



Issue No 553 Dec 2024 / Jan 2025

## A big 'Thank You'



Jamie Street: Unsplash

We would like to extend our appreciation to those who contributed articles and photographs to *The Slate* in 2024. Without you we would not have been able to present such a wide range of news and information. Please continue your good work in 2025.

Our four editors deserve a special thank you as their tireless chasing, checking and proof reading ensured *The Slate* was always ready in time.

We can't forget Tricia Astle, Jane Collier and Ray Sofroniou and the army of volunteers involved in the distribution of *The Slate*. They ensured that 900 copies were popped through Stonesfield and Fawler letterboxes within hours of the printer's delivery. We also thank

Richard Bishop and Roger Powell who, in 2024, retired from delivering after years of service.

Of course, our thanks go to Windrush Printers for their excellent service and to all our advertisers who funded the production and have enabled *The Slate* to make donations to local causes such as the Scouts and this year's Reverse Advent Calendar appeal.

We hope our readers have enjoyed *The Slate* in 2024. If you have a story you would like to share in 2025, please do send it to us.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Paul & Diane Bates, *The Slate* Publishers

## 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?

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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.

### **Publishers**

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#### **Deadline for next issue 15 Jan**

Please email copy to  
slate@stonesfield.online  
or contact the Editor by phone.

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(891210)  
slate@stonesfield.online

### **Printer**

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### **Advertising:**

#### **Deadline for next issue 10 Jan**

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Current and past copies of the *Slate* are available at [www.stonesfield.online](http://www.stonesfield.online)

## Dates for your diary:

### December

1-31	Pictures @ The Pub: Midwinter Show	The White Horse	pub hours
1	Pool competition	SSSC	1pm
2,9,16	Monday coffee	St James' Centre	10am-12noon
2	Food Group planning meeting	SSSC	7pm
3	Social supper	Village Hall	5-6.30pm
3,10,17	Seniors Café	The White Horse	3-4pm
4	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
4,18	Quiz night	SSSC	7.30pm
5,12	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
5	Christmas tractor / mini craft market	SSSC	Tractor at 6pm
7	Christmas coffee morning	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
7	Repair & Community Café	Village Hall	10am-2pm
7,8	Christmas Art Show	Woodlands Rise	11am-4pm
9	Gardening Club social	St James' Centre	7.30pm
10	Christmas Social supper	Village Hall	5-7pm
10	Board Games night	The White Horse	7.30pm
10	Bingo	SSSC	
11	Quiz night	The White Horse	8pm
11	Christmas bingo	SSSC	
12	<i>Cold Comfort Farm</i> auditions	St James' Centre	7.30pm
12,19	Santa's grotto / mini craft market	SSSC	
14	Youth football Christmas party	SSSC	
15	Darts competition	SSSC	1pm
15	Family Festive Concert	St James's Church	3pm
17	Folk Music session	The White Horse	7.30 for 8pm
20	Carol singing	meet at the parish church	5pm
21	Music by Dirty Earth	SSSC	8.30pm
22	Carol service	St James's Church	6pm
23	Kids' movie morning	SSSC	10.30am-12.30pm
28	Music by Ollie Charles	SSSC	8.30pm
31	NYE Disco @ 9pm	SSSC	open 5pm-1am

## Dates for your diary:

### January

1	Stonesfield Stumble	from the Cross	11.16am
1-12	Pictures @ The Pub: Midwinter Show	The White Horse	pub hours
2	Kids' movie morning	SSSC	10.30am-12.30pm
6,13,20,27	Monday coffee	St James' Centre	10am-12noon
7,14,21,28	Seniors Café	The White Horse	3-4pm
8	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
9,16,23,30	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
13-20	SSSC closed for refurbishment		
14, 21, 28	Social supper	Village Hall	5-6.30pm
15-31	Pictures @ The Pub: Two artists	The White Horse	pub hours
15	Scouts AGM & Social	The White Horse	7.30pm
17	<i>One Life</i>	Combe Cinema	7.30 for 8pm

### February

1	Players' Murder Mystery Evening	Village Hall	7.30pm
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Snow comes early to Stonesfield  
19 November 2024



# Notices & news

## Seasonal Things



## Greetings

I would like to wish my friends and neighbours in Stonesfield season's greetings and a healthy New Year. I will be sending a donation to Sobell House Hospice Charity.

Judy Oliver

On behalf of Cilla and myself I would like to wish all our dear friends in Stonesfield a very Merry Christmas & a happy, healthy & peaceful New Year, let us hope it's a good one for us all. We will be thinking especially at this festive time of those friends who have lost a loved one during the past twelve months, may loving memories bring you peace & strength.

John (Evins) & Cilla

Tina, Phil, Curt, Donna and Lyra would like to wish all our family, friends and neighbours a very happy joyful Christmas and a healthy, peaceful New Year 2025. We will be making a donation to Sobell House Hospice Charity.

The Slatter family

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## Christmas Coffee Morning

**Saturday 7 December 10–11.30am**

Do come to the St James' Centre for coffee and Christmas refreshments on Saturday 7 December, from 10am to 11.30am. There will be cake and gift stalls, and plenty of festive spirit! Organised by the Parish Church, all the money raised will be given to Cecily's Fund (our own local charity which makes education possible for orphaned and vulnerable Zambian children).

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## Christmas Art Show 7 & 8 December

Looking for that elusive Christmas present? This annual social and convivial event provides an opportunity to see unique paintings, prints, jewellery and other crafts by Kerry Burniston, Jenny Lines, Ann Lowe, Becki, Griselda & Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson at our Christmas Art show. 11am-4pm at Grey Cat Studios, Woodlands Rise, Stonesfield, OX29 8PL. Join us for a glass of mulled wine.

For more information  
contact [rebeccasj@btinternet.com](mailto:rebeccasj@btinternet.com).

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## Festive family concert

**Sunday 15 December 3pm** in St James the Great Church, Stonesfield

Music and songs from the Ukranian, Celtic, French, Klezmer, Greek and Latin American traditions... plus a few carols and surprises! Suitable for age 7 upwards.

JARISEL is a group of Oxford musicians, and in 2023 they presented a wonderful concert here to celebrate the church's 800th anniversary. They were recently joined by Natalia, a refugee from Ukraine, whose renditions of Ukranian songs are heartfelt and beautiful. The music vibrates with colour and imagination, and a variety of instruments will be played.

Tickets £10, children free (but everyone needs a ticket). Available by emailing [stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org), after the 11am church service on Sundays, by telephoning 898757, or on the door (if still available).

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## Carol singing in Stonesfield

**Friday 20 December 5pm**

Come and join in carol singing around the village, finishing (at approx 6pm) at St James' Centre for a hot drink. We will meet 5pm at the church. Everyone welcome!

If you would like the carol singers to visit your street, please let us know – email [stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org](mailto:stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org). We will do our best to come!

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## Stonesfield Stumble Monday 1 Jan 2025



The annual slow walk on New Year's Day will take place on Wednesday 1 Jan 2025.

Meet on The Cross by the church at 11.16am. It is about an hour long all things considered. A shorter option is available.

Everybody is welcome, no pre-training required. Come in whatever state you happen to find yourself on New Year's Day!



Bring your dog, partner, children, friends. No discussions are barred, criticism encouraged.

After-walk recovery session in the White Horse. Bacon butties will be on offer.

**Note: Buttie pre-booking required**, so pop in to The White Horse by 21 December and book – £5 each.

Please remind your friends of the happening.

Graham Rutson

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## **Combe Mill Annual Christmas Fayre**

**Sunday 1 December 11am to 4pm**  
**Not in steam.**

Don't miss out, come along and bring the children. Listen to a story with Santa, get a present (book a slot from Combe Mill website). Browse the Christmas market stalls for a Christmas gift, enjoy hot food, mulled wine & chestnuts, tea room open, grand raffle with fantastic prizes, tombola and gift shop. Combe Mill's blacksmiths will be in the forge to make pokers, with VIEWING ONLY in the Mill (no machinery operating).

Blacksmith items on sale, made by our very own blacksmiths, wood-turner items on sale too, all make for a very popular gift for Christmas.

Combe Mill is a late 19th century restored water mill on Blenheim Palace Estate by the River Evenlode. Come along and see the blacksmiths in the forge, you might just be able to make a poker.

Dog on leads most welcome. Free entry & car parking.

Combe Mill cannot be held responsible for attractions that cancel.

Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe, OX29 8ET

## **Charlbury Christmas Trees**

Pick your own - choose & take or tag & collect later  
Belgium Spruce - Norway Spruce - Nordman

**Nov 30-Dec 1, Dec 7-8, Dec 14-15 & Dec 21-22**  
Opening hours **9.30 – 4.00pm**

Please check for updates on: [www.charlbury.info](http://www.charlbury.info)

Halcyon Honey Farm  
Woodstock Road, Charlbury, OX7 3ET  
Tel: 01608 810260



# Stonesfield Reverse Advent Calendar

with Stonesfield Community Pub Limited

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Will you be a Stonesfield Community hero?	18 Nov Tea / coffee	19 Nov Toilet rolls	20 Nov Festive biscuits	21 Nov Cereal	22 Nov Tinned potatoes	23 Nov Hot chocolate
24 Nov Gravy granules	25 Nov Tinned fruit	26 Nov UHT milk	27 Nov Crackers	28 Nov Tinned veg	29 Nov Hand soap	30 Nov Tinned hot meal
1 Dec Tinned soup	2 Dec Selection box	3 Dec Tinned custard	4 Dec Baked beans	5 Dec Cake slices	6 Dec Pasta n' sauce	7 Dec Hot pudding
8 Dec Tinned meat	9 Dec Tinned fruit	10 Dec Tinned fish	11 Dec Instant mash	12 Dec Jar of jam	13 Dec Long-life juice	14 Dec Festive snacks
15 Dec Parcel delivery	16 Dec Parcel delivery	17 Dec Parcel delivery	18 Dec Parcel delivery	19 Dec Parcel delivery	20 Dec Parcel delivery	21 Dec Parcel delivery

Thank you! it's a difficult time of year for many and your generosity will have made a difference to someone else's Christmas.

We hope you enjoy the festive season.





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## **Reverse Advent Calendars Initiative**

### **Thank you, Community Champions!**

We all know that Stonesfield is a fabulous village, where the community can always be relied upon to step up and dig deep when there is a need. Never more so than with our Christmas hampers, instigated by the Back the White Horse committee five years ago and created by villagers using the Reverse Advent Calendar (see page 8).

Thank you to all our Community Champions for your support once again this year. Aiding households who would value help at this time of year would be impossible without your generosity and all your efforts in putting the hampers together. This is very much appreciated, your support will have a lasting - and very positive - impact.

It is not only at this time of year that the village supports those in need. If we are fortunate enough to receive more hampers than are needed right now, any surplus will be stored carefully and will be distributed during the coming year by Stonesfield Food Group's Emergency Help coordinator.

### **Would you value some support this Christmas?**

Old, young and all those in between, there are times when we all need a little help from our community and we're here to support you. If receiving one of the 'reverse advent calendar' food hampers would ease the worry for you or someone you know this Christmas, please don't be shy, do get in touch. If you're contacting us on behalf of someone else, please do make sure you have their permission to provide their details. Any one of the people listed below will help and will need – in confidence –

your name, your address and how many people are in your household so that we can get some help out to you.

### **Stonesfield Food Group - Emergency Help**

Contact Kate Harris on 01993 898781 or email: [kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Stonesfield Baby and Toddler Group**

Contact Hannah on 07854 771165 or email: [stonesfieldbabyandtoddlers@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldbabyandtoddlers@gmail.com)

### **Stonesfield Preschool**

Contact Zena on 01993 898012 or email: [stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com)

### **Stonesfield Primary School**

Contact Lisa or Zena in the school office on 01993 891687 or email: [office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)

### **St James the Great Church, Stonesfield**

Contact Revd Ralph Williamson email: [rector@scbenefice.org](mailto:rector@scbenefice.org)

### **Stonesfield Methodist Church**

Contact Kathleen Albert on 01993 891733 or email: [k.m.albert14@gmail.com](mailto:k.m.albert14@gmail.com)

Susan Rudlin

Stonesfield Community Pub



**White Horse**  
**Christmas opening hours**

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December  
Bar – 11.30-11pm  
Food – 12-2.30, 6pm-9pm

Christmas Eve - Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December  
Bar – 11.30-11pm  
Food – 12-2.30, 6pm-9pm

Christmas Day - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December  
11am – 1pm (Drinks only)

Boxing Day - 26<sup>th</sup> December  
Bar – 11-6pm  
Food – 12-3pm

Fri 27<sup>th</sup>, Sat 28<sup>th</sup>, Sun 29<sup>th</sup> December  
Normal hours

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December  
Bar – 11.30-11pm  
Food – 12-2.30, 6pm-9pm

New Year's Eve - Tuesday 31st December  
Bar – 11.30 – 1am  
Food – 12-2.30pm

(Buffet will be available in the evening free of charge)

New Year's Day - Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025  
Bar – 11-6pm (last orders 5.30pm)  
Food – 12-3pm\*

\* Stumblers: Pre-order your Bacon Butties by 21<sup>st</sup> December

Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup>, Fri 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sat 4<sup>th</sup>, Sun 5<sup>th</sup> January  
Normal Hours

Mon 6<sup>th</sup>, Tues 7<sup>th</sup>, Wed 8<sup>th</sup> January  
Closed to give our hard working staff an extra day off

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January  
Normal hours

**Pictures @ The Pub**

Our Midwinter Show runs throughout December and into the New Year. We have some 20 artists offering a wide variety of paintings, prints, collage, metalwork, mixed media, photography and textile art. Exhibits will change from time to time so there will be new things to see as the exhibition runs its course.

From mid-January and throughout February, we will be showing vibrant and colourful paintings by two Stonesfield artists, Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson and Rachel Williamson. These are sure to brighten the wintry days and we hope you will come to view.

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub  
triywnwil003@gmail.com

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse  
Community Pub

rennie@backthewhitehorse.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 December or January:**

**Viv Kendall 01993 891803 or stonesfieldvts@gmail.com**

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## A Sad Day for Stonesfield



Most of the wreaths returned to their rightful place

Vandals had cut down all the Remembrance wreaths around the war memorial in Stonesfield and scattered them throughout the village like frisbees.

The church service on Remembrance Sunday in the St James's Church at 10am was extremely well attended, notably by our local Scouts and Guides. After the service the Scouts led the congregation to the war memorial where a further service was held by our minister Linda Soderberg and attended by scores of parishioners. Eleven wreaths were laid in front of the memorial after the two-minute silence at 11am. After the service the wreaths were securely attached to the railings around the memorial by Roger Evins, our local farmer and a former Royal Navy veteran who organises the British Legion collection and poppy sales in our village.

The following morning it was discovered that the wreaths had all been cut down and thrown about the village. Fortunately, all but one of the eleven wreaths have now been recovered. Vandalism by those who do not understand the sacrifices made during the war and subsequent conflicts by members of our armed forces to protect the freedom that we all enjoy today.

Mike Pollitt

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## Community Café thanks

Thank you to everyone who came along to the November Community Café which was run by The Stonesfield Players. We made a total of £260 which will help us enormously.

It is expensive to put on productions and we have to invest in costumes and props, publicity materials and hall hire to make each play a success. Ticket prices don't always cover our costs but we want to keep our performances affordable so fundraising efforts like this really help.

Thank you to the bakers and volunteers who staffed the kitchen but special thanks to our customers for supporting us. As well as a fundraising event, it was a very enjoyable chance to socialise as a community.

The Stonesfield Players

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## Community Orchard

Great news, we have an orchard to plant in the rectory paddock field. Many thanks to Revd Ralph Williamson and family, we should have nine orchard trees planted before Christmas.

We are also in discussion about a second site for a community orchard and hope to have more news by the new year.

John Sampson

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## The Megalosaurus Society

We had a very useful exploratory meeting with prospective members in October and subsequently everyone in the Society was invited to a special event arranged for us at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The museum curators shared their newly-designed exhibits on world wildlife and ecosystems past and present, the new exhibition *Breaking Ground* which focuses on Stonesfield's *Megalosaurus* and its other fossils, and invited us to contribute our thoughts on how future displays could be developed.

We are currently working on a varied programme of local history topics for 2025. The Society will hold six meetings per year, a combination of talks and visits, which will take place on the last Wednesday of the month in alternate months starting in January. Annual membership fees are £15, payable in January. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining the Society or if you would like to volunteer in some capacity. It's never too late!

Viv Kendall [viviennekendall@gmail.com](mailto:viviennekendall@gmail.com)

Trisha Williams [triywnwil003@gmail.com](mailto:triywnwil003@gmail.com)

**Postscript:** *Breaking Ground* runs until September 2025 and admission is free. (OUMNH, Parks Road, OX1 3PW [www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk))

And finally – anyone who collects dinosaur or Stonesfield memorabilia, or has 'dino-mad' children or grandchildren, may be interested to know that Royal Mail has produced a set of dinosaur postage stamps, one of which features *Megalosaurus*. These are available from Royal Mail at [www.shop.royalmail.com/special-stamp-issues](http://www.shop.royalmail.com/special-stamp-issues).

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## Down the drains

As you may remember, SAFER, on behalf of the Parish Council, have been badgering Oxfordshire County Council to tackle the blocked drains on Laughton Hill and at the Boot Street junction.



Working on the Laughton Hill drain

We can report that some progress has been made as, on Saturday 9 November, work was taking place on Laughton Hill drains. In conversation with the work crew they revealed that the drains were 60% blocked with limescale and they were using an ultra-high-pressure jet to remove it. Some bits were coming away in fist-sized lumps... no wonder that backup and flooding were an issue. Only time will tell if this work has cured a long-standing problem.

Apparently work on the Boot Street drain can 'only be done at night' so we also wait to see if progress is made there as well.

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

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## Leave a light on

If you think your house looks like there's no one in it, then a burglar will too. If you can afford to leave a light on while you're out, this can act as a great deterrent to burglary, especially during the winter months.

Thames Valley Police, West Oxon  
Neighbourhood Team

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## Repair and Community Café

The next Repair and Community Café will be held in the Village Hall on Saturday 7 December 10am-2pm.

The repair team can fix, assess and advise on anything you have which doesn't work. Bring along all your appliances and items which need repair. We will mend your old clothes and textiles, sharpen your knives, fix your broken toaster, restore your wobbly chair and sort out your computer problems. This means that everything that keeps on working doesn't go to landfill. Fix it, don't bin it! If you can let us know what you are bringing that would be very helpful: [stonesfieldrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldrepaircafe@gmail.com).

While you're waiting for your repairs, do stop by the café for tea/coffee, cake or lunch. The community café is open to all on a pay-what-you-feel basis; you don't have to bring an item to repair if you just want to enjoy the food. Lunch is served noon till 2pm, or earlier if we run out! Don't forget that the library is open 10-12noon and Muriel Barrett is joining us too. She crochets the most beautiful woollen hats from wool remnants that would make a brilliant Christmas present and will be available for you to purchase, do pop along to see what's available. Muriel is also very happy to teach anyone to crochet, so feel free to bring your hook and wool along too.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Mike Sofroniou

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## January's Film at the Combe Hub

*One Life* will be showing at the Combe Hub in Park Road on Friday 17 January. Tickets £5 on the door. Doors and bar open 7.30 for 8pm start.

The true story of Sir Nicholas Winton, a young London broker who, in the months leading up to World War II, rescued 669 predominantly Jewish children. Starring Anthony Hopkins as the older Winton in an award-winning role. Helena Bonham-Carter is outstanding as the young Winton's formidable, no-nonsense mother Babette. Cert. PG

Further information:  
[combecommunitycinema@gmail.com](mailto:combecommunitycinema@gmail.com)

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## Temporary road closure - Witney Lane

Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice – S14 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

A request has been received from Thames Water for a temporary road closure for **both pedestrians and vehicles** to apply to a length of Witney Lane, whilst essential boundary box installation works are carried out.

A temporary Notice is being made by Oxfordshire County Council to implement the temporary restriction and will operate from 27 January up to and including 29 January 2025, 24 hours per day. Please note that Notices for urgent works can last up to 5 consecutive days only.

Further information regarding the works may be obtained by contacting Thames Water helpline on 0800 316 9800.

Maps of affected areas can also be found on the Stonesfield village website.

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## **Wild Oxfordshire – Hedgerow Highways**

Hedges are a vital part of our local nature, providing shelter and resources for many species of mammals, insects, and birds. They're crucial wildlife corridors that allow safe travel between isolated habitats – woodland, grasslands, ponds.

Hedgerows provide endless benefits for biodiversity. They connect populations and allow relocation to better habitats. Over 100 priority species utilise hedgerows for many reasons: birds and small mammals nest in them, bats use them as foraging grounds and navigational markers, and reptiles hide in the long tussocky margins associated with them.

November to March is the best time of year to plant new hedges. First, acquire your roots. In Oxfordshire we recommend planting Blackthorn, Spindle, Buckthorn, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Wild Privet, Cherry Plum, or Hazel. Plant 4 or 5 plants per metre, about 25cm apart using the slit planting method, ensuring all fibrous roots are completely buried in the soil. You can watch a demonstration of this method by expert Nigel Adams on our website: [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/hedgerows-guidance](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/hedgerows-guidance). Aftercare for hedgerows is crucial. Keep weeds and grass away from the plants for the first 2-3 years

to give them plenty of space to absorb moisture and light. Thoroughly water the plants during dry spells. Compost can be very helpful to maintain vigour; there's competition for nutrients between such closely situated plants. Trim annually in the first 3 to 5 years to encourage bushy growth. Once the hedge is fully established (in approximately 5 years) you can trim every year or every two or three years but make sure you don't trim it to the same place every cut. More detailed aftercare information is available on our website. Good luck with your new hedges!

Why not make some green-themed resolutions this new year? Cultivate new hedge life, reduce your meat intake, find eco-friendly cleaning products, make your garden more wildlife-friendly using native plants. There are endless ways to make a difference! Sign up to our monthly email Bulletin, visit our website, follow us on social media for the latest nature news and ways you can join others helping nature in Oxfordshire. [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/news](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/news)

Jess Bouwer

Wild Oxfordshire Hedgerows & Partnerships  
Officer

### **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)

# Politics & local affairs

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## **November Parish Council Report**

### **Co-opted Councillors**

Two new Parish Councillors were co-opted, taking the council to a full cohort of members.

Philippa Lowe and Laura Bate were co-opted at the last meeting. The PC welcomes them both and looks forward to working alongside them.

### **Hedges and trees**

The Parish Council have received several complaints of overgrown or encroaching hedges on public rights of way. Would all home, landowners and tenants please ensure their hedges are well kept and cut back, allowing for easy access to footpaths and roads.

### **Anti-social behaviour**

Increased incidents of anti-social behaviour have been reported to Thames Valley Police, these range from destroyed safety signs at the Common, speeding vehicles through the village, smashed wing mirrors and keyed cars, ruined and strewn poppy wreaths on Remembrance Sunday. The Parish Council hope to have a representative from TVP at future meetings.

### **Planning**

Two applications detailed below, one objection and one support.

1. Installation of three air conditioning compressor units to side elevations.

(Retrospective) Richmond, The Ridings, Stonesfield

Ref. No: 24/02628/HHD

Object: The Parish Council are concerned about the amount of noise generated from the units and the lack of neighbourliness as the units are in close proximity to the adjacent house.

2. Single storey extension to existing garage to form two additional garage bays.

Nettleton, Witney Lane, Stonesfield

Ref. No: 24/02532/HHD

No comment.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

All the policies are now written, the final draft will shortly be circulated to the Parish Council for review.

### **Glebe land**

The Parish Council supported the 5-year management plan and thanks John Sampson for his time and effort in putting the plan together.

### **Grants**

The Parish Council awarded Stonesfield Tennis Club a £1,000 grant towards new floodlights.

### **Next Council meetings**

4 December and 8 January at 7pm

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## Neighbourhood Plan

As our draft NP nears completion, we thought you'd like to read about the recently added Character Assessment. This has been compiled by a professional, using data gathered by our band of volunteers who walked every street making notes on the buildings, materials, features and views; it describes the existing character of the village in the context of its development over time.

The Assessment seeks to define what it is about Stonesfield that is distinctive: its positive aspects but also areas where improvement would be desirable. It feeds into other sections of the Plan where policies are framed to shape future planning decisions on how that positive distinctiveness might be preserved and enhanced.

The description of the village is divided into four sections: the historic core focused around the Church, the Cross, High Street and Boot Street; Churchfields and Laughton Hill; later 20th century expansion to the north and east; and our rural surroundings. The prevalence of drystone walls, slate roofs and old cottages is matched by descriptions of post-war developments.

The slate industry is picked out as being of high historic interest to the village, having shaped not only the unique vernacular of the building materials and forms, but also the surrounding countryside and paths with their legible traces of chipping banks and mounds.

The glove-making industry is also described, of which Glover's Yard bears witness. And some key features are noted: post boxes on Boot Street, Churchfields

and the Cross, all of which relate to former post office locations; solid stone slab stiles at the entrances into the church yard; the village lock up; the village taps (did you know there are three?); St James' Centre which occupies the old village school building; and any evidence of former pubs eg in Boot Street.

Finally, and very importantly, it lists the many views out from the village; these make Stonesfield such an enchanting place to live in and walk through, and are rightly earmarked as worthy of protection.

The Character Assessment could form an initial point of reference for anyone contemplating development in Stonesfield and is a valuable part of our Neighbourhood Plan. A printed copy of the Assessment will be in the Library in December and also online.

Caroline Friend

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## Thank you to CSW volunteers

SAFER would like to thank all the volunteers who gave up their time in 2024 to run Community SpeedWatch sessions. We look forward to their help when CSW restarts in 2025. During 2024 Stonesfield Community SpeedWatch passed details to Thames Valley Police, for follow up, of over 100 drivers who were exceeding the speed limit, the fastest being 53mph. These drivers will have received warning letters from Thames Valley Police.

We are looking for more CSW volunteers for 2025 so if you want to help (as little as an hour a month) please contact us.

It was heartening to read in his latest Road Safety Strategy that Matthew Barber, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, 'will look to enhance the



CSW initiative, empowering and educating the public, informing policing activity and ultimately reducing speeding within communities'. Additionally, that 'Thames Valley Police will seek to bring justice to those who recklessly and dangerously risk the lives of others on our roads'.

At the same time, he highlighted that 'the Fatal Four remain the biggest risks on our roads so enforcement and education must continue to focus on distraction (particularly mobile phone use); tackling drink and drug driving; excess speed; and the use of seatbelts.'

Full details of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner's strategy can be found in the Road Safety section of the Stonesfield website.

We wish you all safe travels over the festive season.

Safer@stonesfieldpc.uk

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## **News from West Oxon District Council**

### **Electric vehicles**

WODC has agreed to purchase at least three more electric vehicles to support the services it delivers to residents as it continues with plans to decarbonise its fleet in response to the climate emergency. Their arrival will bring the total number of electric vans used across the waste, street cleansing and ground maintenance service, up to six. They will be powered by fully green electricity at the Council's depot.

The Council has also agreed to invest in an ultra-narrow vehicle which will be used to improve kerbside collections from properties in the hardest to access locations and will also be upgrading its vehicle charging infrastructure to be able

to run more electric vehicles in future. In addition, the Council has put forward plans to procure, or lease, a further six vehicles, including four food waste vehicles and two heavy vehicles which could include those powered by electricity as part of its fleet replacement strategy.

### **Your views count**

WODC is asking for residents' views on how it spends its money before it decides its budget for the next financial year. Despite the financial strain, the Council is committed to minimising the impact on services. Recent efficiencies have been achieved, such as saving £125,000 in customer services whilst still being a top-ranked council, and also boosting recycling revenues by £300,000 through renewed contracts.

To participate in the consultation, please complete the survey online at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/budget](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/budget) or pick up a paper copy at the Council offices on Welch Way and Woodgreen, Witney. The consultation period runs until 15 December.

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### **From our District Councillor Safer cycle routes in Oxfordshire**

How many of us would choose to get on our bikes more if it was easier to get from village to town to city? How many of us would like to take our children and grandchildren out for a biking adventure, seeing the sights of nature through the seasons? Do you want to find safe cycle paths that are low-traffic or traffic-free for families to explore, seniors to enjoy, children to cycle to school or for your commute to work?

At the Safer Cycling event held at the Corn Exchange in Witney on 24 October, over 40 people attended a presentation of the Oxfordshire Online cycling map, which can be found at [www.shorturl.at/QaTRO](http://www.shorturl.at/QaTRO). The map, put together by Oxford City Councillor Emily Kerr and Robin Tucker, Co-Chair of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT), showed that such routes do exist, but there is still a lot of work to be done to create joined-up safe cycling routes.

The map's creators are asking us to zoom in on our local area and see if we can add in routes. There are particular gaps around Carterton and Burford, where we know there are some safe routes (though not enough) that could be added to the map. If you don't have the link above handy, you can simply Google 'Oxfordshire safe cycling map'.

Emily, Robin and Kath Cochrane from Witney's own Windrush Bike project spoke with expertise and conviction about the need for routes that truly enable us to use our cars less, helping reduce congestion and pollution as well as benefiting health and happiness for all ages. Kath also talked about the work of the Windrush Bike project, including delivering safe cycle training and refurbishing bikes, which can then be supplied to people who might not otherwise have access to them.

A discussion then took place where the audience's ideas ranged from the need for more bike racks to the need for cycling routes to be brought into the responsibilities of National Highways, rather than the charity Sustrans. It was also pointed out that Oxfordshire County Council is funding Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), the latest

of which will look at Woodstock and Carterton, and their surrounding villages.

Please get in touch if you would like to get involved in campaigning for and shaping plans for our local cycling infrastructure.

Genny Early

[genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk)

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## **Theft from motor vehicles**

In the last few days there has been an extremely concerning increase in theft from motor vehicles overnight, specifically tools from work vans, around Oxfordshire.

Please consider removing your tools and other valuables from your vans overnight – the offenders appear well practised and vehicle alarms are not being triggered. The offenders are also concealing their identity. If you cannot empty your vans, please consider parking defensively, e.g. up against a wall, garage, or other vehicles to prevent access to your van.

Now would be a good time to make sure any CCTV or video doorbells are charged and operating, but we would rather prevent the offences than be watching the footage of it with you. We know only too well the impact that this is having on local residents.

Please be vigilant and report any suspicious vehicles on 101. Any offences in progress or having just occurred should be reported on 999.

More crime prevention advice is on our website: [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-vehicles-safe/](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/keeping-vehicles-safe/)

# 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

The Library will be closed from 24 December to 1 January and reopens on 2 January.

Val Phillips. (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

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## **Stonesfield Players**

### **Cold Comfort Farm**

On Thursday 12 December at 7.30pm at the St James' Centre the Stonesfield Players are holding auditions for a production of this hilarious and much-loved story written by Stella Gibbons, dramatised by Paul Doust and directed by Becki Sherlaw-Johnson.

Anyone is welcome to come and audition from Year 6 upwards (we have a couple of small parts for younger people). There are lots of large, medium-size and small parts as well as chorus, so it's suitable for all abilities. We aim to perform it on 27, 28 & 29 March.

For more information contact Becki at [rebeccasj@btinternet.com](mailto:rebeccasj@btinternet.com) or 07771 707818.

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## **Stonesfield Players - Murder Mystery Evening 1 February**

Yes, it's back! More murderous shenanigans return to the Village Hall on Saturday 1 February when the Stonesfield Players present their next Murder Mystery evening – Vanishing Act. Join us for an evening of fun, intrigue and a meal, as you work out whodunnit. Tickets £20. On sale soon.

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## **Woodstock Music Society Christmas Concert**

### **Friday 13 and Saturday 14 December, 2024, 7.30pm**

Weber: Der Freischütz Overture; Mass in E flat

Handel: Christmas Music from the Messiah

Choral and orchestral music for the Christmas Season by Rutter, Blake, Parker & Rathbone

Woodstock Music Society Choir & Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Paul Ingram

St Mary Magdalene Church, Park Street, Woodstock OX20 1SJ

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

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

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

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## Witney Music Society

The final concert in 2024 will be given by the Pelléas Ensemble, an acclaimed flute, viola and harp trio. Their programme will include works by Bartok, Rameau and Debussy. The concert is at 7.30 pm on Friday 13 December.

The first concert in 2025 will be given by the renowned vocal ensemble The Gesualdo Six. Their programme celebrating Epiphany in carols and songs through the centuries is at 7.30pm on Friday 10 January.

Both concerts will be at High Street Methodist Church, Witney. Tickets (£18, £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](http://www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk)

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## Make roads round the school safer for children

Many children in the village walk to school. The old narrow winding roads, and vehicles going too fast, has meant a number of near misses with oncoming traffic, particularly at blind corners immediately around the school. School children should feel safe walking in Stonesfield. We are calling upon the local Councils to install a crossing on Pond Hill and clear signage for vehicles to slow down and beware of school children on Pond Hill, Peaks Lane and High Street.

If action is not taken, we fear it's inevitable that a child will be hit by an oncoming vehicle. This petition adds your support calling for action from the Councils. [www.change.org/p/make-stonesfield-village-school-roads-safe-for-children-signs-and-crossing](http://www.change.org/p/make-stonesfield-village-school-roads-safe-for-children-signs-and-crossing).

David Lydiat



*Making the most of each and every moment*

We have a fully extended childcare provision running from Pre-School.

Here is what is currently available:

### **Breakfast Club**

Monday to Friday; 7.30 – 8.50am

(£7.10 per session) Cereal, toast and fruit juice included

### **Pre-School Sessions**

9am – 3pm daily for children aged 2–4 years (£19.35 per session)

### **After School Club**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday; 3.15 – 6pm

(£18.00 per session)

If you would like registration forms for any of the above, please contact our administrator, Mrs Zena Rozee (tel. 01993 898012 or email: [stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com](mailto:stonesfieldpsad@outlook.com))

# Clubs, societies & sport

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## Stonesfield Scouts

### Volunteering with the Scouts

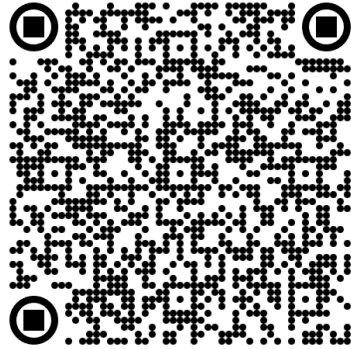
Make 2025 a year to learn a new skill and make a difference. 1st Stonesfield Scouts need support from the village to keep the group getting better and better!

You may not know some of us personally (even though it is a small village) but I bet you have seen our groups in some way or another, be it on Remembrance Day or at our annual Duck Race. We give young people opportunities to make a difference to the community and be engaged with the natural world, but we need to bolster our volunteer numbers. We are looking for people who can give a little bit of time to help run some of the sessions or to be part of our trustees. We are all lovely people, and are also all volunteers, and getting new ideas and fresh views is an essential part of what we do. We also have some seasoned volunteers who are looking to take a step back and we need to ensure the group keeps going.

The Scout Organisation provides a great way for you to learn a new skill yourself. Our Leaders have become trained kayakers, climbers and bushcrafters, but we are also looking for locals to share their interests with the group. This could be through nature walks, guided tours, or even a craft you are a dab hand at.

Come and find out what you can gain from being part of our group, and how we can gain from knowing you. We are having a social on 15 January 2025 at 7:30pm at the

White Horse Pub in Stonesfield. We look forward to seeing you then.



Please scan QR code to see more details about different ways you can help the Scouts.

### Help us turn £30,000 into £60,000!

We are really excited to have been awarded a £30,000 grant from West Oxfordshire District Council to match any funds we raise over the next 3 months, but it is all or nothing so we need your help.

Through the council's official crowdfunding website Spacehive ([www.spacehive.com/stonesfield-scout-hut-and-community-hub](http://www.spacehive.com/stonesfield-scout-hut-and-community-hub)) we have managed to raise an amazing £85,854. £30,000 is a pledge from the communities and infrastructure fund for our community asset, but we need to make sure we hit the target by getting donations through their website (and not straight to us).

£27,390 is a lot of money, but we have done it before and we can do it again. Before we ask everyone to chip in a bit,

what we really want is for people to approach companies, businesses, friends and family who may be able to help. If you think you can be part of this push then here is what to do.

1. Get in contact with Ben Whitworth (chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk) to say you can help and who you think you would be willing to contact. *These personal connections are essential.*
2. Like and share our webpage (www.spacehive.com/stonesfield-scout-hut-and-community-hub)
3. Remember that, at the moment, it is all or nothing and so if we fall short by even £1, then all the money goes back.

Ben Whitworth

chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk

## **Stonesfield Food Group**

### **Stonesfield Social Suppers.**

#### **Tuesday will never be the same again!**

We have a tag line... it's 'neighbours helping neighbours' but that doesn't really cover it! We have been going for two years now and it seems like decades since we started with an idea of a 'Winter Warmer' when energy prices were sky high and the cost of living crisis was headline news. That small idea has grown arms and legs into an all-year round (term time only) delicious supper with craft activities, raffle and great company.

#### **Tuesday is the day it happens!**

It starts with our Seniors Café which is hosted every Tuesday at our fabulous community pub, The White Horse, between 3pm and 4pm, with free tea, coffee and cake. Craig and Barbara are

relishing being the community hub for this regular and popular slot and any Stonesfield 'senior' is welcome, so do go along and catch up with friends or make new ones.

#### **Next up is the social supper – it's completely free**

Our last suppers for this year are as follows – save the dates!

Tuesday 3 December, 5-6.30pm (supper, crafting, raffle, free produce)

Tuesday 10 December, 5-7pm (full-on Christmas dinner, carols, lots of fun)

We would ideally like to get back to running the Social Supper every week from January but that does rely on having a few more people who could help us.

Doors open at 5pm and we serve until 6.30 pm. There will be a hot home-cooked meal (meat or veggie) and a pudding. Everyone is most welcome; it is entirely free and is aimed at families, friends and anyone who fancies a meal with great company.

There's always someone you know there and it's incredibly friendly. Kids are especially welcome – there is a craft table run by our team to keep them happy. There is also a selection of 'rescued' groceries from the Food Hub to take away for free. Sometimes it's sparse, often the table is groaning!

In January 2025 we do it all again, and this time (with your help) it will be EVERY WEEK!

Right now we have around 40 people who help when they can. Some offer regular help, others once a month. Some like to cook cakes and meals for the freezer. Some love the 'Ready Steady Cook' thrill of turning random ingredients

into something tasty, some love working with our younger guests to create handmade crafts and some love the steam of the dishwasher. Others appear as if by magic to help set up, and are gone when we arrive. Regardless of the reason, one thing is constant, there is a lot of laughter and good will in the room and that must be one of the reasons that we are still going. If you are sane when you start, you won't be by the time you finish! We offer good food and laughter, and team spirit. Oh, and if you're helping, you also get fed or have a takeaway.

If you like the sound of this, please do join us, and find your happy place! Setting up, cooking, serving, cleaning, crafting, there is so much to get involved with.

Our next planning meeting is 2 December at the Sports and Social Club at 7pm if you want to find out more. Or, you can email me and I can answer all your questions.

Julie Curran

juliecurran0@gmail.com

## **Stonesfield Gardening Club**

We welcomed Adam Kirtland last meeting, who came to talk to us about the different bulbs we can grow each month.

January brings us snowdrops, a somewhat difficult bulb to grow successfully, which he recommends buying after flowering 'in the green' as an easier way of increasing stock.

February for crocus, those colourful little jewels that are so welcome in a winter garden, and narcissus in March. More commonly known as daffodils, they are mostly scented and come in various shades of yellow and white. Good for pots as well as naturalising under trees.

Adam suggests his favourite, tulips, as the bulb to grow in April. Plant them as late as possible in the year, when the soil has started to go cold and cram them in to pots for a dramatic display.

May is for fritillaries, grown in grass or gravel or anywhere quite damp. I know from experience they spread very well in a gravel drive! In June the allium family come to the fore, with huge flowers for insects that then gracefully become lovely seed heads for birds. In July you can enjoy lily flowers, but Adam reminded us that lilies are toxic to cats.

Dahlias are the flower for August, which you can leave in the ground well mulched or lift each year. Crocosmia come into their own in September, planted in late spring and divided every 3 to 5 years when they have finished flowering.

October for nerines, and he suggested the unusual *oxalis versicolor* for November.

The year is rounded off with *cyclamen coum* in December, wonderful for naturalising.

Adam had a stunning presentation full of beautiful photographs and came armed with a box of bulbs to sell afterwards. A delightful talk from someone who only seriously got interested in gardening during lockdown!

Our meeting this month is our annual social (and membership renewal) with quiz and mulled wine, 7.30pm at St James' Centre on 9 December.

Happy gardening!

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

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

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## **Stonesfield Sports & Social Club**

Please have a look at our website ([www.Stonesfieldsocial.com](http://www.Stonesfieldsocial.com)) to see all the dates and times for events in December and January. There's lots going on in December to keep you entertained, from bingo to the Christmas tractor to Santa arriving at his Grotto! We also have live music from Mudflaps, Dirty Earth and Ollie Charles, as well as our regular pool and darts tournaments for everyone to join.

At the Christmas Grotto, with 'actual Santa', we will also be having a mini craft market for local crafts people to show off and sell their amazing creations.

The famous Christmas tractor will be arriving on 5 December, at around 6pm, raising funds for an amazing cause, Katharine House Hospice, who we have been raising funds for over the last few months. We're hoping they can hit a record-breaking total this year.

Kids movie morning is back with 2 dates over the holidays, popcorn included!

25 December	Open 11am-2pm
26 December	Open 12noon-8pm
1 January	Open 12noon-8pm

From 13–20 January we will be closed for refurbishment; with the club's 30th birthday party coming in 2025 we wanted to give the club a facelift and some much needed maintenance.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year, and thank you for all your support over the last year.

From all at SSSC

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## **Stonesfield Football Club**

All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey but still our boys come out to play!

Autumn is here, Christmas is fast approaching, and The Firsts are in 4th place with only 3 games played, which tells us they've been on Cup duty this month. It didn't start well when Chinnor came visiting in The Oxon Charity Cup, with the visitors progressing to the next round courtesy of a 3-1 win. Next our boys travelled to Hanborough in The Oxon Junior Shield and despite not playing particularly well they scored 4 goals and went through to the next round (4-2). They were given safe passage into the 3rd round of The Fred Ford Trophy when their opponents, Siege FC, pulled out. I know that our boys would rather play matches but at least they are still in the competition. It'll be back to League duty as winter approaches and some tough games ahead, hopefully they'll do well!

It was all league games for The Reserves this month and it didn't start well. They travelled to Sherbourne Harriers and were thumped 7-2 in a real shocker of a display. They have been doing well recently and this performance came as a bit of a 'wake up' call. It seems to have worked as they visited FC Mills and played well, taking all three points in a 4-1 win. The final game of this month saw a great performance against strugglers Leafield, at home. They created a plethora of chances in a one-sided match and the 3-1 scoreline didn't do their superiority any justice. I guess 'a win is a win', but what an opportunity it was for someone to stake a huge claim on this month's Fredo! The Reserves are in third place in The League and look good for the challenges ahead.



You may have guessed that there's been no winner of the coveted Fredo award this month. Don't worry, they don't go off, but they do have to be earned! This being the last Slate of the year, on behalf of the football club, let me wish each and every one of you a very Happy Christmas and may all your festive dreams come true (and more!).

Tom Flanigan (891979)

## Aunt Sally

Stonesfield Sports and Social Club B-team were the winners of the Wychwood League supplementary cup 2024!



Captain Dave Holloway and the winning team shown here collecting trophies at the finals night in Eynsham.

Sybil Barton

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## Pool at SSSC

Stonesfield Sports and Social Club's A-team for pool won the Witney Division 2 league in style with 13 wins and just the 1 loss in total across the season.

This is the first time the team have been promoted since starting 3 years ago and it will now face the top sides in Witney and District in Division 1 next season.



It was a real team effort and top performances to bring the champion's trophy back to Stonesfield from Keith Laird, John Sadler, Julian Marks, Ade Marks, Matty Boulter, Stuart Bevan and David Lydiat.

Lots of laughs were enjoyed on Monday evenings and our thanks to Sam, Ben and the team who have been so supportive at the Social Club. The B-team also made their debut this season and can be proud of their efforts.

David Lydiat, Captain

# Church news

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

### **(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)**

[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 - Christmas Joy**

Much of the news over recent months has been gloomy. Wars, natural disasters, politics and the economy, as well as stories of human wrongdoing and failure, can easily dominate what we read and hear. The media tends not to report the many positive things which happen, but we all need good news to inspire us.

For Christians, the season of Advent which begins on Sunday 1 December and the Festival of Christmas are a source of enormous joy and hope. Whatever difficulties we face, whatever failures we see in the world, in the church, and indeed in our own lives, the message of Christmas is of life-changing joy, and world-changing hope. The birth of a child to homeless parents, who had to flee their own country as refugees, seems an unlikely beginning for such a profound message.

Jesus grew up to become a preacher and teacher, and was put to death in Roman Palestine early in the first century. But as Christians we believe that this child and man was God's own humble presence in the world he made, God 'incarnate', taking on human life, loss, feelings and troubles, bringing the life of God into our world. Preaching a message of repentance and transforming love, rejecting the authority of institutions but embracing the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded, he met our humanity at our point of need.

The birth of Jesus, like a light coming into the darkness of the world, is a declaration of God's desire to be with us, and to remain with us come what may. His birth gives us hope in life, hope in death, hope in God, now and forever. His birth helps us to see all human life as precious and beloved, and to see ourselves as deeply loved too, chosen to welcome God's own Son through the compassion and integrity with which we live, speak and act. May Christ be born in each one of us, and may God fill our lives with love, joy and hope. Please come to join us in Church as we celebrate the joy and hope we share this Advent and Christmas.

Revd Ralph Williamson – Rector

## Church services

### Sunday 1 December [Advent Sunday]

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

Come and enjoy making a Christingle (with orange, candle, red ribbon and sweets), as we look forward to Christmas!

### Sunday 8 December [Second Sunday of Advent]

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

### Sunday 15 December [Third Sunday of Advent]

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

### Sunday 22 December [Fourth Sunday of Advent]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Comb	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
3pm	Combe	Carol Service
6pm	Stonesfield	Carol Service (donations to ShelterBox)

## Christmas Eve 24 December

3.30pm	Stonesfield	Crib Service for all the family
9pm	Stonesfield	Christmas Communion
10.30pm	Combe	Christmas Communion

## Christmas Day 25 December

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

## Sunday 29 December [Christmas 1]

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

## Sunday 5 January [Epiphany]

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

## Sunday 12 January [Baptism of Christ]

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

## Sunday 19 January [Epiphany 2]

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

## Sunday 26 January [Epiphany 3]

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

## Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (every week except 1, 22 Jan)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (4,18 Dec and 8, 22 Jan)

## Thursdays in Advent: ADVENTURES

– 8pm in Combe Church – all welcome!

28 November: Mary's special pregnancy – a meditation with Jonathan Ford

5 December: The importance of hope – Lucy Gardner, St Stephen's House, Oxford

12 December: Musical journey with composer Bob Chilcott and Jonny Manners

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## Stonesfield Methodist Church

### Services for December

Sun 1	11am	Jude Levermore
Sun 8	11am	The Reverend Ian Worrall Holy Communion Service
Sun 15	11am	Dawn Haley
Sun 22	3pm	The Reverend Andrew Biggs Christmas Carol Service
Sun 29	11am	The Reverend Andrew Biggs

### Services for January

Sun 5	10.45am	United at Chipping Norton Methodist Church Covenant Service
Sun 12	11am	The Reverend James Skinner
Sun 19	11am	Jenny Bywaters
Sun 26	11am	The Reverend Stephen Bywaters

### The Mother-to-be!

My thoughts are with Mary just now. Mary who had her whole life changed in one short day. However did she feel, I wonder? Was she doubtful, scared, did she panic - like I would? Or were God's words completely enough? Mary was human after all, she may have dithered, shed endless tears, and said why me - like I would - then gone on and worried about what her family would say and whether they would love her just the same.

Mary's thoughts and feelings were her own, her actions showed profound determination and a steadfast belief. God had chosen Mary, and Mary listened and

accepted all that lay ahead. Her courage and astounding love carried her through from that day of change ever after.

It was a starry night when the hills were bright, earth lay sleeping, sleeping calm and still;

then in a cattle shed in a manger bed a boy was born, King of all the World.

Joy Webb, StF 206

On 26 October, 54 Shoe boxes were filled with good things for children living in Eastern Europe. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed, in any way, to this wonderful result.

Peace and happiness be yours this Christmas time. Come and join the Christmas Carol Celebration Service on the 22 December at 3pm. All are welcome.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

k.m.albert14@gmail.com

---

## **New Church thought**

The USA had a Federal Election at the start of November, and celebrated Thanksgiving at the end. For just under half the US voters, including me, the first event did *not* cause a celebration.

Instead, I'm focusing on December's celebration of the Lord's birth into the world. Part of why He came here was to re-establish our ability to choose between right and wrong, and to remind us to care for each other. So that's what I'll be trying to do – and looking for hope.

Wishing everyone a peaceful holiday season and a healthy, happy new year.

Dale Morris

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## **Roman Catholic Worship**

### **Peace on earth**

We all want peace in the world, at work, with our family, friends and neighbours and Christmas is the time when we particularly hope and pray for peace. Luke 2:14 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill.' Goodwill in the Bible means the giving and showing of kindness, the showing of compassion, understanding and charity – all of which the world now is in urgent need, or as Pope Francis puts it, 'a world which seems to have lost its heart' (Papal Encyclical, Rome Oct 2024, Dilexit Nos - He Loved us). In 2016 Pope Benedict XVI said of God's love for us, 'This mystery of God's love for us is not only the content of devotion to the Heart of Jesus; it is also at the heart of all true Christian spirituality.'

We commemorate each Christmas the ultimate gift of peace, by celebrating the birth of Jesus who was sent by his Father to bring us the joy of peace for eternity. That humble birth of the Prince of Peace became the gateway for all peace on earth, should we choose. Luke 2: 6-12:

'While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the

Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

**Holy Mass**

Sunday 9.15am

Wednesday and Friday 9.15am

**Christmas services**



A blue poster for Christmas services at St Teresa's Church. At the top, the text "CHRISTMAS AT ST TERESA'S" is written in a white, arched font, with a white star in the center. Below the text is a black silhouette of a church with yellow-lit windows and a white roof. The bottom section of the poster contains the following text in yellow and white: "You are invited to CAROLS FOR GAUDETE SUNDAY Sunday, 15th December, 3pm St Teresa's Church (corner of Sheep St and Fisher's Lane) MASS OF CHRISTMAS NIGHT with carols 24th December, 8pm MASS OF CHRISTMAS DAY 25th December, 9.15am".

For Parish updates, any further information and further support, 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)

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**Snow in Stonesfield**



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