



The White Horse is back!



BTWH at Septemberfest

Thanks to your incredible investment, patience and steadfast support, The White Horse is now in community ownership!

The Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd committee would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported the campaign. Due to your generosity and faith over the last few years, we've been able to maintain the strong financial position that was necessary to act quickly to secure the sale.

We've also been overwhelmed by the wave of excitement and positivity that's greeted the news. There has been a wonderful response to our initial call for volunteers at the Septemberfest, and in the first three days of cleaning and maintenance over 60 hours of practical volunteer work were logged at the

pub. Your donations of time, experience, practical and professional skills will be invaluable in helping us with the many aspects of refurbishment so bear with us as we finish compiling a list of specific areas of need. We'll put callouts on email, social media and on signs in the pub at the relevant times.

As you can imagine, there's still a considerable amount of expense involved in refurbishing and fully reopening the pub, and we're already aware of a number of relevant funding and grant organisations to approach for support. Our share offer and donations page will also shortly reopen and we invite everyone to invest or contribute as they can and share in the vision for the pub.

Continued on p5

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

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

Do you want to advertise?

An advertisement in *The Stonesfield Slate* starts from as little as **£3 per month**.

Please email **slate-ads@stonesfield.online**, or call the Publishers on 01993 898841, for full details of availability, sizes, requirements and cost. We can also help with design if required.

Any new advertisements, or changes to existing advertisements, should be emailed to **slate-ads@stonesfield.online** **by 10th of the month**.

All advertisements must be **paid for in advance**.

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

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

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

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

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Dates for your diary: October

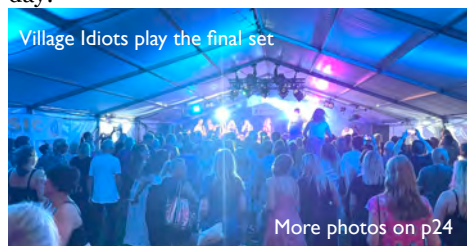
See page 5 for The White Horse pop-up pub/café dates & times

1	Harvest Festival Service	Stonesfield Parish Church	11am
2,9,16,23,30	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	8.45-11.30am
2,5,9,12,16	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
3	North Leigh History Society	Memorial Hall	7.30pm
3,17	Carers Café	Village Hall	10am-12noon
3,10,17,24,31	Seniors Café	Village Hall	3-4pm
3,10,17,24,31	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5-7pm
3,10,17,24,31	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
3,10,17,24,31	Strong Nation HIIT	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
4	Parish Council Meeting	Stonesfield Primary School	7pm
4,11,18,25	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
4,11,18,25	Hannah Bathe Fitness	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
4,11,18,25	Folkdancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
5,12,19,26	Hannah Bathe HITT Class	Village Hall	7.15-8pm
6,13,20,27	Baby & Toddlers Group	Village Hall	10am-12noon
7	Community Café – Preschool	Village Hall	10am-2pm
9	Combe WI	Combe Reading Room	7.30-9.30pm
9	Gardening Club Wine Tasting Ticketed only	St James' Centre	7.30pm
14	Ladies' Breakfast	St. James' Centre	9-10.30am
15	The White Horse is Back Meeting	Village Hall	6-8.30pm
17	TLC – Tick List Club	Village Hall	7.30-9.30pm
19,23,26,30	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
21	Shoe Box Filling	Methodist Church	2-4pm
29	Folk Dance fundraiser for Cubs	Village Hall	2-6pm
30	Village Hall AGM & Meeting	Village Hall	6.45 – 8pm
November			
1	Lunch Club Coffee Morning	St James' Centre	11-12.30pm

Notices & news

Oh, what a day!!

The people of Stonesfield, their friends, extended families and many others tempted by ads on Witney Radio and our social media feeds, gathered on the Stonesfield Playing Field for a scorcher of a day!



We had some truly amazing bands, fantastic beers and ciders courtesy of our wonderful sponsors and, miraculously, the sun kept shining to make this a wonderful community event. The Scouts provided us with tea and cake (loved the tiny campfire cupcakes), our face painter Alice was on hand, Dr Laura was on stand-by, while Libby Rak and Rhubarb Rhubarb hosted a vivacious Prosecco Party which lasted until the very final encore!



At the time of writing this, we are making the last payments and finalising the festival accounts. We will let you know the final tally and the split between the three

wonderful charities in the next edition of the *Slate*.

My personal and sincere thanks to the dedicated committee members who worked exceedingly hard over the preceding year to ensure everything went smoothly on the day, and to the volunteers who gave their time to meet you all at the entrance, sell tokens and to ensure your glasses got refilled promptly! Our thanks also to the SSSC for donating the much needed cool, crisp lager.

Septemberfest usually runs every two years and we would love to hear from anyone keen to get involved next time. Do get in touch with me or feel free to have a chat if you spy any of us at the bar (SSSC or The White Horse).

Thank you to all of you who generously supported us and/or joined us on the day – see you next time!

Lucy Wiltshire

hello@septemberfest.org.uk

On behalf of the Septemberfest 2023 team

Fantastic Beerfest!

Huge thanks to all involved with the fantastic Septemberfest 2023! Great publicity, charities, weather, ales, lagers, ciders, prosecco, decorations, food, music and, of course, people - such a good vibe everywhere! And thank you to Stonesfield Sports & Social Club for your support and year-round good vibe! Here's hoping for Septemberfest 2025!

The O'Gormans

.....
The White Horse is back!(From p1)



Steve Callaghan with The White Horse keys

We're also finalising a robust business plan that covers many of the anticipated aspects of the work required in the coming months. However, the future direction of the pub should and will be guided by the needs of the community, so we'll be asking for your opinions on key areas of operation.



Starting the pub clean (also see p26)

And the big question – when will the pub reopen? Pending the completion of repairs, refurbishment, and renovations, we're aiming to reopen the pub in Summer 2024, but in the meantime we're grateful to Claire Renshaw and a team of volunteers (see p26) who will be operating a pop-up pub/café in the building at weekends from Friday 29 September up until Christmas.

The proposed opening times of Claire's pop-up pub/café are:

Friday: 11:00 to 23:00 (evening only on 29 Sept)

Saturday: 9:00 to 23:00

Sunday: 10:00 to 15:00

We cannot wait to raise a glass with you again in the White Horse. Once again, a huge thank you for all your local, national and international help in making this long-awaited milestone possible.

I'm sure that you will have many further questions, so please don't hesitate to email us at info@backthewhitehorse.com and we'll do our best to answer as many as we can.

Steve Callaghan

Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd



Pub garden wall with (most) ivy removed

**The White Horse is Back:
public meeting**

There will be a public meeting at the Village Hall on 15 October, 6.30 - 8pm.

Join the committee to discuss the next requirements to get the pub up and running, and to ask any questions.

Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd

www.backthewhitehorse.com

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Three cheers...

On behalf of all the residents of Stonesfield *The Slate* would like to congratulate the Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd on their acquisition of The White Horse.

Our thanks to the whole committee for all their hard work and dedication over the last three years in making the dream of a community owned pub turn into a reality.

The Stonesfield Slate

Village Hall News

As the nights are drawing in, we have been very busy planning things for the Village Hall and we have some exciting things coming up!

To learn more about what we are up to why not get involved and join us:

SVH Committee Meeting and AGM

The next Committee Meeting and AGM is scheduled for Monday 30 October at 6.45pm.

We have three major projects that we would like to get underway, the refurbishment of the Village Hall kitchen, the installation of energy efficiency measures and starting a youth event on a Friday evening. We really need additional help to get these underway so if you are interested in getting involved in these (there is no need to join the committee if you would rather not!) then please get in touch so we can discuss.

Seniors Cafe and Stonesfield Social

are back with a bang! Tuesday the Café runs from 3–4pm. and the Social runs 5–7pm. These are free events as we are generously supported with grant funding from OCC and OCVA to run them.

New Support Service – Tick List Club

Do you feel stressed when it comes to looking at your budget, or even creating one to start with? Are you fed up with service providers constantly driving prices up when you are already struggling to stretch your money? Do you wonder if you could save money but don't know where to start looking? There are loads of things that we know we need to do but happily put off because it's too hard, or complicated, or time consuming but it stays there and niggles away causing stress

and sleepless nights! Let's get these things sorted out with the assistance of people who can help, every third Tuesday of the month from 7.30pm starting Tuesday 17 October!

The Flu & Covid Clinic is back on Tuesday 17 October between 2.30-4.15pm. Run as before by the Woodstock Surgery, patients will need to notify them by phone in advance if they wish to attend this clinic. This is for both Covid and Flu vaccinations so the nurses need to know the quantity to bring on the day.

The following people are eligible for an autumn Covid and Flu booster:

- All adults aged 65 years and over.
- People aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group.
- Frontline health and social care workers.
- People aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression.
- People aged 16 to 64 years who are carers, and staff working in care homes for older adults.

Please do not attend the appointment if you have any Covid symptoms. If you have any symptoms, please call the surgery and a new appointment will be arranged for you. Please make sure that you pass this information on to anyone in the community who is vulnerable, who will be able to make use of this service.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)

Bookings Clerk & Secretary for Stonesfield Village Hall

stonesfieldvh@gmail.com

A Stonesfield Scout Group Fundraiser

Ceilidh Dance

featuring
The Donkey House Band
and callers
Ted Morse and David Morgan

Sunday 29th October
4.30-7pm
Stonesfield Village Hall

Tickets
£15 per family (2 adults + their children)
£12 per person
£5 Under 25s

chilli supper, snacks and refreshments (including alcoholic drinks)
available to purchase

Kindly organised by
Stonesfield Folk Dance Group
stonesfieldfolkdance.danceorg.uk

Voluntary Transport Team

A big thank you to the Voluntary Transport team for being there when I needed you. It is so nice to know there are people there when required. I think we are all very lucky to live in such a caring community.

Very many thanks.

Jayne Clapton

Community Café

There was a great atmosphere at September's Community Café, with visitors of all ages enjoying a choice of homemade soups, bread, cheese scones and an impressive array of sweet treats. Thank you very much to all our bakers! We aim to cater for as many needs as we can, and always have available gluten free and vegan options. If you have a particular dietary requirement that would enable you to enjoy the delights that the café has to offer, do let us know, and we will do our best to help.

For the September café, we were also able to provide a table full of fresh, locally-grown produce, which was freely available to visitors to the Café and the Repair Café. It provided a wonderful opportunity to see what can be grown locally. There were very few food miles involved, and very little left behind at the end! Our grateful thanks go especially to Louise John and John Sampson, who coordinated the donations of produce on both the Churchfields and Woodstock Road allotments. Of course, this initiative would not have been possible without the generosity of the allotment holders, and Dan Betterton, who provided a fabulous box of produce from FarmEd. Thank you all.

Running the Food Group's Café at the same time as the Repair Café, makes for a busy and vibrant time at the village hall, with the two events complimenting each other perfectly – do come and join us.

Our ethos has always been for the café to operate on a 'pay as you can' basis. There are suggested prices, and a box for donations, and visitors literally 'pay what they can', and if that is just a little, or nothing at all, that is absolutely fine. That said, we have many generous people in Stonesfield, and the September café raised just over £390 in donations. Donations are used to support those in our community who are finding the cost of living, and, in particular, food insecurity, a real challenge. If there is a food-related way in which we could help you, or someone you know, do please let us know.

The next Community Café and Repair Café will be on Saturday 2 December, serving coffee/tea and cakes from 10.00am and lunch from 12.00 - 2.00pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

Susan Rudlin and Helen Atkinson and the Community Café team.

susan.rudlin@gmail.com

hatkinson216@gmail.com

Coffee Morning at Lunch Club

The Lunch Club Coffee Morning will be held in St. James Centre on Wednesday 1 November from 11am until 12-30pm. There will be coffees and teas, plenty of good company and biscuits too!

The Coffee Morning is open to everyone and a warm welcome is waiting for you!

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Ladies' Breakfast

The Autumn Ladies' Breakfast will be on Saturday 14 October at 9.00am in the St James' Centre. After time spent chatting to friends or making new ones over breakfast, there will be a short talk so that we will go away with something to think about.

All are welcome.

If you would like to know more please get in touch with Bina (891293), Kathleen (891733), Muriel (891479) or Suzy (891552).

Witney Music Society

The 2023-24 series of Witney Music Society concerts starts in October. Details of all the concerts are on the Witney Music Society website and in its new brochure, copies of which may be obtained via the website or from the library and other locations throughout Witney. The opening concert of the new season will be given by violinist Michael Foyle and pianist Maksim Štšura who will be performing works by Janáček, Brahms, Joachim and Beethoven. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 13 October at High Street Methodist Church, Witney.

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

Combe WI

We started our new season with an entertaining talk from Jennifer Cowling who explained the history and meaning of 'Those extraordinary things we say' with words such as doolally, kerfuffle and

flummoxed, similes such as fit as a fiddle and as happy as Larry, metaphors such as by the skin of your teeth, and the black sheep and a variety of idioms such as no pain no gain and costs an arm and a leg.

Chris Caddy is our speaker for our October meeting and he'll be talking about, and giving musical illustrations of, the music associated with parts of London over the last 300 years.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe, from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. 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. We have an exciting programme of speakers and events arranged for 2023/24, please call the number below if you would like a copy.

Non-members are charged £5 to attend meetings which includes refreshments and a raffle ticket. Membership from October – May is just £23.00 – so a good time to consider joining us.

Julia Sharpe (891058)
Secretary, Combe WI

North Leigh History Society

Our October talk is by Jamie Williams on Tuesday 3 October and is about recent excavations in Stanton Harcourt. On Tuesday 7 November Trevor Jackson will be giving a talk on 80 years of the RAF at Brize Norton. We meet at 7.30 pm in the Memorial Hall in North Leigh, OX29 6SA. All welcome. Members £18 per year, visitors £4 per talk. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com and 01993 880368.

North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank

Do you know about the North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank? The Foodbank has two plastic boxes in Stonesfield Church, one inside and one in the porch, and a single box just inside the village shop. Food placed in these boxes is collected on Friday mornings and driven by a rota of drivers to Kidlington Baptist Church, where it is sorted and distributed to families in financial difficulty. All long-life food placed in the boxes will be gratefully received, particularly tinned ham, tinned fish, tinned frankfurters and tinned vegetables or fruit, but also pasta, teabags and coffee. Unfortunately, the Foodbank is not equipped to handle fresh food. Food can be placed in the boxes at any time convenient to donors. When the church is closed, the box in the porch is still accessible and the box in the shop can be reached during opening hours, 7am–8pm on Monday to Friday and 8am–8pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Please give anything you can. Thank you.

Peter Hughes (891018)

Police and community support

For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

Want to protect your home? Think WIDE(N): Windows, Interior, Doors, Exterior, (Neighbours) to have the best possible protection against burglary. Research shows that a set combination of security actions provides up to 50 times more protection for your home versus no security. A combination of WIDE actions is the most effective and recommended by police throughout the country.

Additionally, at Neighbourhood Watch, we believe neighbours keeping an eye out for each other is also key to preventing burglary.

As with all types of crime, prevention is much better than cure. Taking simple measures, such as locking your windows, leaving indoor lights on a timer, double or deadlocking your doors, and having exterior lights on sensors, can significantly reduce your chances of being burgled. Burglary prevention - think WIDE(N)

Windows: Lock your windows

Interior: Put your interior lights on a timer

Doors: Double or deadlock your doors

Exterior: Put your exterior lights on a sensor

Anyone interested in joining the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme can find details and register at: www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join. Click on 'Join a scheme' and select 'Stonesfield'.

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

Outcomes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 6 September 2023 at 7pm.

Woodstock buses have now reverted to turning at the Wootton turn instead of turning in Woodstock Town Centre.

The District Council is still working on the local walking and infrastructure plan. The VTN group is working with this. The VTN has a list of routes and paths, and this will be used with the DC. This will form part of the OCC active travel plan. Cllr Heduan is working alongside this project.

The DC has launched the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, 25 October is the last date of consultation. Residents are invited to share their views on development to 2041. The link for comments is on West Oxfordshire DC website and section Your Place, Your Plan page. Individuals are encouraged to comment.

There was a wasp nest in the bus shelter which has now been dealt with.

Council needs to carefully look at the budget as the common will have some major expenses soon, including common fence repairs which are significant. This will be considered carefully at the next budget setting. The clerk is currently looking at those costs. Replacement log to sit on is being donated by Blenheim Estate for the common, this should be in situ soon.

The council considered and approved a grant for Stonesfield Players. There were

further questions and this has been deferred.

Planning:

Application No. 23/02170/HHD Dartorren Woodlands Rise, Stonesfield – Single & two storey rear extensions and single storey side extensions. The council had no comment or objection.

Date of the next full council meeting:

4 October 2023, 7pm – Stonesfield Primary School.

Stonesfield says 'Slow Down'

98% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan survey said that reducing traffic speed was important or very important.

Community Speedwatch is organised by Thames Valley Police as part of their objective to reduce speeding and accidents.

Stonesfield Community Speedwatch is looking for more volunteers.

You need to be able to give an hour or so a month, at times that suit you. You will be given full training and work as part of a group of three.

If you would like to volunteer to help your village then email

SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk

SAFER is a Stonefield Parish Council Working Group



Neighbourhood Plan

Take a walk with me down Memory Lane.

45 years ago, the elderly couple from whom we bought our first house in Stonesfield enthused about the country walks one could do here and the countryside through which they went. Our recent Neighbourhood Plan survey bears that out.

63% of respondents who had lived in Stonesfield under 5 years said they moved here because of the countryside. 81% of those here over 5 years stayed because of the countryside. Nearly all said protecting local footpaths, views and green spaces was very important to them.

Happily many footpaths around the village give easy access through these green spaces. Most respondents said they walked the footpaths regularly. No one could accuse Stonefield residents of being lazy! My 87-year-old neighbour takes her daily walk as regular as clockwork, often several miles. Walking is good for health. Beautiful countryside is good for peace of mind. We inhabit one of those relatively rare places in which the Town and Country Planning system safeguards our walking and our beautiful countryside. We hope the Neighbourhood Plan will augment this.

We are in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which limits 'major development'. That is why 4 years ago the Planning Inspector upheld WODC's refusal of planning permission for Cala Homes to build 68 houses. The NP should encourage good, affordable houses for people who need them. But also the National Planning Policy Framework was recently amended to say 'planning policies

and decisions should protect and enhance public rights-of-way and access' and make possible the 'designation of land as Local Green Space' in neighbourhood plans, to allow 'communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them'.

Survey respondents stressed the value of the green spaces which provide the backcloth for the walks so many take so regularly. We hope to designate some or all as 'Local Green Spaces' in the Neighbourhood Plan ensuring additional planning policy protection against inappropriate development.

Watch this space – or some of them!

Jim Aistle

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

West Oxfordshire District Council's consultation regarding West Oxfordshire's Local Plan 2041. It's important that you respond individually. The District Council has launched an 8-week public consultation to help shape the development of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041.

The consultation runs from 30 August – 25 October 2023 and is focused on 3 particular elements:

Draft local plan objectives – a series of draft objectives which are intended to guide the future evolution of the plan in terms of its overall approach and anticipated policy content.

The future pattern of development in West Oxfordshire – different scenarios for how and where we might look to focus future growth in the period up to 2041.

Call for sites, ideas and

opportunities – an open invitation for stakeholders to put forward their thoughts on how land in the district might be used in the future such as new housing, employment, infrastructure, community use, green space, nature recovery and renewable energy.

The feedback received will then be used to inform a series of preferred policy approaches which will be the subject of further consultation in due course.

To ensure the responses we receive are able to be easily analysed, we are encouraging all stakeholders to respond using our online digital platform: <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/>

Alternatively, written comments can also be submitted as follows:

Email:

planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk

Write to: Planning Policy Team,
Woodgreen, New Yatt Road, Witney,
OX28 1NB

Hard copies of the consultation material will shortly be made available in Stonesfield Library.

Tel: 01993 898187

News from West Oxfordshire

Check your electoral registration!

West Oxfordshire residents are being urged to check their electoral registration details as the Council starts its Annual Household Canvass to check everyone's voting details are up to date. With District Council, Parish Council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place in May 2024 and a General Election due soon, this is an opportunity for residents to make sure they can take part. If you have recently moved, you might not be on the register. The easiest way to register to vote is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Residents can find out more about registering to vote by visiting the council website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/elections. Anyone with questions about their registration status can contact the council's electoral services team at elections@westoxon.gov.uk or by calling 01993 861410.

Stop Botley West

Over the summer, the campaign has been examining what is being done well, what could be improved and what the future campaign priorities should be, to make any action effective. A new Co-Chair, Alex Rogers, has been appointed.

www.stopbotleywest.com

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, if you need them.

Please call or email to book transport in October:

Viv Kendall 01993 891803 or stonesfieldvts@gmail.com

Fly-tipping

You can report fly-tipping via www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/fly-tipping/

When reporting a fly-tip the following information will help: the exact location, the type of waste and approximately how much there is, if you have any information about who has dumped the rubbish, such as name of person, address or vehicle involved, photographs of the fly-tip are very useful, but don't take risks or trespass in order to get these, include your details in case we need further information.

If you find illegally dumped waste:

- do not disturb the site in case there is evidence that could lead to catching and prosecuting those responsible.
- do not touch the waste because it may include toxic chemicals, asbestos or broken glass.
- do not do anything that could put yourself in danger.

After you report fly-tipping:

If the rubbish is on land under our control, it will be cleared and may be investigated if evidence is found. Priority will be given to hazardous waste. Other reports of fly-tipping will be cleared as soon as possible.

If the report is on un-adopted or private land it is the landowner's responsibility to clear it. We may investigate if evidence is found.

How you can prevent fly-tipping:

If your waste is fly-tipped, by you or by someone else on your behalf, you could face a £400 fixed penalty notice. This can be increased to an unlimited fine if convicted in Crown Court. The following all counts as fly-tipping, leaving items:

- beside street bins and recycling banks.
- on the floor of communal bin areas.
- outside closed recycling centres and charity shops.

Always use a registered waste carrier to collect your rubbish. You can find a registered waste carrier in your area on the Environment Agency's website.



Fly tipping at North Leigh Common car park

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Pre-School

September has been a wonderful month for us, not only have we been able to enjoy the remains of a reasonably warm summer, we have also welcomed several new children and their families. These children have settled well and have become part of our lovely Pre School setting.

We have also been fortunate to employ and welcome 2 new members of staff. We feel so lucky because other pre-school settings are still closing and struggling to get new qualified staff.

Over the past few months leading up to the summer holiday we also found ourselves being kindly thought of by our friendly community. Thank you to all of you who have donated unwanted toys and resources. These are always welcome and help us tremendously and help you to reduce waste and help the environment.

On Saturday 7 October we will be running the popular Community Café. You will find us at the Village Hall at 10am – 2pm so please pop by.

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

The Library Manager will be in the library every Monday.

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

FoSL:

Friends of Stonesfield Library

Do you enjoy reading?

Could you spare a couple of hours a month?

Come and join the library team. A great volunteering opportunity!

For further details contact
Mike Pollitt (891856)

Summer Reading Challenge Celebration

The Summer Reading Challenge Celebration took place on a warm sunny afternoon at the St. James Centre. An enthusiastic group of children enjoyed some activities such as colouring, word searches & puzzles. Several children completed the Treasure Hunt which involved finding pictures of this year's characters in the Summer Reading Challenge.

Children were presented with their certificates and medals by Mike Pollitt, Chair of the Friends of Stonesfield Library. Refreshments, including homemade cakes, followed the medal ceremony. One of the volunteers remarked that 'they were a lovely group of children'. It was a pleasure to see such friendly, polite & cheerful children enjoying themselves.

Many thanks to Oxfordshire Library Service and FOSL members who assisted with the challenge over the Summer and to the Friends who organised the Celebration and provided the afternoon tea.

The Summer Reading Challenge Medal Winners



Some of the successful winners of the Oxfordshire Library Summer Reading Challenge. To win each child read six books during the school holidays. Congratulations to our winners!

Bryony Mallows

STONESFIELD LUNCH CLUB

Stonesfield Lunch Club meets every Weds 11 till 2 (for members) at the St James' Centre. Lunch Club provides a social occasion, friendship and support for our more mature residents along with refreshments, activities and a freshly cooked 2-course meal each week. Volunteers are always welcomed for many roles and this is a lovely way to be involved in village life. Contact me if you would like more information on becoming a member or in volunteering.

Kate Harris 01993 898781 or kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk

I'm a reader

Your library correspondent, has, as we Londoners say: 'proper done 'er back in' - as in, carted off by ambulance, to be pumped full of morphine at the JR, type 'done in'. Since I've been stuck at home, I couldn't, as usual, scour the countryside for enthusiastic library users so, instead, I am delving into my library of memories of reading through childhood illness.



Composing from sick floor, with prism glasses

Luckily this is a large library as I was a pathetic, constantly ill (both snotty and botty) sort of child, as well as accident prone. I managed to get chicken pox and whooping cough in the same year, resulting in eight weeks off school with only Crown Court, Pebble Mill and Rainbow for TV treats.

A classic 'bad back' children's story is *What Katy Did* by Susan M. Coolidge, written and set in late nineteenth century America. Katy is happy-go-lucky, always mired in

comic romps to the despair of her elders, until she ignores advice about the new swing not being fixed yet, falls off and seriously damages her back. The first few weeks of enforced bed-rest Katy spends 'thinking how wretched the rest of her life would be' and being rude to kindly family because she was 'too selfishly miserable'. Luckily, saintly invalid, Cousin Helen is visiting. This woman is so selfless, that when, years earlier, an accident left her unable to walk ever again, she told her fiancé to leave, so that he could have a family with another woman. She tells Katy that she too was once a nuisance of a bad back person, living like a 'slattern', until her father gently reminded her that 'a sick woman who isn't neat is a disagreeable object'. 'After that', says Cousin Helen, 'when the pain came on, I used to lie and keep my forehead smooth with my fingers' so that her face would not give away 'what I was enduring'.

Hmm... now I look back at it, the moral message is a trifle heavy-handed, but honestly, appalling misogyny aside, it's a great read. Luckily, its attempt to persuade young girls never to complain and keep themselves pretty, totally failed with me. On one memorable occasion when I was moaning from my sick bed, my father suggested I follow the example of Cousin Helen, the only effect of this, I'm proud to say, was to make me grumpier than ever.

Books, however, were constant friends through my sicknesses. I had a complete stack of Enid Blyton's school stories in my bedside cabinet for my frequent insomnia. They were full of sick gals being carted off. *The Peppermint Pig* had a lengthy scarlet fever storyline. Petrova in *Ballet Shoes* found her cold really annoying. *Little*

Women's Beth spent ages slowly withering away. It was a rich seam.

These days I have a book called *The Novel Cure*, 'An A-Z of Literary Memories', which suggests novels for all sorts of unpleasant conditions. Under 'bad back' it recommends, *The Mystic Masseur* by VS Naipaul (1957) which satisfyingly identifies back pain thus: 'It have the wust pain in the world. You might as well go fetch a cutlass and cut your whole self up, push it right inside your heart, the pain so bad. It making you want to lie down and die like a pig.'

This is better advice than trying to keep pretty! I won't be telling my husband to leave me to my torment to find happiness elsewhere, but I might send him to the library to pick up some more books.

Eleanor Bailey

Same Table Next Week

'I have to admit,' said one anonymous audience member, 'The prospect of watching a play in the Village Hall on one of the sunniest days of the year didn't sound particularly appealing. But how wrong I was!'



Carrin Warr and
Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson

Nicky Holland's cleverly-written and light-hearted comedy debuted on a beautiful September Sunday afternoon in the Village Hall, which was tastefully transformed by the Stonesfield Players into a bustling tea room. On one table among the audience

the gentle drama of the well-meaning Diana unfolded, her hilariously ill-fated encounters with a series of prospective friends leading her to wonder if what she sought was perhaps closer than she realised.

Every aspect of the afternoon blended perfectly, a tremendous credit to all involved in the planning and production of the show. The ambience, the tea room setting, the script and the high quality of the acting of the eight-strong cast made this a unique afternoon to remember for the audience, who were treated to a cream tea and delicious cakes (thank you bakers!) after the show – served by the cast members themselves.

Congratulations to everyone involved. 'This play should be at the Edinburgh Fringe,' was one comment overheard, and I wouldn't bet against it. Poignant, quirky, funny, and definitely my cup of tea.

Mark Saville

Into Battle: The Art of British War Comics

This exhibition will open to visitors at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, from 1 October 2023 to 30 April 2024. The county's military history museum is collaborating with Oxford-based Rebellion Publishing on the new exhibition which will offer visitors a chance to explore the history of British war comics through the archives of classic comic titles such as War Picture Library, 2000AD, Roy of the Rovers and Battle Action.

Hugely popular today, Britain has been publishing comics continuously for over 130 years. During that time, conflict has remained a staple of comic book

storytelling and by the 1960s and 1970s war stories were the most popular genre.

The exhibition, featuring original comic artwork on public display for the first time, tells the story of war comics decade by decade. From satirical comic strips and patriotic illustrated story papers of the 19th Century and early 20th Century, to the revolutionary comics of the 1970s, which presented much more gritty, authentic and emotionally-charged stories.

Long-time readers of comics will be given a nostalgic look back at some of their favourites, while younger and more recent fans will gain an insight into how their favourite medium has developed over the years. Alongside much to capture the interest and imagination of adults, the exhibition will offer younger visitors the chance to discover how comics are made and have a go at creating comics themselves.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (810211)
www.sofo.org.uk

Nature Notes: Garden Tree Giveaway!

As the weather changes to autumn the tree planting season begins, last season we managed just over 1000 trees and hedging plants in and around Stonesfield.

This year the International Tree Foundation is again giving trees away to householders in Oxfordshire. You can apply through their website that has more details and advice on trees for your garden. See the details from the website below. We have already sent out details round the village, the applications are open on a first come first served basis from 1 October with

applications closing on 22 October at midnight.

Trees can then be picked up between 30 November and 3 December. Stonesfield tree planters are fully supporting this initiative and can support you with applications, collection of trees, digging for preparation to plant your trees.

Please get in touch with us through the email address below.

www.internationaltreefoundation.org/garden-tree-giveaway

john.sampson9@btinternet.com

News from the Wychwood Forest Trust

WFT calendar photo competition - results!

It was a very difficult job to choose the 12 finalists whose photographs will feature in the WFT 2024 calendar. The standard was incredibly high and the judges were really impressed by how each photographer had interpreted the theme of 'My Wychwood'. The result is a wonderful collection of flora, fauna and landscapes - a real celebration of the unique place that we live in.

We are delighted that Martin Gascoigne-Pees (Stonesfield resident) won first prize with his beautiful image of a waxwing and will feature on the cover of the calendar. Dean Miller's picture of a whitethroat came second and Denis Kennedy's glistening inkcaps merited third place.

The calendar will be available for sale at £9.99, just in time for Christmas! If you would like a calendar, please email mavee@wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk to pre-order your copy.

Clubs, societies & sport

Scouts: Hut Update, Ceilidh and an urgent call for trustees

The scouts have had a rest over the summer break, but are ready for the new season. Top of the list is our Hut which (fingers crossed) will have work starting on it at the end of September. We expect that this will cause some detours for dog walkers, and we may ask fellow Stonesfield residents to use another path from time to time, but we hope we can keep the disruption to the minimum possible. We will be posting updates on our Facebook, Instagram and website as we go along. The work will be in 2 phases (groundworks and then shell) so expect a pause between them.

In other news, we were happy to be part of the Beer festival and provided the cakes to match the ale. Thanks to everyone who helped, and we raised a welcome £300 that will go towards the hut and running the group. We also have a Ceilidh for the village at 2pm on Sunday 29 October, and the Xmas Bingo will be returning too! Please come along.

Finally, but importantly, each Scout Group needs a trustee committee to oversee it. This is made from a Chair, a Treasurer and a Secretary. We need people to join, and we need this to happen urgently. If you are willing to be involved then please get in touch. Without these roles the group cannot run. You do not get involved in the day-to-day sessions, and all training is covered, but we desperately need someone. Please get in contact with Ben

on chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk if you know of anyone who might be able to help. It is really good fun, the commitment is very manageable alongside busy lives, and it makes the village a better place.

Stonesfield Football Club

Early autumn and football is back! Season 2023-24 kicked off at the start of September. Both our Men's teams are involved again this season, Firsts in The Premiership and Reserves in Division Three of The Witney & District. At the outset there's always high hopes of great success amongst the Stonesfield support with lofty dreams of winning championships and cups. It's all very well having high hopes but it's up to the players to deliver the positive results, but after one game both teams have made inauspicious starts to their respective league campaigns.

The Firsts travelled the short distance to Hanborough but lost (4-2) at what is always a difficult place to get a result of any kind. Disappointing, of course, but at least the Rice boys, Raffy and Carry, managed a goal apiece. The Reserves travelled further afield to Heyford Athletic and stumbled to a narrow defeat (1-0) in their first match. By all accounts both defeats were due to multiple missed chances: c'est la vie. Two games and two defeats: needless to say, the first Fredo Award of the campaign remains under lock and key and it's clear that our lads need to do better as the season unfolds.

For the reader who is maybe unaware, or new to the village, there's almost always a match at the playing field on Saturday afternoons KO at 2.00 (league) or 1.30 (cups) and our teams really appreciate it when people make the herculean effort to come up and support them. There's always a warm welcome and, of course, the Social Club will be open for a friendly drink. Alternatively, but not as much fun, you can always follow the trials and travails of our teams (monthly) via this column in *The Slate*. Worth noting that what appears in *The Slate* can sometimes be a total work of fiction but at least the score lines will be (roughly) accurate!

Finally, the men's teams are always looking for new players. They train every Wednesday evening on the playing field at 6.00 then at Gosford (Kidlington), 6-7pm after October 18. Players old and new are always welcome.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

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Stonesfield Environment Group

Our efforts to join up with other local groups with similar interests are paying off. We had a recent meeting with the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP), Wild Oxfordshire and Earthwatch and a plan is coming together for us to connect with groups up and down the Evenlode. This will allow us to come up with the most effective campaign strategy for the river, supported by organisations working in this field. We were also fortunate in securing some funding to be able to test the river water for E. Coli. This is the disease-causing pathogen that can be found in the river but up until this point we have no idea of the levels in the river, what are

"normal/acceptable" levels and what is the state of play in the Evenlode. We will report back.

We continue to test the river regularly for pollutants that harm marine life and we are just being trained in how to identify different riverfly species so we can get more insight into the health of the river.

As ever, there is much to do and if you are keen in taking part in any of these activities, let us know....

juliecurran0@gmail.com

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Stonesfield Food Group

Seniors' Café

We were so pleased to see our Seniors' Café members on 12 September, after the summer break. The format remains the same – delicious cakes, refreshing hot drinks, and most of all, great chat! We are here every Tuesday during term time from 3–4pm at the Village Hall and are always ready to welcome new members. There's no need to get in touch, just come along – but if you do have any questions, contact Julie Curran.

Stonesfield Social

Stonesfield Social returned on 12 September, with healthy, home cooked food, fun activities and a chance to socialise with old friends and new. We welcome all age groups on Tuesdays, 5–7pm at the Village Hall during term time.

We continue to benefit from top quality surplus food supplied by our friends, the Oxford Food Hub. We're hoping to bring you a more detailed explanation of how we prevent food waste in future. We're so grateful to the volunteers who cook, serve, wash up, clear tables, inspire crafts, rock

babies, and generally make sure everyone is having a great time. If you'd like to join our enthusiastic team, (this includes the Seniors' Café) please get in touch for a no-commitments chat!

Neighbours helping Neighbours

The money raised at the café is used to support Stonesfield residents who are struggling to afford nourishing food. If you, or someone you know, could benefit, email JulieCurran0@gmail.com; or for information about emergency food parcels contact Kate Harris, on 01993 898781; at 6 Brook Lane, or via email at kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk

If you are able to, you can support the food parcel initiative by donating tinned meat pies, hotdogs, meatballs, chicken, or ham. They can be left in the brown box on the doorstep of 6 Brook Lane.

Food Group Special General Meeting

The Food Group held a Special General meeting on 29 August. It is now a registered Community Action Group, and we will hold regular, in person meetings.

Please get in touch if you would like to join this friendly group. We are interested in all aspects of food and are hoping to organise some more visits to producers, as well as the activities above.

JulieCurran0@gmail.com

Stonesfield Players

We warmly invite you to join the Stonesfield Players on 17 and 18 November, to come and watch our exciting new production. The evening will consist of two, one-act plays, written, directed and produced by local talent, exploring the

power of human memory through connection, loss, love and laughter.

Part One: The Private Collection –

Written by Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson and David Lines and directed by Rebecca Sherlaw-Johnson.

Many of us have private collections of memories that we have never told anyone and prefer to leave safely locked away. Constance Amati – opera singer, diva, spy – has more than her fair share. But now, as she begins to reflect on her life, it is her younger self that insists on opening doors and confronting the memories she has kept suppressed all her life. From top-secret intelligence to the one who got away, Constance must come face-to-face with her past, whether she likes it or not.

Part Two: Can You Hear Me Mother

– Written and directed by Nicky Holland

It's spring 2020 and Covid restrictions keep Rita confined in the small flat she's recently moved to. How can she keep in touch with friends and family? And why is everyone comparing the pandemic to WWII? Rita's wartime childhood was nothing like this - but memories and current events combine in a potent mix.

Tickets will be on sale throughout October and November from the shop, and we urge you not to miss out on this fantastic evening! Please also follow our Instagram and Facebook pages, for all updates on this, and future productions.

Website coming soon!

Instagram and Facebook: @stonesfieldplayers

Stonesfield Gardening Club

Local garden designer Lorraine Brodrick came to talk to us in September, when she urged us to think carefully about how to adapt our gardens to the changing climate. This would include using suitable plants that cope well with the hotter summers that we have, as well as not minding wetter winters. Silver foliage plants have hairy leaves to deflect sun, and rudbeckias and helenium are happy in the heat. Mediterranean plants like salvia, euphorbia, phlomis and the hardy herbs like rosemary, sage and thyme will all cope well. We can also adapt the old ways of doing things, like, for example, leaving dahlias in the ground rather than lifting and storing them for winter.

Lorraine also covered ways we can adapt our gardens when we find we can no longer do as much as we used to! She suggests thinking about paving – size and levels, making sure it is not a trip hazard. Raised beds are a good thing to consider, especially with in-built seating at the side.

Lorraine suggested we should not ignore the possibilities of vertical gardening, green walls, especially with watering systems incorporated to make them more manageable. And in the beds, remember that shrubs and perennials need less looking after than annuals.

Then there are helpful gadgets now on the market, such as lightweight retractable hoses and long-reach tools. All in all, a lot to think about for us all.

Following the fantastic news about the purchase of the White Horse by the community, Gardening Club members have also been busy helping to get the garden ready for its 'pop-up' opening.



Gardening Club work party at The White Horse...

Several hours of labour have resulted in a mown lawn, a wall that can now be seen over and a rogue buddleia and several rickety bench sets consigned to the bonfire.



the bonfire disposes of the cuttings...

More to follow no doubt!



... and already the garden looks better

October's club meeting will be a talk about Wine Growing in a Changing Climate, with a wine tasting. This event is now fully booked – if you are interested I will be compiling a waiting list in case of drop-outs!

Diane Bates

Secretary, Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info



The White Horse is back...



1980



2015



2020



2023

but needs your help.

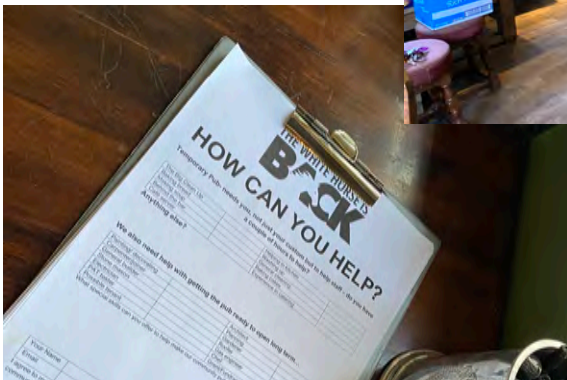


The pop-up pub needs you, not just your custom but to help staff and with the BIG cleanup.

Do you have a couple of hours? If so, contact:

rennie@backthewhitehorse.com

Trades: we also need plumbers, builders etc



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 - The Gardener

This year I intended to visit some of the beautiful gardens around Oxfordshire. For reasons I cannot understand, I did not manage to do this very much, and as we are now in October I will move the intention to next year's diary. It will be a pleasure to look forward to in 2024. But I did visit one spectacular garden, at the home of a dear friend in Sussex. Its owner trained at Wisley and went on to run his own plant nursery. Now that he is retired, he gardens for himself and for others, and mends old vehicles too. His garden is modest in size, but it was even more stunning than I had ever seen it, bathed in beautiful light on a late summer's day. It was far more beautiful than any show garden, with established plants, vegetables and flowers in profusion. Banana palms swathed rustic sheds and greenhouses,

which nestled in a sea of verdant splendour. A round centrepiece flower bed was home to an enormous pumpkin plant, which added dramatic shape and colour to the bejewelled beds around it. I praised the owner of the garden for its beauty, and he thanked me, and smiled. Then he said, "It's been a lot of work, but it's worth it".

The image of God as gardener is a powerful one in the Bible. God is described as the maker of all things, including plants and trees and the whole ecological system which supports them, and He is the one who planted the first garden, in Eden, for the first people to enjoy. God is described as planting, pruning, digging and harvesting, and these images are used about his people, to show how he loves and nurtures each one of us. I often do not know what my plants need, and do not recognise it until it is too late. But God knows what we need, and like a skilled gardener is always ready to tend us if we will allow him. The prophet Jeremiah, writing to Jewish exiles in Babylon, promised that one day 'their life shall be like a watered garden'.

At this time of the year we celebrate the blessing of harvest and the productivity of nature. The Bible uses the image of harvest to urge us to bear good fruit in our community, our work, our families and our relationships, a harvest of righteousness. But we all know that gardens are not cultivated for their produce alone, but also for their beauty, for their peacefulness and harmony. God cares not only about what

we do, but also about who we are, and wishes us to be as beautiful as a well-tended garden.

I find it reassuring that when Jesus is laid to rest in the tomb, it is in a garden. In fact, after his resurrection, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus there and assumes he is the gardener. From ancient times, gardens have been cultivated as places of regeneration, of new birth, of healing and of beauty. As we celebrate the harvest and pray for those whose skill and industry meets our daily needs, we also give thanks for the care of God for each one of us, the light of his love which makes us grow, and the beauty which he creates in us.

Revd Ralph Williamson

Rector

Services

Sunday 1 October [Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity]

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

Sunday 8 October [Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity]

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

Sunday 15 October [Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity]

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

Sunday 22 October [Twentieth Sunday after Trinity]

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

Sunday 29th October [Last Sunday after Trinity]

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

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (4th, 18th)

A record of recent weddings and funerals:

Funerals

24 August: Elizabeth McLean

4 September: June Millard

Our prayers are for family and friends at this time.

Roman Catholic Worship

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass at 9.15am

Wednesdays and Fridays at 9.15am

For parish updates, any further information and further support, please see <https://stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/> Or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, parish priest: fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

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Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for September

Sun 1	11am	Richard Bowler
Sun 8	11am	Local Arrangement
Sun 15	11am	Stella Bristow
Sun 22	11am	The Reverend Jason Cooke Holy Communion Service
Sun 29	11am	Jenny Bywaters

Shoe box time!

What a joy to find friendship in unusual places.

One day in August I walked the path to the Snowdon summit (Yr Wyddfa). With plenty of rest stops and water refreshers, I met folk of every age and nationality, some even carrying a beloved pet. We shared our pleasures and difficulties on the tough and often slow jaunt. The care and thoughtfulness shown between fellow walkers was heart warming and made for a very memorable day.

Care of another kind is needed here on Saturday 21 October from 2pm until 4pm.

Shoe Boxes covered in wrapping paper wait to be filled with all sorts of goodies for girls and for boys. All the filled boxes will join hundreds of others at High St. Methodist Church, when later in November they will travel to countries where children need them and where they will be loved and enjoyed.

So come along on the 21 October, and bring whatever you can to help fill a shoebox, teas and coffees will be served to refresh you and there will be leaflets from the T4U Charity with full information.

Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can.

John Wesley.

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Design your own Mous-terpiece and see it brought to life by BAFTA award-winning prop maker

Blenheim Palace is calling out to budding young artists and designers to win a fantastic competition which will guarantee a Christmas to remember for all the family.

The diminutive, costumed characters have been a “mice” feature in Blenheim Palace’s indoor Christmas trails for many years – and this year is no exception as they will appear as part of the reimagining of Sleeping Beauty. To celebrate, the Palace is giving children aged ten and under the chance to design a Sleeping Beauty-inspired costume, which will be worn by one of the mice in the beautifully-themed State Rooms. The mouse could be wearing a hat, glasses, ballgown, suit of armour or even a onesie! Children can use felt tips, pencils, crayons, paint, or any other medium they choose.

A winner will be selected in early October and their fabulous costume will be handmade by award-winning TV and film prop maker Clare Elliott, who has made models for family favourites such as Postman Pat and Wind in the Willows.

The carefully costumed mous-terpiece will be displayed for thousands of visitors to enjoy during the six-week season inside the Palace, after which the winning child will be sent their mouse model to treasure forever

The fantastic prize does not end there – with the winner receiving six tickets for their family and friends to the exclusive preview evening of Christmas at Blenheim Palace, on Thursday, November 16. The preview will include a walk around the mesmerising outdoor illuminated trail, which meanders around the glorious grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The mous-tonishing prize also includes a festive Afternoon Tea for six at The Orangery and a special goody bag filled with treats from Hotel Chocolat. Finally, the winner will receive a short break for up to six people at Blenheim Palace Lodge Retreat, brought to you by Darwin Escapes, to be taken any time between Monday 13th November and Thursday 21st December 2023 (subject to availability).

It’s not a case of winner takes all either – there are four runners-up prizes for a family ticket to the exclusive preview on November 16 in each age group – 4 and under, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10.

HOW TO ENTER:

1. Download the mouse template sheet from our competition website page and print it off – you can choose to print either the colour version or the black and white version. <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/christmas/christmas-competition/>
2. Your child (between the ages of 2 – 10) can draw a costume on to the mouse using their own choice of artistic medium, whether this be felt tips, pencils, crayons or paint
3. Take a photo of / scan in the finished sheet and save as a digital file
4. Complete the entry form on our competition website page with the digital file entry sheet included. (This part must be done by an adult aged 18 or over).

COMPETITION DETAILS:

Launch Friday 15th September

Closing date for entries Monday 2nd October

Calling all young artists, budding designers and costume creators...it’s your chance to win a very special Blenheim Palace Christmas prize for you and your family...

We would like you to imagine and design an amazing costume for one of the tiny mice who appear in the themed State rooms at the Palace this Christmas. This year, the theme is Sleeping Beauty, so we would like your mouse’s costume to be inspired by the Sleeping Beauty story. Use felt tips, pencils, crayons, paint or whatever other artistic medium you choose!

WINNER’S PRIZE:

The winner’s mouse and their fabulous costume will then be handmade into a perfectly crafted model by award-winning TV and film prop maker Clare Elliot (who has made models for Postman Pat, Wind in the Willows, Mars Attacks! and more) and go on display in the Palace for the festive season along with all of the other exquisite Sleeping Beauty themed decorations. In the New Year, the winner will then be sent their mouse model to treasure and keep forever.

And that’s not all – the winner will also receive six tickets for their family and friends to the Exclusive Preview of Christmas at Blenheim Palace on Thursday 16th November, with entry to Sleeping Beauty inside the Palace from 4pm where they can spot their ‘mousterpiece’ proudly on display! They will also receive six tickets for the Illuminated Trail within the Blenheim Palace grounds, running from 6pm on Thursday 16th November, as well as a Christmas themed afternoon tea for six at The Orangery and a special goody bag filled with treats from Hotel Chocolat to be picked up on the day. Last but certainly not least they will receive a short break for up to 4 people at Blenheim Palace Lodge Retreat, brought to you by Darwin Escapes (A short break for 6 people in a 3 bed lodge, to be taken any time between Monday 13th November – Thursday 21st December 2023, subject to availability).

Issued by Destination Marketing on behalf of Sony Music and Blenheim Palace.

Contact matt.dixon@wearedestination.com or call 07884 938305 for more information.

best-one 

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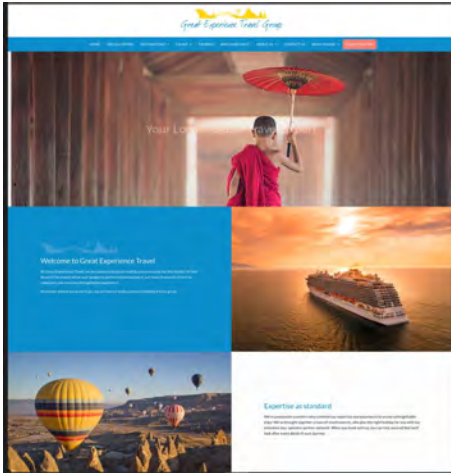
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