repair Cafe may be able to help you out. A small group of us have decided to set up a bimonthly event in the village where anyone can bring a portable item that needs care and specialist attention and at the same time have a drink and a chat. This is a growing movement across the world which is trying to reverse the waste of consumer culture and reduce the amount of stuff going to landfill. This is a community project to bring people who like fixing things together with people who need things fixed.

The repairers will not necessarily be professionals but have experience and skills to carry out repairs or give advice and you can also improve your own skills by watching and learning as your item is being repaired. We aim to cover small electrical appliances and other pieces of equipment as well as offering sewing repairs and knitting advice and possibly computer and mobile phone support,

depending on our volunteers. It might be a lamp that doesn't work or a spade that needs a new handle.

At the moment we have a small group of dedicated repairers but we need more. The more people with different skills we have, the broader range of services we can offer. If you have electrical and mechanical skills or good IT knowledge, sewing and knitting skills please consider offering your services. We are also looking for caterers, and also people to run the welcome desk at these events. We envisage each event initially lasting 2-3 hours every couple of months depending on demand.

If you are interested in being involved at any level, including helping set up the events, please get in touch. Contact Mike Sofroniou at mikesofroniou@gmail.com

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Lend / borrow 'library of things'

To encourage the sharing of resources instead of buying new, the Climate Emergency Group plans to set up a database list of items that individuals are willing to lend to someone wanting to borrow them (e.g. a cot for a visiting grandchild, a sledgehammer, a Vax machine to clean carpets, a gazebo – things that may be costly to buy and only occasionally needed).

First of all, we need things to list. I'll be the 'librarian' who maintains the list. If you're willing to lend something out, send me your name, what your item is, and your email address or phone number *along with your permission to put these on a public site*.

Once I have enough items, the Library of Things list will go onto the village website

(www.stonesfield.online). If you need to borrow something, consult the list to see if it's included, and contact the owner. All items are kept by the owner. Any lending/borrowing arrangements will be strictly between the owner and the borrower.

Dale Morris (898210)
dale.morris@zen.co.uk

Year of the Tiger



Chinese New Year will fall on 1 February and 2022 is the year of the Tiger.

There are 12 Chinese zodiac animals. In order, the 12 animals are Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig. Your zodiac animal is decided by your birth year.

In China it is also called the Spring Festival although it's still very wintry but the holiday marks the end of the coldest days. People welcome spring and what it brings along: planting and harvests, new beginnings and fresh starts. Because countries such as North and South Korea and Vietnam celebrate it as well, it is also known as Lunar New Year.

The Spring Festival goes according to the lunar calendar which means there is no set date for Chinese New Year, so it ranges from 21 January to 20 February.

Celebrations of Chinese New Year traditionally last for 16 days, starting from Chinese New Year's Eve to the Lantern Festival. In 2022, that is from 31 January to 15 February. As a public holiday, Chinese people will get 7 days off from work from 31 January to 6 February 2022.

According to one legend, there was a monster named Nian. It would come about every New Year's Eve. Most people would hide in their homes, but one boy was brave enough to fight him off using firecrackers. The next day, people celebrated their survival by setting off more firecrackers and that practice became a crucial part of the Spring Festival.

People stay up on Chinese New Year's Eve and set off firecrackers at midnight. In the morning, firecrackers are used again to welcome the new year and good luck. Many Chinese cities have banned fireworks and more than 500 cities have restrictions too, but many people do it anyway. Beijing had banned fireworks for 13 years, that ban was lifted in 2006 because of the angry public.

Red is a lucky colour, representing many positive things such as happiness, beauty,



vitality, good luck, success, and good fortune, so almost everything is red during Chinese New Year. Apart from the red envelopes, decorations and paper cuttings, you'll also see lanterns everywhere.

Paul Bates

New manager for The Woodstock Bookshop



Finally, the sale of The Woodstock Bookshop is going through. I am writing to introduce you to Alexis Thompson, who will be the new manager for The Woodstock Bookshop from the end of January. He has been working for Blackwells and is very much looking forward to running a small independent bookshop here. Some of you may have already met him, as he is spending January in the shop learning how all our systems work.

If it weren't for Covid I would have held a party at the Town Hall or Wootton Village Hall to introduce everyone properly, but I hope you will come in the bookshop in the next few months and meet him for yourselves.

I will be leaving the shop at the end of January but Merle will continue, as will Emily who has been here since October.

Thank you all so much for your support over the past years – it is almost 14 years now since I first opened the shop in 2008 and I have had the most wonderful time. It has been quite a challenge during the past couple of years, when it seemed that everything that made the bookshop come alive was no longer possible. But your support kept the shop going through the periods of lockdown and I very much hope things will carry on improving for Alexis this year. Who knows, the poetry festival might even return, and some regular readings and events.

Best wishes for 2022 and thank you again.

Rachel Phipps (812760)
www.woodstockbookshop.co.uk



Inside The Woodstock Bookshop

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan (SNP)

Explanatory details of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan (NP) can be found on the Council website (stonesfield.online). It emphasises that direct power obtained by a successful Plan gives a voice and choice relating to shaping growth and development of the community.

There will be an update each month to keep everyone informed and here is the first.

Progress Report No.1

The Parish Council submitted an application to WODC to have the whole Parish designated as the neighbourhood area. This was successfully approved at the end of 2021.

A Steering Group of Council and SuSto members has now been ratified by SPC. It met for the first time in January and will meet regularly on a monthly basis. This is the Steering Group for the project and it is hoped to further recruit more members, particularly a person with good IT/communication skills to help with the essential publicity and social media coverage. We would also like to recruit someone with project management skills to keep the project on track. Could you fill either of these roles? We are also well aware of a lop-sided balance in age and hope to encourage younger participation.

A Constitution/terms of reference has been drawn up and can be seen on the village website.

The next Local Plan (LP) takes affect from 2031 and is already in preparation by the District Council so we have set a target of 5 years to complete the NP to give time for it to be included in this plan and give us that voice.

Save the date

A village meeting is to be held on Monday 28 March in the Village Hall at 7pm (Covid permitting). Do please try to come along to have your say, ask questions, raise issues, offer suggestions and hopefully volunteer to help put this NP together. There is a lot of work to consider, covering all aspects of village life from housing to education, environment to transport, recreation and future aspirations. We will need active participation.

After the meeting a questionnaire will be circulated to every home. What shall we include? Please come along and give us your thoughts.

Richard Morris

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan (SNP)
Steering Group
sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com



Council reports

No reports were received from Stonesfield Parish Council, West Oxfordshire District Councillor or Oxfordshire County Councillor.

News from West Oxfordshire

Free training for Community Groups

During recent conversations with many of the voluntary and community groups in West Oxfordshire, various common themes have emerged, so WODC have helped organise a series of 2-hour sessions taking place between now and April to provide some training. They are online and free of charge to attend, funded by WODC and OCC's allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). The training will be delivered by Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) in conjunction with Volunteer Link up. Those attending will also be entitled to a free follow-up session with OCVA to talk through any specific issues or queries relating to their group. Groups will need to register to attend, and can do so using the links to Google Forms below.

1. What do you do and Why do you do it?
16 February 6–8pm
Build a vision for your group, learn how to identify community need and understand different ways of measuring and showing the impact of your work.
www.forms.gle/DXc6hW21qoyAjoSn9
2. People Power – Working with Volunteers
16 March 6–8pm
Attracting and keeping volunteers and understanding your responsibilities on

key issues like DBS checks.
www.forms.gle/egsvzkdtzw7JB8wT7

3. Don't Fear the Data
20 April 6–8pm
Good practice and legal requirements in holding and using information on individuals. Conquer GDPR so it doesn't become a barrier to action.
www.forms.gle/67XiewC4zYToQE7v8

WORAID - West Oxfordshire Rural Areas Initiative On Domestic Abuse

This initiative is a collaborative pilot between Reducing the Risk and WODC. It is funded by Containing Outbreak Management Funding (COMF). By working together we aim to strengthen support for victims of abuse and their children in our local communities. This initiative will focus on

1. Building awareness in local rural communities about issues surrounding domestic abuse; how prevalent it is, why things are hidden and who can help. Providing local people with an increased knowledge of the help and resources available and how they can respond safely.
2. Creating more Domestic Abuse Champions (DA Champs) in this district.

We plan to roll out community training sessions in a roadshow. We want to reach into local communities and share what we know, answer questions and discuss concerns.

Campaign to end cold, damp homes

Landlords will be given the opportunity to bring any domestic rented property, failing to meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), up to the legal

requirement as part of a three month campaign by WODC targeting properties in the district with the worst energy performance ratings.

The free energy assessments are being delivered by the National Energy Foundation through the District Council's Better Housing, Better Health service. The report will detail what energy efficiency measures are required which could range from cavity wall, underfloor and loft insulation to replacing gas boilers with low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps. Landlords needing support in MEES compliance, and who would like to book a free home energy visit, should call Better Housing, Better Health on 0800 107 0044 during office hours or for more information email: bhbh@nef.org.uk

From our MP: Robert Courts

(extracts from his online newsletter)

Electric vehicle chargers From 2022, there will be a requirement for all new homes and workplaces to have electric chargers. This is something many constituents have asked about, and something I've been campaigning for. Our new laws will add up to 145,000 new charging points across England each year, driving down emissions. Progress is already being made in West Oxfordshire to expand access to electric

charging infrastructure. Work to install charging points at Black Bourton (Carterton), Back Lane (Eynsham), Woodford Way (Witney) and New Street (Chipping Norton) car parks have recently taken place. Even more reason to make the switch to electric vehicles!

PCR test changes* From 11 January, if you get a positive lateral flow test result, you will no longer need to take a follow-up PCR test. You will still need to register your positive LFD result. You should still self-isolate immediately if you receive a positive result. This is a temporary measure while Covid-19 cases remain high. Please also note that Covid self-isolation has been cut from 10 days to 7 to 5, provided you have a negative lateral flow test result on days 4 and 5.

International travel* Testing rules have now been relaxed, meaning:

- Fully vaccinated passengers & under 18s no longer need to take a pre-departure test before returning to England.
- Fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s no longer need to self-isolate whilst waiting for post-arrival results.
- After arrival in England, all fully vaccinated people and under 18s now only need to take a lateral flow test (instead of a PCR). In order to protect

FoSL: Friends of Stonesfield Library

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

For further details, or to join us, please contact Mike Pollitt
[01993 891856, mikepollitt@btopenworld.com](mailto:mikepollitt@btopenworld.com)

NHS capacity, free NHS lateral flow tests cannot be used for international travel.

- If this lateral flow test is positive, you must self-isolate and take a free NHS PCR test to confirm the result.

These measures will support the safe reopening of international travel.

Thames Water update I share the concerns of constituents, following reports that Thames Water have been conducting sewage releases from Witney STW on a very regular basis. The river levels in West Oxon are all currently at or within their normal levels. Therefore, rather than this being an 'exceptional measure', it appears that Thames Water are treating 'storming' as a routine process. This is clearly unacceptable.

We must urgently see investment in the infrastructure upgrades our area needs to reduce storm overflows, particularly, but not exclusively, at Witney STW. I am determined to ensure that sewage releases are not allowed to become a matter of routine for Thames Water. I have therefore written to the Chief Executive of Thames Water seeking an urgent meeting for an explanation of these sewage releases. [Website gives a link to the letter.]

I am also following up with the Environment Agency to ask them to investigate whether these spills breach

Thames Water's permit conditions. I have been clear that illegal spills which harm our environment must be punished in the strongest possible terms.

The people of West Oxon are clear that we want to see far greater investment in better infrastructure to ensure clean and healthy waterways. I will continue to wholeheartedly support you and hold Thames Water to account.

North Cotswold Line update A great deal of technical, detailed work is being done to develop proposals for further redoubling of the Cotswold Line to enable more frequent and reliable services between West Oxon, Oxford and beyond. I have long campaigned for Hanborough station to be further improved, with better services, a second platform and integrated bus links, to create a West Oxon public transport hub - and it is great to see these proposals beginning to take shape. Plenty of work still to do but good progress is being made!

Robert Courts MP

robert@robertcourts.co.uk

* For latest rules and Covid help see the link on the village website home page:
www.stonesfield.online

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

The Voluntary Transport Scheme has been suspended while the numbers of COVID Omicron cases are so very high.

Our service will be restarted as soon as the situation improves significantly.

Please watch the Stonesfield Slate, NextDoor Stonesfield or call Viv Kendall on 01993 891803 for further information.

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Pre-school & Daycare

We are pleased to announce our 100 Club winners for the December draw.

1st Prize

No 33 Pamela Andrews £25.00

2nd Prize

No 73 Karen Wedge £10.00

Congratulations to you both.

Nature notes: Table manners

'All done' and with a swish an arm catapults any remaining food from the high chair to the floor. This is just a phase for a grandchild coming up to two years old; for birds feeding habits are set for life.

February can be a bone-chilling month as the lazy wind goes right through you. Bird feeders are in full flow with the busy birds brightening gardens. Getting to know your local birds is similar to grandchildren; when do they wake? Who is the first arrival? Any preferred seat? What to eat? Is there a pecking order?

In winter birds of a different feather flock together. Many eyes are safer as sparrow hawks scythe low down through Stonesfield. This allows longer safe feeding, there is a pecking order (learnt through skirmishes) and an etiquette between bird species.

Blue tits often arrive first when a feeder is in a tree or shrub, this allows extra perching sites and they have dainty well-behaved table manners. Great tits have



Blue tits: Martin Gascoigne-Pees

been low on numbers this year and barge right onto the feeders. Robins have defined territories and usually arrive singly looking for a gap at the table or checking underneath. This year we have one female blackbird who is certain she has the contract for cleaning under the table and chases all birds apart from the wood pigeons. If there is a lull a dunnock might sneak out from the bottom of shrubs. Sparrows come in a boisterous chattering mass clearing every bird from the feeders with few airs and graces, stay for a short while and are off again.

Highlights are when the long-tail tits arrive with perfect table manners, feeding together. We have a shy greater spotted woodpecker flying in from tree to tree checking that all is well. The prize for the worst manners goes to the nuthatch, feeding at any angle and spraying seeds everywhere; however they are impeccably dressed so we forgive them their manners.

Care of feeders is essential to avoid disease: a thorough pre-season clean; moving the site of feeders regularly stops excess feed building up under them

(attracting unwelcome guests); this also gives you an idea of which sites are preferred.

An update: the grandchild is now a neat eater, has eyes of a hawk with a finger that identifies something at the table that needs to be tried out.

John Sampson

There is a compilation available from last year's Nature notes with illustrations. See right for details.

Nature notes from 2020-21

An illustrated booklet in
support of Farmland Bird Aid
Network



£3.50 for one or three for £10

For more details and
purchases contact:

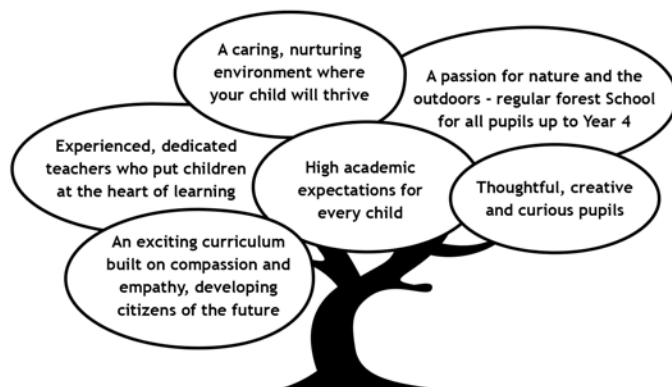
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Stonesfield Primary School

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
Headteacher email: head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

Churchill in Oxfordshire

Streaming from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire (SOFO) Museum website live from 7pm, Tuesday 1 February 2022, is *Churchill in Oxfordshire*, the latest in the museum's series of popular online talks.

Winston Churchill's story started and ended in Oxfordshire and he naturally occupies a prominent place at SOFO Museum in Woodstock. Watch the online talk to find out how big a part his Oxfordshire background and military career played in his political career and decision-making.

Viewers joining this online event can see David Lough and Prof Ashley Jackson, two acclaimed Churchill authors, in conversation about all aspects of his life, from his soldiering in the Oxfordshire Yeomanry (Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars), to his family relationships and the difficult inter-War years. In this talk, the humanity of this remarkable and enduring figure shines through.

A live Q&A session will also allow viewers to pose their own questions for the two Churchill historians. The event will be available to view both live and in a 'Catch Up' version free from the SOFO Museum website, but donations will be encouraged to support the work of the museum.

Stream link: www.sofo.org.uk/whats-on/wsconlinetalk/

North Leigh Roman Villa

Custodians of the Keys

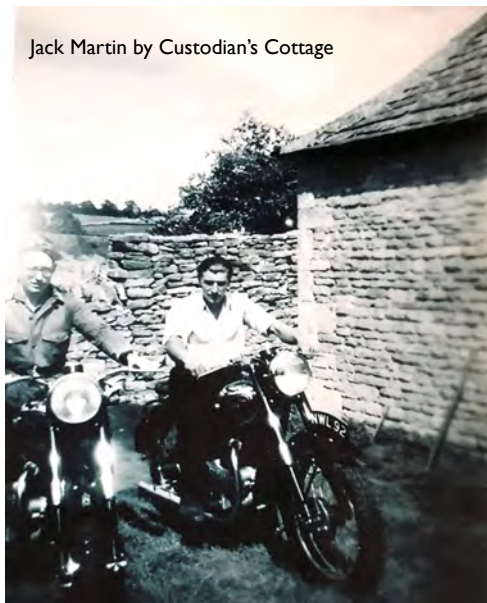
The Roman villa at North Leigh holds a special place for people from Stonesfield who over the years have visited and tried to imagine what life in the villa was like in 400 AD.

On your visits you may have met Jane Aldridge who often walks to the villa from Stonesfield. Jane's father, Jack Martin, was born in the Cottage at the villa and lived there with Jane's grandmother Daisy Martin.

At that time the mosaic was housed in an old shed with a tin roof and people had to pay threepence to gain entry to see the mosaic. Daisy was the Custodian of the Keys to the mosaic shed and would collect the entrance fee and issue them with a candle and the keys.

Time passed, Jack Martin went off to fight in the second world war and the Custodian's Cottage ceased to be a home.

Jack Martin by Custodian's Cottage



Since 2019 a small group of volunteers have been working with English Heritage to try to improve the site. We are the current Custodians of the Keys and have organised open days where the shed is unlocked and open again to visitors.

The Custodian's Cottage is derelict and the old shed tin roof is the same as when Daisy and Jack were Custodians. We have been seeking to raise interest to carry out improvements to both buildings. Imagine our joy when at the start of this year, English Heritage announced a million pound donation to fund vital conservation work at four of their sites – one of them is North Leigh Roman Villa. The announcement went on to say 'The Michael Bishop Foundation grant will support the repair of the rusting tin roof over the mosaics, the cleaning of the Roman mosaics, and converting the 19th-century custodian cottage into an education and interpretation space.'

I phoned Jane to tell her that Daisy and Jack Martin's home and the old tin roof will be renovated and she was delighted.

Over the next 4 years we will be able to bring the villa to life in a way we never thought possible. What lovely news to start 2022.

Graham Rutson

Custodian's Cottage in 1930s: Jane Aldridge



Clubs, societies & sport

Climate Emergency Group

Ethical Banking Have you been wondering if you should move your money – your savings, your pensions – into funds which guarantee to invest only in ethical projects?

Ethical banking is probably the single most important area in which we as individuals can make a difference to the way the planet's resources are used and protected. Why are we hesitating?

Come to a Zoom talk on Monday 7 February at 7.30pm, and get some of your questions and reservations answered. Sian MacInnes FPFS is one of the Independent Financial Advisers at Philip James Financial Services who are members of the *UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association* and the *Ethical Investment Association*. The talk will explore how we can use the power of our investments, savings and pensions to make a difference by making ethical investment choices. Sian will give examples of some of the funds and portfolios available. Please note: she and her firm are completely independent. She will be open for Q&A at the end – we expect to finish around 8.30.

Please email me for your Zoom invitation now.

Caroline Friend, Climate Emergency Group
caroline.v.friend@gmail.com

Stonesfield Gardening Club

I'm afraid the virus struck again in December and, due to the increasing number of cases in the village, the committee decided not to hold our Christmas Social event. A great disappointment to us all, especially to Suzy Boardman who had spent a long time thinking up a fiendish quiz for us. We would love to think that we can hold this as part of our AGM on 7 February, but I think time alone will tell. If it goes ahead, it will be a busy evening, with the AGM niceties to get through, followed by the quiz, a raffle and a seed swap – here's hoping!

Can I put out a further request for some brave souls to open their gardens to the public in June for our Open Gardens? We have some old and some new but are always on the lookout.

Happy gardening when the weather allows!

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

Stonesfield Tennis Club

The club was established over 50 years ago with membership open to all at very competitive subscription rates. The two astro-turf tennis courts were re-laid in 2018 and are in excellent condition with plenty of court availability.

Coaching is available through Faith Heron coaching services (07771 904905, faith.heron.tennis@gmail.com) and the club runs regular club sessions and coaching clinics. In addition, club members receive automatic membership of the adjacent Stonesfield Sports and Social Club.

The annual AGM is due to take place on Tuesday 15 February at 6.30pm (Stonesfield Village Hall) with refreshments to follow in the social club. All welcome.

To assist the club for future planning, a club survey is available to all (members and non-members). Please follow the links available at the contact details below. Please contact us for further details or see details on our website or social media pages.

Andrew Tacon, Chairman (07795 441986)

stonesfieldtc@gmail.com

www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/StonesfieldTennisClub

Stonesfield Football Club

It was with great sadness that I heard of the passing of Bob Franklin. Bob was a great friend and supporter of our football club and for many years in the late '80s and '90s stepped into the breach and refereed our games. It's accurate to say that while he wasn't the best of referees, it's a testament to his sense of fair play and

integrity, that it would have been difficult for a stranger to spot that Bob was, in fact, the home referee. As ill health got the better of him, Bob was often found at the side of the pitch, supporting our boys from the comfort of his mobility scooter. Nobody spoke ill of Bob, he was one of life's gentlemen. He will be missed by all of us. On behalf of Stonesfield Football Club, I'd like to express our condolences to Bob's family and friends (and Bob had many friends) at this sad time.

Bob had lots of time for our Reserves, so it's fitting that we start with them this month. Now, you may not believe this but, it's true: a Luke Burns hat-trick inspired our boys to a stunning 7-0 (yes, SEVEN) win at home to Aston. Just incredible! That was followed up with a 'walkover' win and three points when Kingham failed to raise a side. The only blemish was a 1-0 loss at home to Leafield, in a hard-fought encounter, in the first match of 2022.

The Firsts have kept their unbeaten run going. A 6-1 demolition of Ducklington in the Fred Ford was followed by a great 4-0 away win in the Oxon Junior Shield at East Oxford. The final match of 2021 was a real cracker against Hook Norton, where the spoils were shared in a 3-3 draw with Raffy Rice (his split toenail is all mended) scoring 2 of the 8 chances that he had! They then 'first-footed' Hanborough and won a tense encounter, 3-1. Can they keep this unbeaten run going? The next games are both against Hailey, in the quarter final of The Fred Ford and the league and these are games that could define their season.

Luke Burns is an enigmatic footballer, but he took his three goals against Aston with considerable aplomb and on THIS day he was unplayable. Fredos are not handed out

gratuitously, they are earned with dedication, determination and perseverance. This month's Fredo goes to a different house down by the Combe Rd: Luke Burns, your three goals matched those three words perfectly, step forward, this month's Fredo is all yours!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

North Leigh History Society

On 1 February, Liz Woolley will be giving us a talk on 'Beer, bangers and marmalade'. Oxford has always been well-known for its university and its history, but less so for its economic life, but this too has had a powerful influence of the city. On 1 March, there will be a talk about Cogges Museum. Come and find out more.

We are meeting in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA at 7.30pm. Members free, visitors £4. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com



Sunset over Stonesfield Straight

Church news

Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield

(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Rector: Rev Ralph Williamson,
rector@scbenefice.org, 01993 891872

Churchwardens: Lindsey Sellar and Rachel Severn
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

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

From the Rector: Love is...

The midpoint of this short month is Valentine's Day, an ancient feast celebrating the life of an early Christian martyr, which became associated in medieval times with romantic love, probably for no other reason than the observation that, at this time of the year, pairs of birds are engaged in earnest courtship. But romantic love has a much longer history. In the grand Upper Library at Christ Church, Oxford, there is a particularly beautiful statue of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, accompanied by Eros. Made from white marble, it dates from the Roman era, and has survived the ravages of many centuries, including violence and damage by fire in 1870, when over-privileged students rioted against the control of the Dean and college officers. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was identified with Venus in the Roman world, but had her origins in the stories of other

deities associated with love, sexuality, procreation and the harvest, going back to the dawn of human civilisation.

Christianity in its first centuries was keen to distance itself from the worship of Roman or Greek deities, proclaiming one creator God, whose selfless love was manifest in the sending of his Son. Under the influence of Greek philosophy, Christians particularly distanced themselves from any reference to erotic or bodily manifestations of love. But however much the church privileged 'spiritual' life above earthly existence, romance and passion, which are surely a vital part of who and what we are, continued to find expression. The feast of St Valentine on 14 February is one of the ways in which the value of romantic love has been acknowledged in Christian culture, and although many people struggle to sustain passion in their relationships, we value not only romance but also the deeper loves which it may foreshadow. These include the compassionate love which partners discover beyond the fire of first passion, the love of parents for children, the love we feel for family, for neighbours and for the environment around us.

The Greek language has many different words for love. We have only one, but we are aware of its very different connotations. We love special places, things and experiences. We love our church, our village, and the people who are our community and wider family. The saying 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' was already a thousand years old when a lawyer

quoted it to Jesus, but it remains a potent reminder that unless we can do so, there is no life worth living for any of us, as each of us depends on the love which our neighbours show to us. ‘Who is my neighbour?’ the lawyer asked. A list would include all who live and work in our communities, however we feel about them.

As Christians, love is something we feel, but more than that, it is something we do, and all kinds of love have their origin in God. At the start of the Marriage Service I say, ‘God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them’. The worship we offer is to the one who created in love, who entered into his own creation through love, who knew the love of a human mother, who surrendered his life out of love for us.

We are relational beings and the celebration of Valentine’s Day this month points to our human longing for relationship, for closeness and for the reciprocity of shared understanding and commitment. But more than this, as Lent and Easter approach, it points to the love beyond our falling in love: the love of our Creator, the love which sustains and which saves, the love which draws us into relationship with God and with one another.

Rev Ralph Williamson

Sunday 6 Feb

[Fourth Sunday before Lent]

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

Sunday 13 Feb

[Third Sunday before lent]

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

Sunday 20 Feb

[Second Sunday before Lent]

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

Sunday 27 Feb

[Sunday next before Lent]

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
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Tuesdays

8.45–10am	Coffee and biscuits in the Reading Room, Combe
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Wednesdays

9.30am	Holy Communion (every week - Stonesfield)
11am	Morning Prayer, Combe (2nd & 16th February)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

February Services

- 6 Feb No Service at Stonesfield
10.30am United Service at
Charlbury
- 13 Feb 11am Reverend Charles Harris
- 20 Feb 11am Reverend Rose Westwood
Holy Communion Service
- 27 Feb 11am Andrew Maisey

Happy New Year wishes

It's arrived, another new year. Another opportunity to put aside the past and look ahead to the future. Time to seek new joys and new ventures of every kind, to reach out and share them with 'All We Can' (a prayer by Charles Wesley).

He will fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Job 8:21

World Day of Prayer

The WDP Service will be held on Friday 4 March at 2.15pm. This beautiful Service has been prepared by Christian women from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The theme is found in the book of Jeremiah: *'I know the plans I have for you'*. The Service focuses on freedom, forgiveness, justice and God's Peace, and hope for today's world.

Readers are needed for the Service and everyone is warmly invited. Do get in touch soon if you would like to take part.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

k.m.albert14@gmail.com

Roman Catholic worship

Your future

Ambition, goals, objectives, destiny, vision, mission, pathways: all largely share some sort of forward direction from now to somewhere in the future. It's not so hard to work out one's ambition or goals, but it's much harder to figure out how to get there, or harder still to measure your success. Future is about not knowing or being sure if we are in the right direction to where we want to go or should be going. Jesus alone knew His destiny: to fulfil His Father's mission to save humanity by sacrificing Himself for us:

Mark 9:30–32 (also in Matthew 17:22–23) as follows: He said to them, *'The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.'*

And in three Gospels: Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21:

'Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

So with awful fore-knowledge Jesus knew His fate and the consequences, but He didn't leave us directionless or without guidance. The Gospels provide us with a safe and secure road through our present to our better future.

Matthew 6:34: *'So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'*

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass is 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)

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

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.

The Synodal Pathway

The Holy Father has called for the Synodal Process to begin in the Dioceses of the world on 17 October 2021. The Holy Father highlights the importance of ‘mutual listening’ and that this will be at the heart of the synodal process throughout the Church and beyond the boundaries of the Church.

For further information about the Synodal Pathway and how St Teresa’s is approaching this, please visit our website (see below).

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

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

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Anna Burnside PARTNER
anna.burnside@theburnsidepartnership.com

Jacqui Birks TAX DIRECTOR
jacqui.birks@theburnsidepartnership.com

For further information, please contact:
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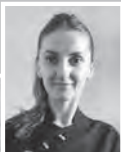
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Tree Planting Starts on Nine New Woodlands

The first of 270,000 trees are being planted on our Estate as part of a project, in partnership with Morgan Sindall Group plc, the construction and regeneration group, to create nine new woodlands. Throughout December around 30,000 trees were planted at a site known as the River Dorn Wood including hornbeam, lime, sycamore, wild cherry, oak, Norway maple, alder and beech.

Battlefields and Baroque Exhibition: The story of the 1st Duke of Marlborough

In 2022 we'll be celebrating the Duke's life, family and achievements with an immersive exhibition of interactive displays, tours, battle re-enactments, and other activities for all the family. Step back in time to the Palace of the 1700s and marvel at the exquisite clothing, food, games, and music that the 1st Duke and his Duchess would have loved.

Residents express how grateful they are to settle into new home

The first tenants of our initial release of Affordable Homes at Park View Woodstock have recently moved into their new properties. "The opportunity to live in a Blenheim Estates affordable home is delightful. Surrounded by the beauty of the area and being close to my child's school, we can flourish as a family. It has been somewhat life-changing". At Blenheim Estate Homes, we are committed to building truly affordable homes for local families.

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Great Experience Travel



The light at the end of a very long tunnel seems to be getting brighter and brighter with good news about reduced testing requirements for

travellers to the UK and more and more countries adapting to the realities of travelling in Covid times.



Talking of Lights, David and Sarah from the Great Experience Travel team were both lucky enough to visit Lapland over the Christmas

period, where they experienced for themselves the stunning sight of the Northern Lights – and they truly are even more

amazing in real life than the photos make out. Seeing the Lights should be on everyone's bucket list, so do come in for a chat and we can share our experiences with you.



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