



Issue No 532 February 2023

Stumble into 2023



Start of 2023 Stonesfield Stumble at The Cross

The annual New Year's Day stumble attracted a good crowd of walkers (with and without dogs) to complete the five kilometre stroll along the Ridgeway, across the road to Ditchley and back via Harry's Plantation and the Ridings.

It is a good opportunity to swap Christmas stories and to look forward to what the New Year will bring.

For some that will be exciting with new challenges ahead, for some daunting as they come to terms with life changes, for others a frightening prospect as the rise in the cost of living hits home.

As the article on page 4 shows, there is a huge amount of goodwill in the village and 62 Reverse Advent Calendars were donated this year. The flip side of this though is that so many families are struggling to make ends meet and these boxes were a real help.

The important point to bear in mind if you need help is that there are those who can offer support.

- West Oxfordshire Community Support Helpline 01993 861077.
- West Oxfordshire District Council have a comprehensive list of help available on their website www.westoxon.gov.uk/news-items/help-if-you-re-struggling-with-living-costs/or phone 01993 861000.
- Citizens Advice is another place to turn to via their website www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/ or phone 01865 247788

Locally we have our very own Stonesfield Mutual Aid, a group of residents working with the Parish Council. You can contact Kate Harris (01993 898781) or Sharon Acum (07766 424088) in confidence as well as any member of the Parish Council.

Do you want to send in an article but have no email?

Just call the editor (see below) who can arrange to collect your handwritten copy.

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Articles are solely the responsibility of the writers and their opinions do not necessarily accord with those of the editors or publishers.

Whilst we strive to ensure all information is correct, we are not responsible for anything that happens as a result of you using the information. If you find any errors or omissions then please contact the Publisher and we will endeavour to correct them.

Dates for your diary are always subject to change. Please check with event organisers.

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

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Line ads can also be delivered by hand to:

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All advertisements must be paid for in advance.

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Dates for your diary:

February

1	Parish Council meeting	Stonesfield Primary School	7pm
2,9,16,23	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30–2pm
3	St James Folk Session	St James' Centre	7.30–10pm
6,20,27	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45–11.30am
7,14,21,28	Winter Warmer (social supper)	Village Hall	5–7.30pm
11	Ceilidh Dance	Village Hall	8pm
13	Gardening Club AGM & talk	St James' Centre	7pm
21	Pancake Party (free!)	St James' Centre	3–5pm
25	Septembeerfest quiz	Village Hall	7pm

March

3	World Day of Prayer	Methodist Church	2pm
4	Repair Café & Upcycling Workshop	Village Hall	11am–2pm

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to local medical appointments or to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury.

We make no charge but welcome a donation towards expenses.

COVID safety precautions are still in place.

Please call Viv Kendall (01993 891803) to book transport in February.

Notices & news

Thank you!

Just a note to say thank you to the lovely people of Stonesfield for the festive food parcel delivered to my home prior to Christmas – very much appreciated and enjoyed!

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2023 from a grateful octogenarian.

(Name & address supplied)

Reverse Advent Calendar



If there is one thing Stonesfield has in spades it's community spirit! We received a magnificent 62 reverse advent hampers from households around the village, boosted by a very generous donation from the *Stonesfield Slate*. They came in all shapes and sizes, and were all wrapped so very differently giving each one that special dusting of Christmas community spirit. We know that the hampers made a real difference to households where the cost-of-living crisis has made things even more difficult.

These initiatives really happen when people work together and there are a lot of people to thank. Firstly, there are the folk that collected the parcels from our givers: Helen and Rob Atkinson, Paul and Diane Bates and Simon Warr. Helen Atkinson also persuaded a lot of village organisations to become points of contact for those in need and to deliver hampers to households who needed them, plus she and Rob coordinated the delivery of hampers to that team of deliverers. There are a lot of people in those organisations to thank: Sarah Lydiat at Baby & Toddler Group, Louise John at Pre-School, Rachel Crouch and Zena Rozee at Primary School, Ben Whitworth at Scouts, Kate Harris at Lunch Club, Viv Kendall at Voluntary Transport, Kathleen Alb ert at Methodist Church, Rev. Ralph Williamson at St James' the Great Church, Suze Matthews at Roman Catholic Church, Sharon Acum at Mutual Aid, and Wendy Gould and Karen East on the Parish Council.

Here's wishing everyone a happy 2023.

Susan Rudlin, Vice-Chair
Stonesfield Community Pub Limited
susan@backthewhitehorse.com

Final tree on Stonesfield Straight?

The family of the late Leslie George Smith planted what might be the final tree (an oak tree) on the Stonesfield Straight, with his ashes and in memory of the much loved husband, father, grandfather & great

The family of the late Leslie George Smith



grandfather. A fitting poem was read by all to mark the birth of his tree and what a magnificent tree we hope it to be!

The 'Stonesfield tree planters' have so far planted 222 trees and hedging plants; we are also learning how to lay hedges. A big thank you to everyone who has been out helping and planting.... We are about to get going again.

The best time for planting trees goes until March, depending on the weather. Having avoided the frosts and rested over the festive season we have just had permission from Ditchley for planting on the footpath that turns left off the Ridings just before Callow Farm.



New marker stone on Stonesfield Straight

Many thanks to all who have sponsored trees. If you would like to sponsor a tree please get in touch.

Another thank you to those who made the Cotswold National Landscape stone possible, and to Neil Godfrey for getting the stone in place.

John Sampson

john.sampson9@btinternet.com

Septemberfest Quiz Night

Please come and support the next Septemberfest 2023 fundraiser which will take place at Stonesfield Village Hall on Saturday 25 February at 7pm. £10pp includes a grazing board (vegetarian and gluten-free options). Teams maximum 6.

For tickets please contact :-

Sarah Plumridge (891163)

Bolivern@icloud.com

Lucy Wiltshire lwiltshire99@outlook.com

Juliette Hillier Juliettehillier@hotmail.com

St James Folk Session



A Stonesfield Folk Session

We are meeting once again at the St James' Centre on 3 February 7.30-10pm. Bring your songs, instruments, poems and ears for an evening sharing of acoustic music and poetry. Those who just want to listen are welcome. Bring your own drinks. £2 on door to cover costs.

Becki Sherlaw-Johnson

rebeccasj@btinternet.com

Survey for the Neighbourhood Plan

Your chance to have a say in the way Stonesfield develops

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their community.

The Neighbourhood Plan will allow Stonesfield residents to participate in making the policies on which planning decisions are made. We need evidence upon which to base the policies. An important source of the evidence will be answers to the survey written by the Parish Council Steering Group.

What is the survey? The survey will ask you to say what sort of housing you think Stonesfield needs, what transport and other resources you value, and which green spaces you want to protect from development. The Steering Group will collect and analyse your answers and express them as policies in our Neighbourhood Plan.

What's it got to do with me? These policies will stand as your statement of how you want Stonesfield to develop: what sort of houses you say you need, how they should look, what land you would like protected, what infrastructure you think needs to be provided.

Your views are crucial. Without your responses to the survey, we cannot draft the policies. If we have no policies, Stonesfield will have nothing to offer when resisting inappropriate planning applications. Please make every effort to complete and return the survey, so we can

record your views and preferences and create a development plan for the village, now and for future generations.

Why does it matter? We are in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which should protect us. In 2018 the community successfully fought off an application to build 68 houses on the Stonesfield Straight. But beautiful countryside and lovely views are seemingly no longer sacrosanct. The developers may well be back.

When will I get the survey? The survey will be delivered as a paper document to every household at the end of February. We would strongly encourage you to complete it online – it's very simple, and only takes about half an hour. Instructions for how to do this will be on the survey itself and in the *Slate* as well as on social media. Paper copies will also be acceptable. The deadline for completion will be 31 March 2023.

What happens next? When the draft Plan has been completed by the Steering Group the village will be asked in a referendum to approve it. Then, once it has also been approved by the District Council, it will form part of the Local Development Plan. All planning applications must be determined with regard to the Local Development Plan which will include Stonesfield's Neighbourhood Plan.

The more people who complete the survey, the more accurate the picture will be of how you want the village to develop. So please complete the survey, and encourage friends and family to do the same.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the survey or the

Neighbourhood Plan go to:
www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan/, or email us at
info@stonesfieldplan.com.

Defibrillators

Did you know Stonesfield has **two defibrillators in the village** which are accessible to members of the public?

The Parish Council would like to ensure that **everyone is aware** of this vital life saving equipment. Over the Christmas period we understand that the ambulance service mis-informed someone who needed a defibrillator that the nearest one was in a neighbouring village.



Defibrillator at Pre-School

Our defibrillators are located at the **Village Hall** (outside the entrance doorway - accessible every day, all day) and at the **Pre-School** - 4 Glovers Yard, Stonesfield, Witney OX29 8PT.

Both defibrillators have pads for both adults and children and are suitable for ALL users. Both are registered with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS). When you dial 999 they will give you the codes to



Defibrillator at Village Hall

access the box. The parish council funds batteries and pads for both defibrillators to ensure they are ready for use if required. Please contact the parish council if you have any queries regarding the defibrillators or if you notice either are damaged at any point (they are checked and maintained regularly - at least once a week).

clerk@Stonesfieldpc.uk

St James the Great, Stonesfield

Pancake Party

for children and adults

at the St James' Centre
Shrove Tuesday 21 February
3pm - 5pm

Pancakes and drinks all free of charge

Come and join us!

More information

stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Village Hall News

It has been a super busy few months with the lead up to Christmas and then back to normality in January with all the classes starting back. We were also lucky to have the Stonesfield Players brightening up the cold winter nights at the end of January with their duo of plays, so thank you to everyone who attended and supported them.

Always on the lookout for bringing new things to the village, we held our first Winter Warmer in December. This is a new initiative with the Stonesfield Food Group to host a weekly social supper with optional craft activity, book and toy swap. Our first evening was very successful so we are now going to run this on a weekly basis. Come along on a Tuesday from 5pm til 7.30pm, all welcome and no charge for the event. Come on your own, bring your family, bring a friend, it is a fun and social evening. Other new events have included a few evenings of mediumship. Do check on our Facebook page and Nextdoor posts for up-to-date information on all the Village Hall events.

Keeping with the theme of new things, we have also added some new items to the party supplies available at the hall. These include yards of home-made bunting, battery powered candle lights with bottle holders, fairy lights and props for photo booths (you have to supply your own camera). We have everything you need to make the hall look great and we have recently hosted some large parties with fantastic decoration. So do think of the Village Hall if you are holding a party and looking for a venue.



December's Community Café

Community Café – A big thank you to everyone for supporting the December Repair Café, and more recently the Preschool Café in January! We have a space for the February Café on the 4th so if anyone would like to raise some money please get in touch.

Early notice for anyone with broken items that are hoping to get them looked at, our next Repair Café will be on 4 March.

STONESFIELD PRE-SCHOOL FUNDRAISER

Valentines Ceilidh Dance

SATURDAY 11TH FEBRUARY
STONESFIELD VILLAGE HALL

TICKETS - £20

INCLUDES LIVE MUSIC FROM
FINSTOCK FESTIVAL BAND,
LIGHT BUFFET & SOFT DRINKS

*ALCOHOLIC DRINKS CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE BAR

BUY YOUR TICKETS FROM:
[HTTPS://STONESFIELDCEILIDH.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://stonesfieldceilidh.eventbrite.com)

DOORS OPEN
8PM

COME JOIN US FOR A DANCE

Valentine Ceilidh Dance – Preschool are putting on this lovely fundraiser event on Saturday 11 February. Doors open at 8pm and the evening includes live music from Finstock Festival Band, a light buffet & soft drinks. There will also be a bar. Tickets are available from www.stonesfieldceilidh.eventbrite.com

Just to keep you up to date on the regular open classes, they are as follows:

Mon: Tae Kwon Do – open to anyone 5+

Tues: Winter Warmer, Zumba, Strong Nation HIIT Class, Carers Café on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

Wed: Pilates, HIIT Class, Folkdancing

Thurs: Tae Kwon Do, HIIT Class

Fri: Baby & Toddler Group

Sat: 1st Saturday of the month Community Café

With so much entertainment and activities available, hopefully there is something for everyone. However if there is something that you would like to see at the Village Hall, please do let us know and we can see if we can help!

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

Untreated sewage discharges can be followed in real-time on the Thames Water Utilities website



by Lidia Arciszewska, Church Hanborough, West Oxon.

(This was sent out on 5 Jan 2023)

Following the pressure from numerous community groups, such as the signatories of a petition, Thames Water Utilities developed a live monitoring system that advises the residents about every single discharge of raw sewage released from their storm overflow tanks straight into the rivers.

This is available online at www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map

While this is a step forward, it is really disappointing to see that as of today all but one Sewage Treatment Works along the river Evenlode are or have been discharging raw sewage into the river within the last 48hrs; some for more than 100hrs already.

This campaign is not over!

[See also 'From our MP' in the *Politics & local affairs* section.]

Stonesfield Repair Café – Don't throw it away!



The next Repair Café will be Saturday 4 March 11am–2pm in Stonesfield Village Hall. Thank you for supporting the Repair Café - so far we have saved over 140kg from going to landfill.

We will look at all electrical appliances, items of furniture, mechanical items, computers and phones and associated software problems, and tools which need sharpening.

Please bring your items by 1.30pm and it's helpful if you can tell us what you are bringing and what's wrong at stonesfieldrepaircafe@gmail.com

Delicious drinks, cake and lunches will be available provided by the Community Café.

Upcycling Workshop – New from Old!

**Stonesfield Village Hall, 4 March
11am–2pm**

Expanding the work of the Repair Café this month we are running a new venture. Would you like to learn a new skill which will help you transform a worn but treasured item into something you can still use? We can help you turn your old jeans into a bag or your boyfriend's cast-off shirt

into a stylish bandana! Contact us to book a space at the upcycling workshop. We need your name, contact number, age if under 18, and whether you have an item you want to upcycle or would like help sourcing one. Tell us if you have an idea of what you want to make or if you'd like our upcycling gurus to come up with suggestions.

To register contact us at stonesfieldrepaircafe@gmail.com. The workshop is free but donations are invited to cover costs.

The White Horse – update

We've reviewed the agent's sales particulars and are pleased to see that the property is up for sale as a pub.

Mr Bowers has been liaising with our solicitor, Jim Astle, and personally hosted a visit to the pub by a RICS Registered Valuer, Mike Hughes, on Tuesday 17 January.

Mike Hughes carried out a formal assessment of the property as the basis for providing a report for us on the current market value of the property (known as a Red Book valuation). When it arrives we will use it to inform any further decisions we make on the behalf of our shareholders.

Steve Callaghan

Chair of the committee

Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd

A festive evening for wreaths



We all had such a festive evening creating beautiful Christmas wreaths at the beginning of December, we had the wonderful Cassie singing beautifully throughout and much fun was had by all! Stonesfield Pre-School would like to thank everyone who attended, everyone who donated raffle prizes, baked delicious mince pies and collected foliage for us! Thank you to Hillary from Cotswold Florists for helping on the night.

Also a big thank you to Blenheim Palace, Dave Holloway and Bampton Garden Centre for their very generous foliage donations.

We raised an amazing £1,066.61!! Already looking forward to next year's event.

Hannah Willans (Stonesfield Pre-School Committee)

Time to get walking again!

With spring on its way we start to think about getting out to walk in the beautiful English countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks?

Walking in Oxfordshire www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire has loads of walks to download and print, free. It also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is there in one place.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

john@walkinginengland.co.uk

HONEY PATCH
Cotswolds



LOCAL HONEY

£6 per jar

Please contact Gaye on 07990530386
Or email honeypatchcotswolds@yahoo.com

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

Notes from the January meeting:

Scouts: Scouts representatives attended this meeting. They have the planning permission for a new Scout hut and fundraising to date has been relatively successful. Further monies are needed but work can commence. Scouts will be letter-dropping those nearest to the Scout hut to provide further information, and an update is included elsewhere in the *Slate*. The builder for the Scout hut is a local person. The steps at the Scout hut need to be made safer. The Scouts are looking into this as they own those steps. The council is supportive of the work that the Scouts are doing.

Botley Solar: It was noted that the Parish Council supports Bladon's response to the Botley West solar park, which was very detailed. A copy of the supporting document from SPC can be found on the website.

County, District & Parish Councillors' reports

County & District

- There is a £2 bus scheme in place for reduced travel. There may be a scheme for a reduced bus scheme for young people on the buses coming in.
- WODC Cabinet is touring. The clerk will liaise with Cllr Graham to see if we can host a cabinet meeting in the village later in 2023.

- The cabinet has decided not to have pavement licences - they will also refund fees paid in 2022 - which should encourage people back on to the High Street. This will be welcome news for our local and neighbouring towns.

Parish Council

- Residents are reporting blocked drains and potholes – the clerk is reporting these, as are our councillors. Residents are encouraged to report ALL blocked drains, potholes, highway issues via Fixmystreet – www.fixmystreet.com
- Neighbourhood Plan meeting held recently focussed mainly on the survey. The Community Trust are meeting with NP w/c 16 January.
- Graffiti at bus shelter – the council are looking to clean this up.
- Overgrown hedge on Pond Hill is causing a problem. This has been reported to Highways.
- It is noted that the White Horse pub is on the market (as a pub) for £550k.
- Defibrillators – the clerk confirmed they are registered with SCAS (Ambulance service) – there is a call-out for first responders. If any villagers are interested there is a first responder scheme that can be joined nationally.
- Playing Fields Association wish to buy a hedge cutter – they may potentially put a grant form to the parish council. The parish council could possibly use them

for hedge cutting providing costs are competitive and all necessary insurances and qualifications for those using it are held.

- There have been 4 incidents of vandalism on the SID at the war memorial. The SID will be moved to another location.
- The council heard from Susan Rudlin that the reverse advent calendar was a success. This is great news and the Parish Council thanks the team for organising this.

Financial matters

- There was a grant request from the Playing Fields Association for the sum of £1,932. Councillors approved to pay this grant in full.
- The council approved the precept % for 2023/24 at 2% against Band D council tax rates. This comes to an annual precept figure of £37,299 for our section of council tax.
- The council approved the proposed budget for 2023/24, which was circulated and discussed at the meeting.

Planning Applications

23/03472/HHD – Mr Mee, Middlecote, High Street, Stonesfield. Erection of single and two-storey front extension and conversion of garage to habitable space together with associated works. – NO OBJECTION from the Parish Council.

23/03434/HHD – Ms Armando Zozaya, 16 Busby Close, Stonesfield. Garage conversion and extension – NO OBJECTION from the Parish Council.

Council: Cllr Geraldine Lawrence advised that she is standing down as councillor at

the end of this term and will not be re-standing at election.

Use it or potentially lose it! Bus Service S3 north of Woodstock, including both branches to Charlbury and Chipping Norton, was declared as non-commercial by Stagecoach. Since October 2022 it has been run under contract to the County Council. This arrangement will run until August 2024. This funding was obtained to give bus services which have suffered as a result of the pandemic a chance to return to commercial viability. Ultimately, the service **needs more fare-paying passengers to use it** for it to be a commercial success; the implementation of the Oxford traffic filter scheme may well generate additional usage but we will not know if that is the case until early 2024. We encourage people to use the S3 service and encourage others locally. If we do not use it, we could lose it!

2023 Stonesfield Parish Council meeting dates:

All at 7pm, usually at Stonesfield Primary School. 1 February / 1 March / April – the (due to annual elections) / 10 May - delayed due to elections, may be later in month with annual Parish Meeting / 7 June / 5 July / no August meeting / 6 September / 4 October / 8 November / 6 December.

Elections: This year is an election year in Stonesfield. Elections take place in May but forms to get your name on the election list come out end March. ALL seats for the Parish Council are to be re-elected. **We need you** to represent your village.

Some of our existing councillors would like to sit again but it is likely not all - all seats need to be re-elected. If you are interested in becoming a councillor please come along

to a Parish Council meeting, chat to an existing councillor or the clerk to ask questions about what it may involve.

Being a councillor is an unpaid role and does require a few hours of your time each month (including one evening monthly meeting) but it does not require any formal qualifications - just an interest in what's going on in your community.

You can make a difference in your village, your voice can influence District and County decisions, you can influence budget and how money is spent in the village and provide a voice for members of the village amongst many other things. Being a councillor is for everyone aged 18 and over. It would be great to have representation from some of our youngsters too.

To find out a bit more informally there are some **FREE zoom sessions** 'So you want to be a councillor?' These are arranged by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils. Each is a one hour session which sets out the basics of being a councillor, with the opportunity to ask questions as well.

The sessions are one hour long, *no need to book*, on 13 February 10–11am and 15 March 2–3pm.

Zoom joining details:

[www.us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?](https://www.us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrVmVxTUUs2QT09)
[pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrVmVxTUUs2QT09](https://www.us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrVmVxTUUs2QT09)

Meeting ID: 871 2501 2109

Passcode: 386520

We look forward to meeting you!

Parish Clerk

Stonesfield Parish Council

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

News from West Oxfordshire

At the beginning of December WODC launched a **consultation on the plans for its budget** for the next financial year. Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting the Council's website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/budget Physical copies of the consultation questions will also be available in the council offices in Witney.

The Council has agreed a total fund of £200,000 to **help with the cost of living crisis**. Various support schemes have been developed in partnership with local communities who have been advising the Council on where they can provide the best support. WODC has opened up a grants scheme to financially support local groups helping their community through the cost of living crisis. 18 groups have been given funding. The Council is also running a campaign to help people understand what support is available to them both nationally and locally. Visit www.westoxon.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport to find out more.

WODC has completed the **purchase of the buildings and assets of Marriotts Walk** in the middle of Witney as part of wider plans to reinvigorate town centres across West Oxfordshire.

From our MP

Extracts from Robert Courts' Newsletter

Update on sewage pollution: When new homes are built, they must have the infrastructure that is needed to go with them, and that is never more important than when we are ensuring our sewage networks are able to cope.

I have been campaigning for some time to

link new homes to the provision of their corresponding, and needed, sewer upgrades, working alongside the Conservative Environment Network and colleagues in Parliament.

I asked in the House of Commons when the Government will review its plans to implement Schedule Three of the Flood and Water Act. Should this bit of existing law be implemented – rather than sitting on the statute book unused – it would remove developers' automatic 'right to connect' to public sewers.

This would mean that water companies would be able to object if the system was not able to cope – they would not simply accept what the developers did – and consequently would be able to require a financial contribution from developers. We, in turn, would get the upgrades to our water systems that we expect and would have a system that can cope.

Campaign win on reducing sewage pollution: Following my question in the House of Commons, I was delighted to see the Government's announcement to make sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) mandatory to new developments.

This will significantly reduce both pollution and the risk of flooding for rural areas such as West Oxfordshire by:

1. Removing developers' automatic 'right to connect' to public sewers; allowing water companies to object if their systems are not able to cope.
2. Slowing down water flow into drains; for example, by using features such as grassed areas or permeable surfaces to reduce the risk of surface water flooding and helping improve our sewer infrastructure.

I am pleased with the progress the Government is now making on this issue and I will be following its implementation closely.

Oxfordshire Community Land Trust

Crofts Court Community Share Offer has reached the halfway mark - help us with the next 50%.

Oxfordshire Community Land Trust is excited and proud to announce that its Community Share Offer has, in just 9 weeks, managed to raise over half its target investment. There is still time to invest; we really need your help to reach this challenging target.

The homes have been advertised on Vale's Homechoice website. We are looking forward to meeting prospective tenants, interviewing them and getting started on the training over the coming months.

The building is going well and the roof went on before Christmas, we're still on schedule to move in around June. Once residents have settled in, we hope to welcome many members and investors to come and see how community-led housing can really be of benefit.

As a reminder, Crofts Court in Dean Court, Cumnor Parish just west of Oxford is OCLT's first development that will provide 8 much needed community-led affordable homes for those on the Vale of White Horse Housing List and with a strong local connection. It is fully funded, with a grant of £904,000 from the Vale of White Horse BC and Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and a variable rate mortgage of £1.1m from Ecology Building Society.

Through Community Shares, with a forecast 3% return, stakeholders will help OCLT guard against future increasing interest rates, and will allow OCLT to generate a small income stream from the rents at an earlier date, and start bringing a

second site forward. Oxford is the second least affordable city in the country and these homes are desperately needed. Rents will be no higher than the Local Housing Allowance so those on housing support will be able to afford them. The homes will also be asset locked, so they cannot be purchased.

This is an opportunity for social investors and organisations to step in and take a stake in fairer, more sustainable housing for Oxfordshire, and to demonstrate that this form of community housing can be scaled up across the country! The trust is offering Community Shares at a value of £1, offered in multiples of 250, with a minimum investment of £250 and a maximum of £50,000. The Community Shares will carry a target maximum interest rate of 3%. We aim to raise £500,000 by 28 February 2023. For more information including our Community Share Offer brochure and Business Plan, please visit www.ethex.org.uk/invest/OCLT

Police statistics on Operation Holly

From 1–31 December, Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary's Joint Operations Unit made more than 700 arrests as part of Operation Holly, to stop drivers under the influence of drink and drugs.

737 arrests were made, with 451 of those in the Thames Valley alone. This is an increase of 24% compared to last year. Of the arrests made, 283 were for drink driving and 168 for drug driving. There was a 42% increase in arrests of those aged under 25 on last year, with the figure rising to 101.

Please help the police by challenging anyone you think may be about to drive having drunk alcohol or used drugs. Even the smallest amount of these can impact on driving. It's not worth the risk.

Neighbourhood Watch

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of us are worried about our home being broken into, yet there are simple, proven measures we can all take to halve our chances of being burgled.

At Neighbourhood Watch, we believe neighbours keeping an eye out for each other is key to reducing burglary, so we've extended the WIDE acronym to WIDE(N):

W: WINDOWS: Keep your windows locked

I: INTERIOR: Put inside lights on a timer/smart bulb

D: DOORS: Double or deadlock your doors

E: EXTERIOR: Put outside lights on a sensor

(N): NEIGHBOURS: Keep an eye out for your neighbours

Leaving home? Use this free home security checklist to leave your home safe and secure. Learn more at ourwatch.org.uk/thinkwiden

Police and community support: For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Deanna Asplundh
Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Primary School

I wanted to introduce myself as the new Interim Headteacher of Stonesfield School. I have just started at the school this month and I have already enjoyed a very warm welcome from the school and wider community.

I have found Stonesfield School to be a very friendly environment with dedicated teachers and inquisitive, bright children. I am looking forward to supporting the school and children to further the aims of being inclusive, friendly and ambitious.

I am also looking forward to working with you, the wider community, to keep Stonesfield School at its heart.

Mr Matt Jarvis
Interim Headteacher

Stonesfield Pre-School and Day Care

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

1st Prize - No 12 - N McDonald £25
2nd Prize - No 90 - Claire Johnson £10

We are fast approaching Term 4 and keeping our fingers crossed for some lovely spring weather. However, the children continue to enjoy themselves whatever the weather and waterplay and puddle jumping is, and always will be, a firm favourite. Our motto at Pre-School is, 'there's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing!'

Once again, our community has been so kind to us, we have had lots of support with all our recent fundraisers and have been able to purchase some new resources to support their learning.

If you have a child who you would like to attend our Pre-School and would like to add them to our waiting list please contact Louise John, Manager stonesfieldps@outlook.com or Zena Rozee, Administrator stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com and we will be more than happy to discuss availability.

Another of our main aims is to work with our local families' needs. If you need days and sessions not currently available, we would love to hear from you as well. We may be able to accommodate if numbers allow.

Louise John
stonesfieldps@outlook.com

Stonesfield Library

The Library (898187) is open as follows:

Monday	2.30–7pm
Wednesday	10am–12 noon
Thursday	2.30–5pm
Saturday	10am–12 noon.

I'm a Reader ...

Caroline Friend, 69, has lived in the village for 33 years. She has acted and directed with the Stonesfield Players, is a long-standing member of the Sustainable Stonesfield committee, and set up the Climate Emergency Group. She currently teaches English to foreign professionals.

Caroline's relationship with the library changed after a diagnosis of Graves' disease 18 months ago which left her seeing double, her everyday life drastically curtailed. Graves' is a thyroid autoimmune disorder that attacks the eye muscles. 'Objects intersected with one other resulting in multiple images. It was like I was in a Picasso. My eyeballs were pulled in different directions and became disobedient: I couldn't look up or sideways. It was very frightening.' The double vision was improved by use of a patch which means that although she still can't drive, she can read again.

Just before Christmas, Caroline had a cup of coffee with a nonagenarian friend next door and was intrigued by 'the mysterious green canvas bag of books that sat permanently by her chair'. The bag, her friend revealed, was her three-weekly 'fresh supply' from the Home Library Service. She urged Caroline to try it.

So Caroline emailed the service. 'They responded immediately. It didn't matter that my disability was temporary. I just needed to identify books and authors that I would like.' The books Caroline asked for included: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, *Revenge* - the latest Rose Tremain, the *Rough Guide to Portugal*, something from the recent Nobel prize winner, Annie Ernaux, and everyone's favourite whale epic, *Moby Dick*, which Caroline defines as

the quintessential classic, i.e. a book 'you haven't read but know you should have.' She was impressed when the volunteer turned up at her door with most of her requests met.

Reading is a vital part of Caroline's life; the Home Library Service has been a real help, because she gets through a lot. She has several books on the go at once, to meet different needs.

'There's the novel I read for an hour when I'm eating supper. Currently it's William Trevor's *Elizabeth Alone*, which explores the lives of women in the early 1970s in hospital for hysterectomies.' Caroline was struck by the difference between then and now: fifty years ago, these patients were kept in hospital for weeks, giving them time to muse artfully about their existence. The novel's premise wouldn't work today where you can have a hysterectomy quicker than you can find a parking space at the hospital.

Before bed, Caroline has 'a completely different type of book. There needs to be no plot as I'm going to conk out after two pages. I read diaries, biographies.'

'On Saturday morning I read travel books with my tea in bed. Dervla Murphy (Irish madcap who travelled alone by bicycle all over the world) or Horatio Clare, the contemporary nature and travel writer. Weekends I will embark on a long walk and this reading is when I'm psyching myself into landscape...'

To register for the Home Library Service call 01865 810259 or email homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Eleanor Bailey
eleanorbailey55@gmail.com

West Oxfordshire Community Choir

After a lovely Christmas sing-song and festive evening to see out 2022, WOC Choir is back for a new term and 2023 is promising to be a fun packed year. With an Easter social night, Summer charity concert, a slot at this year's Stonesfield Septembeerfest plus a festive concert to look forward to, there really couldn't be a better time to join the choir.

WOC choir is open to all local residents with any level of singing ability. Music reading is not required as we don't work from sheet music and all harmonies are arranged with the current singers in mind. We sing a variety of musical genres from Soul to Swing, Rock to Reggae and everything in between.

WOC meets every Weds evening during school term time from 7:30–9:30 at St James' Centre, High Street, Stonesfield. Term fees are charged at £5 per week, with the first evening being free for all new members.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are an essential part of any rehearsal (of course!) and offer the perfect opportunity to get to know your fellow singers, so why not come along to our next choir rehearsal and see whether WOC choir might be for you? We'd love to meet you.

For further information please contact Laura on wocchoir@yahoo.co.uk.

Happy harmonising and a belated Happy New Year to all.

Laura Rudge, Choir Director
wocchoir@yahoo.co.uk

Witney Music Society

The penultimate concert of Witney Music Society's 2022-23 season will be given by Ensemble Molière, selected as Radio 3's first-ever New Generation Baroque Ensemble. The programme will include works by Couperin, Rameau and J.F. Rebel. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 10 February at High Street Methodist Church, Witney.

Tickets (£15, £1 for under 19s) are available in advance online or at the door from 7pm. For more information, please telephone 01993 898020 or visit the Witney Music Society website www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock: WW2 art to go on display

The Art of World War II: A Personal Collection will go on show from 25 February to 7 May 2023, featuring original artwork produced during, and depicting, the Second World War – a diverse range of styles and subjects, from well known and lesser-known artists.

The art collection forms a history in pictures of the Second World War, showcasing incredibly personal perspectives reflecting a varied range of experiences before, during and after the conflict. Through the work of artists of the time, visitors will see the war unfold 'as it happened'.

The exhibition has been curated from John Noott's personal collection. He was seven years old in 1939, and remembers clearly many nights in air raid shelters, and his father's service with the Local Defence Volunteers after work (later to become the

Home Guard, or 'Dad's Army'). These lived experiences inspired him to gather the collection throughout his own career. He will make the collection available to hire for exhibition at museums and venues around the country as we approach the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2.

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is open from Tuesday–Saturday 11am–5pm and Sunday 2pm–5pm. It is located in the gardens of the Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, on the doorstep of Blenheim Palace. Admission charge.

We are looking for a home in Stonesfield / Charlbury

Are you, or any of your neighbours, thinking of selling a 3+ bedroom house / bungalow in Stonesfield / Charlbury?

If so, we would be very grateful if you can get in touch with us.

We can be very flexible with timings – moving immediately or in some time.

Niki & Roger

niki@hernshaw.eu

01608 811933

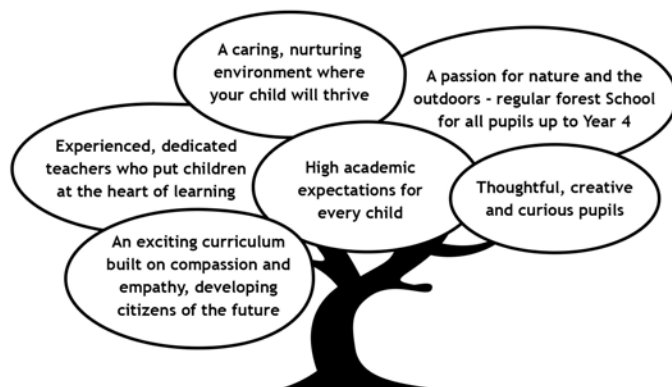
07713 654209

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, please contact the school office.

Tel: 01993 891687

Office email: office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

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

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Environment Group

Our first meeting of the year was held on Zoom on 24 January at 8pm, to be fortnightly thereafter. This first meeting was a bit of a recap on the last 9 months, since our establishment in March 2022, and a look at the year ahead and our two key focus areas, tree planting and the river. There is much to do and we are building a good and useful network of other groups with similar interests so we can co-ordinate our actions.

We are nearly 20 members now which is great, so drop me a line if you want to dial in.

juliecurran0@gmail.com

Stonesfield Gardening Club

After all the rescheduling and postponements of the last couple of years, we finally managed to hold our long-awaited gardening quiz in December.

It was well worth waiting for – Suzy Boardman gave us an evening to remember and a real work-out for the grey matter. We had tables of seed heads, leaves and twigs to identify, photographs of weeds to name, anagrams to puzzle over – you name it, Suzy had thought of it! Many thanks to her, and to the rest of the committee who provided mulled wine and snacks.

Most of our members have already joined for 2023 in order to make the most of the benefits that membership offers -

discounts at local garden centres and a packed programme of talks and visits over the coming year.

We kick off this month with our AGM on Monday 13 at 7pm in St James' Centre. We'll ply you with wine and nibbles as a bribe and a further enticement is that, once the business part of the evening is over, Lauren Baker will be talking to us about 'Growing Food in a Growing World'. Sounds very interesting, so do come along.

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Stonesfield Lunch Club

Members and volunteers of the Lunch Club like to celebrate special occasions in style, so on 14 December we met together to enjoy what was to be a delicious, seasonal meal, cooked by two of our dedicated team of volunteers.

Before we sat down to pull our crackers we were treated to a delightful performance of Christmas music performed by Cassie Jane, accompanied on the piano by Fiona. It was a positive way of achieving the aim of the Luncheon Club which is "to provide a warm welcome and friendly day of companionship along with a 2-course home-cooked meal."

During the course of the day I managed to ask two of our members what Lunch Club means to them. Margaret, who has lived in the village for a few years now, replied that



it was “the highlight of my week as I don’t get out much.” She went on to say that she has been amazed at how friendly everybody is and that it has been a really good way meet people and make new friends.

Di, who has been involved with the club for many years originally as a volunteer, and now as a member, also remarked that for her it was a chance to get out and that she similarly has made new friends. One thing that has been very important to her, however, is how the members support each other when times are difficult.

It seems to me that the care and service provided by the group is invaluable and is probably the only opportunity that some of our members have to socialise with others during the week. So, the challenge is, how can we ensure that it carries on in good hands? Our present group of 30 volunteers have amongst them several who are now in their 80s, myself among them, and it is with great reluctance that I have decided now is the time for me to retire. We need younger people to join with us and indeed, we have recently welcomed a few, Suzy, Gina, Julie and Jessica amongst them. Thank you! We need more.

How can you help? There are four ways of volunteering and they are:

Day Organiser who has overall responsibility for the day (4 hours, 10am to 2pm) , including premises management, finance, activities and the health and safety of members and volunteers.

Day Helper who generally work in pairs from 10am to 2pm and who assist the D.O. with furniture moving and setting up, making and serving drinks, serving lunch, helping with activities and any mobility needs.

Cook and Assistant Cook, 10am to approx. 1.45pm. Deciding on the menu for the day, shopping, food preparation and cooking, serving food, tidying and cleaning kitchen.

Driver, approx. 10.45am to 11.15am and 1.45pm to 2.15pm. Picking up members including any mobility aids, driving to St James’ Centre, assisting members into the Centre and then in the afternoon the same routine in reverse.

Most volunteers opt to be on the rota 1 in every 4 weeks but it is the choice of each individual to say when they would be available.

Please consider the benefit this activity gives to our elderly residents and whether you could join with the many dedicated people, past and present, who for 25 years have offered a few hours of their time on a regular basis for the continued, important, work of Stonesfield Lunch Club.

If you would like any further information please contact either myself or Kate Harris, the chairperson, on 01993 898781.

Margaret Hill (898823)

Stonesfield Community Food Group

Our first meeting of 2023 will be on 31 January and will be a chance for us to plan out the year and see what the group wants to do. We are settling into a bit of a groove now with running the quarterly Community Café alongside the Repair Café, March, June, September and December dates and adding a new weekly event, The Winter Warmer at the Village Hall.



The Winter Warmer is supported by WODC via grant funding secured towards the end of the year. It is a fun and relaxed social supper as we all sit together on long tables, everyone is welcome, whether you are different generations of one family,

Winter Warmer dolls



coming on your own, or bringing a friend. It runs every Tuesday from 5pm until 7.30pm, so just drop in. We also have craft activities, a toy and book swap and are open to suggestions or offers of help!

Drop me a line if you want to come along to a food group meeting, we would love you to join us and do as little or as much as you want. Email juliecurrano@gmail.com

Scouting in 2023: 75 years young!

2023 promises to be an important year for 1st Stonesfield Scouts. The section was registered in July 1948, making this year our 75th Anniversary. We have a busy year planned for us, including starting work on our new hut, getting more young people involved in Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and making the Duck Race the best one yet. More will be announced as the year progresses, so keep an eye out for updates.

The Christmas Bingo saw a welcome return, with over 100 people filling the village hall, enjoying the mince pies and mulled wine and quacking away with '2 little ducks'. Thanks to everyone who attended, the local businesses who kindly donated prizes, and to Elsevier, who have matched the income from the night, meaning we raised £1,520 to support the group.

We have been pleased to welcome new Cubs and Scouts into our groups, but Beavers in particular remains very popular. They meet on Friday evenings and it is for young people aged 6 – 8. Whilst it is currently full, we expect there to be places in the future as the current Beavers move up into Cubs. If you would like to register your child's place then please go to our website and click on Join & Volunteer.

Importantly, we are still on the lookout for volunteers to help run and lead Beavers sessions. If you have any interest in getting involved with the group, or know someone who does, then please get in touch with us by emailing Ben Whitworth at chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk or come along and see one of the leaders one evening.

Finally, one project that has been long-running and close to many people in the village, is the building of the new hut. In 2017 we negotiated to own the land in partnership with the Parish Council, and were awarded a grant to demolish the old hut. Now we are in a place to start building our new one. Our project has always aimed to involve local people as much as possible. The builder we are working with has lived in the village and was a Scout himself. The team managing the build all live in the village and have been involved in the community in a variety of ways.

After consultation with the Parish Council, we intend to build the hut in phases. The aim is that this allows us to access various funds and grants that have to be released at different stages, as well as allowing us to make use of volunteers' time wherever possible. Importantly, the build has been supported by a substantial grant from West Oxfordshire District Council that, as with the other grants we have received, have time-limited conditions meaning we are obliged to start the build process by the end of the financial year. With this in mind, we are aiming to start the site preparation, access and groundwork in March 2023. This will inevitably lead to some temporary access challenges down the track, and we would ask for your patience whilst these are in place. The aim is not to restrict access too much for too

long, but for obvious reasons we may have to ask the village to find other walks from time to time.

We are committed to keeping everyone affected by the build as informed as we can. We will be updating our website with progress reports and any news, as well as putting articles in the *Slate*. Please take a look at our website www.stonesfield-scouts.org.uk for further details. This is a very exciting time for us, and we thank the village for all the support it has given us.

North Leigh History Society

Tuesday 7 February 2023 Angela Kyte will be giving a talk about Eynsham Hall. Come and find out how this property has changed and continues to change over the centuries. We meet at 7.30pm in North Leigh Memorial Hall OX29 6SA, members £18 per year, visitors £4 per talk. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com and 01993 880368.

Woodstock Natural History Society

This Society offers a range of environmentally-related activities which should be of interest to many. We welcome new members, and you are warmly invited to attend a couple of events before resolving to join.

We host monthly meetings at St Hugh's Hall, Hensington Road, Woodstock, from 7.15pm until 9.00pm on the second Tuesday of each month, to which all are welcome. Recent meetings have reminded us that caring for and appreciating wildlife is a bounty open to all rather than reserved for experts.

At our next meeting on Tuesday 14 February, Tony Bostock MBE will speak on “Fishing for Freshwater Bugs”.

We offer a programme of monthly guided walks, none too strenuous, usually taking place on Fridays or Saturdays. Other activities are also available for members, such as bat walks, members’ garden parties, etc. Our current walk leader is stepping down in April 2023, and we are looking for someone else to fulfil this vital role.

We would love to see you at one of our events, and hope that you will want to become a member. For a copy of the current programme please email contactwnhs@gmail.com, read this column regularly, or just turn up at one of our events.

Stephen Vickers, Meetings correspondent

Cricket Club – volunteers wanted

Stonesfield cricket club are looking for a match day scorer and other volunteers for the 2023 season. We have a very dedicated and friendly team looking after and maintaining the cricket square but are always looking for extra help. If you have any spare time and fancy getting out in the sun for a few hours this summer (mainly cutting and rolling the wicket) we would love to have you on board. Please ask in the social club for more details.

Stonesfield Tennis Club

The club was established over 100 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.

Phone: 07795 441986
(Andrew Tacon; Chairman)

Website:
[https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/
StonesfieldTennisClub](https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/StonesfieldTennisClub)

Email: stonesfieldtc@gmail.com
Facebook: [@stonesfieldtennisclub](https://www.facebook.com/stonesfieldtennisclub)
Instagram: [@stonesfieldtennis](https://www.instagram.com/stonesfieldtennis)

Stonesfield Football Club

With Christmas and New Year firmly behind us it's interesting to note that, despite the winter break and cancellations, our teams have continued to provide value for money and goals galore in the games that have been played. Mind you, it must be admitted that successes have been few and far between. The Firsts crashed out of The Oxon Charity Cup away at Senior League Garsington, but at least they put up a good fight, going down 4-2. Next they travelled to Banbury in The Oxon Junior Shield and won 3-2 against Swis to set up a classic quarter final with local rivals (and table-toppers) Hailey. The quarter final was a fabulous match with our boys losing out by the odd goal in a 9-goal thriller (5-4) with Hailey making the most of defensive lapses to go through to the semi-final. Our lads can take heart though, as the game shows that Hailey are vulnerable and with two league games to come against them, anything is possible. Finally, it was back to league duty and a home game against Milton with our boys winning 2-0 in a really tough match. Interestingly, that's only two league games played and they are in 6th place with 6 points.

The Reserves have also been involved in a goal-fest since the last report. Progress in The Jack Busby was beyond them as they lost 4-2 at Milton. In the league they started well with a draw (2-2) at title-challengers Yarnton, then had a great home win (2-0) against Kingham AB. Next up it was a tough away defeat (4-3) at Deer Park. They were then involved in a 10 (yes, ten!) goal extravaganza at FC Mills where the hosts edged it 6-4 in a genuine thriller. Our gallant lads also sit in 6th place with 20 points from 12 games, 6 points off top spot. Yes, it's tight at the top in the third

division! Great to see the reserves being competitive at long last. Win, lose or draw, they are worth every penny of the entrance fee!

Sorry to say that The Fredo hasn't been won this month, though it must be said that young Eden Rice was so close to keeping it in the family. Against FC Mills he scored to put the reserves 3-2 up and was in pole position if the boys had held out: sadly, it wasn't to be. Nevertheless, young Eden has put himself in the spotlight alongside his big brothers who are looking over their shoulders, in admiration of their wee yin, watch this space!

Finally, on behalf of The Football club, I'd like to wish you all a very happy, successful, and healthy 2023.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

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

Churchwarden: Lindsey Sellar
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

St James' Centre bookings:
sjcsbookings@gmail.com

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

Rev Ralph Williamson becomes a member of Stonesfield tree planters (STP) planting an aspen in the corner of the Churchfields graveyard. The tree is the 90th planted around Stonesfield by STP for the 'Queen's green canopy'.



From the Rector – A Chance to Prepare

In 1985, my mother died suddenly while I was travelling around India. I came home and quickly realised that I needed a job. I visited a friend who was a young monk at a Benedictine monastery just a few miles from our home, and he said, “I’ll get you a job here”. So I became a painter and decorator, maintaining the buildings of the monastery and the secondary school which they ran. I worked with two older men who were experienced decorators, who had been trained the old fashioned way, and I learnt so much from them. Their stories about their own training were fascinating, and often hilarious. One told me how, as an apprentice, he had spent months mixing wallpaper paste before being allowed to put any on to the wallpaper, then months again doing only that before he was taught how to hang it. For me, that experience of painting and decorating for several months was exactly what I needed at the time, and in practical ways it stood me in good stead afterwards. But the most important thing I learned was not the technique for getting a roll of paste-soaked wallpaper onto the ceiling without it ending up wrapped around my head, or the best way to gloss a panel door. It was the importance of thorough preparation. Without it, there is little chance of success. It should be self evident that proper preparation is essential for any task. We should not drive on a motorway without first learning how to manage a car at low speeds. I cannot begin to make a cake without checking that I

have the ingredients and equipment I need. No one should sit an exam without having revised the subject being examined.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, the 22nd of February. Lent is the church's season of preparation for Easter, but we often use this period of 40 days as a time to prepare our hearts and lives for the challenge and adventure of life which Easter represents. It is a time to take stock, to see what we need to learn, what habits we must let go of, which resources or behaviour we need to develop and practice so that we will be ready to live abundantly in the joy of the resurrection. Some people might use it as a time to become more active, others to shed unhelpful habits of body or mind. Often it is a time when we seek to be more prayerful, and to take seriously the spiritual side of our lives, and to get involved (maybe like we did once before) in the local church community, or in the work of a local charity. Lent is a reminder that we only get one go at life, and if we want to live abundantly, we should seize the chance God offers. Doing some preparation during Lent will ensure that when Easter comes, we are ready for the challenges and opportunities of life which await us, and can say 'Yes' to the abundant life which God has for us in Christ.

Revd Ralph Williamson - Rector

Church services:

Sunday 5 February [Third Sunday before Lent]

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

Sunday 12 February [Second Sunday before Lent]

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

Sunday 19 February [Sunday next before Lent]

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

Ash Wednesday 22 February

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion with ashing
11am	Combe	Holy Communion [BCP] with ashing

Sunday 26 February [Lent 1]

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

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion/ Morning Prayer (1st, 15th, & 22nd as above)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (1st, 15th, & 22nd as above)

Thursdays

7.30pm	Benefice Housegroup in St James' Centre	
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Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for February

5	11am	The Reverend Stephen Bywaters
12	11am	Local arrangement
19	11am	Julie Biggs
26	11am	Martin Hannat

World Day of Prayer, 3 March

A new year has begun its journey. I hope it will bring much joy and a worthy purpose to us all.

With that hope in mind, my thoughts turn to the people of Taiwan. A country caught right now in a superpower struggle, wanted by China, but supported by the U.S.A. and other western countries.

Christian women of Taiwan have prepared the World Day of Prayer Service this year. They speak of injustice and suffering but above this they place the love of their country and the togetherness they share in helping each other.

This beautiful Service will circle the globe on Friday 3 March, it begins here at 2pm. Everyone is very welcome, do come and join this huge wave of prayer for Taiwan.

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albert (891733)

Roman Catholic Worship

Time passing

There are different types of time: clock or chronological time – that which we measure by the predictability of clocks, watches and our digital instruments; emotional or psychological time: the subjective time by which we measure events such as how we assess the last time we saw someone dear to us or will see them again; historical time: how we understand past events. But what about spiritual time? There's an inscription on a sundial which reads: 'I am a shadow, so art thou. I mark time, dost thou?' This invites us to recall that our time on this earth is relatively short, so how do we spend our time here? The Psalms tell us that 'You return man to dust and say "Return O Children of man". For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past or as a watch in the night'. Psalm 89 (90):4 In other words, spend your time carefully as it's not an infinite commodity. If we behave as if we have eternity to 'make things right', that there is 'always tomorrow', then we are losing the opportunity to focus on the things which really matter: the quality of our relationships with friends, family and work colleagues, our own inner emotional lives, the respect we show for our world, and above all our relationship with God. The Psalms again exhort us, 'Teach me to number my days that we may gain a heart of wisdom'. Psalm 89 (90):12

Holy Mass times

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