



Support our local artists



Lisa Lee (245)

Oxfordshire Artweeks is the UK's oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event, and the 41st festival, which is scheduled for spring 2023 (May 6-29, and 13-21 May locally) promises to be fit for a king. As the country's creatives open their doors to welcome visitors, for free, there's a wealth of art and intrigue to explore in hundreds of studios, galleries, gardens, potteries, churches, woods and other fascinating venues including the Bibliographical Press in the Old Bodleian Library, St Hugh's College Oxford, and the National Trust Heritage and Rural Skills Centre in the Cotswold village of Coleshill.

Here in Stonesfield there are two venues to explore – Claire Fyfe-Jackson's exhibition is popular every year, and here she will be exhibiting unique designer jewellery made with gold, silver and semi-precious stones

which are inspired by her garden and the Oxfordshire landscape. Alongside this, Claire's quirky handmade flowers made from recycled metal are dainty and durable, often displayed in vintage bottles and vases. More recently, Claire has also begun painting beautiful mixed media semi-abstract paintings inspired by the natural world and her love of the countryside.

Opening her garden studio for only the second time, glass artist Lisa Lee of Cotswold Glass Creations invites you in to see her work and her work in progress as she fuses sweet-shop colours to create pretty and tactile vessels and decorative pieces. She also runs courses, so if that's something you might be interested in, pop over and see her and her bright airy art space.

Continued on page 6

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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.

Publishers

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Deadline for next issue 15 May
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Printer

Windrush Press, Witney

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Advertising:

Deadline for next issue 10 May
Advertisements to
slate-ads@stonesfield.online

Current and past copies of the *Slate* are available at www.stonesfield.online

Dates for your diary:

May

4,11,18,25	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
8	The Big Help Out	Village Hall	3-5pm
10	Annual Parish Meeting	Primary School	7pm
13	Ladies' Breakfast	St James' Centre	8.45-10.45am
15	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
15	Stonesfield Gardening Club	St James' Centre	7.30pm
16	Stonesfield Players AGM	St James' Centre	8pm
17	Sniff for Life	St James' Centre	7pm
19	Murder Mystery Evening	Village Hall	7.30pm
20	Pre-School Cake Stall	Village shop forecourt	8.30am



Lend a hand. Make a change.

**MONDAY
8TH MAY**

3-5pm at the Village Hall
Free refreshments

Notices & news

The Big Help Out – Stonesfield’s Volunteering Day

Come and join us on Monday 8 May from 3-5pm at the Village Hall for a celebratory look at the amazing work that volunteer groups do in one way or another to make life better for the people of our village.

Monday 8 May has been designated the start of the Big Help Out. It’s part of the Coronation weekend and its aim is to celebrate all the incredible work which goes on behind the scenes all over the country, in many different ways.

Stonesfield is lucky enough to have about 30 groups and organisations working with volunteers – see the centre feature in this issue – and the Coronation weekend Monday will be the day to see many of them in action.

There will be varied displays and fun activities to join in, for all ages; people already involved will be there to chat about the various groups and what they do, and there will be **free refreshments**.

The groups and organisations represented will include (we’ve not finished arranging entries yet!):

- 1st Stonesfield Scouts
- Stonesfield Gardening Club
- SAFER / Community Speedwatch
- The Stonesfield Slate
- Stonesfield Environment Group
- Stonesfield Food Group
- Stonesfield Village Hall Committee

- Chrissie’s Owls
- Friends of Stonesfield Library FoSL
- Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Scheme
- Repair Café
- Stonesfield Parish Council Litter pickers
- Stonesfield Common Volunteers

And it might even get you thinking about volunteering yourself. Have you sometimes thought you might like to volunteer in some way, but were unsure what there is to be done and how to go about it? Now here’s your chance to find out!

Come and enjoy being part of the Big Help Out...

Viv Kendall and Jane Rust for Stonesfield’s
Volunteer Groups

stonesfieldvts@gmail.com



Bus travel information for Ukrainian guests

The Villager bus service is a community bus service driven by volunteer drivers which provides regular services from Stonesfield to Witney on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. A timetable is shown below. The bus is free of charge to all Ukrainian guests and we look forward to seeing you.

Monday, Tuesday and Friday: Service V26

Depart: Stonesfield (shop) 9.45am

Arrive: Witney (Market Sq) 10.16am

Depart: Witney (Market Sq - C) 12 noon

Arrive: Stonesfield 12.31pm

The Villager Community Bus Service

Stonesfield Players' Annual General Meeting

The Players will be holding their AGM on Tuesday 16 May at 8pm in the St James' Centre. If you are interested in joining this lively and sociable group, then do come along. There is always plenty of room for more actors, directors and those who simply want to help behind the scenes.

Becki Sherlaw-Johnson

rebeccasj@btinternet.com

Septemberfest: Murder Mystery fundraiser

The Septemberfest Committee cordially invites you to a Murder Mystery Evening on Friday 19 May, the setting for which is an awards dinner organised by the fictional Southern England Micro-Brewery Association.

At some point during the evening there will be a murder. It will be your job to work out

who did what to whom, and why! To solve the mystery the audience are going to have to question the characters, which they are able to do at any time. If you want to unleash your inner Holmes or Poirot, why not join us for an evening of sleuthing, food and liquid refreshment at Stonesfield Village Hall.

Doors open at 7pm and the show starts at 7.30pm. There will be a cash bar. Tickets cost £20 including a two-course meal and a full evening's entertainment, and are available by contacting Sarah Plumridge at: bolivern@icloud.com or 07771 788990.

Sarah Plumridge

Taste and see: Ladies' Breakfast

What is a 'Ladies Breakfast'? It is a chance to meet and chat to others over breakfast. The breakfast includes a choice of cereals, yoghurt and fruit as well as croissants, pains au chocolat and toast, and tea, coffee and fruit juice.

After breakfast there is a short talk. Our speakers have been varied and they have all given us something to think about; this month we have someone local.

The cost this month is £4 - that's just a few pence more than a cup of coffee. So why not come along on Saturday 13 May at 8.45am for 9am at the St James' Centre. More information is available from: Bina (891293), Kathleen (891733), Muriel (891479) or Suzy (891552).

Bina Farrow

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Support our local artists (cont)

Claire Fyfe-Jackson (244)



Stonesfield openings

Claire Fyfe-Jackson

Artweeks venue 244

Sarts Cottage, The Ridings, OX29 8EA

Open 13-14 & 19-21 May from 11am-6pm

Lisa Lee

Artweeks venue 245

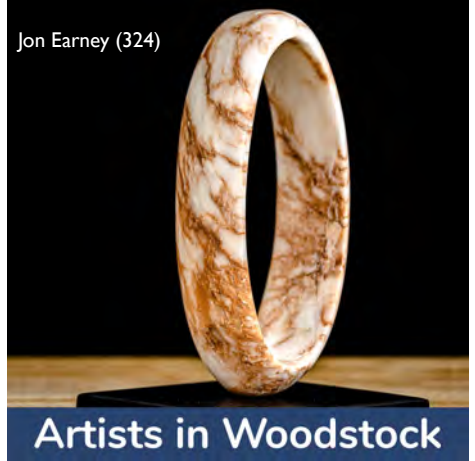
Tryfan House, 3 Pickett Piece, OX29 8FH

Open 13-14 20-21 May from 11am-6pm

Further afield, in Finstock, Julia Ogborne paints vibrant and joyful abstract acrylic landscapes which she will be showing in a delightful Cotswold home gallery (Artweeks venue 247) alongside polymer clay jewellery, and you can also visit Wilcote Arts, a large community of artists deep in the ancient Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood. During the Artweeks festival, 16 artists are showcasing their artworks on a theme of Contemplation in the main exhibition room, and in individual studios. The group includes painters, sculptors, ceramists, jewellery makers, and installation artists who work as individuals and also collaborate in creating socially-engaged works (Artweeks venue 246) so it's a microcosm of Artweeks itself.

There is also a brand new art trail in Woodstock that's well worth a visit, with art on show by 40 artists including ceramists, photographers and sculptors.

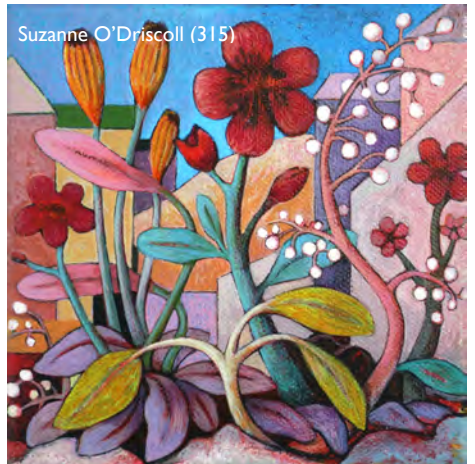
Jon Earney (324)



Artists in Woodstock

Overall, during the festival, as many as 2000 artists, jewellers, furniture-makers, milliners and more than 200 new exhibitors will be presenting over 500 shows at nearly 400 different locations. They will be showcasing their creative talent, explaining their materials and, often, demonstrating their methods.

Suzanne O'Driscoll (315)



Visitors will be able to see, touch and talk about hundreds of thousands of pieces of art and craft and uncover the stories of their inspiration. The art on show both celebrates iconic Oxford views and local landscapes and promises a global journey through the eyes of local artists who have been influenced by people and places around the world and the colours, fabrics and styles of exotic destinations. Explore a five-acre sculpture park in the Cotswolds and take an art trail through the towns of Woodstock, Watlington and Wallingford, or tour America on a motorbike, go on safari in Tanzania, head to Svalbard or Cuba, and be enchanted by Rajasthan.

Maisa Stolz (15)



Visitors can also expect the unexpected as they discover handcrafted rocking horses, bellows and boats; technology-assisted art and stunning microscopy images relating to medical research; satirical commentary on today's society and a goat with a pearl earring.

Hannelore Meinhold-Morgan



For further information on these venues and others in Oxford and across the county – or just to enjoy a vast on-line showcase including a virtual exhibition by popular Stonesfield potter Hannelore Meinhold-Morgan – visit www.artweeks.org

Grey Cat Studio and Oxfordshire Artweeks

After taking part in Artweeks since it began in the 1980's – I remember helping Mary Moser put together the very first guide on her kitchen floor at Wadham – I am going to take a break this year. However, Grey Cat Studio will be open during May by appointment. Please contact me on 891318 to arrange a time. I would love to see you.

Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson

Stonesfield Tree Planters are supporting tree planting in Madagascar – can you help?

Our trees will be slow to grow and establish. We have been looking for a tree planting project in the tropics where trees establish and grow much faster: a project that shares our values of local engagement, planting and ongoing care. Through the World Land Trust (whose patron is Sir David Attenborough) we have a project in eastern Madagascar that fits well. The project is to extend a tropical forest, planting trees and establishing local wardens. The lemur is the key native species that will be supported.

We are looking to support the planting of trees which are locally grown and planted by the community. The cost per tree is under a pound. We have started to raise funds through crowd-funding. To donate funds, please visit this site:
www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/stonesfield-tree-planters-fund-for-future-forest

Many thanks.

John Sampson

Sniff for Life: Medical Detection Dogs

Come along to the St James' Centre at 7pm on 17 May and learn about the amazing work of Medical Detection Dogs.

For over ten years, this charity has been training dogs to save lives using their amazing sense of smell. Medical Alert assistance dogs support people with complex health conditions, being trained to detect and alert their human partner of an episode well before it is about to occur. Bio-detection dogs are trained to detect even the faintest of smells associated with diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's, COVID-19 and bacterial infections.

This pioneering work could lead to dogs playing an important role in screening for diseases and improving patient care in hospitals. The charity is working with scientists and medics to develop faster, cheaper, non-invasive methods of diagnosis that could impact on thousands of lives.

Refreshments will be available. There is no charge for the talk but donations will be very welcome from anyone who wishes to give to the charity.

Ros Mengech (898276)

St James the Great: 800th anniversary

Do come and join in the weekend of celebrations, which include:

Saturday 17 June, 9am-5pm

Christening display – gowns, attire, gifts, photographs, etc

If you still have a special Christening outfit (it could be yours or perhaps it was for your child) or other special item, would you like to lend it for display? We would also love to know a little about the Christening (also called Baptism) and perhaps you also have a photograph that could be displayed with the outfit/item? The Christening can have happened anywhere of course – not only in Stonesfield!

Please get in touch – we would love to hear from you (by the end of May if possible.)

Sarah Plumridge:
bolivern@icloud.com (891163)

Lindsey Sellar:
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Sunday 18 June, 11am

Service of celebration and thanksgiving

A very special time to join together in worship and thanks

Sunday 18 June, 4pm

Celebratory concert in the Church

Jarisel, a group of four local musicians with an international reputation, present an exciting and exhilarating feast of folk music from the Scottish, Irish, French, Italian and Latin American traditions. They will play a variety of instruments (cello, accordion, keyboard, violin, Hardanger fiddle, bodhran) and voice. The

concert is suitable for children aged 7 upwards. Tickets are £10 and children may attend free of charge, although everyone needs a ticket. Tickets are available from 14 May by emailing stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org, after the 11am church service or on the door if still available. A concert not to be missed!

Lindsey Sellar

St James the Great: Church restoration appeal



Thank you so much to everyone who has supported the Church Restoration Appeal. We are very grateful for your generosity; every donation helps us towards reaching our total of £120,000 to make necessary repairs. If you have not already contributed and would like to do so, details are at www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org/restoration-appeal/ or see the leaflet which has been distributed door-to-door. Thank you again.

Revd Ralph Williamson

Bridewell Gardens



Bridewell Gardens, a local mental health recovery service, will be holding an Open Day on Sunday 21 May when the walled garden and vineyard will be open to the public.

There will be a pop-up café in the garden for tea and cake and high-quality plants, home-produced jams and chutneys, and organic sparkling wine will be on sale. Make a day of it, bring a picnic blanket and relax in the vineyard with friends and family. Dogs on leads are very welcome and families and children are encouraged to explore the site.



No booking is required and the suggested donation is £5 per person. Further Open Days will take place in June, July and September.

Rachel Green
Bridewell Gardens, Wilcote OX7 3DT

Combe Women's Institute

Despite the driving rain, we had almost a full house for our April Spring-themed evening – many thanks to Suzanne for organising the craft activities and for helping those of us who needed it. Everyone had a great time and despite the laughter – or maybe because of it – we all managed to make something respectable to take home.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 15 May which is a week later than usual due to the Coronation bank holiday. Al Sylvester will be talking about the RAF's attempt to ski to the geographic South Pole. This is an open meeting and anyone over 18 is welcome to come along.

Meetings are held in the Reading Room at Combe, 7.30-9.30pm, and are usually 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. Non-members/guests are charged £5 to attend meetings which includes refreshments and a raffle ticket.

Julia Sharpe (891058)
Secretary, Combe WI

Stonesfield Scouts – request for photographs

Calling all former members of 1st Stonesfield Scouts Group! The group is turning 75 this year. If you have any photos of scouting activities in the village from years gone by, we'd love to see them. Please email them to: akela@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk or drop them round to 14 Pumbro, supplying a return address.

Rachel Aldred

North Leigh History Society

On Tuesday 2 May Paul Barnett will be giving a talk on Easter Island. This is a place that intrigues and seems to have a mysterious past. Come and find out the latest theories and findings about the island and the people who lived there. 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

Woodstock Bowls Club

We are a friendly club and would like to invite you along to see if bowls is for you. Bowls is a game for adults and children. We have open evenings every Tuesday starting on 2 May from 6pm (and other times by appointment.) The Club is at Cadogan Park, OX29 1UW.

We will be hosting an Open Day on Saturday 27 May, 10am-4pm, as part of the nationwide Big Bowls Weekend. Free coaching and equipment will be provided. For further information please contact me on 07939 257351 or email bjnc@tiscali.co.uk.

Brian Clarke

Handmade Oxford

Handmade Oxford will be holding their third annual crafts festival at Waterperry Gardens over a three-day period, 16-18 June. This event will bring together over 150 UK-based makers and feature a curated selection of arts and crafts including jewellery, fashion and textiles, ceramics, glass and sculpture. There is also a programme of workshops, demonstrations and talks. Live music will be performed by local musicians and artisan food will be available. More information and ticket booking is available at: www.handmadeinbritain.co.uk

Branwen Bindra

Handmade in Britain

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.

We are 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.

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

From the meeting held on 5 April 2023

Neighbourhood Plan: SPC would like to thank the Neighbourhood Plan working group. The survey results are to be confirmed but there has been a superb response to the survey so far and this is down to the very hard work of the group. There will be an update on this in due course.

Trees on Woodstock Road: It was confirmed by Oxfordshire County Council that the tree-cutting by Blenheim on the Woodstock Road was primarily carried out due to ash dieback (which can also become a safety issue where trees are close to the road) but also to reduce the density of the woodland so that the forest floor can recover. Trees will be replaced appropriately.

Cost of living: Oxfordshire County Council asked SPC to advise residents that cost of living support is available via West Oxfordshire District Council. This includes Council Tax and funding for children who are in receipt of school meals during school holidays. If anyone is in urgent need and has difficulty accessing this support, the Clerk is able to link them confidentially to the support services; the Clerk may be emailed at clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk. SPC is also making some grant funds available for support and is working to establish how this will be handled.

Annual Parish Meeting: The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 10 May at

7pm at Stonesfield Primary School. Villagers and volunteer groups are all welcome to attend. Anyone wishing to speak at the meeting should contact the Clerk in advance and no later than 8 May. The Chairman will be elected and confirmed at this meeting and Councillors will be announced following the election. SPC would like to record its thanks to those Councillors who have worked tirelessly on its behalf but are not standing again; their work has been very much appreciated.

Dark Skies: It was highlighted in the meeting that many people in the village are unaware of Stonesfield's Dark Skies status. The south-east of England is the most densely populated and fastest-growing region of the UK, so it is not surprising that it is the most light-polluted area of the whole country. The few square kilometres of truly dark land are found in pockets scattered across several counties and Stonesfield village is one of them. It is not just that starry skies are wonderful to see: light pollution is bad for human health as it can upset natural sleeping rhythms causing irritability and insomnia, and increase headaches and anxiety levels. Moreover, animals, birds and other life forms are affected: many organisms need the natural rhythms of light and dark for breeding, migration and feeding and therefore light pollution can adversely affect whole ecosystems. With the cost of living and climate crisis, it is useful to remember that light pollution wastes energy and therefore precious natural resources. The Council

encourages residents to turn off the lights and try stargazing instead!

Planning: Application 23/00670: 4 Limbeck Way. Outside office - no comment or objection.

Karen East, Parish Clerk
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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Other advices from SPC:

Motorbikes: It has been highlighted that, once again, motorbikes are being ridden in the woods surrounding Stonesfield, making a lot of noise on private land. Residents are assured that the police are aware of this and will monitor the situation. We would like to remind motorbike riders that using motorbikes on this land is prohibited.

Stonesfield Parish Councillors from May 2023: As there are more seats on the Parish Council than candidates standing, the following are automatically elected as councillors from 4 May 2023: Eleanor Bailey; David Brown; Mick Heduan; Phillip McArdell; Jim O'Brien.

Karen East, Parish Clerk
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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West Oxfordshire District Council

From our District Councillor

Botley West Solar Farm: As I am sure by now most people in Stonesfield and the surrounding villages will know, the Botley West Solar Farm project is a very emotive issue that has landed at our feet. However, for those who don't yet know what I am talking about, please do have a look at the website: botleywest.co.uk. It is very much the same at West Oxfordshire District

Council with many strong views being projected at the last council meeting. We at West Oxfordshire, despite being the planning authority, don't get to decide this particular planning matter; due to the size of the project, this is the privilege of the Secretary of State. We have, however, commissioned an impact assessment for the project to help gather information, and indeed evidence, to present in order that an informed decision can be made when the official consultation process begins.

Woodstock Road: The woodland area along the Woodstock Road has changed appearance quite a bit recently. The Blenheim Estate has undertaken work in order to deal with ash dieback, a fungus that dramatically affects the structural integrity of trees and therefore can make them quite dangerous. At the same time some other species of trees have also been removed to thin out the foliage and allow sunlight to penetrate the deeper parts of the forest floor in order to encourage better growth. I am promised that some of these trees will be replaced.

Waste collection services: Finally, a review of our waste collection operation is beginning. We want to ensure the current service is best value, practical and efficient. This will involve looking into all options of bin combinations, containers, mixtures of materials and frequency of collections. If you have any particular comments or ideas regarding this, or indeed any other issues, please do let me know via my email address:
mathew.parkinson@westoxon.gov.uk

Mathew Parkinson
West Oxfordshire District Councillor

Other news from West Oxfordshire

Cost of living support: WODC is supporting those affected by the cost-of-living crisis by focusing funding towards local community groups, households struggling with energy costs and offering a community-focused Resident Support Service. Further information is available at www.westoxon.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport.

Sewage pollution in local waterways:

WODC has been working with Thames Water to reduce sewage pollution in our waterways. The Council has changed its planning regulations so that all development applications must declare at the outset whether there is sufficient capacity at the relevant sewage treatment works. Where there is insufficient capacity, a planning condition will be added stating that the new home(s) may not be occupied until additional capacity has been installed.

Oxfordshire County Council

From our County Councillor

Pedestrian highways: Safety measures have been drawn up by the SAFER group in the village and once finalised will be considered and agreed by the Parish Council. The Parish Council supports these measures.

Wootton Primary School: Issues related to the closure of the primary school at Wootton and transport issues for children now being schooled in Tackley are being progressed. It is not anticipated that the children will attend Stonesfield Primary School in the immediate future.

Freight strategy engagement: OCC is engaging with parish and town councils as it develops its freight strategy further.

Parishes have been invited to submit their input via LetsTalk. This is not a public consultation but rather an early opportunity for key stakeholders to input local knowledge on areas that would benefit from area weight restrictions and to identify areas challenged by HGVs. The strategy seeks to keep HGVs off inappropriate roads and confine them to the strategic road network (eg. the M40).

Boundary review: OCC has submitted to the Boundary Commission for England its suggestions for new county division boundaries (which were passed unanimously at Full Council). The Commission's consultation will close on 9 May. The Commission will then develop its recommendations and consult on the draft proposals during the period 1 August-9 October 2023. Any questions in this regard may be emailed to: andy.graham@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Andy Graham

Oxfordshire County Councillor

The Village Survey

Thank you! What an amazing village this is. A magnificent 469 households completed the village survey - approximately 60% of the total number of houses - and 699 people also responded as individuals, which represents about 52% of the eligible population. (The final figures may vary slightly.) Typically, surveys get a 20% response - our is much higher and therefore more representative. So - well done Stonesfield! An excellent result.

Here's a re-cap on why this is such good news:

During 2022, the team of volunteers working on behalf of Stonesfield Parish Council identified the need for a Neighbourhood Plan. Stonesfield needed to create and record policies that could influence the way future planning permissions might be decided. We devised a set of questions that sought to elicit responses on key areas of our village structure: housing, transport, green spaces, environment, infrastructure. This took shape as the village survey, which was delivered to every household in the first week of March this year.

We persuaded, prompted and cajoled the village throughout March with a lively publicity campaign reminding everyone to get their surveys completed and returned by the end of the month. All paper copies of the survey have had their responses entered manually onto the online database so that we now have a complete bank of data. A full set of the survey results will be made available online and a printed copy in the library.

Throughout the coming months we will be collating and analysing these results and drawing conclusions from what you have

said. These conclusions will be written up as the policies which describe the way you have said you want Stonesfield to develop.

Our next step is to invite you to a public meeting in the village hall on Monday 19 June at 7.30 pm, where we will report on our progress and answer any questions you might have. More details in next month's edition of the *Slate*.

Caroline Friend

info@stonesfieldplan.com

Village Character Assessment for the Neighbourhood Plan

We are out and about gathering information to draw up a village character assessment to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We're collating information about key physical features and characteristics of the buildings, roads, views through gaps/over roof tops/beyond ends of lanes, green spaces, tree lines, walls and street furniture that combine to create Stonesfield's local distinctiveness and unique identity. Understanding the local character is crucial to the conservation or enhancement of the specific attributes of the village and can ensure that any development proposals are appropriate and of a design which respects and complements its nature.

We are happy to talk to anyone about what we're doing while we're out and about, so please do stop us if you have any burning questions. We would also welcome any information you may have about the history of buildings and spaces, so please do get in touch if you have anything to share.

Susan Rudlin

Neighbourhood Watch

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.

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



STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

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

We make no charge but welcome a donation towards expenses.
COVID safety precautions are still in place, if you need them.

Please call or email to book transport in May:
Viv Kendall 01993 891803 or stonesfieldvts@gmail.com

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Pre-School and Day Care

Quite a lot has happened at Pre-School since our last entry, where I introduced you to our wonderful staff. I am now pleased to announce that we have employed two new staff members: Clare and Sophie joined us at the start of Term 5; both have experience of working in an Early Years setting and are settling well into our happy Pre-School family. We have also been able to offer places to six new children and their families.

On our return from our Easter break, Spring has well and truly arrived with lots

of sunny, showery outside play, exploring the flower beds for signs of new growth and finding lots of new mini-beasts to investigate and build new homes and hotels for. We also had our annual delivery of six caterpillars, soon to be Painted Lady butterflies; they always fascinate us, adults and children alike.

We still have a few places for sessions this school year and we are taking enquiries for September 2023. If you are interested, please contact me, Louise, at stonesfieldps@outlook.com or Zena at stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com

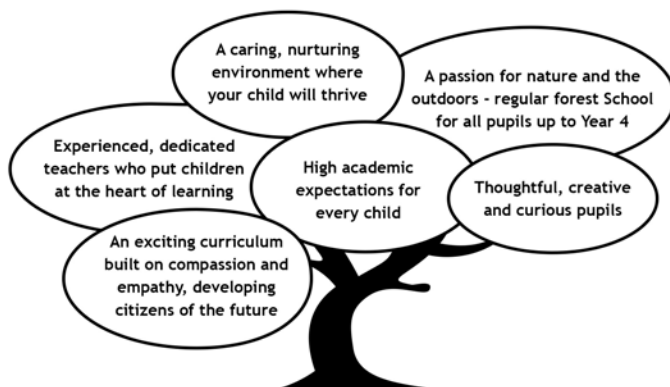
Louise John

Stonesfield Primary School

Learning together to achieve our best.



Looking for a friendly, inclusive, local school for your child?
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The Sea

The sound, the smell, the beauty and the energy with a powerful will of its own

Which never stops or asks permission; resting is not allowed

Even frightening at times, beautiful and smart enough to change colour and strength at will

Dancing with the wind whilst creating amazingly delicate or intricate movements

Casting shapes and shadows on the land and in the sky

Like an invisible paintbrush with a talent of its own, drops of rain adding a wet-to-wet detail

Love it or wary of it, the depths provide homes for living things

Huge mammals lurk beneath the waves in hidden depths

While minute organisms feed on delicate plants and crustaceans live in a world we only begin to understand

Why then do we not honour it for its beauty, worthiness and unique source of pleasure that surrounds our world?

We must nurture its presence, honour it, preserve it and not take it for granted
Keep it safe as a precious jewel as it lights up our world

Bathe in it, feel the joy of its cool, salty water

It is rejuvenating and deserves our deep respect, enjoyment and, most of all, preservation

Why, then, is it used as an ornamental dustbin?

Diana Letchford

I'm a Reader...

Alison Richards, 50.

Alison's busy job as head of marketing for a software consultancy means that curling up with a book is a favourite way to relax. She belongs to a long-standing book group, and this has pushed her out of her comfort zone of authors such as Ian McEwan, Kate Atkinson and Tracy Chevalier.

'For example, I'm not usually into fantasy but one of the members of the group got me into Eowyn Ivey. They are a magically written series set in Alaska. They really pull you into the cold; they are enchanting stories, fairy tale-ish. I recently read *To the Bright Edge of the World*. This is set in 1885 Alaska; the story, told through journal entries, military reports, letters and documents, follows a U.S. government funded expedition into the Alaskan wilderness and its first encounters with indigenous people. It is fiction but inspired by the real 1500-mile expedition led by Henry Tureman Allen to map the unexplored wilderness, who survived with little proper food, through freezing rain and across difficult terrain.

If this just sounds like chicken feed after surviving the dark winter and washed-out spring in Stonesfield, then consider that Henry Tureman Allen also had to survive without a library. Just as reports of the hostility of the indigenous people turned out to be exaggerated for Tureman Allen, so it is at the Library here in Stonesfield, where a friendly professional and a small expedition of intrepid volunteers give visitors a warm welcome.

Alison brought her two children on weekly expeditions to Stonesfield Library when they were younger; 'we loved sitting on the

cushions' and ordered books in for herself on-line. This is a habit formed in her own childhood in the town of Dronfield, near Sheffield. The library was in a beautiful old manor house. 'I took my grandad's books to change every week. He liked murder mysteries, in large print. I mooched about, changed my books (something like PD James or John Fowles) and then went to the library's music section to borrow some records. I remember taking out all the Led Zeppelin, Roxy Music and Iron Maiden; that music was quite old by then, as this was in the eighties, but I was trying to educate myself.' It turns out that this was time well spent since Alison is now a regular at the village pub quiz (Wednesdays at 8pm at the Sports & Social Club.)

I asked Alison, life-long fan, if she had any amusing library anecdotes over the years. It's not strictly a book-related story, but she told me of one occasion when she was in the university library as an undergraduate. 'Suddenly there was a really annoying and loud-pitched relentless wailing sound. I wandered about trying to find the source of this, and I couldn't understand why no one was doing anything about it...and then I wondered why everyone was looking at me weirdly. Then I realised it was my rape alarm in my bag; the noise was me!'

Eleanor Bailey

Update from the Stonesfield Tree Planters



Planting the final three trees of the season

Between mid-October 2022 and the end of March, 67 Stonesfield Tree Planter volunteers have planted 823 trees around and about Stonesfield. We are now more than halfway to achieving a tree for everyone in the village.

We have also put a Cotswold National Landscape stone on the Stonesfield Straight and have learned about trees, how best to plant them and the key role they play for the climate and the environment.

As the trees grow they will absorb and lock in carbon emissions that would otherwise contribute towards global warming. The carbon is not only stored in the trees and their roots but also in the soil. We have chosen trees that will also support the fungi, lichens, moss, invertebrates and vertebrates essential to our wider environment.

An enormous thank you to all who have been involved so far. We will be looking to support the trees over the summer ahead.

John Sampson

Stonesfield Library

The Library (telephone 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

No Mow May!

Join legions of gardeners and say 'no to the mow' during May to help our bees, butterflies, wildlife and us!

Plants need pollinators and pollinators need plants. However, we know that both are in sharp decline. The results of giving the mower a breather for May can be spectacular: in 2021 'No Mow Mayers' reported over 250 plant species including wild strawberry, wild garlic and a dazzling array of rarities including adder's tongue fern, meadow saxifrage, snakeshead fritillary, and eyebright. By not mowing, you can see more wildflowers, more species and more pollen for insects.

Lawns are sometimes considered to be wastelands for wildlife but under the right management they can be biodiversity hotspots, increasing the food available for pollinators including moths, butterflies and bumblebees.

For those considering No Mow May, Plantlife - an organisation which manages nature reserves across the country - can reveal just what to expect. A one-metre square on a typical lawn last year had 17 daisies and a smattering of buttercups and dandelions. Across lawns, germander

speedwell and field forget-me-nots were next most likely to show. Such a square of lawn would produce about two milligrams of nectar sugar and three microlitres of pollen per day. So 100 m² area of lawn would produce enough pollen to stock up six mining bee brood cells and enough nectar sugar to meet the baseline needs of six bumblebees a day.

Dandelion-clad lawns are particularly wildlife friendly as they are disproportionately important for pollinators. In fact, just eight dandelion flowers might produce enough nectar sugar to meet an adult bumblebee's baseline energy needs.

Plantlife's guidance across the year recommends a layered approach to the garden cut, where shorter grass is complemented by areas of longer grass. An excellent way to encourage a wide range of flowers such as doves foot cranesbill, selfheal, cuckooflower and meadow buttercup, is to create regularly mown 'desire paths' through lawns. This approach creates different lengths of grass, boosts floral diversity and nectar and pollen production through the year.

For more information see www.plantlife.org.uk/.

If you would like to learn more about our local wildflowers, contact wychwoodfloragroup@gmail.com

Genny Early

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Gardening Club

The end of April saw the return of our very popular plant sale, held on Pond Hill, courtesy of Sybil and Will Barton. As we go to press, members are busily growing plants to sell and hoping there will be enough warmth in the sun to bring things on!

Our speaker this month will be Chris Day, who will be talking to us about Gardening in a Changing Climate, a useful topic if weather from the recent years is any guide. How we garden and what we grow is changing due to the higher temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns of recent years due to the alteration in our climate. Chris highlights the latest thinking from the Royal Horticultural Society as well as looking at the range of plants to consider for biodiversity and ease of growth in these changing times.

Talk will be held on May 15 at 7.30 in the St James' Centre, we look forward to seeing you there.

Diane Bates

Secretary, Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Stonesfield Scouts

A Summer of Scouting

1st Stonesfield Scouts are looking forward to a very busy spring and summer. Keep an eye out on our website (stonesfield-scouts.org.uk), Facebook page or our new

Instagram account for updates
[instagram.com/stonesfieldscouts](https://www.instagram.com/stonesfieldscouts)

We have summer camps for Cubs, Beavers and Scouts planned, as well as a spring camp for our hardy Scouts at Youlbury. We will also be holding our AGM at the camp on 18 June for parents and anyone keen to see what a camp is like. Although we have a waiting list, places do appear so sign up at stonesfield-scouts.org.uk/join

We are going great guns on raising funds for the group and the hut. The cake sale to which so many of you donated raised £500, and Elsevier have said they will match this to make it £1,000. We have had grants from local councils and parish councils of £2,000, and a whopping £10,000 from the Janet and Bryan Moore Charitable Trust. This puts our total at just under £125,000! There is more to be done, and the ducks will be back on 15 July. This year we are very pleased to have additional support from a local business - keep an eye out for the ducks to be on sale in June and July. If you would like to support the group in any way, please take a look at www.stonesfield-scouts.org.uk/support for details on how to volunteer and for Gift Aid forms.

Many of you will have seen the work starting at the hut. We are clearing the space and will start work towards the end of May. We aim to have a great facility that works with the land surrounding it, allowing us to keep up the scouting tradition in the village.

Finally, and this is getting urgent, **we are in need of people interested in leading sessions and running the section as a member of our executive committee.** A number of our leaders are looking to take a step back after many years of volunteering and we need people to take their place. You do not need to be Bear Grylls, or even Craig Ball. All you need is to be willing to give it a go and work with great colleagues and young people. It is fun, and it needs supporting.

We will be seeing you at the Big Help Out, and at the river for some serious duck racing soon.

Ben Whitworth

chair@stonesfield-scouts.co.uk

Stonesfield Football Club

As the league season approaches its climax, our boys still have it in their own hands to land top spot in the Witney and District Premiership for the first time since season 1963/64, though it looks like they will have to do it the hard way. They started this month with a tense draw away at Enstone (1-1) then followed that up with a magnificent performance away at Hailey where Shaun Kemp and Carry Rice scored the goals in a fabulous 2-1 win. It's been a long time since they've beaten Hailey in any competition and this hard-fought victory was well-deserved. Next up, they entertained Charlbury at home and were second best as their local rivals romped home to inflict a first league defeat of the season on our boys (1-3). Some questioned whether they have the bottle for the fight for the league title, but our boys answered their critics with an emphatic 5-0 win at home against Hanborough, always a difficult team to beat. That result gets the

show back on the road and with four games to go (Hailey, Enstone, Milton and Freeland) the destiny of the league title is in their own hands but it's going to be tough. Can they do it? I hope so but I'm making no predictions.

The Reserves have had a good month too. Three points were guaranteed when Sherborne Harriers failed to raise a side but that was contrasted with a heavy loss (0-4) at home to Wootton. No disgrace in that result (if I'm being honest) with Wootton currently top of the table, it came as no real surprise. Our lads bounced back with two fabulous wins at Eynsham (5-0) and at home to Leaffield (5-1). That later result was significant as it saw young Toby Clarke notch a double and spark wild celebrations amongst the Brian & Cilla Clarke dynasty! With a prevailing wind the lads could finish fourth, which would be just reward for a good season.

What a month it's been, and I'm delighted that the Fredo Award has been well-contested by the likes of young Toby Clarke and the older two of the three Rice brothers who all got very close with their doubles against Leaffield and Hanborough, respectively. However, I know a Fredo winner when I see one and this month's award goes to Finley Baker of the Reserves for his hat-trick against Eynsham! Hats off to Finley, a well-deserved winner.

Finally, I'm sure all this lovely village will join me in wishing our Firsts the best of luck in the final four league games of the season and hope they can bring home the Premiership League title for the first time in almost 60 years!

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.

From the Rector: Higher still and higher

After the excitement and joy of Easter subsided, I walked one afternoon along the path which leads across the fields, parallel to the Stonesfield Straight, towards Blenheim. After crossing Combe Road at 'the dip', I skirted a field and stopped to watch two groups of deer, resting beside the distant woodland. There were eleven in total, and they were graceful to watch, as we each stood and soaked up the afternoon sun. Then my eye was taken by a small brown bird, on the ground, much closer to me. As I watched, it took to the air on squat wings and rose up in front of me, singing as it went, higher and higher into the sky. I watched and listened intently until my less than perfect eyes and ears lost it far above me. Watching the aerial display and listening to the golden song of the skylark

has been a pleasure for many centuries, and its heart-lifting effect is demonstrated by the many poems it has inspired. Best known among them is *'To a Skylark'*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley, which begins,

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring
ever singest.

A few stanzas later the poem continues with,

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so
divine.

I wonder what the sight and sound of a lark arising stirs up for you? For me it speaks of the worship which rises up from our hearts and ascends to God when we are touched by beauty, or by truth, or by love. Whether we embrace the Easter faith, or another faith, or if we, like Shelley, have been put off established religion and those who profess it, there are experiences in life which connect us to something greater, something profound. Whether we are at the sink, out with the dog, or singing in

Church, whether we are watching the sunset or weeping for a loss, something can happen in our hearts when we are touched by a sense of being part of a greater mystery. Christians use the word ‘worship’ to describe our thankful response to those feelings of connection.

Today, in a world where secularism and atheism live alongside a multitude of faiths and spiritualities, we need language which can express the connection or meaning which we recognise beyond mundane experience. We need a vocabulary for human spirituality, the awareness that our nature is more than flesh and blood. Even Shelley, an avowed atheist, could not help making reference to ‘Spirit’, ‘heaven’, and the ‘divine’ in his poem, to convey the sense of the ‘numinous’ which the Lark’s performance evoked for him. Scientists speak of connectedness in ‘quantum’ terms, while philosophers speak of ‘metaphysics’. Faiths use the titles of Spirit, God, Holy One, Divine Being, or the Word, to allow us to recognise the relationship which exists between us and the One who is not a being, but Being itself. As Christians we consider Jesus of Nazareth to be God’s human presence, the one who makes that relationship known through his life, death and resurrection.

The church today, despite the elaboration of beliefs, more than a few mistakes, and the complexity of its interaction with human society, is a place where we can acknowledge our connection to Being, to God. It is a place where we can offer our thanks for the mystery of life in worship together, and can celebrate the love, truth and justice which lies at the heart of our experience of the Divine, as Jesus revealed it. Please join us.

Revd Ralph Williamson, Rector

Services for May

Sunday 7 (Fifth Sunday of Easter)

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (BCP/said)
9.30am	Combe	All Age Worship
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship

Sunday 14 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (BCP/said)
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
5pm	Combe	Evensong

Sunday 21 (Seventh Sunday of Easter)

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (BCP/said)
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Sunday 28 (Pentecost)

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (BCP/said)
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (3, 17 and 31 May)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for May

Sunday 7	11am	Local Arrangement
Sunday 14	11am	David Sarbutts
Sunday 21	11am	The Reverend Andrew Biggs Holy Communion Service
Sunday 28	11am	The Reverend Stephen Bywaters

Where out there, can you feel that little bit closer to God? Some may say at the top of a mountain or maybe on the seashore with waves crashing. Others might say in a city centre, watching humankind dash to and fro. Then there's my favoured place, a spot beneath a clear night sky, with dancing stars above me, and just lately planets too

A recent television documentary focused on the stars, and experts declared fewer can be seen these days with the naked eye. The familiar 'global warming' was deemed the cause. Sadly I agree with them, that awesome Milky Way is a much rarer sight.

Those glorious stars are mentioned in the beautiful hymn, 'From Heaven You came', a hymn that wills us to serve God, as he forever serves us.

'Hands that fling stars into space.
to cruel nails surrendered.'

Graham Kendrick

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Roman Catholic Worship

His head will be anointed with oils
(Matthew 26, 6-13)

In early May, King Charles III will be crowned; we know it will be a gorgeous spectacle, rooted in long traditions. The whole coronation service has been reduced and edited from the three hours allowed for the previous coronation, to apparently one hour long to reflect our modern world. However, one element which remains is the anointing of the King; of all the components of the coronation this is considered to be the most important and sacrosanct action.

The royal anointing is thought to have its genesis in the anointings of Jesus's head or feet recorded in three of the four gospels, and throughout the Old Testament. However, anointing was not an exclusively royal action, but has other purposes:

- a symbol of respect and investment in an eternal and indivisible relationship. Guests were anointed upon arrival in ancient Greece and in both the New and Old Testaments
- a health-giving and restorative treatment
- an act of consecration and initiation as in baptism and the coronation

Through our baptism, we enter into a personal, indelible, consecrated relationship with God which, despite the lives we might lead, can never be dissolved. You might not recall your baptism but, through those symbolic actions of water or oil, you will have been transformed into a person of God, and God waits endlessly for us.

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass 9.15am

Weekday Mass

Wednesdays and Fridays at 9.15am

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

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Stonesfield Tennis Club

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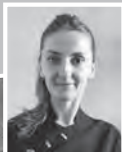
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Discover behind the scenes stories spanning 300 years into the Marlborough's relationship with the British Royal Family. Blenheim Palace will celebrate its centuries-old relationship with the Royal Family in a major new exhibition opening this spring, Royal Connections Crowns and Coronets.

The Palace's close connections to the monarchy will be showcased with an exhibition of previously unseen artefacts, crowns, coronets, robes and photo albums including dresses and costumes from the hit Netflix series Bridgerton and The Crown as well as from the award-winning ITV drama Victoria. The exhibition will also feature an ornate crown worn by Queen Anne which has undergone conservation and will be on public display for the first time.



BLenheim ESTATE

We are pleased to announce that we have now opened our new community path, with entrances in Long Hanborough and Bladon. The path can be used by anyone from walkers to cyclists, including buggy users as well. The route meanders across part of our picturesque estate so why not seize the opportunity to enjoy the local flora and fauna as you follow the river and enter the woodlands? The path leads into the Parkland and is approximately 1.5 miles long. The new community path is part of our new network of permissive pathways which have been designed to provide greater access to the wider estate.

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

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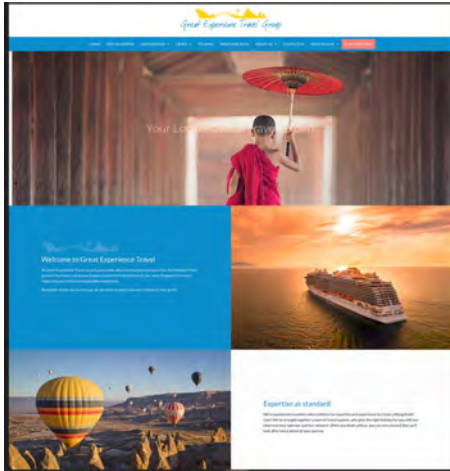
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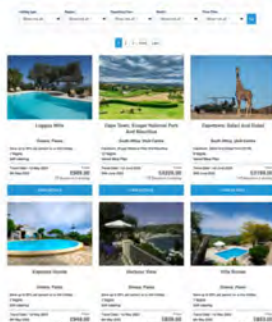
It has lots of exciting new features, and we think that the website looks great. However, it is still a 'work in progress' and has to meet your needs.

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.

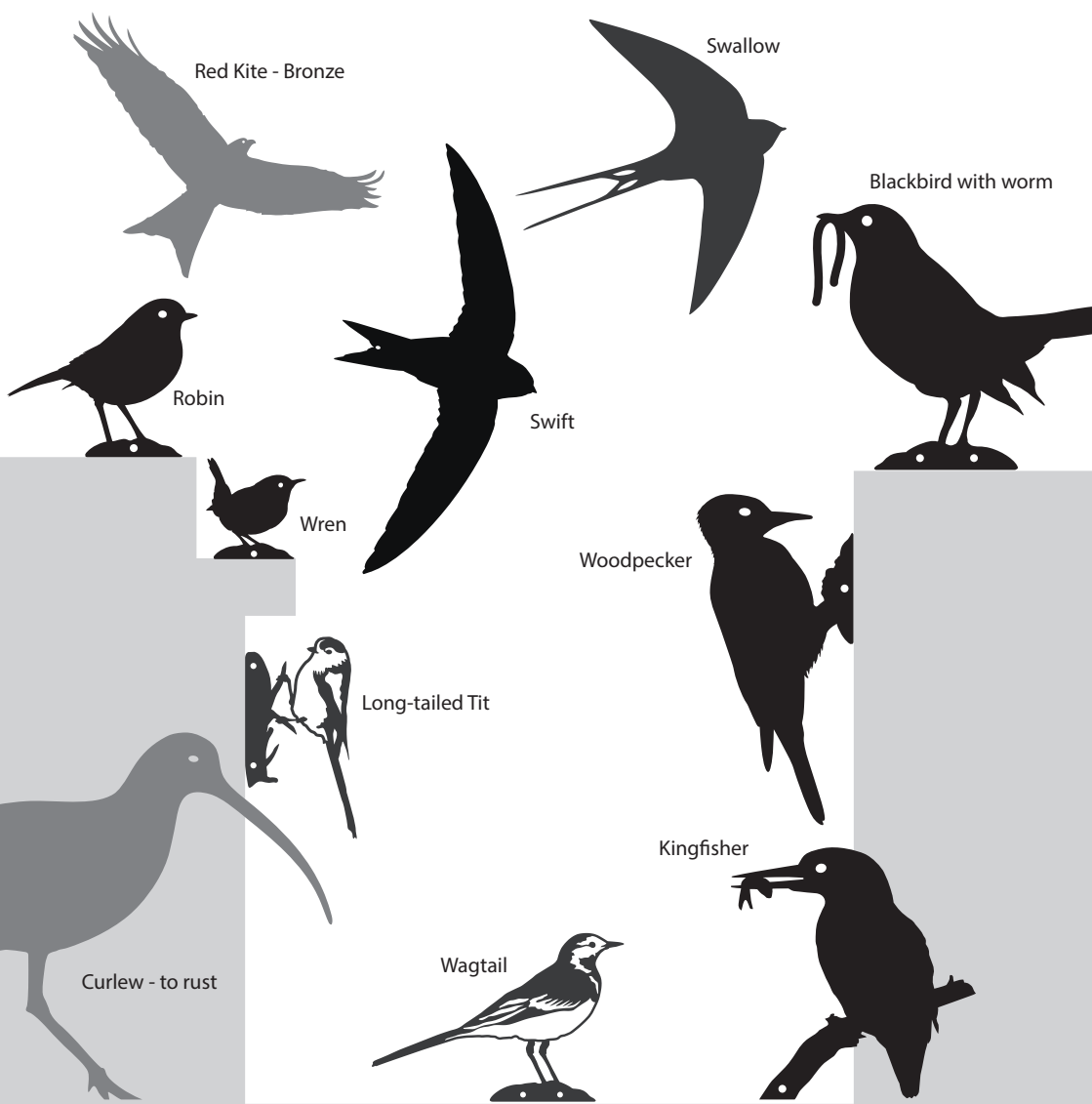


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