



Issue No 548 July 2024



## Aspiring architects

I teach the building structures classes at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) College of Architecture, including statics, steel design and concrete and masonry design. I became interested in the pub when I read about it in the New York Times back in 2020. I bought a few shares and have been following the story ever since. At about the same time that the community was able to acquire the pub, IIT requested proposals for study abroad class for the summer of 2024.

I began to consider a study trip to the UK including a stop at the pub, but I didn't have a clear idea of what we would be doing. After meeting with a few of the committee members including Susan Rudlin, Pete Smyth and Mark Saville (who was our main point of contact) I began to understand the problems of the current building including running a pub within the building. Using this information, I was able to better define the purpose of the

trip so that I could complete and submit my proposal to IIT.

The students visiting The White Horse pub in May 2024 were fourth- and fifth-year architecture students at IIT. The basis of the class is to give the students experience working with a building owner or client on an architectural problem. Questions such as: What does the client need? What are the limitations of the building? What are similar pubs doing? All needed to be answered before we could start formulating ideas for the White Horse. The White Horse pub is not our client, and we are not the architect for the pub but we are approaching the problem in that way. Many of the students have never worked in an architectural office so this is a new experience for them. To further complicate matters, as Americans, we don't know much about pubs.

Continued on p3

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## Aspiring architects (from p1)

The students initially documented the building by measuring and drawing the floor plans, elevations, and sections through the building. The students also had the chance to talk with a few members of the pub committee including Claire and Mike to understand the physical limitations of the building and the ideas that the committee has for improving the building. We were inspired by the inclusive community emphasis for the pub and we were invited to attend one of the community dinners at the village hall. We realized that the pub will become a community house, a community dining hall, a performance space, a study space and a café as well as the traditional use as a pub.



To answer the question, 'What is a pub?' the students and I had to embark on an academic pub crawl. The students visited a few other pubs in the area (The White Horse in Bladon for example) and pubs in and around London (The Swan in Clewer and The Prince's Head in Richmond for example) to gain a better understanding of the use and programming within a pub. The students measured and drew these pubs and looked at building area, kitchen sizes, seating counts among others and

reviewed each pub's target clientele and weekly schedules such as theme nights.

We quickly discovered that quiz night and Aunt Sally may mean a lot to The White Horse, but not so much to the Prince's Head. Also, The Orangery at Blenheim is radically different than the Woodstock Social Club both architecturally and programmatically. The takeaway being that there is no ideal or typical pub. They all must respond to their location and clientele in order to thrive.



Using the drawings made of The White Horse, the ideas from the committee, and the case studies of the other pubs the students are currently looking at options for improving the building. These will range from minimal changes to major changes such as saving only a few walls. As part of their research, the students discovered the interesting dynamic in the UK between historic preservation and accessibility. They will address these two issues differently in the final options. The final report for the class will present the options in a schematic manner. We may return to the project in more detail in a future class or design studio.

Steve Kibler

Illinois Institute of Technology

kibler@iit.edu

## Dates for your diary: July

1-21	Our Megalosaurus – Children’s art	The White Horse	pub hours
1,8,15,22	Monday Coffee	St. James’ Centre	8.45-11.30am
1,4,8,11,15	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
2,9,16,23	Seniors Café	Village Hall	3-4pm
2,9,16,23	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5pm-7pm
2,9,16,23,30	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
2,9,16,23,30	Strong Nation HIIT	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
3,10,17,24,31	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
3,10,17,24,31	Hannah Bathe HIIT Class	Village Hall	7.15-8pm
3,10,17,24,31	Folk dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
4,11,18,25	Hannah Bathe HIIT Class	Village Hall	7.15-8pm
4	General Election	Village Hall	7am-10pm
4,11	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2.00pm
5,12,19,26	Baby & Toddlers Group	Village Hall	10-12 noon
5,6	Woodstock Music Society	St Mary Church	7.30pm
5,12,19,26	Pizza van	SSSC	5.30-8.30pm
6	Stonesfield Summer Fete	Primary School	12-4pm
6	Safari Supper	Stonesfield Players	7pm
7	Stonesfield Players Audition	St. James’ Centre	2pm
8	Gardening Club	St James’ Centre	7.30pm
8	Combe WI Summer garden party	Reading Room, Combe	
13	Charity Bike Day	Stonesfield Playing Field	2-11pm
13	Housing Proposal Exhibition	Village Hall	10am -4pm

### 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 July:**

**Viv Kendall 01993 891803 or [stonesfieldvts@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldvts@gmail.com)**

## Dates for your diary: July (cont)

13	Scouts' Duck Race	River	5pm
14	Gardens Open Day	Bridewell	11am-4pm
18,22,25,29	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
20	St James' Festival	St. James' Centre	3-5pm
21	St James' Festival Service	St James' Church	11am
21	Combe Mill In Steam	Combe Mill	10.30am-5pm
24-31	Pictures @ The Pub	The White Horse	pub hours
27	A Comedy of Errors	Wootton	from 3pm
29	Monday Coffee	St. James' Centre	10-12 noon
30	OUMNH talk: Megalosaurus *	The White Horse	7-8.30pm
31	Combe WI trip to Kelmscott Manor	transport leaves Combe	12.30pm

\* booking req'd

## August

14 (Prov)	Parish Council meeting	Stonesfield School	7pm
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WOOTTON VILLAGE HALL PRESENTS

# A Comedy of Errors

OUTDOOR THEATRE  
FROM  
THREE INCH FOOLS

Sat 27 July

IN COLLABORATION WITH

THE BRIDGE BAR & ST MARY'S CHURCH

MEMORIAL FIELDS,  
CASTLE RD, WOOTTON OX20 1EG

[www.woottonbywoodstock.co.uk/summer](http://www.woottonbywoodstock.co.uk/summer)

Tea Room from 3:00pm  
Curtains 5:00pm  
Bar & BBQ from 7:00pm

# Notices & news

## Join us for the Summer Fete!

Friends of Stonesfield School are busy planning the Summer Fete which will be held 12-4pm on Saturday 6 July, to raise funds for Stonesfield Primary School. There will be entertainment, a bouncy castle, food and drink, and stalls and games for the whole family to enjoy. We will be joined by Chrissie's Owls, Stonesfield Scouts, St James' Church, craft and gift stalls and many more.

It's the biggest fundraiser for our wonderful Primary School and we have some fantastic raffle prizes including a Family Ticket to Camp Bestival, Blenheim Palace annual pass, theatre tickets and much more.

Raffle Tickets are on sale at the Village Shop, The White Horse & at the Stonesfield Social (Tuesdays in the village hall).

We look forward to welcoming you, your family and friends.

The FoSS Team

## Charity Bike Day – Saturday 13 July

We would like to remind you: it's at Stonesfield Playing Field from 2-11pm. Please join us and bring your bikes and families. This is a free event but we will be making a collection in aid of the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research and several local charities.

Bands will be playing throughout the event so bring along your dancing shoes. Food will be available and the Social Club will be open for drinks.

We are hoping this year that the weather will be kinder so we can all enjoy a great day.

The Organisers: Andy, Roger, Fred and George

## Stonesfield Players Auditions 7 July

Come and audition for our November production: an Indiana Jones panto-style spoof with songs now called *To the Back of Beyond*, by Becki Sherlaw-Johnson. There are big and small parts and chorus opportunities. The auditions will be held at the St James Centre at 2pm. There's no need to prepare anything in advance, and new members are welcome. The performance dates are 22 & 23 November. If you can't make this date and want to audition, please contact Becki at [rebeccasj@btinternet.com](mailto:rebeccasj@btinternet.com) or on 07771 707818 to arrange another time.

Becki Sherlaw-Johnson



**ST JAMES' FESTIVAL WEEKEND**  
**20-21 JULY**

**Summer afternoon tea and cake**  
Saturday 20 July, any time between 3pm and 5pm  
St James' Centre and its lovely garden  
Everyone welcome – free of charge

**Festival service**  
Sunday 21 July 11am, Parish Church  
Do join us!



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## Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

We held an open meeting in the Village Hall on 24 June to update you all on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. Although the Slate deadline for the July issue means that we can't tell you how many people came, or what questions were asked, we can tell you that we gave a PowerPoint presentation bringing you up to date with all the work we have done so far and what we are doing next.

We shared examples of the policies we have drafted (based on data compiled from your responses to last year's survey). We also showed you excerpts from our Landscape Assessment and our Housing Needs Assessment. These two documents are now in the library and on the village website at [www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan](http://www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan), where you can also find a copy of our PowerPoint presentation.

Finally, we indicated our likely time frame for completing the draft (early 2025) and the procedure for the subsequent submission to the Parish Council, the village consultation, submission to WODC, then examination by the Inspector. A more detailed explanation of this process will appear in a later Slate.

If you have any questions, please get in touch at the email address below.

Caroline Friend  
[info@stonesfieldplan.com](mailto:info@stonesfieldplan.com)

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## Village Hall News

Summer is really starting to make an appearance now, and with it is the start of a lot of outdoor events, and more fun in the sun. The Village Hall does tend to get a bit quieter during the summer holidays with so many people away and all the children being off school. That means a few of the clubs do take a break until September, so please do bear that in mind when you are thinking of a venue to host your events.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported our regular clubs, including the Seniors Café, the Stonesfield Social, and the Community Cafés. It's always a big risk putting on free events for people as they are only sustainable to do if we have good attendance, so a thank you to our lovely community for making these things possible.

Again, we would like to apologise to anyone who has tried to reach us by phone as we have had an issue with the booking line number not forwarding the calls, but BT are **still** working to resolve this as soon as possible.

Jacqueline Carthew (898919)  
Secretary & Booking Clerk  
[stonesfieldvh@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldvh@gmail.com)



The White Horse  
Open for meals and drinks

The White Horse is a community owned pub.

[www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com](http://www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com)

The White Horse, The Ridings, Stonesfield, OX29 8EA

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## White Horse AGM



Thank you to everyone who attended our AGM on Monday 20 May. What a difference in mood from last year's meeting, when we were somberly but resolutely digging in further in our fight to save the pub! This year, as in 2023, over 100 people filled the hall to hear the latest news, but this time the updates were about tenants, finances and potential opening dates following the community's acquisition of the pub last September.

To summarise, the Chairman reported the tenancy agreement was in the final stages of negotiation. The financial report covered the period before the purchase of the pub but, as the Treasurer reported, subsequent costs relating to the purchase, repairs, refurbishment, process and compliance have been covered (just!) by the funds raised through grants, shares and the pop-up pub. The Chairman also acknowledged the immense voluntary efforts from across the community that have been equally vital in bringing the reopening of the pub within touching distance.

The existing committee was re-elected with the exception of Julie Curran, who was standing down. Julie was thanked for her tremendous work over the years. A new committee member, Mike Moore, was proposed and seconded.

A Q&A session covered many queries from the community, including future building

improvements, increased disabled access, governance of the tenants, future funding, grant applications, a reopening of the share offer, and communications.

The committee would like thank the community again for their support, and we wish Craig and Barbara every success in the reopening of the White Horse.

Steve Callaghan

Chair, Stonesfield Community Pub Ltd.

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## Another publicity coup for the White Horse!

*'Local pub saved by community campaign reopens'* – was the headline on BBC Local News for Oxford, 15 June. See the feature here: [www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckmm27lrx26o](http://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckmm27lrx26o).

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## Pictures @ The Pub

Our Artweeks exhibition was a great success and attracted many visitors from outside the village. Thank you to everyone who supported our artists by coming to view their work.

We hope that, by the time you receive this issue, you may have taken in the children's exhibition, *'Our Megalosaurus'*, which runs until Sunday 21 July. In addition to the children's artwork, we have a display of information and images provided by the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Oxfordshire Geology Trust. The Museum has also loaned us a cast of a footprint of a (juvenile!) Megalosaurus which will be available to view, along with some local fossil finds and other items of interest, on Saturday mornings, 6, 13 and 20 July, 11.30am-1pm. Grateful thanks to the many people who have helped in some way with this exhibition.



Additionally, Dr Emma Nicholls, Manager of the Earth Collections at the Museum and a vertebrate palaeontologist, has offered to give a talk (aimed at an adult audience) on the evening of Tuesday 30 July at 7pm. This event is free of charge but space is limited; if you wish to attend, please book a place via Eventbrite at [www.eventbrite.com/e/our-megalosaurus-tickets-924486643437](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/our-megalosaurus-tickets-924486643437). We are also expecting a member of the Oxfordshire Geology Trust to give us a 'walk and talk', suitable for all age groups, on the geology and fossils of Stonesfield later in the summer.

When our Jurassic period comes to an end, we will be showing textile art by Margaret Wilmore and Ann Lowe, Chair of Oxford Textile Artists, together with Stonesfield-inspired landscape paintings by Chris Davies, finalist in the BBC's Big Painting Challenge in 2018. This exhibition will run from Wednesday 24 July to the end of August and we hope to see you there.

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub  
([triywnwil003@gmail.com](mailto:triywnwil003@gmail.com))

Claire Renshaw for the White Horse Committee

## Churchfields Allotment Social

Sunday 26 May looked to be a gorgeous and dry day after all.... or so I thought until a short while before our allotment social was due to begin.

The boys had left the house in dry T-shirts to set up benches on Jon and Lucy's plot and came back soaked and possibly bruised due to the brief hailstorm. Did I still have petit pois in the freezer just in case? Rats! We're going to have to cancel.



'Move the party to mine!' Thank you to Kate for saving the afternoon and allowing everyone into her lovely home and for the open gardens preview! The sun did shine and continued to do so for pretty much the remaining afternoon.

And that's some of the joy in growing - expect the unexpected, embrace the change and appreciate all who help us along the way.

Deanna Asplundh  
Churchfields Allotments



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## **A plea from Stonesfield Playing Field Committee**

What can be better than sipping a cold beer on a sunny day while watching a cricket match on the playing field?

However, to deliver cricket to the village requires a lot of voluntary input during the spring and summer to maintain both the square and the outfield to a playable standard. When the grass grows prolifically that means three cuts of the outfield a week, including an important cut on the Friday before a Saturday match. As this work is done entirely voluntarily it has to be when volunteers are available which, for most people with full time jobs, means evenings and weekends.

To enable cutting to take place safely requires the full cooperation of the users of the field in staying well clear of the mowers. Without this co-operation we cannot continue mowing, which sadly has been the case on several Friday evenings recently.

If the field is not cut it obviously makes for a worse facility for cricket, but also will quickly mean the grass outgrows the capacity of our cutting equipment to deal with it: requiring us to source equipment externally.

So please help us to maintain the excellent sports facilities the village enjoys, by cooperating with all our volunteers to ensure they are able to go about their work safely.

Stonesfield Playing Field Committee

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## **Another plea...**

It has been brought to our attention that children are still playing ball games and kicking balls at the fences in the Children's play area.

This is a polite reminder that No Ball Games Are Permitted In The Children's Play Area. This Area Is For Under Twelves.

Thank you

Stonesfield Playing Field Committee

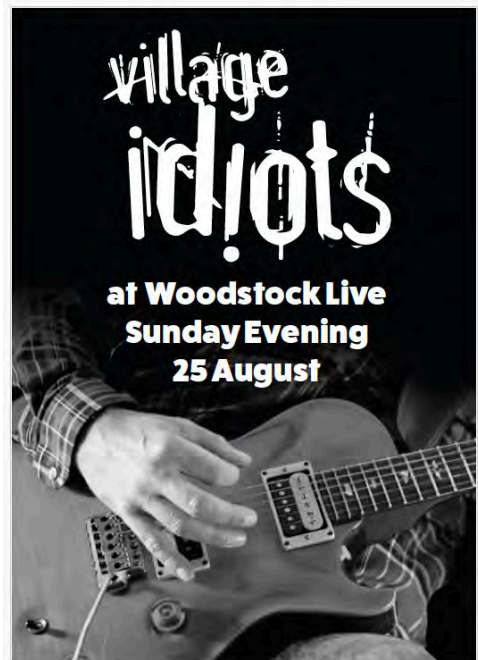


### **The White Horse Open for meals and drinks**

The White Horse is a community owned pub.

[www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com](http://www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com)

The White Horse, The Ridings, Stonesfield, OX29 8EA



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## **Housing Proposal Exhibition**

On Saturday 13 July, 10am till 4pm, we will be holding an exhibition in Stonesfield Village Hall to show our exciting plans for the upcoming proposal of new homes.

We want to work with you, so please do come along to share some refreshments, and your ideas on how we can best create the housing we need, whilst considering the local area, and surrounding amenities.

Graham Soame, local Planning Consultant on behalf of the landowners

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## **Bridewell Gardens – Open Day 14 July**

Bridewell's walled garden and organic vineyard will be open on 14 July, 11am-4pm. Learn about Bridewell's work, gardening and working with nature to support people who have experienced serious mental health issues.

There will be a pop-up café in the garden for tea and cake. High quality plants will be on sale along with home-produced jams and chutneys, and our acclaimed organic sparkling wine. 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 there is a suggested donation of £5.

Bridewell Gardens

Wilcote OX7 3DT

[www.bridewellgardens.org](http://www.bridewellgardens.org)

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## **Combe Mill 'In Steam' Environmental Day – 21 July**

Combe Mill is a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Grade II-listed water mill on the River Evenlode which, in its day, was the workshop for the Blenheim Palace estate.

Combe Mill steaming events are well under way. We are now looking forward to our next event on 21 July which is themed 'In Steam – Wildlife by the Evenlode'. We have invited exhibitors centred around local wildlife: come along and see as there will be lots of interest.

All machinery will be running 'In Steam' and volunteers will be on hand with lots of interesting information. Come along and see the blacksmiths in the forge – you might be able to make a poker!

The tea room will be open if you would like to call in for refreshments. There will also be a BBQ, gift shop, tombola and raffle. Dogs on leads are most welcome.

Adults £9.00, Seniors £7.50, accompanied children FREE; open 10.30am to 5.00pm.

Combe Mill is also open every Wednesday for self-guided tours with volunteers around. Adults £5.00 Seniors £4.00, accompanied children free and the tea room is open.

Ever thought of volunteering at Combe Mill? Come to a steaming event where you will see where you have an interest, and can join the team.

Margaret Gruber

Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe,

OX29 8ET

[www.combemill.org](http://www.combemill.org)

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## **Woodstock Music Society Summer Concert – 5 and 6 July**

The Society's summer concert will be on Friday 5 and Saturday 6 July at 7.30pm, at St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock.

The programme includes

Choral works by J.S. Bach, Kuhnau, Zelenka and Cecilia McDowall.

J.S. Bach Concerto for oboe and violin (Alison Street oboe, Isabel Knowland violin) and Warlock Capriol Suite.

Woodstock Music Society Choir and Chamber Orchestra, Conductor Paul Ingram.

Tickets are £14 in advance, online or from The Woodstock Bookshop; or £15 at the door, full time students £5, accompanied children under 16 are free.

book online: [www.bookwhen.com/woodstock](http://www.bookwhen.com/woodstock)

[concerts@woodstockmusic.info](mailto:concerts@woodstockmusic.info)

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## **Woodstock open air pool**

Woodstock Open Air Pool is open now until Sunday 1 September, with a busy summer activities programme of pool parties, family swim sessions, lane swimming, aqua aerobics, senior swims and also garden games including Jenga, Swingball and badminton. A pop-up café will be open during the summer holiday.

Opening times and activities information are available on the Better UK website: [www.better.co.uk](http://www.better.co.uk). Walk-in sessions are available all day every day, but to avoid possible queues or oversubscribed sessions it is recommended that you book in advance.

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## **Combe Women's Institute**

As there was no meeting in June, members visited Freeland WI to attend a talk by Antonia Keane about *A Passion for Fashion*, which was very informative and enjoyable.

The members' annual summer garden party is on 8 July and this year, instead of the usual best bloom competition, members are invited to bring along a flower decoration in a teacup.

Members and guests going to Kelmscott Manor on Wednesday 31 July are reminded that transport will leave at 12.30pm.

There is no meeting in August but WI will resume in September, when Analiza Jones will be talking about handwoven bags from the Philippines.

WI Membership is open to all women over the age of 18 years. This year the annual membership subscription is £48, however for people joining in July the subscription is reduced to £36. Throughout the year there are 11 monthly meetings with a range of interesting speakers, outings and social events.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe, from 7.30-9.30pm. Guests are charged £5 per meeting (with a maximum of three visits a year).

Please call or email me if you would like further information about the WI.

Julia Sharpe (891058)

Secretary Combe WI

[combewi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk](mailto:combewi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk)

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## Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum celebrates 10th Anniversary

Oxfordshire's military museum celebrates its 10th Anniversary with new exhibitions, events and objects.

Many objects from the museum collection go on display for the first time. New objects on loan to the museum include Bond memorabilia and film props - such as a pair of Sean Connery's shoes worn in *Never Say Never Again* - while recently acquired SOE weapons and equipment illustrate the work of real WW2 spies. A new trail, *'We Need to Talk About War'*, asks visitors to think about the difficult questions that war poses. A special 10th anniversary display will also open from 1 June to 1 October: a look back at some of the museum's most significant moments and stories, as well as a showcase of the museum's favourite objects from past displays.

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## Young carers

Be Free Young Carers is the only charity in Oxfordshire devoted to improving young carers' well-being and opportunities, through the provision of recreational, emotional and social support.

It works with young people aged between 8 and 17 who have care responsibilities at home. The Children's Society has estimated that this affects as many as 1 in 12 secondary school children; that's more than two pupils in every classroom.

Be Free Young Carers provides befriending, counselling, emotional support and an online youth group for these young people, and has a current campaign to raise awareness of the issue

with all current Parliamentary candidates. For further information please see [www.befreeyc.org.uk/about/](http://www.befreeyc.org.uk/about/).

Callum Watkins (01235 838554)

Be Free Young Carers

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## 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.



### The White Horse

#### Open for meals and drinks

Enjoy a menu showcasing classic British fare, alongside a well-curated selection of local ales and fine wines.

Whether seeking a hearty meal, a relaxing drink, or lively conversation, The White Horse offers a timeless retreat, embodying the spirit of traditional English pub culture. Bring along your 4 legged friends too, where our dog loving staff will be ready with a bowl of water and a biscuit or 2.

Bar						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Closed	17.00 – 23.00	11.30 – 23.00	11.30 – 23.00	11.30 – 23.00	11.30 – 23.00	11.30 – 20.00
Food						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Closed	Closed	12.00 – 14.30	12.00 – 14.30	12.00 – 14.30	12.00 – 14.30	12.00 – 16.00
		18.00 – 21.00	18.00 – 21.00	18.00 – 21.00	18.00 – 21.00	

The White Horse is a community owned pub.

[www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com](http://www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com)

The White Horse, The Ridings, Stonesfield, OX29 8EA

# Politics & local affairs

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## **Stonesfield Parish Council**

Report from Parish Council meeting,  
11 June:

Chair: Cllr Phil McArdell was elected as Chair of Stonesfield Parish Council. This was a temporary appointment. (Election of Vice Chair was deferred until Council vacancies have been filled post-election; the Council has 3 current vacancies)

**District Council:** Cllr Genny Early introduced herself and gave some background on the District Council; the full report is published on the village website. Genny welcomed the news that the White Horse pub would open in mid-June. The Council also acknowledged this and wished the pub luck on the opening.

Cllr Early was asked about what is happening regarding river quality in the area. She would take this away for further updates and would report back to the Council.

**Financial:** The first stage of the internal audit of the council had been completed with no concerns arising. It would now go to a second stage with an external audit.

A grant request for £1,000 had been received from Playing Field Association. Council approved this grant request for the full sum, towards playground costs.

The Council was appointing a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), Cherie Carruthers, and she would start on 1 July. This was part of the recruitment which Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils was

supporting. New clerk hours would be reduced accordingly. The vacancy for a new clerk would be advertised shortly. The current clerk would finish at the end of July, but the June meeting would be her last meeting.

**Planning:** Councillors discussed the current planning applications:

24/01357/HHD extension – Deeplands, The Ridings, Jordan Blair – No objections from the Council.

24/01299/HHD extension – Dene View, Roslyn Holmes – No objections from the Council.

The Council confirmed that it **does not** have a planning application from Manor Road, Combe Road proposed development at this stage.

**Date of next Council meeting:** Provisionally arranged for 14 August at 7pm, in Stonesfield Primary School.

Parish Clerk  
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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## **West Oxfordshire District Council**

**WODC's telephone services:** WODC has reported a significant increase in the use of its online services and improvements in customer satisfaction following its trial of new hours for its telephone call centre customer services. In September 2023 the Council reduced its telephone service hours from 9am to 2pm, in place of the previous 9am to 5pm. It

reduced the opening hours in quiet afternoons and increased operators on the phones during busy lunchtimes. At the same time the Council invested more into its online services and maintained a 9-5 office to people who need to speak to someone in person.

Over the last three years, the volume of customer calls received by the Council has declined by over 37%, and the use of online forms has increased by 350%.

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## General Election – 4 July

Since the electoral boundary changes, Stonesfield is now within the Bicester and Woodstock constituency and is no longer part of the Witney constituency.

The polling station will as usual be in the Village Hall, Field Close, Stonesfield OX29 8HA, and will be open between 7 am and 10pm.



You do not need to take your polling card but you will **not be able to vote unless you show photographic identification**, such as a passport or driving licence, to the polling station staff. A full list of the types of accepted photographic identification is shown on your polling card, and it does include an older person's bus pass and a Blue Badge.

The Parliamentary candidates for the Bicester and Woodstock constituency are:

Tim Funnell	Social Democratic Party
Rupert Harrison	Conservative and Unionist Party
Ian Middleton	Green Party
Calum Miller	Liberal Democrats
Veronica Oakeshott	Labour Party
Augustine Obodo	Reform UK

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## Oxfordshire County Council

### Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2)

In 2023, the County Council awarded Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) funding to retrofit the homes of low-income residents living in energy inefficient homes; up to £38,000 per property.

During the 2023-24 financial year, despite a number of challenges, 65 homes were upgraded across the county, including 15 in West Oxfordshire. Although this was fewer than originally planned, 31 homes are already being upgraded in the second year of delivery, toward completing an additional 150 upgraded properties before the scheme closes in March 2025.

There is capacity for a few more households, so if you could benefit from the funding, please register your interest with the Council's delivery partners: <https://www.welcomethewarmth.org.uk/register-your-interest>.

Please note the scheme will close to new applications at the end of October, and for properties requiring planning permission (e.g. listed buildings or homes in a conservation area) at the end of July, so the opportunity to apply is time-limited.

The eligibility criteria for HUG2 funding are as follows:

- Home owners or private renters
- Annual household income of £39,000 or less OR in receipt of means-tested benefits
- EPC rating of D or below (free survey can be completed if necessary)
- Not heated by mains gas.

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## From our MP

This is the last report to Stonesfield from Robert Courts as our MP, due to the electoral boundary changes; see General Election article on p15. Robert Courts will continue as one of the Parliamentary candidates for Witney.

## A40 and rail improvements

Robert Courts has been concerned about the condition of road transport on the A40 between Eynsham and Oxford, and of rail services on the Cotswold Line, focusing on Long Hanborough station. He has raised with Mark Harper, the Secretary of State for Transport that the A40 improvements should include not only the building of the Eynsham Park & Ride, but also better connecting roads and an eastbound bus lane.

## Special Educational Needs

Following the County Council's decision to cut funding for essential special educational needs services (SEND), Robert Courts joined with other Oxfordshire MPs to urge the Council to reconsider. As a result the service funding will be restored.

## Solar farms

While acknowledging that more solar farms are necessary to ensure food security, the Government has pledged to

protect farmland. Applications for solar farms on fertile farmland should not be a first resort, and applications should prioritise previously developed, brownfield land. Developers should avoid the best quality farmland, and the overall impact of several applications in the same area must be taken into account. These provisions are effective immediately and will apply to all current and future applications. Steps have been taken to make it easier and cheaper to install solar panels on top of warehouses, farm buildings, factories and car parks.

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## Progress on drains?



Water wells up at The Tap

The rain on Sunday 26 May highlighted the desperate state of the drains on Laughton Hill and at the Boot Street junction.

Gardening Club members were replanting the pots at the Boot Street junction when the rain started and within 15 minutes water was bubbling up out of the drains. Within 20 minutes, the whole of The Tap area was flooded and water was pouring down Laughton Hill. The rain stopped



after 40 minutes and the drain on Laughton Hill was gushing water.

As well as reporting via [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com), Oxfordshire County Councillor Andy Graham was informed, as he had previously taken up this case. Within two days Paul Wilson, Operations Manager for Oxfordshire Highway, had responded to say 'As you may imagine, we are still dealing with a backlog of drainage enquiries since the very wet winter, however I can advise that we have a crew booked in for 4 July to try to resolve the drainage issues on Laughton Hill.'

Paul Wilson has photos and understands these are long-standing issues that have been 'resolved' before. I just hope that this time resolving actually means curing, but as this has been going on for years it may take many more visits!

Paul Bates

[SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk)

## Neighbourhood Watch

Increasing theft from motor vehicles in the villages has been reported; Combe has been hit, as have Tackley and Wootton. This includes an increase in thefts of VW Golf R vehicles, but the thieves there were not successful due to the ghost immobiliser. This protects vehicles from key-cloning, key theft and hacking, through a unique pin code. Thames Valley Police recommend adding extra security features for high-performance vehicles. Please also be reminded to take all belongings and loose change from vehicles when going on dog walks or just for a stroll.

Further advice is to be wary of cold callers asking to cut trees and grass.

Information on Neighbourhood Watch is available at: [www.ourwatch.org.uk/](http://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](http://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 or call 101 or contact [woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch  
Coordinator

## Loan sharks

Thames Valley Police report that loan sharks are becoming more prevalent with the cost-of-living crisis. Stop Loan Sharks provides advice for those needing credit but who cannot access mainstream sources. It has a 24-hour phoneline for reporting loan sharks: 0300 555 2222, and also an online chat service at [stoploansharks.co.uk](http://stoploansharks.co.uk).

### Stonesfield says Slow Down\*

\* 72% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan survey said that reducing traffic speed was important or very important.

Stonefield Community Speedwatch (CSW) is looking for more volunteers.

CSW is organised by Thames Valley Police as part of TVP's objective to reduce speeding and accidents. You need to be able to give an hour or so a month, at times that suit you. You will work in a group and be given full training.

Email if you would like to volunteer to help your village or want more information.

[SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:SAFER@stonesfieldpc.uk)

SAFER is a Stonefield Parish Council Working Group



# Education, culture & more

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## **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

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## **Home Library Service**

The Home Library Service is free and there is no charge for requests or late returns. To register for this service or for further information, telephone your local library, or the Home Library Service on 01865 810259, or email

homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Deborah Wilson (898187)

Library Manager

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## **Age UK – Not everyone uses online!**

Age UK is campaigning to make sure that everyone can access the services they need, whether or not they can use or have access to the internet. Well over two million people in the UK are not internet users, (that's 1 in 5 in this age group) and 3.3 million people aged 65 and over don't use a smartphone. For them it's becoming harder to access many routine services, like banking, making medical appointments or paying for car parking. Many others would simply prefer to handle their finances or

health matters in person or by phone. Age UK believes that no-one should feel forced to do these important tasks online if they are uncomfortable with it.

If you or someone you know would like to sign the petition offline you can find it in Stonesfield Library, or go to [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) and search for Offline and Overlooked, or write to Freepost Age UK campaigns (no stamp required).

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## **Summer Reading Challenge**

It's that time of year again! The Summer Reading Challenge starts on Saturday 6 July 2024. This year's theme – Marvellous Makers – is all about creativity; from dance to drawing, junk modelling to music, there's something for everyone.

Come along to Stonesfield Library to find out more and to sign up for the challenge.

More information is on [www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk](http://www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk)

Bryony Mallows



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## I'm a Reader

Originally from Melbourne, Janet Kettels, 53, runs a healthcare communications agency. Her clients include Alcon (eyecare) and Verso Biosense (a Femtech start up). She has lived in Stonesfield for 10 years with husband James, a musician and audio production specialist. She is often seen walking their Bernese mountain dog, Holly Golightly, who you shouldn't confuse for a large and fluffy rug when the rather large hound is relaxing at The White Horse.

'I love crime novels. Not true crime, it upsets me. I read Ian Rankin when I first came to the UK in 1998. Now it depends on my mood, sometimes I like something silly, like Agatha Raisin. I read many Christies. I enjoyed *'Slow Horses'*, the Mick Heron series.'

'I studied Pharmacy at Monash University, Melbourne. I was reading chemistry books all the time and my respite was murder. I studied chemistry to spite my physics teacher. My father's friend ran a rubber factory in Bangkok. I worked there one summer, aged 16, and discovered I just loved the connection between manufacturing and commercial. I'm an engineer's daughter and granddaughter; I was brought up surrounded by mechanics, but I knew I'd be going into healthcare, as I loved biology.'

Janet's favourite crime novel is, *'An Instance of the Finger Post'* (1997) by Iain Pears. Set in 17th century Oxford, a murder story is revealed from the contradictory points of view of four different and unreliable narrators. The English Civil War has just ended, the situation is volatile and conspiracies abound. The book is peppered with real figures – the philosopher John Locke, scientist Robert Boyle and even a

reincarnated Jesus – as historical fact, mediaeval philosophy and emerging science combine in a thrilling read. (This sounds great, must add to my list!) Janet says: 'It really made me stop and think. I knew the theory about thinking from other people's perspective because my mother brought me up well, but this really made me understand. Each narrator's version of events is written like a separate novelette. You think you know what's going on, but then by the fourth story you are totally confused.'

'When I was a child, I read the *Famous Fives*. My mother made me plough through the Austens...and that other moor one...' My interviewee grapples for the name. 'The Brontes?' I suggest. 'Yes, they're the ones!' says refreshingly irreverent Janet. 'My mother was a primary school teacher, she wanted me to read the classics.'

Unfortunately for Janet's mother, in the Australia of Janet's childhood, schools were very egalitarian; spelling was optional. 'Our class was given the choice of studying *'The diary of Adrian Mole'*, or *'Macbeth'*. I was the only one who voted for *Macbeth*.'

Nowadays, Janet strikes a balance between high art and easy reading; 'Not that long ago I gave myself permission to give up books that didn't grab me. I'll never read another Booker Prize winner, because they are *always* miserable.'

'As a teenager, I went through a phase of reading historical romance, sweeping dramas, across Europe and the Middle East. Like many Australians, I always knew I wanted to travel, I just didn't realise it was going to be for the rest of my life.'

Librarywise, at least it's been a culture shock; unlike Stonesfield Library, in which people often shelter to avoid the rain and cold, Janet has quite a different association 'we didn't have air conditioning at home, so on boiling 40 degrees days, we'd head to the library for delicious cool.'

Eleanor Bailey

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## **The Stonesfield Spirit**

The spirit of volunteering in Stonesfield is not a recent phenomenon born out of the pandemic, or the cost-of-living crisis, or the community desire to save our pub. No, it is a spirit that has flourished for decades in our village. With clubs, charities and organisations relying on the time and efforts of their volunteers over the years to keep the momentum going and make our village such a welcoming place to live. You only have to look at the historical pictures of the Strikers in the Sports & Social Club to know that a spirit of volunteering is at the heart of Stonesfield and its history.

As I write on a sunny Stonesfield evening at the end of National Volunteer Week (3-9 June), I pause to reflect on what an amazing community we live in. It makes me happy knowing that our community supports its members, not just in times of crisis, but every day, week in week out, year after year, with the hours our residents give to volunteering and supporting others.

It is this selfless commitment that I want to celebrate. In researching National Volunteer Week, I discovered the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, a charity dedicated to helping other charities grow. As their Chief Executive, Sarah Vibert, emphasised: 'Now more than ever, it's important to recognise those who

selflessly give up their time to help others. We can't wait to celebrate the power volunteering has to bring communities together and be part of recognising its immense impact.'

Last month I focused on the monumental efforts of the volunteers at The White Horse pub and our incredible committee that made it happen. This month I wish to showcase the wide range of activities that are held at and supported by our village hall, library, sports and social club and on the playing fields. I want to celebrate the unique role our volunteers play in our community, the kindness, support and fun they bring to others through their efforts. The impact of volunteering is hard to quantify. It is only when you write down a simple list of everything that is supported in our village, you can start to appreciate the diversity and huge thanks we owe our dedicated residents.

While so many smaller communities have lost their library, village hall or playing fields to developments, ours are thriving, well used by groups and clubs. Stonesfield has such a diverse selection of clubs and societies for our residents to enjoy and contribute to. None of these would be possible without the power of our volunteers. Every club, every activity relies on those volunteers to make it happen. Our community should be proud of just how much is available; both fun activities and those at the very foundation of our community:

- **Parish Council:** a special mention must go to Cllrs Eleanor Bailey and Jim O'Brien who have just retired; Jim completing 24 years as a Parish Councillor.

- **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**, a subgroup of the Parish Council, who for the last two years have tirelessly gathered evidence and worked to formulate our Neighbourhood Plan.
- **SAFER**, a subgroup of the Parish Council, who assist with road safety issues and Community SpeedWatch.
- **Common Working Group**, also a subgroup of the Parish Council, whose members work hard to keep Stonesfield Common from becoming overgrown.
- **Litter pickers**, led by Jess Huband, keeping our environment beautiful.

Village Hall Building Committee 1994



- **Village Hall team**, supported by the hardworking Secretary, Jacqueline Carthew.
- **Friends of Stonesfield Library (FoSL)** Volunteers keeping our library open.
- **Playing Field Association** looking after our sports fields and children's playground.
- **Sports and Social Club Committee**, founded in 1994 and kicked off with a buy-a-brick campaign!
- **Food Group, Seniors' Café and Stonesfield Social** – see following article by Kate Winstanley for a fascinating insight into their origins.
- **Repair and Community Café** run by Mike Sofroniou and Susan Rudlin. This very popular event helps household

items get a new lease of life, with the added bonus of lunch or cake provided by the Food Group while you wait. This event would be impossible without the time and skills offered by the repairers, who can fix furniture, computers, clothes and all electrical items, as well as sharpen your knives and garden tools.

- **Community Café** on non-Repair Café days, hosted by the Village Hall for individual charities including Chrissie's Owls.
- **Stonesfield Players** have been running since 1953; which is 71 years of our residents writing, acting, producing, directing, set designing and more. Not only have they put on incredible shows, but previous members who joined as children have benefited from the confidence that performing gave them: most notably Rupert Friend but also Sheilagh Martin, who became a standup comedian, and Ed Atkinson, a successful artist. Sally Wainwright (well-known writer of *Happy Valley* and *Last Tango in Halifax*) has done plays with the Players since the 1990s and is still a strong supporter.
- **Scouts, Cubs and Beavers**, providing fun, knowledge and confidence for our young people.

Stonesfield Football Club 1910



- **Football Teams** from youths to seniors – started over 100 years ago, they have been using the Stonesfield Playing Field

since the land was donated by the Hunt Family. A new addition, Hunt's Paddock, alongside the main field was brought into use by the efforts of the Playing Fields Association.

- **Stonesfield Tennis Club**, established for over 100 years.
- **Cricket Teams**, coaching and match experience.
- **Stonesfield Community Trust**, providing affordable housing.
- **Baby and Toddlers Group**, a social group for the very young and their parents.
- **Upholstery Club** for developing new skills.
- **Folk dancing**, for fun, exercise and tradition.
- **Charity events** on the playing field, including bike night pop-up pubs.
- **Stonesfield SeptemberFest Volunteers**, raising money for charities including Cancer Research UK, BBO Wildlife Trust and Stonesfield's children's playground.
- **Youth Group** – currently being considered as a new group for younger residents.

Every day of the week sees clubs and groups in Stonesfield providing education, fun, fitness, social interaction and support for our residents. Young and old alike, there is something for everyone.

The impact of the volunteer contributions to these activities is immense: it is immeasurable in hours or days, because it is years of dedication that are attributable to making Stonesfield such a happy place to live.

Fiona Dangerfield  
Editor

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## Volunteer Focus - The Food Group

In our small community, Stonesfield offers up a very wide range of activities for different groups. I want to highlight the great work of our volunteers in delivering two very popular and vital community activities. They both have community support and kindness at their very core, and are about bringing people together.

### Seniors' Café

The Seniors' Café started as a response to community requests for a venue for older residents to get together and socialise. It has a group of around 12 people who come regularly, and is a friendly group. Hot drinks and homemade cakes are served in a welcoming atmosphere.



Delicious raspberry jelly

There are two regular volunteers (Claire Renshaw and Julie Curran), and other helpers drop in when they are able. A rota of expert bakers keeps the supply of cake coming. Our regulars enjoy the opportunity to get together, share news, laugh and inform each other on local issues, as well as highlighting the current scams that might catch them out (there has been talk of toyboys!) We also discuss

other things the group would like to do, like trips and perhaps a walking group, so we are very much in our aspirational phase with plenty more to achieve.

The Café provides a lovely environment to engage with friends: new visitors are always welcome and the term 'senior' is fairly flexible. We look forward to welcoming new members on Tuesdays, at 3-4pm.

### **Stonesfield Social**

The Social was born out of a wish within the Food Group to do something to support neighbours when inflation was at its highest for 40 years, and fuel prices particularly had rocketed. We feel we have more than met the agenda of providing a warm space – we had no idea how much more the Social could offer when we began with a trial session in December 2022. We are currently receiving funding from Oxfordshire Community Foundation and West Oxfordshire District Council, which supports our running costs.

Every week in term time we offer stimulating craft activities for children, a place to meet old and new friends and a chance for young parents to relax as well as a warm space and a free meal. 'I love that I don't have to cook, or even choose what to cook!' has been voiced by more than one tired parent. The age of participants ranges from newborn babies to people over retirement age, and it's a great way for the generations to mix. Our social seating arrangement means no one sits alone and you will not leave without speaking to someone you didn't know before. We are building connections in our community. Our Facebook group has 75 members and we post our menus ahead of time, cater for



those with food allergies and have a 5-star food hygiene rating.

We even offer a takeaway service, for those who can't make it to the Village Hall or who find the atmosphere too lively. We encourage customers to bring their own containers or to treat ours as a loan.

For every Social, volunteers make a healthy two-course meal (with meat and veggie options) based on produce which has been donated by the Oxford Food Hub. The Hub (which supports community groups) sources food from shops, restaurants and other food suppliers, and it is often simply surplus to requirements, and nowhere near its 'best before' date. Meals are always accompanied by a salad or crudites and we offer fresh fruit as a dessert.

On the rare occasions that there are leftovers, we can freeze additional portions to be distributed in emergency situations. We estimate that we have cooked over 3,000 meals and saved over one tonne of

food from going into landfill and emitting greenhouse gases.

There is a rota of about 10 cooks, which generally means they cook about once a month. People can cook at home, or in the Village Hall and as we have a freezer they can even cook ahead if that works for them. Some cooks enjoy the 'Ready, Steady, Cook'-style challenge provided when Julie returns with an interesting combination of ingredients from the Hub; others prefer a little certainty!

We have around 20 volunteers who help with preparation, table laying, washing up and clearing as well as the important duties of hosting - explaining why we are passionate about saving food waste as well as connecting neighbours. We have welcomed the younger members of our community who volunteer as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. We also provide a bank of signposting information about money advice, mental health and local events.

The success of the Seniors' Café and the Stonesfield Social highlights the importance of volunteering, the selfless commitment of each volunteer to give back to the community in which they live. Personally, I would not underestimate the benefits of volunteering to the volunteer. I've met people I would never otherwise have met and have the satisfaction of knowing I'm part of a community that cares on a large and small scale. Our volunteers bring hard work, kindness and a smile to the activities and help make Stonesfield such a great place to live.

Kate Winstanley

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## Sustainable Stonesfield

If you want to help make sure that potential housing developments in Stonesfield meet any need for affordable housing without spoiling our priceless rural character, please consider joining Sustainable Stonesfield. No fee, no hassle, just get alerts and information. There are already 170 members who have joined because they want to hear the latest news and help if they can.

Write to us at  
sustainable.stonesfield@gmail.com

### **Be smart, buy your tickets safely.**

#### **Thinking about buying tickets for your favourite band, sport or festival?**

##### **Things to consider.**

##### **Is the event being advertised as 'sold out'?**

How did the seller get the tickets and do they really have them for sale?

Beware of sellers who want to meet you at the event!

##### **Where is the company's office?**

Is it a real office or a 'virtual' one? Search online and see what comes up.

##### **Does the company have a UK landline?**

The website must have a standard rate number for customer service.

##### **Are there customer reviews?**

Check online to see what others are saying about the website.

##### **Ask questions.**

Questions can be as simple as when will the tickets be dispatched' and what type of ticket you are buying'. If you're unsure, ask before you buy.

##### **Read the terms and conditions.**

Always read the small print, particularly on unfamiliar websites.

##### **Football ticket reselling is largely illegal.**

If you're buying football tickets, be aware that it's illegal to re-sell most football tickets. Clubs may refuse you entry if you have bought someone else's ticket.

##### **Pay for tickets by credit card.**

The card issuer will be responsible for refunding you if you don't get the ticket, (as long as the price of the single ticket is more than £100).

##### **Is the payment page secure?**

When paying online make sure that the payment pages are secure. Look for a padlock symbol in the address bar and https' in the website address.

If you want advice on buying tickets safely or if you want to report a scam or need advice on tickets you have bought please contact the Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133



# Clubs, societies & sport

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## Stonesfield Gardening Club



As we go to press, gardens in Stonesfield are being readied for display at our Open Gardens event. We're hoping that the weather gods are on our side, so we can look our best, as this is an important fund raiser for us and allows village donations later in the year.

This month our meeting is on 8 July and sees the welcome return of Chris Day from Buckingham Gardens. Chris is an experienced speaker and is passionate about indoor plants, so will be telling us how we can 'tame the indoor jungle' – a timely talk as many of us fill our rooms with houseplants.

The committee, when not organising Open Gardens, has been looking ahead to 2025. We have an interesting line-up of speakers, with a mixture of old favourites making a return appearance as and some new faces. Full details will be published later this year.

The very welcome reopening of The White Horse means that you can check up on the

work that club members have been doing in the garden there. It has been opened out to include the previously fenced-off back section, so there is now plenty of space for everyone. We hope you enjoy it!



Chinese Rice-Paper plant

By the way, the exotic tree in the middle of the back section is a *Tetrapanax papyrifer* – the Chinese Rice-Paper plant. I say this because so many people have asked!!

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

[www.stonesfieldgardening.info](http://www.stonesfieldgardening.info)

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## Stonesfield Sports and Social Club

Thank you for your continued support - we look forward to welcoming you over the summer.

Stonesfield Sports and Social Club

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## Stonesfield Scouts

### What have we been up to?

The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have been really busy. They have been sorting ducks, going to Charlbury Fire Station, on a bushcraft camp where they had to make their own shelters, had an inspirational science lesson on rockets and flight, made fires, made some more fires, put up tents and created enormous wooden structures on the school's playing field. We have 60 young boys and girls in our group, as well as 12 leaders, weekly volunteers and other ad-hoc helpers. We are really keen to get more people involved and it does not have to be on a regular basis. You can start on a very low level of commitment, but we need more people to get involved. Please get in touch and have a go.

### Can you help?

Some of our volunteers have been around for a while now. Our children are moving on. It's time for the next generation of volunteers to step up. It's your turn. It's up to you – it's your children. It's an exciting time to join our Group. Not only are we 75 this year, but we are building a new hut – a base for us all to enjoy many more Scouting adventures. A place where this year's Beaver Scouts can watch their great grandchild Scouting in 75 years' time? By the way, we are all incredibly busy just like you. But it is great fun and one of the most rewarding things you can do with your time.

### Duck Race 2024

The annual Stonesfield Scout Duck race will be on 13 July from 5pm. They seem to have been breeding as we now have 1800 of them! Please take the opportunity to sell these to friends and family, as well to



colleagues at work. 1st prize is £150, so it is worth a go. There will be a BBQ and a bar, as well as the chance to cheer on your favourite duck. For all the details and to buy ducks just search online for 'Stonesfield Duck Race'.

### Raffle

We are also running a fantastic raffle on the duck race day. If you have any donations for prizes, we will be very grateful.

### Scout Hut Update

Writing this a few weeks before you read it means we have to predict the future a bit. The aim for the Hut is to have the shell ready for half term in October, allowing the groups to use it as a base. We will be advertising a DIY SOS day in September for anyone to come and help move items, paint, build shelves etc. We are still looking for fundraisers to help, but are pleased to have added just under £4,000 to our target, bringing us to almost £133k raised to date. We have £42,000 to go. If you know a way of raising even just a fraction of this, then we would love to hear from you.

For more information, please see our website, Facebook or Instagram page by searching for Stonesfield Scouts.

If you want to get in touch with us, please email

Ben ([chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk](mailto:chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk))

Gary ([gsl@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk](mailto:gsl@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk)) or

Paul ([scouthut@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk](mailto:scouthut@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk))

Ben Whitworth

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## **Stonesfield Food Group**

Our main activities continue to be the Seniors' Café, the Social and the Community Café.

We support neighbours who are struggling with the cost of living, and use donations to provide this help. All our activities are free to Stonesfield residents, and we only ask that people donate if they feel able and want to do so. We can now receive card payments from anyone who would like to donate to us that way at the Café or the Social. Our costs are low but we do have expenses for things we can't get from the Oxford Food Hub, and for items like craft materials.

We have received our first summer glut donation! We were so delighted that the slugs had spared an excess of lettuce from Brook Lane and made it into a delicious healthy salad. If you find you have more produce than your household can deal with, please get in touch – we love zero-food-mile food as much as rescued food.

## **Seniors' Café**

This takes place on Tuesday afternoons in term time from 3-4pm in the Village Hall Clubroom. All are welcome, and being a Senior is self-defined! There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere and it's a

wonderful place to welcome old and new friends. There are always hot drinks and usually home-made cake (there is always cake!)

## **Stonesfield Social**

Tuesday evening is Social evening, in term time, where a group of creative volunteer cooks work wonders with surplus produce. We get most of our ingredients from the Oxford Food Hub who receive donations from supermarkets, small shops, restaurants, and food suppliers which they then donate to community groups. The standard of produce is fantastic – think Isle of Wight heritage tomatoes, beautiful



purple aubergines and top-quality bread! Everyone is welcome; we have guests of all ages and household types, which means it's a real mix of village residents getting together to save great food.

If this sounds like something you would like to get involved with, please contact us. We need cooks and helpers to run the Social, so there's a role for everyone, whether you like to be a creative cook, chat with guests, or keep behind the scenes stacking the dishwasher. And more for the

Seniors' Café. You don't have to commit to every week; we can accommodate your availability and you can even help for just part of a session if that works for you. Our motto is 'neighbours helping neighbours', and we'd love to invite you to take part.

### **Our environmental impact**

We continue to save in excess of 30kgs of food each week, serving 70 portions of healthy food to our guests. The food we save uses energy and water when it is grown, and there is a further impact on the environment when it is packed and transported. If it was not used, it would end up in landfill, where it would cause further environmental damage by creating greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Dates for your diary**

Our last sessions this term are on 16 July. Look out on our Facebook page and in the Slate for details of our return.

For further information, or to get involved, contact Julie Curran.

Julie Curran

Co-Chair, Stonesfield Village Hall

juliecurran0@gmail.com

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### **Community and Repair Café**

Thanks to the two teams who helped make last month's Community and Repair cafe such a great success. The Community Café produced a spectacular range of cakes, biscuits, breads and tasty soups while in the main hall the repairers showed their usual care and attention to detail to repair the majority of items that were brought to them. Jeans were patched, vacuum cleaners fixed, shears sharpened and even a talking reindeer given back its voice, while people ate and drank and chatted in the club room. Although we cannot

guarantee success we do seem to do pretty well. Please save up your faulty goods for the next Café, on Saturday 7 September.

Mike Sofroniou

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### **Stonesfield Environment Group**

We have just completed our water sampling for this month and are waiting for the publication of the current year's data on levels of nitrates and phosphates in the Evenlode. These results are collated from the data collected by the citizen scientists working in and around the river. This report should be out soon and we will share it with you when we can.

We've mentioned before that our efforts are enhanced when we work with other groups, and in this light we are co-ordinating with other groups along the Evenlode on our next set of sampling data; that of the riverfly population. We need to establish the baseline levels of these populations so that we can identify when there is some deviation, and alert the Environment Agency if and when that happens. We have been talking to the folks at the Nature Recovery Community Action Group and also our neighbouring villages of Fawler, Finstock and Charlbury on their plans for nature recovery.

When we aren't busy with the above, the Tree Planters have been out checking the trees along the Stonesfield straight and working to identify new sites for additional planting. You might also see us out litter picking by the time you read this.

As ever there is much to do, so please let us know if you'd like to get involved.

Julie Curran

juliecurran0@gmail.com

# Church news

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## **Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield**

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[www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org](http://www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

**Rector:** Revd Ralph Williamson,  
[rector@scbenefice.org](mailto:rector@scbenefice.org), 01993 891872

**Churchwarden:** Lindsey Sellar  
[stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org)

**St James' Centre bookings:**  
[sjcsbookings@gmail.com](mailto:sjcsbookings@gmail.com)

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

### **From the Rector: Abundance**

July begins with our General Election on 4 July. The opportunity to vote for an incoming government may be a very limited democratic act, but it is precious. So many countries are controlled by unelected leaders in repressive regimes, where press and the media are silenced. Millions of people across the world are afraid even to voice criticism of their leaders, let alone work for a change of government. Even where there are democratic elections, money buys votes or political support, while election outcomes and democratic processes are undermined through abuse of social media and misinformation. As Christians, we pray for all those who will represent us in the next Parliament, that they will act with wisdom and integrity in the interests of all people, especially the most vulnerable, and will

protect the world God made, our precious home.

July also sees the opening of the Olympic Games in Paris on the 26th, the XXXIII Olympiad. They will feature 32 sports at 329 events, with 10,000 athletes representing more than 200 countries. Ten million tickets will be sold and up to a billion people will watch on television. The Games will cost billions of euros, but in our fractured world, they are a beautiful sign of hope and international friendship. The Bible has very little to say about sport, although St Paul compares the discipline of the Christian life to the training of an athlete at the games. In the ancient world, sport emerged from the need for military training and combat, from competition between individuals and communities, from physical prowess relating to work (such as swimming, rowing or sailing, lifting or running), and from the sheer exuberance of human playfulness. Sport today is enjoyed as entertainment, as a hobby, and as a way of staying healthy. Whether we are watching or participating, it is a great way to meet people, and to learn about teamwork, losing and winning. It connects us with our physical nature, reduces stress, and builds resilience.

We thank God for these Olympic Games, which show that competition can be peaceful and respectful. We pray that the Games will be safe. We also pray that they will inspire the next generation of sportswomen and men, and encourage many millions more of us to use sport and

physical activity to take pleasure in our bodies. As human beings, our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual sides are wonderfully interwoven. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the Games is the inspiration and enrichment they bring to lives across the world. For me this is very much in the spirit of Christ, who said, 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

Revd Ralph Williamson

### Church services:

#### Sunday 7 July [Sixth Sunday after Trinity]

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

#### Sunday 14 July [Seventh Sunday after Trinity]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
5pm	Combe	Evensong

#### Sunday 21 July [Eighth Sunday after Trinity/ St James' Patronal Festival]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	St James' Festival Parish Communion

#### Sunday 28 July [Ninth Sunday after Trinity]

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

#### Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (every week)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (3rd, 17th, 31st)

#### A record of recent funerals:

5th June: Jill Moore

Our prayers are for family and friends at this time.

#### New Christian thought

'The number of useful things to do is infinite.' E. Swedenborg, *True Christianity*

So get out there and be useful! You'll feel better for it.

Dale Morris (898210)



### ST JAMES' FESTIVAL WEEKEND

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## **Stonesfield Methodist Church**

### **Services for July**

Sun 7	11am	The Revd Charles Harris
Sun 14	10.45am	United Service at Chipping Norton Methodist Church; there will not be a service at Stonesfield
Sun 21	11am	Margaret Broadberry
Sun 28	11am	Local arrangement

### **July outings!**

I remember so well a day in July when I visited an old Church in Dorset; one I very much wanted to see. Tucked away and surrounded by trees and leafy lanes, this Church of St. Nicholas had experienced damage and destruction during the Second World War. Its beautiful stained-glass windows were shattered and destroyed. But now they looked just splendid, sparkling and unique. Each towering window of glass was created with passion by Lawrence Whistler and awakened with God's words; even the one reaching up among shadows and shared with Judas; the window of Forgiveness.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

Come to a service soon.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

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## **Roman Catholic Worship**

Some reflections (part21) by Pope Francis on John Chapter 15, 1-8

Pope Francis offers his further reflections on John, Chapter 15 (from his sermon at Holy Mass Casa Santa Marta (Domus Sanctae Marthae), Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Easter, 13 May 2020). Pope Francis' themes are about our bearing witness to faith, our mutual relationship and dialogue with Jesus, and the importance of steadfastness (remaining in the relationship).

‘And it comes to my mind to say, what is the need that the tree, the vine has for the branches? It's bearing fruit. What is the need - let's say a little boldly - what is the need that Jesus has for us? The testimony. When he says in the Gospel that we are light, he says, ‘Be the light, so that men may see your good deeds and glorify the Father’ (Mt 5:16), that is, witness is the need that Jesus has for us. To bear witness to his name, so that faith, the Gospel grows by our testimony.

This is a mysterious way: Jesus glorified in heaven, having passed through the Passion, needs our testimony to grow, to proclaim, for the Church to grow. And this is the mutual mystery of ‘remaining’. He, the Father and the Spirit remain in us, and we remain in Jesus.

It will do us good to think and reflect on this: to remain in Jesus; and Jesus remains in us. To remain in Jesus to have the sap, the strength, to have the justification, the gratuitousness, to have fertility. And He remains in us to give us the strength to the bear fruit (John 15: 5), to give us the strength to witness with which the Church grows.

And one question I ask myself: what is the relationship between Jesus remaining in me and I remaining in Him? It's a relationship of intimacy, a mystical relationship, a wordless relationship. 'But Father, but this, let the mystics do it!' No, this is for all of us. With small thoughts: 'Lord, I know you are there: give me strength and I will do what you tell me.' That intimate dialogue with the Lord. The Lord is present, the Lord is present in us, the Father is present in us, the Holy Spirit is present in us; they remain in us. But I have to remain in Them.'

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. John 15 1-3

Pope Francis, Rome, 13 May 2020

### **Holy Mass**

Sunday Mass: 9.15am

Weekday Mass:

Wednesdays: 9.15am

Fridays: 9.15am

**For Parish updates**, more information and further support, please go to [www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/)

or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, Parish Priest: [fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk).

### **Aid to the Church in Need**

**Pilgrimage:** Durham and Lindisfarne, 22-27 July 2024. For further information please contact Suze Mathews: [suzemathews899@btinternet.com](mailto:suzemathews899@btinternet.com)

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

### **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](mailto:kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk)



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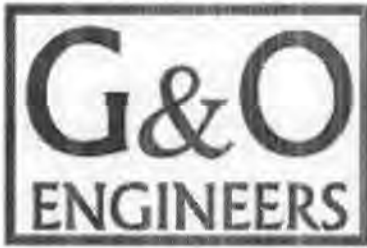
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