



Issue No 534 April 2023

Coronation celebrations



The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6 May 2023. The Service will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. As previously announced, the Service will reflect the Monarch's role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry.

Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion. On Sunday 7 May 2023, a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle by the BBC and BBC Studios, with several thousand pairs of tickets to be made available via public ballot.

The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country on the same date. On Monday 8 May 2023, members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort hope the Coronation Weekend will provide an opportunity to spend time and celebrate with friends, families and communities across the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. Their Majesties are looking forward to marking the occasion with the public throughout 2023.

Continued on page 6

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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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Dates for your diary:

April

3	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
3,6,10,13	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
4,11,18,25	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
4,11,18,25	Zumba Strong	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
5	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
5,12,19,26	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
5,6,12,13	Hannah Bathe HITT Class	Village Hall	7-8pm
5,12,19,26	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
6,27	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
17,24	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
17,20,24,27	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
18	Carers' Café	Village Hall	10am-12 noon
18,25	Spring Social	Village Hall	5-7.30pm
19,20,26,27	Hannah Bathe HITT Class	Village Hall	7-8pm
21,28	Baby & Toddler Group	Village Hall	10-12noon
22	BTWH Curry & Pint Social Night	Village Hall	7-10pm
29	Pre-School Cake Sale	Village shop forecourt	8.30am
29	Gardening Club Plant Sale	Pond Hill	8.30-11am
29	Bridewell Gardens Plant Sale	Bridewell, Wilcote	10am-1pm

May

5-8 Coronation Celebration weekend (see pages 5 - 7)



Notices & news

Denise Fieldwick



Dear Friends

Following the sudden passing of Denise, beloved wife, mum, grandma and mother-in-law, we would like to thank you for your overwhelming support and kindness in the incredibly sad days that have followed. There have been cards, flowers and visits from those who knew and loved her and it has been a great comfort to us at this impossibly difficult time.

On Friday 10 March we held a service in St James's Church at Stonesfield which was a true reflection of the love everyone had for her. So many beautiful things were said and felt that day, and we want to thank all of you who came to celebrate and remember her life, both in church and afterwards at our home as we try to find our way through this. The love that was shown is a comfort to us and we'd like to thank Reverend Ralph for his sensitive and kind support in helping us shape the services.

We miss her beyond words and your thoughts and kindness have helped us so

much as we try to come to terms with her loss. This village is full of the warmest and kindest people and we feel blessed to be part of this community, especially during the hardest of times in our lives.

With our heartfelt thanks and love

Peter Fieldwick, Rachel, Simon and Alex and families

Frank Hall

On Saturday 18 February, Frank's close family met in the St James' Centre for a small get-together the day before what would have been Dad's 100th birthday. It's still hard to believe he's not here.

We then walked to the war memorial for a private unveiling of the plaque the village has had made for dad to show its appreciation to him for looking after the memorial for 50 years. It was especially lovely that Mum, Jean, could come from her care home, and that Dad's sisters, Marion and Mary, could also be there.

We would like to say a massive thank you to the village and to the Parish Council for organising the plaque. Dad always said it was a privilege to be able to look after it.

Rosemary and Stephen

Village Hall News

In April there are a few groups that will be taking a break for the Easter school holidays so please check with your group organisers for any classes not running during this period. We do know of the following cancellations:

Baby & Toddler Group will not be running on Friday 7 or Friday 14 April.

Winter Warmer will not be running on Tuesday 4 or Tuesday 11 April.

Winter Warmer – As a surprise, and to add a little bit of brightness and joy to this unpredictable time of year, the Winter Warmer changes its name to the Spring Social on its return on Tuesday 18 April. I'm sure that there will be some lovely evening entertainment provided by Stonesfield Food Group's weekly social supper but with the lighter evenings why not find out for yourselves and pop along to the next evening?

Community Café – The Repair Café ran again in March and was another great success with more than 50 people coming through the door and over £400 raised in donations. We have a few more café events booked in the coming months so keep your eyes peeled for updates and posters. There is still an opportunity to book the May café slot which could be run with a royal theme in line with the coronation? Do get in touch if you would like to take advantage of this venue and there is a cause for which you would like to raise funds.

Carers' Café – The café usually takes place on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month and is an opportunity for anyone who would like the chance to pause, take a breath and smell the coffee - perhaps whilst drinking it at the same

time! Everyone needs some 'time out', so do stop by, take some time for yourself and relax in a warm and friendly environment. Exceptionally, this month the café will be held only on 18 April due to the Easter holiday period.

Back the White Horse Campaign –

Ahead of the AGM scheduled for Sunday 14 May, there will be a Curry & Pint Social Night as a fundraiser for the pub on Saturday 22 April. Further details of what promises to be a great evening will be given nearer the time.

Thank you, everyone, for your continued support.

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)

Secretary & Booking Clerk for Stonesfield Village Hall

stonesfieldvh@gmail.com

Stonesfield Volunteering Day

You may have seen that, as part of the Coronation Weekend, Monday 8 May has been designated as the start of the Big Help Out (www.thebighelpout.org.uk). This project, supported by dozens of voluntary and business organisations across the country, is intended to mark the occasion by celebrating the work of volunteers to support their community (See page 7).

In Stonesfield volunteers work in many different ways through 30-40 individual groups, and we are discussing how we can best showcase all their activities. If you have ever thought about volunteering but weren't sure how to go about it, more information will follow in the May edition of *The Slate*.

Viv Kendall

stonesfieldvts@gmail.com

Coronation celebrations (cont)



Saturday 6 May: The Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey

The Coronation Service will take place on the morning of Saturday 6 May 2023 at Westminster Abbey. The Coronation is a solemn religious service, as well as an occasion for celebration and pageantry.

Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort will arrive at Westminster Abbey in procession from Buckingham Palace, known as ‘The King’s Procession’.

After the Service, Their Majesties will return to Buckingham Palace in a larger ceremonial procession, known as ‘The Coronation Procession’. Their Majesties will be joined in this procession by other Members of the Royal Family.

At Buckingham Palace, The King and The Queen Consort, accompanied by Members of the Royal Family, will appear on the balcony to conclude the day’s ceremonial events.

Sunday 7 May: The Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle

On Sunday 7 May 2023, a special Coronation Concert will take place at Windsor Castle. Produced, staged and broadcast live by the BBC and BBC Studios, the Coronation Concert will bring global music icons and contemporary stars together in celebration of the historic occasion.

Attended by a public audience including volunteers from The King and The Queen Consort’s many charity affiliations, the concert will see a world-class orchestra play interpretations of musical favourites fronted by some of the world’s biggest entertainers, alongside performers from the world of dance. The performances will be supported by staging and effects located on the Castle’s East Lawn and will also feature a selection of spoken word sequences delivered by stars of stage and screen.

Through a national ballot held by the BBC, several thousand members of the public will be selected to receive a pair of free tickets for the Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle.

Alongside the stars of the concert, the show will also see an exclusive appearance from The Coronation Choir. This diverse group will be created from the nation’s keenest community choirs and amateur singers from across the United Kingdom, such as Refugee choirs, NHS choirs, LGBTQ+ singing groups and deaf signing choirs. A new documentary exploring the formation of The Coronation Choir will tell the stories of the people representing the many faces and voices of the country. The Coronation Choir will appear alongside The Virtual Choir, made up of singers from across the

Commonwealth, for a special performance on the night.

The centrepiece of the Coronation Concert, 'Lighting up the Nation', will see the country join together in celebration as iconic locations across the United Kingdom are lit up using projections, lasers, drone displays and illuminations.

The Coronation Concert will be produced by BBC Studios, broadcast live on BBC One, BBC iPlayer, BBC Radio 2 and BBC Sounds.

Further details about the concert, the national ticket ballot and the line-up will be released in due course.

The Coronation Big Lunch

Neighbours and communities across the United Kingdom are invited to share food and fun together at Coronation Big Lunches on Sunday 7 May 2023, in a nationwide act of celebration and friendship. From a cup of tea with a neighbour to a street party, a Coronation Big Lunch brings the celebrations to your neighbourhood and is a great way to get to know your community a little better.

The Coronation Big Lunch will be overseen and organised by the Big Lunch team at the Eden Project. The Big Lunch is an idea from the Eden Project, made possible by The National Lottery, that brings millions of people together annually to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. Her Majesty The Queen Consort has been Patron of the Big Lunch since 2013.

Thousands of events are expected to take place in every corner of the United Kingdom this May as people take to their streets, gardens, parks and community

spaces to join the Coronation celebrations and mark this historic occasion.

Free downloadable resources will also be made available online by the Big Lunch team at www.CoronationBigLunch.com, to help people and communities start their Coronation Big Lunch planning.



Monday 8 May: The Big Help Out

The Big Help Out will be held on Monday 8 May 2023 and is being organised by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups from across the United Kingdom. The Big Help Out will highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation.

In tribute to His Majesty The King's public service, The Big Help Out will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. The aim of The Big Help Out is to use volunteering to bring communities together and create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend.

Buckingham Palace

www.royal.uk/

A Year to Remember

Stonesfield has been a staging post for us - a temporary home en route to our permanent home in Witney. We came here after relocating from Amersham to be nearer our family, thinking it would be for just a few months. However, it's taken longer than we imagined to find and renovate a house suitable for John's mobility needs, so here we are, over a year later - and now it's nearly time to leave. Sadly! Very sadly!

Stonesfield! What a place it is and what a heart-warming community spirit it has. So many praiseworthy features, from your excellent informative magazine, *The Slate*, to the smiles and greetings of everybody we've encountered. Such wonderful initiatives to bring the community together at the Village Hall and St James' Centre. The Monday Coffee, the Community Café, the Repair Café (thank you for repairing my ancient secateurs), the Upcycling Workshop, the Winter Warmer and more. Thank you also to the Drama Group for entertaining us on our doorstep - no long journey home late at night from a far-flung theatre. Thank you to the Sustainability Groups and the tree planters for what you are doing for the planet.

How lucky you are, Stonesfielders - or should it be Stonesfieldians? - to have a friendly, well-stocked village shop open all hours, a really helpful garage, a unisex hair salon, three churches for spiritual nourishment (including one with a striking clock and bells that ring out joyfully across the village and beyond - thank you campanologists) and, to top it all, a lovely little library where you will always meet friendly and interesting people and plenty of good reads to see you through the dark

days of winter. We will come back to borrow and chat. And the Gardening Club - I will renew my subscription and come back again for the plant sale and for more of George's excellent horse manure compost. I'll also be back for some of Mr Bareham's wonderful honey.

I've never been to the HITT classes, or Pilates, or folk dancing or Taekwondo, or Zumba - or played football or cricket on the sports field but, my goodness, what excuse can you find to be unfit in Stonesfield?

And then there are the dogs. Dogs with sad eyes, dogs with snub noses, shaggy dogs, sleek dogs, tired old dogs, boisterous teenage dogs. We've learned such a lot about dogs and their owners - Romanian rescue dogs, an ex-Army working Labrador which I'm sure should have a medal, cockapoos, shih tzus, Alsatians, huskies, spaniels, a gorgeous Irish setter and, of course, our next-door neighbours' two beautiful collies. It's dog heaven! I really must get a dog!

And Stonesfield is not only dog heaven, but cake heaven! We've never eaten so much cake. And why aren't these fantastic cake-makers on Bake-Off? What stars they are.

But what has touched me most about Stonesfield is the sense that this is a community that is caring and inclusive. The Christmas hamper appeal, the fundraising appeals for Ukraine, the Carers' Café, support for the local school, the Scouts, the Voluntary Transport Scheme and more. No one is left out.

We've enjoyed so much in our time here. John, who shuffles along on his Nordic poles to the shop every day, has been greatly buoyed by all the encouragement to

keep going from other walkers and other shufflers! He always comes back more cheerful than when he set out and that has meant a lot. We both agree that this surely must be the most pleasant village in all of England.

Thank you, Stonesfield. It's been lovely.

Beth and John Clutterbuck

St James the Great Church: restoration works

The Church is the oldest building in the village, celebrating its 800th anniversary this year. It is a place of welcome for all - for worship, prayer and reflection, baptisms, weddings and funerals, concerts and for those keen to explore the history and architecture of our beautiful Cotswold Church.

A recent architectural survey of the Church has identified quite a number of restoration tasks which need to be completed. The required work includes repairs to masonry, the roof and various other features. This restoration is necessary to ensure that the Church is maintained and preserved, both for today and for future generations of Stonesfield residents.

The total cost of the restoration work is £120,000 plus VAT. The Parochial Church Council is seeking funding from various grant-making trusts. We would also very much value the financial support of village residents. Any contribution you are able to offer, however small, would be most gratefully received.

Do look out for a flyer which is being delivered to everyone in Stonesfield - it gives details of the restoration work and

how to donate. Details are also available at www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

If you have any questions, please contact Colin Clarke, the Rector (891872) or email stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

It is hoped that the works will commence in the summer of 2023, funds permitting, and should last around 14 weeks.

Colin Clarke (898902)

St James the Great Church reaches its 800th anniversary!

This year the Parish Church celebrates its 800th anniversary - an incredible milestone. Events are being planned to mark this occasion, focusing especially on the weekend of 17 and 18 June (as well as other summer dates). Do put the June weekend in your diary - there is likely to be a display of christening dresses and photographs in the church, plus lots of other fun activities for all ages. More details are to follow in the May edition of *The Slate*.

Lindsey Sellar

Stonesfield Pre-School 100 Club

We are pleased to announce our 100 Club winners for the March draw:

1st Prize: no. 59 Harry Keen £25

2nd Prize: no. 54 Hannah Crowe £10

Congratulations to you both.

Zena Rozee, Pre-School Administrator
stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2022

The wonderful people of Stonesfield raised the magnificent total of £2,089 which has been deposited with the Royal British Legion. This is an extraordinary effort by the village. I can assure you it will be used wisely. I would like to thank everyone who contributed, helped to raise this money or collected from door to door, or had a static poppy box in their business.

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, I will not be continuing as the Poppy Appeal Organiser for Stonesfield so if any individual or organisation would like to take on this role I would be pleased to hear from them.

Going forward, organisations or individuals will be able to order their poppy wreaths direct from the Royal British Legion by going to their website and ordering online.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for the support given to myself and Sarah over the last fifteen years; it has been greatly appreciated.

David Brown (898193)

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Organiser
for Stonesfield

Thank Ewe Campaign

The Blenheim Estate shepherds are relaunching their Thank Ewe Campaign ahead of the lambing season and dog owners are urged to act responsibly while visiting the Estate. The Estate allows its sheep (a 900-strong flock of Scotch Mule) to give birth outdoors in order to give lambs the best spring grass and nutrients that they need. The first lambs this year are due in mid-April.



Although the vast majority of people who walk their dogs on the Estate do so responsibly, it only takes one loose dog to cause a problem; even if a dog does not actually catch a sheep, the stress of being chased can cause the sheep to miscarry their lambs or even die. Recommendations for safe dog-walking near livestock have been issued jointly by the Kennel Club and the NFU and dog-walkers are asked to: stop, look and listen before entering a field; keep dogs on a short lead; allow livestock plenty of space and use designated pathways wherever possible.

Bridewell Gardens

Bridewell Gardens will be holding a Plant Sale on Saturday 29 April from 10am-1pm. The plant sale will be held in the vineyard; please note that the walled garden will not be open on this day.

Open days are planned for May, June, July and September, details of which will appear in the forthcoming issues of *The Slate*.

www.bridewellgardens.co.uk

Wootton Craft Fair

Come and join us in Wootton-by-Woodstock on Sunday 2 April for our first ever Craft & Gift Fair. Taking place in the Village Hall, Church Street, from 11am-4pm, the fair will feature the work of small local artisans selling everything from skincare, art, clothing, stationery, flowers, sweet treats and handmade wooden items.

We will also be joined by a wonderful boutique coffee van serving hot and cold drinks all day. All our stallholders are providing special prizes for a raffle and we are asking for a £2 cash entry fee on the door. All raffle and door entry proceeds will go to the DEC Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal. For more information, please email woottonvillagehall@hotmail.com.

Zoe Wheeler

Wootton Ukraine Fundraiser

Join us on Friday 21 April at 7pm, at Wootton Village Hall, to support the fight for freedom in Ukraine. Enjoy a feast including lots of delicious Ukrainian specialities. The evening will include a brief talk from a Ukrainian historian, Olha Sokolova, about the Ukraine war in context and in particular about the role of Russian propaganda and cultural colonisation.

Tickets are £10 from Wootton Stores or email fcbatesukr1@gmail.com to register and pay on the day. Please bring cash for the raffle and to buy drinks at the bar.

All proceeds go to a charity working directly on the front line to provide physical and psychological assistance to soldiers and their families and for civilians caught up in the conflict.

North Leigh History Society

On Tuesday 4 April Marie-Louise Kerr will be giving a talk on *'Oxford's Penicillin – the last story of the development of penicillin in the Second World War'*. The use of penicillin transformed survival rates from injuries and sepsis and we still rely on it today, together with other antibiotics to treat life-threatening conditions. Come and find out more about the early days of its discovery and application.

We meet at 7.30pm in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA. Membership is £18 per year and the charge for visitors is £4 per talk. Further details are available from Diana Power (882301) or Robert Kyte (880368) or by emailing kyterobert@gmail.com.

Angela Kyte

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

Blenheim Palace Pink Ribbon Walks – Saturday 13 May



Challenge yourself to a 10 or 20-mile Pink Ribbon Walk and help fund life-changing research and support. Starting and finishing in the stunning grounds of Blenheim Palace, the walk will showcase the best of the Cotswolds' stunning rural scenery.

Whether you're a newbie walker or a seasoned hiker, the Pink Ribbon Walk is for you. And you can walk your way – in a group, on your own, or even with your dog!



The charity will support you all the way with a clearly marked route, expert guides and lots of snack stops. All you need to focus on is the spectacular scenery and reaching that finish line. A hero's welcome and your well-earned medal will be waiting for you there.

Sign up to a walk today at www.breastcancer.org/pink-ribbon-walk

Contributions to *The Slate*

The editorial team and publishers are conscious that not everyone has access to email and/or a computer.

If you are in this situation and would like to submit something for publication, please get in touch with the Editor in order to make alternative arrangements. Note that *The Slate* doesn't print anonymous articles.

We are very happy to collect something handwritten from you or to take it down over the phone.

The Editor's name and contact number appear on page 2 of each issue.

You don't have to be Bear Grylls

Stonesfield Scouts has been in the heart of our community for the last 75 years, and we plan to be here for the next.

We need people to be part of the story. Learn skills for life and challenge yourself by volunteering with our local groups.

No experience necessary, just join in.

stonesfield-scouts.org.uk/join
#getyourwoggleon



Combe Women's Institute

As March is the time of year for our Annual Meeting, the business element of the monthly meeting was swiftly dealt with. At the Annual Meeting reports were presented by the Treasurer, Secretary and President. The Committee, consisting of Sally Purssell, Gillian Oldfield, Diane Taylor, Jill Wheeler, Suzanne Fowler, Kathleen Albért and myself were duly elected. Sally Purssell was unanimously elected as President for a second year. We concluded the evening with a delicious bring-and-share supper.

Female guests are invited to our next meeting on Tuesday 11 April (a change of day due to the Easter holiday); this will be an informal evening featuring an assortment of spring-themed crafts with which to experiment.

WI meetings are held in the Reading Room, 7.30-9.30pm, on the second Monday of each month. If you'd like to find out more about the Women's Institute, do come along and try us out. We offer a warm welcome to all ladies over the age of 18. Guests are charged £5 which includes refreshments and a raffle ticket.

Julia Sharpe (891058)
Secretary, Combe WI

National Gardens Scheme: Open Garden at Sarsden Glebe

On Friday 7 April (Good Friday) Sarsden Glebe in Churchill (OX7 6PW) will open its garden between 12 noon and 4.30pm. The wild garden expects to have blanda anemones, fritillaries, spring bulbs and blossom.

A selection of plants will be available from Bridewell Organic Gardens' plant stall and homemade cakes and teas will be provided by Thrive North Oxfordshire. Dora, Daphne and Dolores, the pigs, look forward to meeting visitors and their canine friends are welcome if kept on a lead.

The entrance fee is £7.50 in aid of NGS's chosen medical, nursing and caring charities.

Rupert Ponsonby, Sarsden Glebe

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 April.

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

Notes from the 1 March meeting:

Sports & Social Club: The Parish Council is looking to install a directional sign for the Sports & Social Club. Quotations are awaited and it is hoped that this can be installed later in the year.

Damaged fence: It was noted that a fence has been damaged close to the Scout Hut, for which repairs will be arranged.

Horse-riding: Reports have been received of horses riding on footpaths in the local area. Horse riders are reminded to check where they are riding and take care when passing pedestrians.

Dog-walking: Dog walkers are reminded that when walking on any land locally where sheep are present they should keep their dog/s on a lead. This is particularly important at present as it is the lambing season (see page 10).

Financial: The Parish Council agreed to award grants this month to the Voluntary Transport Scheme and Chrissie's Owls.

The Clerk is starting work on the internal audit which is due to commence officially from 1 April.

Planning:

23/00270/HHD 4 St James Court - no objection

A routine licensing renewal was received in respect of The White Horse Pub - no comment or objection.

Parish Council elections: Elections will take place on 4 May for the Parish Council. Nominations are now open and may be delivered to the Council Offices, West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney, OX28 1NB between 27 March and up to 4pm on 4 April 2023. Nominations **cannot** be accepted by post; they must be hand delivered. Nomination forms can be obtained via the Parish Clerk by emailing clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk stating a full address or from West Oxfordshire District Council offices.

Next meeting: The Parish Council will meet at Stonesfield Primary School at 7pm on 5 April.

Parish Clerk

Stonesfield Parish Council

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

www.stonesfield.online

Local elections: new requirements for voters

The following summary has been issued by the Electoral Commission.

On Thursday 4 May 2023 local elections are taking place in West Oxfordshire.

Following a change in national law, at these elections voters need to bring photo ID to be able to vote at the polling station. A wide range of photo ID will be accepted, including passports, driving licences and cards with a PASS mark.

Those who do not have an accepted form of photo ID can apply for a **free voter ID** document known as a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for this year's elections is 25 April. ID will not be required for anyone voting by post.

Residents are reminded that they will need to be registered in order to be able to vote; this needs to be done by 17 April 2023 to be able to vote in May.

More information is available at www.westoxon.gov.uk/voterid or by calling the team on 01993 861410.

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Village Survey

Great news! The response to the village survey for the Neighbourhood Plan has been fantastic. It seems people are really keen to say what they want to preserve in the village, what they think the village needs, and what areas need improving and protecting.

Don't get left out! If you haven't quite got round to filling it in yourself yet, please can we urge you to do it now. We know that jobs like this often get left to the last minute and, in anticipation of a flurry at the finishing post, we're extending the deadline to 7 April. Please see if you can find 30 minutes in the next few days to fill it in: your views count.

Deadline extended to 7 April (on-line or paper)

You can access it on-line using the following :

Household survey

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NPhousehold

Individual survey

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NPindividual

Or use the QR codes

Household survey



Individual survey



You can also complete the paper copy - if you need a fresh one, just email me.

And don't forget the prize draw! As a thank you for completing the survey, you are invited to enter a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher! See the instructions on how to enter on the inside cover of the paper survey, or at the end of the online individual survey.

Huge thanks to all those who have already completed the survey. Thanks, also, to all those who have worked on the project with us: offering early ideas on content, giving us expert advice on creating the questions, testing it and delivering it - including the postcards!

We'll let you know in May how the next stage of the process will evolve.

Caroline Friend

info@stonesfieldplan.com

News from West Oxfordshire

Cost of Living support programme

WODC advises that the Government plans to maintain its support for the most vulnerable beyond April. Cost of Living support includes food, childcare, mental health, benefits and debt advice. Those needing support may telephone the Resident Support Worker at WODC on 01993 861077 or email to: community.support@westoxon.gov.uk.

West Oxfordshire District Council budget for 2023/24

By the time this issue of *The Slate* appears, households will have received their Council Tax bills and information about the services provided. The Cabinet Minister for Finance wishes to thank the hundreds of residents who participated in the consultation process and indicated their priorities, the majority of which related to the protection of local services, the climate emergency and support for local communities. There is a support scheme for those who may need help with paying their Council Tax and further information in this respect is available at www.westoxon.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport.

Woodstock Outdoor Pool

WODC is changing the opening dates of the Pool to coincide with the school holidays for 2023 and putting on additional activities during the holidays in order to provide more for local residents and visitors to do over the summer months. This will include diving lessons, learning to swim, pool party sessions and 'bring your dog for a swim' at the end of the season. The pool will be open from Saturday 22 July to Sunday 3 September

and full information will be made available closer to the opening date.

Botley West Solar Farm

Climate Crisis Saviour or Countryside Encroaching Monster?

By now, everyone in the village must have heard about the so-called 'Botley West Solar Farm' (BWSF). Blenheim Estate/ Merton College/PVPD are proposing to develop a mega solar farm that, if built, would be the largest one in Europe. BWSF would have capacity to produce up to 840MW electricity, which could cover the domestic needs of 330,000 homes (when the sun is shining!); that is the whole of Oxfordshire and much more. A dedicated substation would be needed to handle such a huge amount of electricity and would be developed by the National Grid near Farmoor. Sounds like very good news, doesn't it? Could Botley Solar become our 'climate crisis saviour'?

The vast area of the proposed BWSF stretches from Botley, Cumnor and Farmoor, to Eynsham and Hanborough, then to Wootton, Tackley and Oxford Airport, Begbroke, Yarnton and Cassington. Three quarters of it would sit in the Oxford Green Belt. It would cover hills and valleys and surround villages and woods. The impact of this farm on the rolling landscape would not possibly be mitigated by hedges, as has been proposed. With the security fences surrounding each field and CCTV cameras, the BWSF will undoubtedly lead to the industrialisation of much of the open countryside in this part of Oxfordshire.

Moreover, BWSF would remove 1400 hectares of a productive agricultural land, something that should not be taken lightly

at a time of increasing global food insecurity. The facility would also have a detrimental impact on local ecology and would restrict wild animal movements across the area. Is it worth it?

The proposed solar farm would supply 840,000 MWH of electricity per year; the same amount of electricity could be produced by just 12 modern offshore wind turbines or by 24 onshore turbines. Nowadays, offshore wind farms are the fastest, easiest and cheapest way to produce power. Moreover, wind turbines have a four-times lower carbon footprint during production and dismantling compared to solar farms.

But the wind doesn't always blow! We do need to generate solar energy in Oxfordshire. But how best? There are plenty of brownfield sites such as disused power stations and other industrial sites or airports. There is a great potential to cover domestic and industrial/commercial rooftops and large car parks with solar panels. Some small to medium poor-value arable green fields are suitable to take solar panels. These should be carefully considered so as not to be intrusive visually, should be accepted by the local communities and should provide local benefit in return, as is the case with Southill Solar Farm near Charlbury. West Oxfordshire District Council is currently developing a strategy on renewable energy generation and this strategy will be written into our currently developing Local Plan.

Developing a solar farm of the size of BWSF in open countryside, much of which is green belt, and immediately adjacent to the densely populated villages, carries the risk of community rejection. Indeed, Parish Councils and hundreds of residents in the

areas that would be directly affected by this project, are opposing it vigorously, despite being strongly supportive of green energy generation.

Because of its enormous size, BWSF is a Nationally Strategic Infrastructure project, which will be considered by the Secretary of State. West Oxfordshire District Council will be a key consultee. The Council is undertaking an Environment Impact Assessment Study to determine potential benefits and harms of this project. Community voice is one of the key factors the Council will take into consideration. It is therefore essential for communities to let the Council know their opinions on this project. Comments can be sent to the Cabinet and Council members including those who do not represent directly affected areas. The email addresses are available on WODC's website or comments may be sent by post to: WODC, Woodgreen Council Offices, Witney, OX21 1NB. Andrew Thompson is the officer in charge of the study.

Dr Lidia Arciszewska
District Councillor for Freeland and
Hanborough Ward and Cabinet Member for
Environment
lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk

From our MP, Robert Courts

Just before 'going to press' *The Slate* received Robert Courts' newsletter which included the following in relation to Botley West Solar Farm:

'I was pleased to join the 'Stop Botley West Solar Farm' campaign group recently on a walk around the site of the potential solar farm. It was important to talk with the group and to hear residents' significant concerns. From the outset I have always

made clear that I will be guided by local opinion. Having received close to 1,000 responses to my survey – which revealed that local residents were overwhelmingly against the proposals for Botley West Solar Farm. I will therefore be reflecting the strength of local feeling on this by supporting the anti-Botley West campaign.’

‘It is imperative to ensure renewable energy schemes are facilitated in appropriate places.’

‘I will also be campaigning on a national level in Parliament for there to be a better national strategy in place on the delivery of solar farms across the UK. This would mean that areas such as ours are not overwhelmed by disproportionately sized solar farms. I will be writing to the Secretary of State to make my case on this, and I look forward to updating you in due course.’

Anyone wishing to complete the survey may do so via: www.robertcourts.co.uk/botleysolarfarmstatement

Robert Courts
robert@robertcourts.co.uk

Household waste recycling centres set for refresh

People planning to use Oxfordshire’s household waste recycling centres next month are being advised of a series of short closures to enable essential work to be carried out.

For safety reasons, Oxfordshire County Council will be shutting each of its centres for two days - although not at the same time - to allow for deep cleaning and essential maintenance to take place. This includes jet-washing the sites and

structures, repainting lines and safety areas, and other general work to improve the customer experience.

The closing dates for Dix Pit at Stanton Harcourt are Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 April.

Oxfordshire County Council

Oxford Railway Station and area upgrade

Network Rail is upgrading the station and making improvements to the road network nearby to improve safety and encourage sustainable transport in the area. The upgrade of the railway here will mean more passenger and freight services can serve the city and Oxfordshire.

However, before we can start work on replacing the bridge, we have an incredibly complex task of working alongside eleven different utility services to divert their pipes and wires that run underneath the existing bridge. To do this successfully, we will be temporarily closing Botley Road in two stages, with the first closure starting on Tuesday 11 April. We hope to reduce the impact on the city’s residents, as well as school and university terms, by working in the spring and summer months.

The timeline of 2023 road and rail closures is as follows:

- First road closure: 11 April - October
Botley Road is closed to traffic at the railway bridge between Cripsey Road and Frideswide Square for the diversion of utilities.
- Railway closure: 29 July - 6 August
Lines through Oxford are closed for track and platform work.

How will I get into the city with the road closure?

- Motorists who usually use Botley Road to get into the city are advised to use the Seacourt Park & Ride or to take an alternative route into the city.
- Buses will turn around just before the railway bridge allowing passengers to continue their journey into the city centre on foot.
- Pedestrians, mobility scooters and cyclists will have access throughout the period of work.
- Local residents’ access to their homes will remain at all times, with some diversions in place.

Questions about the improvement works should be directed to Network Rail on 03457 114141 quoting ‘Oxfordshire Connect’, or by email to OxfordPhase2@networkrail.co.uk

Network Rail

Thames Valley Police review

Thames Valley Police is reviewing the structure of its local policing areas as it aims to make sure it is set up in the best possible way to meet current and future challenges.

The last review of this nature took place in 2010. Following extensive research, including how other forces are structured, long-term trends and future scenarios in policing, two local policing models are being considered.

One is to continue with the existing 11 Local Policing Area (LPA) model, with enhancements where possible and the other is to change to a five-area command model.

To support this work, the force is asking Thames Valley residents for their views on the proposals.

The survey is online and closes on Friday 28 April. Paper copies of the proposal information and the survey can be requested by calling or texting 07814 485155 and leaving a message with a name, address and contact details. Alternatively written correspondence can be sent to: Force Review team, Thames Valley Police Headquarters South, Oxford Road, Kidlington, OX5 2NX. More details www.thamesvalley.police.uk/police-forces/thames-valley-police/areas/au/about-us/local-policing-proposals/

Neighbourhood Watch

Thames Valley Police have notified Neighbourhood Watch of two issues in the West Oxfordshire area which they advise residents to watch out for:

- the theft of high-performance cars from driveways, the keys having been stolen from inside the property; and
- vehicles collecting scrap but which have also been seen to take bicycles from driveways.

Information on Neighbourhood Watch is available at: www.ourwatch.org.uk/ Anyone interested in joining the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme may find details and register at: www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join. Clicking on ‘Join a scheme’ and selecting ‘Stonesfield’ will complete the request.

Deanna Asplundh
Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Pre-School and Day Care

Our Pre-School is very proud to have such loyal staff. Sadly, around the county, Early Years settings are closing due to staffing issues and child funding not currently increasing in line with the cost of living. The Princess of Wales has called for more to be done to recognise the importance of the early years. Writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, the Princess said: 'If we are going to create a healthier and happier society for future generations, we must start by understanding and acknowledging the unique importance of the first five years of life'. She is so right and the staff at Stonesfield Pre-School feel the same.

Together we must support and nurture all Early Years settings and their staff, so please let me introduce you to ours:

Hi, I'm Claire. I have worked at Pre-School for two years. Music is my passion and I really love bringing my guitar into Pre-School and introducing the children to the enjoyment of music, singing and rhythm. My favourite children's book is *Giraffes Can't Dance* and my favourite joke is: What is black and white and red all over? (A newspaper).

My name's Georgia. I enjoy working here because I feel the atmosphere is always very caring and friendly between both staff and children and it very much has a feel of family during sessions at Pre-School, our own little family where we listen to each other and work as a team. When I'm not at

Pre-School my hobbies include being a mum to my daughter, spending time with my family and friends, exploring new places and I'm also a big fan of anything Disney! My favourite book is *Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson.

Hi, I'm Grace. What I like most about working at Pre-School is getting to know all of the children's individual personalities and nurturing their skills to support them in becoming lifelong learners. I particularly enjoy doing storytelling activities with the children and helping them to build constructions. My favourite children's book is *The Smartest Giant in Town* by Julia Donaldson.

Hello! I'm Hannah. I have been working at the Pre-School for the past six years with a break in the middle to have my third daughter. My youngest is here at Pre-School and my two elder daughters are at Stonesfield School. I love doing creative activities with the children and generally getting the messy stuff out! I also like to be out in nature, using natural objects for making a potion or a nature bracelet... or searching for fairies in the woods! My favourite children's books are *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Peace At Last*.

Hello, my name is Lizzie. I've worked at Pre-School for over twenty years. My job is not just a job, it's an adventure, full of fun and very rewarding. I love that our Pre-School has a warm family feel. Nurturing every child's individuality and building strong supportive relationships with our families is at the heart of everything we do;

this ethos is very important to me. I have two favourite children's books that I love to share and act out with the children; they are *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* and *Handa's Surprise*. One of my favourite funny jokes is: What do you call a gorilla with bananas in his ears? (Anything you like, he can't hear you!) In my spare time I love to spend quality time with my husband, grown-up children and grandchildren. I keep myself fit by running and walking in the countryside that surrounds Stonesfield - oh, and I also love baking cakes and eating them too!

Hello, I'm Louise. I have worked in Early Years for over twenty years. Childcare has always been my passion; even as a child myself I nurtured a younger sister and many cousins. It is such a rewarding job - we watch children learn, grow and thrive and build their confidence to move on to school and the outside world. I love taking the children on walks around our lovely countryside and introducing them to our wildflowers and mini beasts. In my spare time I enjoy knitting, crochet, gardening and cooking. And I have a very large family! My favourite book is *The Scarecrows' Wedding* and my joke is: How do you make a bandstand? (Take all the chairs away!)

Hi, I'm Sarah. Both of my boys went to Stonesfield Pre-School and I liked it so much that when my youngest left nine years ago I started working there. I'm often found building obstacle courses or involved in messy play and I love watching the children develop their confidence away from home and show me their creative skills. My favourite story to read is *Room on the Broom* and when I'm not at Pre-School I am usually on a horse!

Hello, I'm Sandra and I have been at Pre-School for twelve years. I also do Breakfast Club and I love to take the children to Forest School. I enjoy crafting and cooking and walking my dog, Jess. My favourite children's book is *Hello Beaky!* and my favourite joke is: How do bears go on holiday? (In a bear-o-plane!)

Hello, I'm Zena and I have worked at Pre-School for over twenty years. I also work at the primary school and I love watching the children grow and develop. Both of my now grown-up children went to Pre-School in the village. One of my favourite children's books is *Where Are You, Blue Kangaroo?*

Louise John

.....
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.

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

.....
I'm a Reader...

Ollie, 5, lives with his mum and younger sister. He visits the Library on weekends and enjoys changing his books.

'Right now, I like a story I read with my mum about Mr. Panda who is making a cake, but no one waits to find out what he's making, apart from a quiet little penguin. So, nobody gets the cake apart from Mr. Panda and the penguin. It's not a cake, it's a doughnut. All the other animals think it's a cake because they didn't wait. The penguin gets a doughnut bigger than him. I

don't think he can eat all of it. There are lots of different doughnuts! I like the sparkly one best. I could eat lots of them. I might have waited to find out what Mr Panda was making, but I might not.'

Clearly there's a moral around patience and respecting the baker, in the book *'I'll Wait, Mr. Panda'*, by Steve Antony; while Ollie isn't sure he's ready to take these lessons on board, he's even more convinced that his three-year-old sister would not have waited patiently and won the doughnut. 'My sister eats all the cake, and she makes all the mess.' Surely, I put it to Ollie, that he makes some of the mess also? 'No' he replies, then concedes 'well a little bit.'

Ollie is learning to read at school - he is in Reception (that's kindergarten in old money, the class for youngest age group) - but really prefers being read to 'because

the stories are better'. Ollie's school reading book, his homework to practise reading for himself, is called *'Sit and Sip'*. I can see Ollie's point, that, when you're a beginner, the stories are a bit tame - because they are written in the one syllable words that have been learned by the class. *'Sit and Sip'*, for example, tells the tale of a girl called Tam who visits her Nan for tea. Nan pours the tea, offers Tam a biscuit and then promptly nods off - which might suggest that Tam isn't much of a conversationalist - but, in actual fact, it is because 'nap' is a word in Ollie's reading vocabulary, right now.

When Ollie goes to the library, often with his troublesome little sister, he finds a much more exciting selection of books that can be read to him. 'We have a cat called 'Peanut' and a rabbit and they don't like each other. We don't have the rabbit

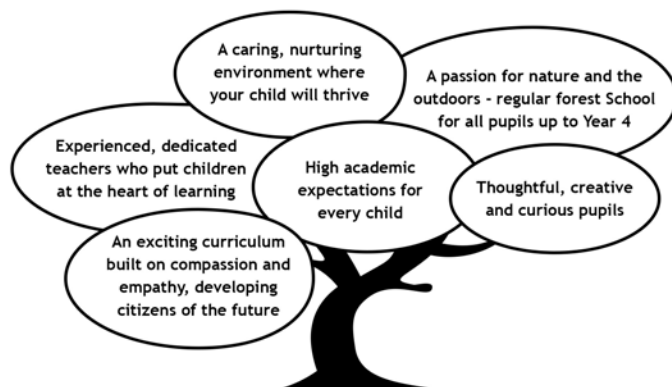
Stonesfield Primary School

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

anymore. So, I like books about animals; I got one from the Library about lions and tigers, but I can't remember what it's called. Tigers are bigger than lions, but lions have manes...but tigers have stripes, so I don't know which I would like to be.' Like a politician, expertly deflecting when asked a difficult question, Ollie asks me which *I'd* rather be. To be honest, I'm not sure either. I don't know why I asked him such a silly thing. 'Can't I be a leopard?' I say, 'since they get to rest in trees.' Ollie doesn't think I can. Tiger or Lion, it's a simple either/or question. He looks at me rather disparagingly and at that moment I see a future Jeremy Paxman in his eyes.

Eleanor Bailey

Local history: Solved – the Mrs Morris mystery

In last month's issue of *The Slate* (page 21) we published an article by Graham Rutson together with a 1986 advertisement for The White Horse which mentioned 'Mrs Morris's hot specials'.

Graham Rutson wondered who Mrs Morris might be.

In response Colin Morris wrote to *The Slate*: 'Mrs Morris lived in Stonesfield and had done so all her life as a Barrett before she was married. She delivered *The Slate* in the Farley Close area from 1985 for about 30 years. Nigel Bishop was great fun to work with and is sadly missed.'

Nature Notes: The alder tree

This is the time of year to enjoy alder trees down along the Evenlode and in damp places as long as the water is not stagnant. Look for the deep purple from the buds and small dark cones, and now the catkins for the year ahead. If you are lucky, a mixed flock of finches descend to check the cones for the seeds; the finches can suddenly erupt in what looks like a 'fire drill' before settling back down. For avid quizzers, alder is the only deciduous tree that produces cones.

The alder is the thirteenth native tree to arrive after the last Ice Age. The wood is soft but when kept wet hardens to withstand rotting. This property gave the wood a use for building boats, sluice gates and water pipes. Much of Venice is built on alder piles and the excellent charcoal was used in the explosive industry.

As a native tree, it attracts many invertebrates including the 'alder kitten moth' and the 'blue bordered carpet moth'. (One day I am going to find out why naming moths is such fun). The Stonesfield tree planters have been planting alder trees along the flood plain.

The fun facts are that traditionally soft alder branches were put in cupboards as it is the preferred wood for woodworms to lay their eggs, and alder wood was used in the Fender Stratocaster electric guitar that Jimi Hendrix played at Woodstock in 1969.

John Sampson

Farmland Bird Aid Network 20th Anniversary celebrations



Genny and Jane opening the talks

We held a celebratory event at beautiful FarmEd at Shipton-under-Wychwood, in the 20th year of Farmland Bird Aid Network to say a big thank you to everyone who has been involved in Farmland Bird Aid Network over the years. This includes the farmers who have provided seed, everyone who has generously helped financially, FarmEd for hosting us, landowners who support feeding on their land, Dave Holloway for helping us with storage and transport, and particularly to all our volunteers who feed in all weathers so that farmland birds can rely on having food available every day.



Yellowhammer: Martin Gascoigne-Pees

The delicious food and drink featured seasonal produce from FarmEd, there was bird photography from Martin Gascoigne-Pees, birdsong, and engaging talks from farmers and scientists.



Matthew Izod - North East
Cotswold Farmer Cluster

The birdsong on a sunny day suggests that spring is coming but the lack of food available to farmland birds continues through the 'hungry gap' until May. We need to continue to feed on a daily basis to support the flocks of chaffinches, linnets, yellowhammers and sparrows through into the breeding season. Now is the time to be spreading in quantity, thinly scattered on bare ground, in amounts that are eaten up by the next day.

FBAN is a registered charity started by Louise Spicer twenty years ago. Since then Bird Aid has expanded to over twenty feeding sites throughout West Oxfordshire. If you are interested in taking part, please contact info@farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org

Genny Early

A busy month planting trees



As you can see, all members of the tree planters' group have to have a sense of humour and fun. We have planted 302 trees and hedging plants over the last month; the skills are verging on the professional and on our best day we planted 97 trees in three hours!

We continue planting native trees that are great for insects, birds and associated wildlife. The focus is to extend the green corridors towards Fawler along the edge of the Evenlode flood plain. The trees on the edge of the flood plain are alder, goat willow and some downy birch. We have some grey willow arriving and these will add to the flood plain edge as we finish the planting in the current planting season (to the end of March.)



Planting with our neighbours from Fawler, Charlbury and Finstock has been great and we will be planting together again as we continue to extend the green corridors. We post details of our tree planting on the Queen's Green Canopy website and if you search for 'Stonesfield' you can see where we have been:

www.queensgreencanopy.org/map-education-hub/qgc-map/#/

Many thanks for all the support we have had and to the sponsors. We hope that, by the time you read this, we will be nearly halfway to our target of a tree for everyone in the village – that's just over 700 trees assuming we get all the trees planted, towards the target of 1,575 people in the village.

Do get in touch with me if you would like to sponsor a tree.

John Sampson

john.sampson@btinternet.com

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Gardening Club

A great meeting in March; on a cold, wet evening a record number of members came out to hear a very entertaining talk from *the Chatty Gardener*, Mandy Bradshaw. Journalist and gardener, Mandy showed us behind the scenes of a dozen gardens in the Cotswolds and talked about their development. Accompanied by her excellent photographs, this was a real treat and gave us all some ideas of gardens in the National Gardens Scheme that we'll be making sure we visit this year.

Among those she recommended are Highnam Court, Littlefield and Absolam's Orchard, all in Gloucestershire and all open under the National Gardens Scheme, as is the Walled Garden in Worcester and the Whatley Manor Hotel in Wiltshire. For a family day out, the Cotswold Wildlife garden has some wonderful planting to admire while others in your group may be distracted by the animals!

This month sees the return of our ever-popular plant sale, to be held on 29 April at Four Acres, Pond Hill, thanks to Sybil and Will Barton who generously allow us the use of their front garden. We look forward to donations from members, who should be busy growing seedlings or potting on cuttings!

Diane Bates

Secretary, Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Stonesfield Scouts

Scout Hut update: As some of you will have seen, we have started clearing the space around the hut to allow works to take place. This has been done before the nesting season in the case of tree work, and we are also setting out how to best make use of the land to allow for as much continued access as possible. Building work will start in earnest once the weather is more on our side. We thank you for your ongoing patience.

The £65,000 question: Our fundraising team have done an amazing job and raised just over £110,000. Much of this has come from grants, but the duck races and cake stalls all play their part. We have enough funds to build the main structure of the hut and put in the access required, but we are still short of the funds to kit out the inside. This is where we hope you, the reader, might come in.

£65,000 is a lot of money but it gets easier with Gift Aid. Help us raise this last step! We are looking for individual donations to help us kit out the kitchen, install the toilets and to turn on the lights. Might you, or do you know someone who would be able to donate?

£65,000 could be made from a combination such as:

- Five donations of £5,000 plus Gift Aid
- Ten donations of £1,000 plus Gift Aid
- Thirty donations of £500 plus Gift Aid

We know times are tight but this hut is destined to last generations of Stonesfield Scouts and so we ask for your help.

Contact us at:
fundraising@stonesfield.scouts.org.uk or
go to: stonesfieldscouts.org.uk for details
on how to donate and the Gift Aid forms.

Thank you!

Ben Whitworth

Chair, Stonesfield Scouts

Stonesfield Sustainability Groups

The Repair Café



Ross providing help at Repair Café

Thank you for supporting the Repair Café; in March we completed our fourth quarterly café and have saved 170kg of items from landfill. We have sharpened knives and tools, repaired computers, fixed toasters, vacuum cleaners, food mixers, chairs and lamps and any number of appliances.

Now we need more repairers! If you have any skills you would like to share to serve the community, especially electrical or sharpening ones, we would love to hear from you. Please contact me.

The next Repair Café will be on Saturday.
3 June, 11am-2pm.

Mike Sofroniou

stonesfieldrepaircafe@gmail.com

The Food Group

Community Café: Another busy month for us in the food group! We ran our quarterly Community Café alongside the Repair Café which was very busy, tasty and successful! More than 50 people came through our doors and we raised over £400. We are starting to formalise how we might use the funds we have raised over the last year to ensure the whole community can access good food - more on that when we have some definitive plans.

Winter Warmer: The weekly Winter Warmer is continuing although a name change is required ... 'Spring Social', anyone? This is a very lively and relaxed evening event, from 5-7pm in the Village Hall every Tuesday. We are fully grant-funded through the generosity of WODC and Oxford Community Volunteers Association so it is free to attend. We are also working with the Oxford Food Hub to put surplus food to good use, so please do come and join us. Come on your own, bring your family, bring a friend or a neighbour, all are welcome!

Seniors Café: This is a new event in the social calendar; it has been in stealth mode for a few weeks but it looks as if there is enough interest for it to become a fixture. Run by the Food Group, it is a drop-in café

at the Village Hall every Tuesday, 3-4pm. Teas, coffees, cakes and other treats will be available. We have debated the name but as it is aimed at the 'sensibly-aged' village community, it has stuck. At the moment socialising is the main activity but we are open to using the time for other activities if those coming along are interested... just let us know and we hope to see you there.

As you can see the Food Group is pretty active; we only meet once a month so if anyone has an interest in food and community-food activities, please join us.

Julie Curran

juliecurran0@gmail.com

The Environment Group

The interest in the plight of our rivers continues to increase and there have been a number of really good programmes covering this issue recently. We would encourage you to check them out: Paul Whitehouse's *'Our Troubled Waters'* and on Radio 4 *'Water Troubles'*; both do a brilliant job of setting the scene.

Closer to home, looking at and signing up for the information coming from Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) is another really useful resource. WASP are absolutely at the forefront of the research that has made the issue so high profile and they are on our doorstep. As Ash from WASP repeats often .. 'All it takes for bad stuff to prosper is for ordinary people to do nothing. It's not an option to do nothing'.

We are working on our campaign plan and how best to get the village onboard. We know there is a lot of concern about the state of the river and what we can do about it. One of our local poets has donated a haiku to us:

you're a tributary
feeding the Great River
of Potential Change

It says it all, so we look forward to getting some community action started. If you want to get involved, please email me and come along to a group meeting, held fortnightly on a Tuesday at 8pm, either on Zoom or in person.

Julie Curran

juliecurran0@gmail.com

Stonesfield Football Club

As we move into the business end of the season where leagues and cups are won and lost, I have bad and good news while admitting my part in the former. Last month I waxed lyrical about The Firsts 100% league record and yes, you've guessed it, I did jinx it - oops! As it turned out, the draw (1-1) away at Charlbury in a keenly contested local derby wasn't a total disaster, as league leaders Hailey were also held to a draw by a resurgent Charlbury. Local rivals Enstone also managed an impressive win against Hailey which helped soothe Stonesfield's wounded pride. A walk-over win against Minster Lovell (who failed to raise a side) and a great win (3-0) away at Spartans sees our boys into second place just a point behind Hailey and a point ahead of Enstone.

It's very tight at the top, with games coming thick and fast in the next month and tough battles ahead against a rampant Enstone and a faltering Hailey. The impetus lies with our boys who need to keep cool heads and take full advantage of the three games they have in hand over Hailey. Do that and they'll have the league title in their grasp. Can they do it? No predictions from me this month, I'm a jinx!

The Reserves have had a mixed bag of results recently, starting with losing out by the odd goal in five at Chadlington, in a thriller. No real disgrace in that loss as Chadlington are up there battling to be champions, which just proves that our boys are a difficult side to beat and could have a big say in the destination of the league title. A tidy win (3-0) away at Deer Park was followed by a walk-over win against Aston (who failed to raise a side), both of which sees our boys in fifth place in the league. Realistically, the best they can hope for this season would be a respectable fourth place.

The regular reader (thank you!) will know it's a given that Fredos are only for heroes and with none this month, the coveted Fredo Award stays in its box. However, the Committee did note that the only Rice brother to score a goal this month was young Eden for The Reserves against Deer Park; not enough to be a hero but certainly enough for the bragging rights over his two big brothers!

More drivel next month as the season approaches its climax. Hopefully a hero will rise and clutch the Fredo with both hands!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

Stonesfield Tennis Club

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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.

From the Rector – Special Buildings, Special Dates

This year our Parish church of St James the Great celebrates its 800-year anniversary, and will be hosting events through the weekend of 17-18 June, and a party at The Manor in September too. I hope that many of you will be able to join us.

As I complete my second year here as Rector, it is a privilege to be part of a succession of parish priests which dates back to 1223, when 'Joseph of Farnham' is recorded as the first Rector. Stonesfield or 'Stunsfield' was earlier recorded in the Domesday Book, the great land survey commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086, and the Church has played a central role in the village ever since. The church building as we know it today dates from the 13th century, including the

central area of the church, called the nave, the chancel (where the altar is placed) and the tower, along with the Lady Chapel beside the chancel. Various additions and improvements were made over the centuries including the porch, and the north aisle where the organ and choir stalls currently sit, which were added in the 19th century, and more recently, the vestry.

Like all churches, it went through periods of enlargement, followed by periods of neglect. Finding the resources to maintain such a substantial building in a small agricultural community was often challenging. Fascinating examples of this are to be found in historical documents, which tell us that in 1717 the church was 'out of repair and in great danger', (presumably in danger of falling down). In the early 19th century, it was in poor state of repair again, but was to benefit from the great Victorian revival of faith and the expansion of the Church's activities, which here, as in many places, included the building of our village school, now the invaluable village resource, the St James' Centre. In our time the maintenance of all church buildings has been much more consistent, and all are now inspected every five years. This year at St James we are addressing the repairs to stonework, roofs and structure which our latest inspection requires, and seeking to raise funds from the village, as well as from grant-making bodies. I hope you will be pleased to have received our leaflet about this, and might contribute if you can.

However important our church building is for each of us, the heart of Christian faith is not a building, but a people seeking to live life in response to the love and justice of God. On Shrove Tuesday we were delighted to welcome many people to our Pancake Party to mark the beginning of Lent. This month we are celebrating the great feast of Easter, and the church community will come together in Holy Week to remember the final days of Jesus' life, and to celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday. This year we are holding an additional service, which will retell the Easter Story for children and families, at 11am on Good Friday, 7 April. Please come and join us for any or all of our services, and I wish you all a very Happy Easter!

Rev'd Ralph Williamson, Rector

Services for April

Sunday 2 April [Palm Sunday]

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

Maundy Thursday [6 April]

7.30pm	Stonesfield	Maundy Thursday Communion
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Good Friday [7 April]

11am	Stonesfield	Good Friday Service for all the family
2pm	Combe	Good Friday Meditation

Easter Eve [8 April]

7.30pm	Stonesfield	Easter Liturgy
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Easter Day [9 April]

6am	Combe	Dawn service
8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Easter Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Easter Parish Communion

Sunday 16 April [Second Sunday of Easter]

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

Sunday 23 April [Third Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion followed by APCM at 10.30am
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Sunday 30 April [Fourth Sunday of Easter]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
10am	Combe	United Benefice Communion

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (5 and 19 April)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Reflection for Easter 2023

This time of year is one of my favourite times. I tend to be an early riser and I must confess to feeling a little excited when I pull back the curtains in the morning and daylight floods in. I see the green buds beginning to appear on the trees, the green spikes in the ground turning into snow drops, crocuses and daffodils. The grass begins to grow and I reluctantly head to the shed for the lawn mower! It's like creation has wakened and sprung back to life. Life renewed, rediscovered, looking very much like it did this time last year but subtly different. That patch of snowdrops looks just like it did last year. Or does it? The shoots come from the same source but the green leaves and white petals are not the same ones that were there last year. The patch has developed and spread out a bit since last year too. It's the same - but different.

It's also the time when we celebrate what we have come to know as Easter.

Celebrating the most important event in Christian history - the resurrection of Jesus. In Luke's gospel we hear of the women going to the garden and finding the tomb empty! Instead, they find two men in dazzling white clothes who tell them that they are looking in the wrong place. The women run back to the other disciples who do not believe their story. Later, a couple of the disciples walking to a village called Emmaus meet with a traveller on the road and they get talking all about the events of the last few days and what they might mean. It is significant that they don't recognise that it is Jesus walking with them, until later when he breaks bread with them. He is the same, but different.

Actually, everything is different from then on. Because of love, Jesus is alive, death is cancelled: just another point in the cycle of life. And because he did not die, Jesus is there ready to be alongside us in every experience of life, the good and the bad. We can trust him to be there for us, just as we can trust that next year the snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils will be back - the same, but different!

Revd Andrew Biggs

Superintendent Minister for the West
Oxfordshire Methodist Circuit

Services for April

Sunday 2	11am	Jenny Bywaters
Sunday 9	11am	Andrew Maisey Easter Sunday Service
Sunday 16	11am	The Revd James Skinner
Sunday 23	11am	Local Arrangement
Sunday 30	11am	The Revd Andrew Biggs Holy Communion Service

A stitch in time!

A hobby of mine is delving into the lives of folk who moved from this world long ago. With the help of old books and passed down memories, I catch a glimpse of the way they lived from day to day. This reminds me of my own valuable time on this earth and how I spend it. I wonder how you spend yours, beyond the 'must do's' of course!

Take a look at this unconventional old English prayer, its author unknown. It still speaks to us today.

Take time to work,
it is the price of success.

Take time to think,
it is the source of power.

Take time to play,
it is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take time to read,
it is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to be friendly,
it is the road to happiness.

Take time to dream,
it is hitching your wagon to a star.

Take time to love and be loved,
it is the privilege of the Gods.

Take time to look around,
it is too short a day to be selfish.

Take time to laugh,
it is the music of the soul.

The World Day of Prayer Service held on 3 March was a joyful Taiwan Celebration. £180 in kind donations has been forwarded to this worthy charity assisting worldwide projects. My sincere thanks to everyone who supported the Service. Next year, Palestine!

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Roman Catholic Worship

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do

Of the seven times Jesus spoke when he was on the Cross, it is the first: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34) that resonates so strongly. It is full of love and compassion, rich in understanding that forgiveness is the hardest of virtues to achieve for humanity. Joel 2: 13 in the Old Testament says: 'Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and compassion'.

At the heart of God's forgiveness is mercy for all our endless faults and failings: Saint Pope John Paul II said 'Apart from the mercy of God, there is no other source of hope'. God's love and mercy for us is shown in the gift of his only Son to us, and that Son's sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. Psalm 23:6 tells us 'Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever', echoing Exodus 34:6 'The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin'. Let us all share that eternal forgiveness and mercy which is offered to us through the death of Jesus and his resurrection which we celebrate each Easter.

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass at 9.15am

Weekday Mass

Wednesdays and Fridays at 9.15am

Easter Services

Tuesday 4 April at 7pm: Service of
Reconciliation at Holy Trinity Church,
Chipping Norton,

Please check St. Teresa's website for
details of all services during Holy Week:
www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/

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Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield



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Clementine's on the Lawn

Opening April 2023 until Autumn 2023

Our brand new dining experience Clementine's on the Lawn is opening this month on the South Lawn of the Palace, providing magnificent views of the Palace whilst you dine for the very first time due to its conservatory glass structure. A range of delicious choices will be available from roast dinners and seafood platters to afternoon tea, making the perfect place for a special treat with friends and family. The citrus name pays homage to The Orangery restaurant, which is currently undergoing vital restoration work, as well as Clementine Churchill, wife of Sir Winston Churchill. After lunch why not take a stroll to the nearby Formal Gardens and discover where the wartime leader proposed to his wife at the Temple of Diana.

BLENHEIM

You may have noticed that our Lake Dredge has now been resumed after being paused for the past few months due to weather conditions. The dredging of Queen Pool first started back in April 2022, having not been carried out in over 100 years. Upon completion it will have removed 300,000 cubic metres of silt from our 'Capability' Brown designed lake – enough to fill Wembley Stadium. The dredge will return our lake to its original depth of two metres from its current shallows of 30cm. The walking loop around Queen Pool has once again been closed whilst the project is completed.



BLENHEIM ESTATE

As the new season unfolds, you will soon begin to see signs of spring appear in the Parkland and surrounding areas. We have already seen a sprinkling of snowdrops, a blossoming of bluebells and drifts of daffodils with a whole host of other seasonal flowers still to come. To add to the Easter picture we will also see lambs arriving on the Estate this month. As we exclusively lamb outdoors, we ask all visitors to please be mindful of walking their dogs in the Parkland. Keeping your dog on a lead is particularly important to ensure that our sheep are not attacked or chased in a way that may cause injury, suffering or miscarriage.

Keep up-to-date with our news and latest events by signing up to our newsletter at

blenheimpalace.com

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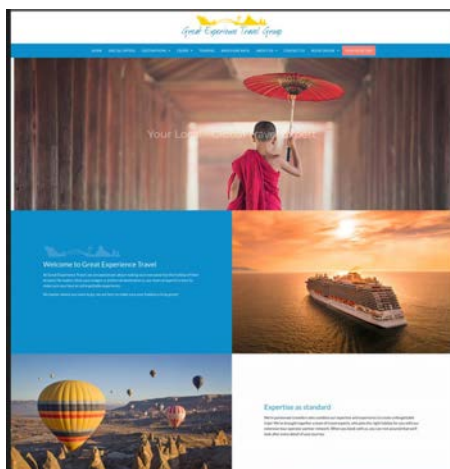
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Our fabulous new website:
www.greatexperiencetravel.co.uk
 is now up and running



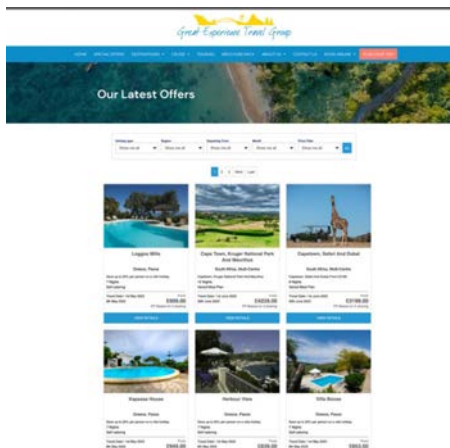
It has lots of exciting new features, and we think that the website looks great. However, it is still a 'work in progress' and has to meet your needs.

If you can see anything that we can do which would make the site even better or even easier to use, please do let us know.

It doesn't mean that we don't want to see you in the office.

This is still our No.1 priority.

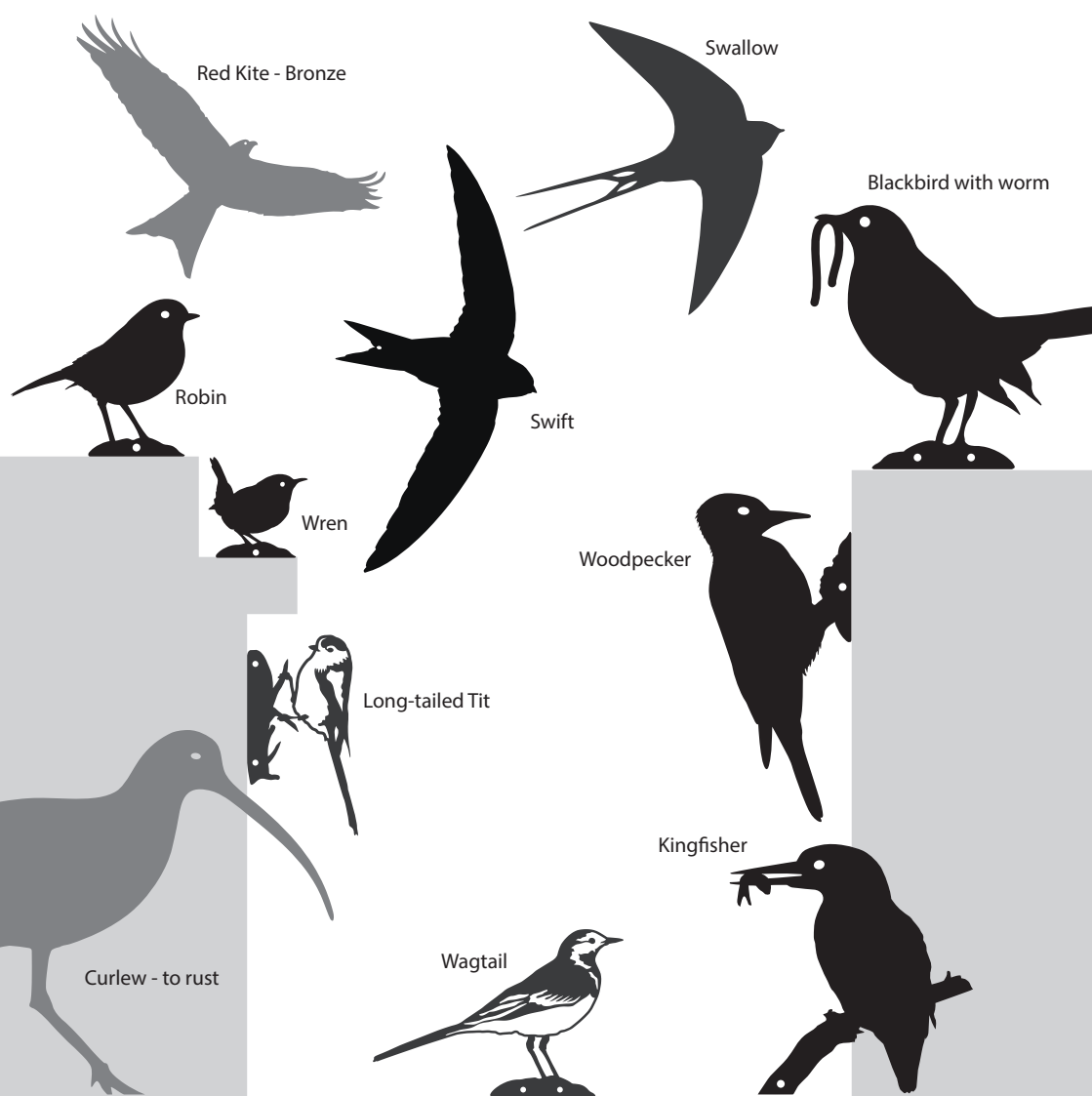
The site will just help you find even more holiday options and will make the service that we can offer you even better.



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