



Issue No 556 April 2025

The Great Exhibition



Have your say on the Neighbourhood Plan!

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group opened its period of public consultation on 15 March with an exhibition in the village hall. If you missed this exhibition, please make a note of the second exhibition in the St James Centre on Tuesday 29 April 2 – 8 pm. This offers an opportunity for those who are busy at weekends and/or who need to come during school hours or after work. It will be identical to the first exhibition.

There was a good turnout for our first exhibition: people came to look at the display of extracts from the draft Plan and to talk to

the team who have created it. We reproduced sections that explained the Plan's aims and objectives and how it has been put together using community involvement (remember the 2023 survey?!) and a host of volunteer work. We set out its key policies on housing, transport, building design, natural environment etc. We showed maps, charts and photographs. People were keen to engage in discussion, asking questions about every aspect of this vital document which will have legal status when future planning applications for developments in the village are made.

Continued on p5

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

The Editor and the Publishers reserve the right to edit, shorten or omit any article submitted.

Your contact details are held by *The Slate* while you are in correspondence with us or advertise in *The Slate*. This information and your legal rights are protected by our Data Privacy Policy, which is available on request from the Publishers.

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Deadline for next issue 15 April

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Printer

Windrush Press, Witney
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Advertising:

Deadline for next issue 10 April

Advertisements to
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Dates for your diary:

March

27,28,29	S'field Players: <i>Cold Comfort Farm</i>	Postponed	(see p4)
29	Open Mic Night	The White Horse	8pm

April

1-13	Pictures @ The Pub: Three Artists	The White Horse	pub hours
1,29	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5-6.30pm
1,8,15,22,29	Strong Nation HiTT Class	Village Hall	8.15-9.15pm
1,8,15,22,29	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
2,9,16,23,30	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
2,9,16,23,30	HiTT Class	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
2,9,16,23,30	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
2,16,30	Quiz Night	Sports & Social Club	8pm
3,10,17	Book Break	Library	12.30-2pm
3,10,17,24	Upholstery Club	Village Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
3,7,10,14	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
3,10,17,24	Ladies only Fitness Class	Village Hall	7-8pm
4,25	Baby & Toddler Group	Village Hall	10am-12 noon
5,6	Britten's <i>Noye's Fludde</i>	St Mary's, Charlbury	(see p24)
6	Open Garden	Sarsden Glebe	12.30-6pm
7,14,28	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10am-12noon
8	Board Games Night	The White Horse	7.30pm
8,22	Dominoes	Sports & Social Club	8pm
13	Darts competition	Sports & Social Club	1.30pm
15	Bingo	Sports & Social Club	7.30pm
16-30	Pictures @ The Pub: Spring Show	The White Horse	pub hours
17,21,28	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
20	'In steam' event: Military Vehicles	Combe Mill	(see p22)
24,25,26	Plant Sale	Bridewell Gardens	10am-1pm
26	Garden Club Plant Sale	Four Acres	8.30-11am
26	The Real Ale Trail	The White Horse	(see p9)
26	Music from Rough Cut Ruby	Sports & Social Club	8.30pm
27	Pool competition	Sports & Social Club	1.30pm
29	Folk Music Night	The White Horse	7.30pm for 8pm

Notices & news

March play postponed

The Stonesfield Players apologise for the postponement of the March performances of Cold Comfort Farm following the sad loss of a dearly-loved member and friend, Andy Tacon.

If anyone wishes to contact us, please use this new email address:
thestonesfieldplayers@gmail.com

The Stonesfield Players

Sponsored skydive



I would like to thank everyone in the village who sponsored my Tandem Skydive on 8 March. I not only raised almost £2,000 for charity but had a great day. The world looks a little different at 15,000 feet – it was awesome! Afterwards we had lunch and a few beers at The White Horse and I would like to thank Craig for looking after all 20 of us – that was also awesome!

David Brown

Thank you from Chrissie



Chrissie with Zulu at the Gardening Club AGM

Chrissie, of Chrissie's Owls, would like to thank everyone for their kind visits, messages and cards, following her heart attack and surgery last month. The ambulance and hospital staff were fantastic and she was able to go home again in less than a week.

It means that Phil is looking after the owls and that all forthcoming money-raising events have had to be cancelled; therefore, any donations or offers of help will be gratefully accepted!

www.chrissiesowls.com

Please use our new email addresses

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The Great Exhibition (cont)



The feedback received at the time of going to press has been extremely positive. Here's what one person said: 'An excellent, comprehensive plan, clearly identifying aims and objectives and offering insight into the needs of the village through easily understood statistics and diagrams. Written with an unusual degree of clarity - thank you!'



You can read the draft Plan online at www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan/ or in hard copy at the library.

An essential step in this public consultation is gathering your feedback on the draft Plan. We must show that we have asked for your views on it, and then taken your comments – positive and negative – into account. PLEASE could you now send us your feedback using the short form on the village website.



Below is the QR code which links to the website. There are physical feedback forms in the library and the shop. Feedback is open until Saturday 3 May.



Caroline Friend
info@stonesfieldplan.com



Ardley Incinerator



There are still places left for the tour to the Ardley Incinerator on 29 April at 10am. 95% of West Oxfordshire's waste is burned at Ardley's state-of-the-art facility so this will be an insight into what actually happens to all that stuff that we throw in the bin and how sustainable it is.

If you are interested, please get in touch with me.

Mike Sofroniou

mike.sofroniou@gmail.com

Monday Coffee at the St James' Centre

Since we changed our timing, serving from 10am through to 12 noon, we have welcomed some new faces at our Monday morning coffee group. However, we would love to see a few more, especially if you have recently moved into the village and would like to meet some new people.

Coffee is served with a smile, accompanied by a biscuit or two, at the table. It is all free of charge, funded by St James' Church. Why not come along and see for yourself? Please note we are not open on Easter Monday morning, 21 April.

Margaret Hill

Contacting *The Stonesfield Slate*

A reminder that *The Slate* email addresses have changed. To submit an article, please email editor@stonesfieldslate.uk. To advertise, or for general enquiries, please use publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk.

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 appears on page 2 of each issue.

Paul & Diane Bates

Slate Publishers

publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk

White Horse Folk Session



Due to the Easter holidays for schools and colleges, and the fact that many of us will be away, the April White Horse Folk Session has been shifted from the third to the fifth Tuesday of the month - 29 April, 7.30 for 8pm.

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STONESFIELD GARDENING CLUB'S PLANT SALE



ANNUALS - PERENNIALS
HOUSE PLANTS
HERBS - VEGETABLES



SATURDAY



26th APRIL 2025

8.30am to 11.00am

@ FOUR ACRES, POND HILL

Cash or Card, bring a bag / box

'Early birds' get the best choice

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Footsteps guide for parents

Footsteps guide for parents is fundamentally the same advice to parents/carers: that they need to help their child learn to risk-assess traffic (while they are together). This is a life skill, essential for helping keep the child safe when they become independent, wherever they are and not just related to school journeys.

Parents/carers need to take on this responsibility, as they are the ones out and about with their youngsters. Learning about traffic needs to be done in that environment and it will take time to learn the complex decision-making skills needed to cope.

Similarly to how children learn to swim, children need to be accompanied by an adult, starting out in an easier setting (shallow water/quieter roads). As the child grows in confidence, the parent/carer can move them to more challenging situations (deeper water/more traffic). With lots and lots of practice and encouragement, the child should demonstrate they can cope with traffic (if parents follow the questioning techniques and inviting the child into decisions as in the guide), and then they can be moved to a more challenging situation. Eventually, with lots of time and support, the child should be able to show the adult they can cope alone (in the deep end of pool alone/in any traffic location). That's when the parent/carer can decide whether to allow their child to go it alone.

It is not complicated but, for many parents, it is a shift away from telling children what to do: stop here, look there, go now.... which keeps the child safe when they are together but doesn't help the child learn to

make decisions for themselves and prepare them for independence.

A copy of Footsteps guide for parents can be found at www.stonesfield.online/category/safer/

Julie Jones, Road Safety Education Officer
Oxfordshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service

Stonesfield Village Hall

Please note new contact details and website:

Tel: 07359 338490

Email: info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com

Website: www.stonesfieldvillagehall.com

We have continued to be super-busy at the Hall. The new phone number and booking system are in operation and the website displays our calendar and offers online booking for regular users to book and/or amend use, and enables new users to check available times and book accordingly. We hope that it continues to help speed up the booking process and makes life easier for everyone – if there are any problems, please just contact me.

Due to the Easter holidays regular bookings may be changed so please check times with your class leader.

Another reminder of our planned Stonesfield Village Garage Sale on 5 July. Please look out for how to get on the map – but do save the date for now.

Claire Renshaw (07359 338490)
info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com

Friends of Stonesfield School

Following our AGM, Friends of Stonesfield School were very pleased to have had a successful year last year. However, we're aiming to raise even more funds this year and will be applying for grants to help us achieve our goals (which are yet to be set!). If you have experience in grant applications, we would love to hear from you.

Sadly, Hannah Crowe is stepping down from the Committee. We would like to say a huge thank you as she worked so hard to keep FoSS going when it looked like it might fold due to a lack of volunteers, and has been a fantastic Treasurer. We really wouldn't still have FoSS without her... thank you, Hannah!

We know that life is busy, especially with primary school-aged children, but FoSS can only continue to thrive with the support of volunteers. We have a FoSS Network WhatsApp group, so if you would like to join, let us know at

robyn@fossteam.org

sarah@fossteam.org

You can also find us on Facebook.

Save the Date: We are planning our Summer Fete for Sunday 22 June from 12-4pm to be held at a new venue on the Stonesfield Playing Field as part of a wider village event. We welcome all community organisations to join in so, if you would like to get involved, please email us!

Sarah, Adam and Robyn

Friends of Stonesfield School

The Real Ale Trail

The Real Ale Trail comes to our area on 26 April.

The trail bus will run throughout the day and will take a circular route picking up from Oxford Parkway or Woodstock with drop-offs at Begbroke, Thrupp, our White Horse in Stonesfield, Ramsden, Hailey and Little Ox Brewery in Freeland.

For tickets and further information, please visit www.realaletrail.co.uk/oxfordshire

Pictures @ The Pub

We hope that visitors to the pub have been enjoying the diverse work of Chris Young, John Taylor and Stuart Parker. There is still plenty of time to take in this exhibition which continues until Sunday 13 April.

From mid-April and throughout May we will have our Spring Show which coincides with Oxfordshire Artweeks. This will be a group show by Stonesfield artists who will offer paintings, prints, etchings, drawings and illustrative works on a variety of themes. We hope to see you there!

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

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse
Community Pub



Combe Women's Institute

At our annual meeting in March the Committee was re-elected with Sally as our President for another year.

We are an enthusiastic group of women from Combe and Stonesfield offering all things WI - friendship, tolerance, learning and community spirit, and we have an exciting year ahead with a varied programme of speakers, outings and activities. If you are interested in joining us then why not come along as a guest (up to three meetings each year) for a charge of £6 per meeting which includes a raffle ticket and refreshments.

Membership is open to all women over the age of 18. The annual subscription of £51 is now due and this covers 11 meetings throughout the year. Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe from 7.30pm - 9.30pm.

At our next meeting on Monday 14 April, Stuart Cummings will be telling us about the many household innovations from years gone by.

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

Julia Sharpe, Secretary (891058)
combewi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

An appeal for articles

We hope you have enjoyed the *I'm a Resident* articles which have appeared in recent issues of *The Stonesfield Slate*.

We're hoping to find more Stonesfield residents who will contribute their own article for *I'm a Resident*. We are looking for a wide range of contributors: school children to retirees, new arrivals to those

'born and bred' ... and everyone in between.

The topic allows the writer to describe their own experience of Stonesfield in any way that suits them. It can be of any length but, as a guide, 500 words would work well.

We are trying to build a collection of these articles to publish throughout 2025. If you might consider being a contributor, please let us know.

The Editor

Oxfordshire Artweeks 2025



Oxfordshire Artweeks, the UK's oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event, returns to Oxfordshire this year for three weeks in May to showcase the art of over 1,000 artists, including more than 200 who are new to the festival for 2025. These range from world-class painters, printmakers, photographers, ceramicists, sculptors and silversmiths to the talented and enthusiastic members of a variety of community groups.

Each week focuses on a different area of the county:

3-11 May Oxford City

10-18 May South Oxfordshire

17-26 May North & West Oxfordshire

There's so much to see whether you're arty, an art aficionado or simply curious. Where will you go first?

www.artweeks.org

Tarmac the Oxfordshire Way?



Some Stonesfield residents have raised concerns about Blenheim's use of tarmac on the lanes and tracks above the village on the Charlbury side.

The units alongside the big barns at Hill Barn Farm have been shored up against further dilapidation and the dry-stone wall around their plot is being repaired. The track that leads from the Charlbury Road to the farm has very recently been tarmacked, presumably because of the heavy usage generated by the commercial use of the barns to store wood and machinery.

The concern is that part of the Oxfordshire Way (which comes from the crossroads on the ridge down to Laughton Hill past Waterloo Barn and Lower Farm) could be surfaced in tarmac. It is a bridleway and walkers' footpath which would be devastated if heavy traffic were using it. A tarmac surface would cause all the water running off the fields to cascade down to the main road at Laughton Hill: potentially lethal in winter. The track has recently been packed with rubble, but tarmac would be inappropriate, and out of keeping with the rural setting: it is very visible from parts of the village. Encouraging vehicular

use here would be a serious hazard for walkers and riders.

When asked what their plans were, Blenheim replied that they have no plans currently to resurface other tracks, especially not the one past Lower Farm and Waterloo Barn. They will, however, carry out basic maintenance on the 'ridge' section from the Fawler Road as and when the potholes get much worse.

Caroline Friend

Probate – why bother?

Ah, probate. The word alone makes most people cringe, conjuring images of dusty offices and endless forms. It's tempting to dismiss it as pointless bureaucracy, but probate serves an essential purpose – one you'll appreciate when you see the alternative.

Probate is what gives you the legal power to manage a deceased person's estate. Without it, you're stuck. Banks, insurance companies, or even Great Aunt Maude's prize dahlias won't budge without official proof of your authority. Think you can bypass it because you're family? Sorry, but no.

Consider this: your Uncle Bob dies without a will, leaving a few grand and a shed full of tools. "Surely, I don't need probate for that," you think. But then Cousin Larry, last seen in the '90s, appears claiming Bob promised him the shed and cash. Without probate, disputes like this spiral into chaos, turning family gatherings into courtroom dramas.

Skipping probate isn't just risky for small estates. Try selling a house that technically still belongs to someone deceased—you won't get far. Probate clarifies ownership,

prevents disputes, and ensures a fair transfer of assets.

Yes, the forms are tedious, and yes, it takes time. But it's better than family feuds or legal limbo. In short, probate keeps the peace, maintains order, and ensures Cousin Larry stays away from that shed.

So, why bother with probate? Because chaos isn't worth the cost.

Anna Boucher (07534 581748)
anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com

National Databank

The National Databank was co-founded by O2 and the digital inclusion charity, The Good Things Foundation. The Databank provides free mobile data, texts and minutes to those living in 'data poverty'. The ability to stay connected with loved ones and have access to many essential services, some only available online, is critical but may be a problem for the 2.4 million UK residents who cannot afford a mobile contract.

Currently any O2 store will offer a free data SIM to those who meet certain criteria. Assistance will be given with setting up and the original mobile number may be retained. More information is available by calling 0344 809 0222 from your O2 mobile or visiting the website: www.o2.co.uk/national-databank.

Why not take part in Artweeks 2026?

Artweeks is:

- Nonselective, not-for-profit artists' organisation
- Open to all artists & craft makers living or working in Oxfordshire
- For the keen enthusiast to the professional, for charities & community groups.
- Selling or non selling exhibitions

Offer a venue to Artweeks artists 2026:

- Do you have display space you could offer for a few days next May?
- A wall or a room?
- Increase footfall to your business or just to help a local artist.



IF YES:

- contact artweeks@artweeks.org for a chat and more details.
 - List yourself or your venue on our 'find a venue page' www.artweeks.org/artists/find-a-venue
- Email to request link to our free 'Thinking of Taking Part in Artweeks' session on Zoom 7pm on Wed 24th September 2025.
- Exhibition entries taken from October – **ALL completed entry details & payment must be received NO LATER than 31st December.**

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

From the Parish Clerk

Following the Parish Council meeting on 5 March, the following is reported:

Welcome to the new Clerk

The Parish Council welcomed Kay Linnington, the new Clerk to the Council. We very much look forward to working with Kay.

The Glebe

The management plan for the Glebe was approved and the Council has confirmed it will commit to cover the cost of the annual cutting. The community orchard is also progressing.

Laughton Hill mirror

The Parish Council agreed to replace the mirror back to its original height.

Highways update

Drains on Laughton Hill: Drain descaling works will take place on 23-24 April 2025. The Highways Operations Manager hopes this will cure the longstanding 'water overflow' problem.

Repainting white lines outside shop: Highways have finally identified this as part of 'Scheme Ref-1716568' for resurfacing the road outside the shop and it is hoped that the works will be completed soon.

Planning

There have been no applications.

Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 14 consultation starts on Saturday 15 March and closes at 4pm on Saturday 3 May. There are two in-person drop in exhibitions, the first on 15 March in the Village Hall and the second at the St James' Centre on 29 April at 2pm. Please complete / hand in your feedback forms by 4pm on Saturday 3 May.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 2 April at 7pm at Stonesfield Primary School.

Cherie Carruthers

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

West Oxfordshire District Council

From your District Councillor

Thames Water

I was in London recently to protest outside the High Court against the Thames Water £3 billion high interest emergency loan to add to their existing debts of £19 billion. A group of secondary creditors, along with WASP and the Witney MP Charlie Maynard, are currently challenging the decision in a three-day hearing at the Court of Appeal. Under the current terms, the loan carries a 9.75% annual interest rate and will cost £898m over the next half-year; one bond fund has already recorded a 17% paper profit on their portion of the £3bn loan. It appears that Thames Water is now being aggressively exploited for excessive financial returns, rather than

addressing the operational issues that are costing us as customers, and leaving our rivers as dirty open sewers. For Combe sewage treatment works (STW), there was a total duration of 1,983.75 hours of spills; at Finstock STW, there was a total duration of 208 hours of spills. The River Evenlode is designated by Thames Water as an ‘ecological high priority site’, and yet this is how it is treated. The hope is that the appeal will result in putting Thames Water into ‘Special Administration’, which will enable Thames Water to focus immediately on restructuring and on delivering improvements, rather focusing on the demands of the lenders.

Botley West Solar Farm: Relevant representation

On 24 February, the Development Control Committee considered the Council’s response to the Botley West Solar Farm proposal. ‘Relevant representation’ covers a wide range of topics, including the impact on the landscape and its heritage, the environment, and local communities. Issues highlighted during the meeting for further consideration included;

- Concerns about the impact on tourism to the area
- The potential impact the development may have on wildlife and whether necessary mitigations are in place
- Plans for decommissioning and what happens when solar panels are removed at the end of their life
- Asking for more consideration to the loss of high-quality agricultural land
- Community benefits from the site should be significantly increased
- A concern that suggested improvements previously proposed by WODC, as a

means to try to reduce the harmful impacts of the scheme, had not been taken into account by the developer

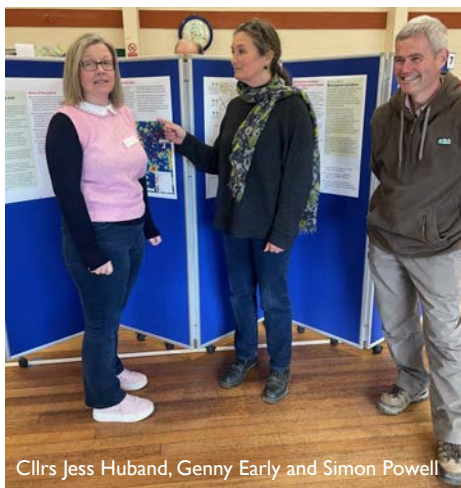
Local plan timetable

WODC is preparing a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2041, to make sure that our planning policies and proposals are up to date and effectively tackle vital issues such as climate change, health and wellbeing, housing and the economy. The current timetable is as follows:

- Consultation on preferred policy options (Regulation 18): towards end May 2025
- Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19): October 2025
- Submission for independent examination: March 2026
- Examination and adoption: 2026

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan

I attended the exhibition on 15 March in Stonesfield Village Hall on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the result of a huge amount of work. This sets out the views and aims for the village’s future



Cllrs Jess Huband, Genny Early and Simon Powell

development, to enhance our community, village character, economic activity and beautiful countryside and ecology. I gave some feedback to the Committee, and discussed some aspects of village needs for housing for an ageing population. You can see the draft Neighbourhood Plan at the library, online at: www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan/ along with a feedback form, or in person on Tuesday 29 April (2-8pm) at the St James Centre. The feedback needs to be submitted by Saturday 3 May.

Genny Early

genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

From your County Councillor

Devolution and Local Government reorganisation

- The Government has produced the White Paper whereby changes to Local Government will take place leading to a combined mayoral authority being put in place across the county. Together with the end of two-tier authorities, this effectively means the end of District and County Councils in 2027/28 with them being replaced by combined authorities of Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and possibly Buckinghamshire, and with an elected mayor.
- Sitting under this will be either a single county unitary in Oxfordshire delivering the services currently provided by the County and District, or a two-tier unitary with Cherwell, West Oxfordshire and Oxford City as one, and South, Vale and West Berkshire as the other. A third

option is also being explored, commonly known as a three set of unitary authority with a greater Oxford with new boundaries, a reduced sized Cherwell and West, and a South, Vale, and West Berkshire.

- The Government wants a proposal by November 2025 and a decision will be made by the government minister shortly afterwards in 2026.
- We understand that parish and town councils will remain largely as they are, possibly with some extended responsibilities. (Further details awaited.)

Stonesfield

- Road safety: Signage (children crossing), line repainting and pavement build-out are being considered in Pond Hill / Church Street / High Street to make roads safer for children and others going to Stonesfield Primary School. A site visit involving residents, OCC Highways, the Headteacher and myself was held in March. Proposals to come forward with actions.
- Judds Garage junction black spot at the A44: I am working with OCC officers to reconfigure the traffic at the junction in order to make it safer for motorists and to move the bus stop so that a new bus shelter can be installed for bus users largely from the Wootton area. It may well be that traffic lights will be considered. A full consultation will be undertaken once plans have been drawn up.

Please use our new email addresses

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Woodstock

- **Doctors' Surgery:** The next meeting of the Strategic and Action Group is taking place on 27 March when it is expected that a footprint and funding agreement for the surgery, together with its location, feasibility results, and the next steps can be agreed.
- **Coach and bus routes:** A coach and bus routing site visit is taking place in the vicinity of Cadogan Park, Princess Ride, Flemings Road and Shipton Road on 11 March. The cabinet member for transport, residents, the OCC officer for transport and I will be in attendance to get first-hand insight into the issues of street parking, coach, and bus drop-offs and to come up with strategies and actions to mitigate the impact.
- **Banbury Road:** Road surfacing and verge repairs will take place towards the end of May.
- **The Feathers Hotel:** Works outside The Feathers have now concluded and the generators removed which had been causing residents considerable disturbance over at least six months. This took considerable effort but at least is now happily resolved.

Bladon

- **Flooding:** A site visit to Eagles Lodge with the Blenheim Estate and residents affected by the flooding took place a few weeks ago, with agreement for the introduction of a bunding in the grounds of Blenheim to hold the water from Blenheim's land and mitigate the flooding on Grove Road.

Combe

- **Combe House:** Ongoing disturbances and damage to the green, verges and

highway because of renovation works at Combe House has been reported to OCC Highways and WODC for action. This has been deemed inconsiderate and unacceptable. Further updates will be reported.

- **Road repairs:** Road repairs and resurfacing will be scheduled in the vicinity from the railway bridge and Combe Mill.

Andy Graham

andy.graham@oxfordshire.gov.uk

From our Member of Parliament

After more than nine months as your MP for Bicester and Woodstock, I want to share what I've been working on for our area and how you can get in touch if my team and I can help in any way.

In Parliament, I have been raising the issues that matter most to our communities. I secured a meeting with the Health Secretary to push for capital funding for GP surgeries, pressed the Prime Minister on the urgent need to reduce CAMHS waiting times, and challenged the Energy and Net Zero Department on frequent power outages affecting homes and businesses. I am also working to ensure stronger action on water pollution, holding water companies accountable for sewage discharges that harm our rivers and streams.

Supporting local businesses, farmers, and charities is a priority. I opposed tax changes that could force family-run farms to sell land and challenged National Insurance rises that place an undue burden on small businesses and charities. I have also pushed for stricter limits on water

company bonuses to stop billpayers from covering corporate debts.

Alongside scrutinising policy, I am working to bring forward positive changes that directly benefit our communities. I have supported efforts to improve youth opportunities, including backing a Youth Mobility Scheme that would create new chances for young people to work and travel abroad. I have also pushed for cross-party cooperation to address the social care crisis, rather than waiting years for another inquiry.

It has been a pleasure to visit many events across the constituency and meet so many of you. Since being elected, I have engaged with dozens of community groups, businesses, and charities. From supporting local campaigners working to clean up our waterways to meeting organisations making a difference in Bicester, Kidlington, and Woodstock, I am always inspired by the dedication of our residents.

I will continue working hard to ensure our constituency gets the attention and investment it deserves. If you'd like to raise an issue or need assistance or want to flag any events happening in Stonesfield that I would love to attend, please email me.

Calum Miller MP

calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

Neighbourhood Watch

Information on Neighbourhood Watch is available at: www.ourwatch.org.uk/

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

Police and community support: For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to local medical appointments or to the hospitals in Oxford and Banbury. We make no charge but welcome a donation towards expenses.

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

Thames Valley Alert

Matthew Barber, Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, is asking the public to report crime and anti-social behaviour so that action can be taken.

Matthew Barber said: Overall crime is falling and Thames Valley Police is doing a good job but there is more work to do. Some crimes have gone up, as reporting has increased and that is what I have been encouraging people to do: Report crime, don't assume someone else will do it. As citizens, we all have a role to play. Reporting on social media, turning a blind eye or assuming that crimes will be dismissed won't lead to action. Only reporting crimes to the police will lead to more criminals being caught, and if cases can be prosecuted, victims getting the justice they deserve.'

Crime (including retail crime which has been under-reported historically) and anti-social behaviour can be reported online at: www.thamesvalley.police.uk. In an emergency, always call 999.

Please use our new email addresses

Articles: editor@stonesfieldslate.uk Advertising and enquiries: publisher@stonesfield.uk

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Library

Note our new phone number: 01865
815181

Opening hours:

Monday	2.30-7pm
Wednesday	10am-12 noon
Thursday	2.30-5pm
Saturday	10am-12 noon

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

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 to:
homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Deborah Wilson (01865 815181)

Library Manager

YOUR LIBRARY NEEDS YOU!

Time to spare?

Looking for a new opportunity?

Friends of Stonesfield Library would like to meet you! We support the library service by sharing the opening hours with the professional manager. If you enjoy reading and helping people, this is the volunteering opportunity for you!

We work in pairs and carry out a variety of tasks during a session (usually one session of 2-3 hours per month).

Interested?

Come along to Stonesfield Library to find out more or contact Mike Pollitt on 01993 891856.

I'm a Resident

We moved from Hertfordshire to a bungalow in Farley Close in 1969, which had been one of the first developments in the village, completed in 1960, and at that time the Greenfield Road estate was just being completed. Like ourselves, there were many young families with small children who had moved into the village and we found it a very friendly community, particularly our neighbours in the Close.

Our bungalow backed onto the playing field which was there before the existing village hall had been built. An early memory was attending a meeting in the old village hall, on the corner of Greenfield Road and Woodstock Road, to discuss the provision of street lights in the village. There were some strong feelings on this subject and several more meetings followed over the next few years.

Shopping was easy in the village with a grocer's, butcher's, baker's, general store, hairdresser's and Post Office. Central Stores, in the Primitive Methodist Chapel building on Pond Hill, was a general/hardware store where you could buy almost anything. There were two butchers - my cousin, Bill Lindsey, in Churchfields and another attached to the grocer's in Pendle Court. The Post Office was run by Marion Hall in Churchfields and Mr Barratt, the baker, came door-to-door with his basket of bread from his bakery in Boot Street.

Our children all attended Stonesfield Primary School and at age 11 pupils then went to Spendlove Middle School in Charlbury, including Matthew, my eldest, before going onto secondary school. Spendlove closed in 1982.

I became a PTA representative on the school's governing body under the chairmanship of Pat Hunt and, apart from our more formal duties, we had a programme of social and fund-raising events. We held very popular barn dances in the village hall, skittles evenings in the bowling alley at The White Horse, and, one year, a bonfire and fireworks down near the scout hut.

We also held an annual pig roast and disco in the playground of what is now the St James' Centre. The first year this was held, we roasted a whole pig over a charcoal fire, starting early in the morning but after 12 hours the pig still was not cooked. We managed to carve a few slices at about 10pm before everyone went home! The following year we cooked beefburgers!

Our main fund-raising activity was the annual 50/50 auction which I organised with Pat Hunt with help from many parents. This was in the days before eBay and items were entered into a professionally-run auction held in the village hall, with half the proceeds going to the owner and half to the PTA. Large items were collected beforehand including, I remember, a very heavy piano from The Black Head and one particular year the late Colin Saunders CBE from Solid State Logic donated a car. He also allowed us unlimited use of his photocopier at the company's new headquarters in Churchfields. Other items were brought to the village hall on Saturday morning where

they were numbered and catalogued. We would have maybe 300 items to auction off during the afternoon. One year we collected an old black cabinet covered with bird droppings; when the bidding started, the auctioneer realised it was more valuable than it appeared and restarted the bidding. It turned out to be an antique Victorian ebonised credenza.

In addition to The Black Head, where we would always complete PTA/school governor business after a meeting, there was The White Horse where we played skittles regularly. The Boot Inn reopened in 1974 and was run by John and Marion Leaves until 1979, and this was the venue for the very popular Pink Panther Jazz Band which played regularly on Wednesday evenings.

For the annual Carnival, various village organisations decorated floats which were assembled in the Manor's drive and then paraded via Pond Hill to the village fete which was held on the playing field. One year we borrowed a Land Rover from Nigel Collier which some parents decorated to carry the School's Rose Queen and attendants; that year the Rose Queen was Jessica Langford and one of the attendants was my son Oliver

The Manor also hosted the Tennis Club's annual tennis tournament before the tennis courts were completed on the playing field in the early 1980s. A special tournament was held to celebrate the opening of the new courts where I competed with high expectations in the men's doubles partnered by Pat Hunt and we were soundly thrashed!

My sons became members of the 1st Stonesfield Scouts when Ray Godfrey was scoutmaster. They met in 'Andy's Den' on

the site of the new scout hut. It was originally a temporary wartime building from RAF Bicester and in 1958 was dismantled and transported to Stonesfield. In the 1980s I helped Clive Sutton, the then Group Scout Master, to take the Scouts camping by the lake in Heythrop Park where I had regularly camped at a Whitsun scout rally some 30 years earlier. One very wet night we had to evacuate all the boys from their tents to a hut on the site.

Back in the days when it snowed every winter, the favourite place for sledging was down Baggs Bottom, which is the field below the scout hut, where dozens of youngsters would enjoy the snow. I still have a home-made wooden toboggan in my garage.

Stonesfield remains a very friendly place to live, where everybody greets you when walking the dog.

We are lucky to still have an excellent grocer's shop and the hairdresser's and, although these days I can no longer walk very far, there are the most enjoyable walks in almost any direction from the village. Where else would you get such magnificent views as you have from Stonesfield Common early in the morning?

Ray Gould (07768 353405)

Botanical sessions in Stonesfield – a call for interest

I work as an ecological consultant, and first visited Stonesfield in 2023, carrying out botanical surveys of the Common with my work. I got in contact with Richard Morris and revisited the Common voluntarily last year to add to the dataset we'd started gathering the year before that – the aim is

to continue this monitoring year on year, measuring any changes in the diversity and abundance of the many wildflowers that grow there, in response to ongoing management. Richard rounded up a few volunteers for last year's monitoring, and through this I met Genny Early. Genny put me in touch with John Sampson, and I became further embroiled in the village's botanical goings-on, carrying out another survey of the Glebe land on Brook Lane.



This lovely little site shares much of the character of the Common, the top section supporting limestone specialists like the nationally scarce (but perhaps locally well-known) meadow clary, *Salvia pratensis*, cucumber-scented salad burnet, *Poterium sanguisorba*, and a scattering of crowd-pleasing pyramidal orchids, *Acacamptis pyramidalis*. Volunteers have been hard at work clearing scrub from the grassland, leaving gaps that were quickly occupied by the frothy pink blooms of wild marjoram, *Origanum vulgare*, another indicator of limestone grassland. The space opened up will, with time, fill in with a diverse array of plants, which will in turn be visited by butterflies like the small copper and common blue. There are glow-worms at the site, and on my regular strolls up and down Brook Lane to the Common and back I have spotted song thrushes and green woodpeckers foraging. The spell of warm

weather in early March brought common pipistrelles racing up and down the lane, clearly giddy with thoughts of spring; the botanical riches on offer on the Glebe will provide a bounty of insect prey to keep these bats happily fed through the summer months.

In September last year I produced a report espousing the botanical interest of the Glebe land (available on the Stonesfield website: www.stonesfield.online/category/sustain/) which was sent on by John to the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, who awarded a grant to develop a long-term management plan for the site. The management plan was a collaborative effort between John, Imogen Parker of Wild Oxfordshire, and many others.

The plan places emphasis on using the site to increase the engagement of the community with local ecology and the environment, and as such, I'd like to hold some (free) botanical training sessions on the Glebe land and the Common over the summer – no previous experience necessary!

If this is something you would be interested in, please send me a quick email at joe.graingerhull@gmail.com, and I will get back in touch with further details about the sessions.

Joe Grainger-Hull
joe.graingerhull@gmail.com

Combe Mill 'In Steam'

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

On Sunday 20 April, the Mill will be open 'In Steam', showing military vehicles from the North Oxfordshire & Cotswolds Military Vehicle Trust together with a display by the Home Guard. This is the event for anyone interested in military matters and children will love the jeeps and large trucks. All machinery will be working and will be demonstrated by our volunteers.

The tea room will be open for refreshments which may be enjoyed in the picnic area by the river. There is a mini market and a gift shop in which to browse, along with tombola and a raffle. Dogs are most welcome and car parking is free.

Admission charges:

For 'in steam days': adults £9, seniors £7.50 and children free.

For self-guided tours every Wednesday up to the end of October (tea room open): adults £5, seniors £4 and children free.

If you have enjoyed your visit, why not enquire about volunteering – we would love to hear from you.

Margaret Gruber
Blenheim Palace Sawmills,
Combe, OX29 8ET
www.combemill.org

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum



Sjt Harry Carr 1st Bucks Battalion T-Force (centre) at liberation of Delft Holland - 8 May 1945 (Bucks Military Museum Trust)

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is launching a new exhibition *From Conflict to Peace: Celebrating VE & VJ Day* which will run from Tuesday 1 April until Tuesday 18 November.

The exhibition will feature stories of Oxfordshire celebrating VE & VJ Day 80 years ago; accounts of soldiers from Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire who liberated towns, POWs and concentration camps in the latter stages of the Second World War; and a programme of events at the Museum and in Woodstock will mark the anniversaries of VE Day and other milestones from 1945.

On Saturday 10 May Woodstock will celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a special event in the town's Market Square, featuring live 1940s music, living history displays, food and drink from local businesses, and fun for all ages from 4-8pm.

The new exhibition and accompanying events programme will offer visitors a chance to discover the part Oxfordshire and its people played in achieving victory

and liberation in Europe and in East Asia, 80 years on.

More information at www.soft.org.uk

Sarsden Glebe Open Garden

Our garden at Sarsden Glebe will be open for the National Garden Scheme from 12.30-6pm on Sunday 6 April. There will be cakes and teas provided by Thrive OX7, a charity which provides practical support to children of struggling families in the OX7 postcode, as well as other purchasable excitements.

Spring weather permitting, we should have a sea of blue and white anemone blanda with perhaps daffodils, fritillaries or tulips. Our pigs Daphne, Dora and Dolores will be in attendance and hopefully our two wormeries will be active. Dogs are very welcome.

Rupert Ponsonby

Sarsden Glebe, Chipping Norton OX7 6PH

North Leigh History Society

On Tuesday 1 April Julie Ann Godson will be giving a talk entitled *1066: Oxfordshire's Part in the Norman Conquest*. Do come and find out more.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA at 7.30 (doors open at 7pm). All welcome. Members £20 per year, visitors £4 per talk. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com and 01993 880368.

Angela Kyte

The Flood is nigh!

Benjamin Britten's Community Opera,
Noye's Fludde

St. Mary's Church, Charlbury

Saturday 5 April at 3pm and 7pm

Sunday 6 April at 3pm

Today the sun is shining after a winter of rain, leaving flooded, muddy fields and big puddles everywhere. Hopefully we are in for a dry spell, otherwise we could be flooded.....

In April we really will have a flood! There will be three productions of *Noye's Fludde* in St Mary's Church, Charlbury and preparations are well under way.

Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* is a community opera, first performed in 1958 at the Aldeburgh Festival. It was written for mainly amateur performers, particularly children. It tells the story of Noah and the Ark.

The Charlbury production will be delivered by the Oxford Concert Party, started 33 years ago by Arne Richards and Isabel Knowland. *Noye's Fludde* is a final celebratory project after many community concerts and workshops making music accessible to all. The production will be conducted by Ben Goodall, Musical Director of the Chipping Norton Choral Society and other adult and youth choirs, and directed by Nicola Baylis from Chipping Norton Theatre. The overall aim is for local people, young and old, to have great fun providing an amazing spectacle for the enjoyment of all.

The chorus of 30 animals are local children, Noye and his wife are played by Edmund Caird and Carol Goodall, and six young local people play Noye's sons and

their wives. Mrs Noye's drinking companions, the Gossips, are members of Charlbury Amateur Dramatics. A string orchestra, recorder players, bugles and handbells plus eight professional musicians will provide the music and Charlbury Arts is delighted to be involved with the costume design and making, props and scenery.... and amazing animal masks!

The performances will be preceded by the Oxford Concert Party playing a short selection of their repertoire - music from Ireland, Scotland, France, Eastern Europe plus tangos from Argentina.

Tickets are £12, under-16's £5, available from 5 Market Street, Charlbury (cash only) or email isabel@oxfordconcertparty.org or text 07788 1747.

Cotswolds Arts Through Schools

Cotswolds Arts Through Schools (CATS) is a charity partnership of local arts organisations (choirs, music festivals, art groups, theatres and opera companies) working together to help bring arts to the centre of our local school life. 54 schools in our area are now being helped by CATS.

The arts are crucial to the wellbeing of children. Creativity should be central to a child's education. Putting the arts back into school improves mental health, reduces absenteeism, gives children enthusiasm and joy, and helps improve academic results.

Our schools are supported by having an art workshop every term to learn techniques – charcoal, watercolours, acrylics, clay modelling, engraving, pottery, etc. This is

backed up with more training for class teachers and syllabus support.

CATS is also supporting schools with music, dance and drama. Several schools are now enrolled in the Royal Ballet School Primary Steps programme. Our partner, The Theatre in Chipping Norton, is offering schools drama workshops. Other schools have been provided with instruments (ocarinas and ukeleles) that can be taught by a class teacher. As they progress children are offered other more sophisticated instruments like recorders, guitars, and even violins.

Inspiring children with what's possible through their own creativity and practice comes from local professional artists and musicians employed by CATS to visit schools to showcase what they do and explain how there can be a career in the arts to these young minds.

All this activity, bringing arts back into the centre of school life, only happens because people give generously and help. If you'd like to be involved or can help or give, please contact:
info@cotswoldsartsthroughschools.com



Liz Townsend and Christopher Stockwell
CATS

Review: Rachel Williamson poetry reading



Rachel is already familiar to us as a painter and a textile artist, as those of you who have seen her exhibitions will know. What most of us didn't know was that she has had training in stand-up comedy and that she is a poet. Her appearance at The White Horse on 25 February gave us the delightful experience of hearing her read her poems aloud.

Rachel took us on a journey that started in Stonesfield with a poem in praise of its rural nature, its friendly people and the warm welcome to be found in The White Horse! Her route took various twists and turns, taking us to places that resonated with us and our own experiences.

The wordplay of her poem, *Spritz or Spray* was clever and funny, providing humour amidst themes of loss, uncertainty and resilience. In *Porthleven* the metaphor of lifelines left an impression of vulnerability and a search for stability. Particularly striking in the poem *Untitled* was the line, 'I had to write with my eyes', highlighting the poet's determination to continue to write despite the challenges. Rachel does indeed write with the eye of an artist.

The Secret Weaver begins:

The trees do in fact make a beautiful silhouette against a milky sky and concludes:

In a month, the threading of tendrils and new shoots will begin
Beautiful irregularity
Something to stroke
A fabric of woven leaves.

Rachel's skill in performing undoubtedly enhances the impact of her poetry and her poems were heard by a very appreciative audience. We all hope for more.

Wendy Lynch
.....

Wild Oxfordshire



The curlew's wonderful 'bubbling' call is one of the most evocative sounds of springtime in meadows and pastures across Oxfordshire. Something we cherish, but which is sadly under threat. The curlew is arguably the most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK, where nearly half the breeding population has been lost over the last 25 years and where range contraction has seen curlews disappear from many traditional sites.

Watch our *Curlew River* film which explores the work of farmers and volunteers to help our wonderful curlews as well as highlighting the fabulous ancient meadows and wet grassland habitats that they inhabit in our area.
www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/projects/curlew

National Allotment Week

Allotments can provide wonderful spaces for nature and people. Allotments and gardens are now a vital refuge for much of our local wildlife, with many species now relying on our gardens to survive, such as the greenfinch, stag beetle and hedgehog. It's easy to forget that our gardens join up with other gardens as well as the local greenspaces to make one big patchwork of foraging, drinking, and nesting sites. Together we can help nature bounce back, garden by garden.

Thank you so much for all you have done for nature's recovery in the last year. Together we have brought people together, created more space for nature, and inspired more people to act for nature. Many people contribute to Wild Oxfordshire, and this support enables us to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all. If you would like to join in and are able to, we would greatly appreciate a contribution towards our work, either through a one-off contribution, or a monthly contribution. Check out our website to find out more about the many ways you can support us and our recent achievements.

Mike Pollard

Wild Oxfordshire Curlew Recovery Project
www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

Kirtlington Park

9 miles east of Stonesfield

Kirtlington Park is about ½ mile east of the village of Kirtlington, north of Bletchington, and nine miles east of Stonesfield. The village is in the southern part of the parish which lies on the east bank of the River Cherwell, which divides it from the parish of Tackley.

Kirtlington Park is a Palladian country house which was built in 1742-46 for Sir James Dashwood, 2nd Baronet (1715–79), after he had married an heiress, Elizabeth Spencer. In 1740 he was elected a knight of the shire (MP) for Oxfordshire. Kirtlington Park is set in 3,000 acres of parkland, landscaped by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, with views over the gardens to the Chiltern Hills. Brown received £1,574 2s. for the work between 1755 and 1762.

Kirtlington Park, still unfinished at Dashwood’s death, remained in the family until 1909, when Sir George John Egerton Dashwood, 6th baronet, sold the house to the Earl of Leven and Melville.

By 1922 it was owned by Hubert Maitland Budgett. In 1926 Hubert Budgett founded Kirtlington Park Polo Club after Major Deed, who had lived in Argentina, persuaded him to play the game. In 1954, after the Second World War, Hubert Budgett’s son Alan reopened the club and added a second ground. The polo club is still owned by the Budgett family and now has six grounds.

In the Second World War the park was used as a ‘victory garden’, also called war gardens or food gardens for defence, which were vegetable, fruit, and herb gardens planted at private residences.

The house, a Grade I listed building, has undergone redecoration since 2018 and the elegance and beauty of The Classical Era has been restored to its former glory.

Kirtlington Park remains a private house, and home to the Buxton family.

The house has been featured in television historical dramas and live opera performances, some of the most famous productions being ITV’s Ruth Rendell’s *Mysteries* and the BBC’s *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Father Brown* and some documentaries.

Kirtlington Park is available to visit only through Historic Houses open days (www.historichouses.org). Commercial activities include weddings, family celebrations, film shoots, corporate events and exclusive hire.

www.kirtlingtonpark.co.uk

Paul Bates

Do you have a story to tell?

We hope you have enjoyed the history articles which have appeared in *The Slate*.

We’re hoping to find more Stonesfield residents who will contribute their own history articles (or photographs) to publish throughout the year.

If you have a story to tell, or photographs to share, please send it to me.

The Editor

editor@stonesfieldslate.uk

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Football Club

First of all, sincere apologies for the lack of a report in last month's *Slate*; I'm afraid life intervened.

It has been a mixed bag of results for our boys recently but overall it's been positive for both teams.

The Firsts started off with a stunning 5-1 win at Charlbury in the league. Always good to beat Charlbury, but this one was special as it marked a milestone for Raffy Rice who scored his first two goals since recovering from a horrific injury that saw him lose out on most of last season and half of this one too. Great to see Raffy back and scoring goals again!

Next, they went to Glory Farm (in The Junior Shield) and, despite playing well, crashed out (2-1). The priority for our boys this season is the league, and they bounced back in fine style away at RAF Brize Norton winning 2-1. League form continued with an emphatic win (5-0) at Bampton. Sadly, their unbeaten league run ended in defeat (3-2) at home to Hailey. Getting back to winning ways was the required response and they did just that with a solid win (3-0) at Aston. That win just 'feels' significant as it moved them into second place, just two points off top spot having played two fewer games. Say it very quietly: the destination of this season's Premiership title is firmly in their own hands. With Spring arriving, it'll all depend on how well they handle playing two or three games every week. Fingers crossed!

I have a theory that our Reserves just thrive on high scoring matches and they don't really mind if they win, lose or draw, provided they see plenty of goals! The period started with two excellent wins at home against Milton (4-2) and FC Mills (5-1). They then travelled to Uffington United where the home team took the spoils in a seven-goal extravaganza (5-2). Next up it was Sherborne Harriers at home and yet another five-goal thriller with our boys coming back from being two down to snatch all three points (3-2)! Another five-goal thriller ensued in a tough win (3-2) at Moreton RD. They then hosted top dogs, Ducklington, and were disappointed not to snatch all three points, having to settle for a draw (1-1).

All things considered, three wins and a draw out of five matches and loads of goals to enjoy, isn't too shabby. Our boys sit in third place in the league with only five points separating the top three teams. It's not beyond the realms of possibility that they could win promotion to Division Two. Fingers crossed!

There were two contenders for the Fredo Award. Raffy Rice had a solid claim with his two goals against Charlbury but we all know that three goals are better than two when it comes to scooping the coveted Fredo. Step forward Marco Babic - the Fredo is yours following your brilliant hat-trick against FC Mills.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

Stonesfield Gardening Club

Our March meeting saw a welcome return from Timothy Walker, who came to talk to us about the fascinating plant life to be found on Tenerife.

Tenerife, like all the Canary Islands, came into being as a result of volcanic activity and the plant life is not only very different from anywhere else on Earth, but also differs in many ways from the other Canary Islands. The habitat also changes dramatically with seriously arid areas at the coast, mediterranean scrub, pine forest areas and the heavily wooded areas with evergreen trees – all growing out of the lava fields.

Although Charles Darwin never managed to visit the islands, the plants there certainly live up to his survival theories, adapting to cope with the growing conditions which means that often they are difficult plants to grow in our gardens.

This month we will be holding our annual plant sale at Four Acres in Pond Hill on Saturday 26 between 8.30am and 11am. If you have any plants you would like to donate, please get in touch, or bring them along on the day.

Hope to see you there. Happy gardening!

Diane Bates, Secretary

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Stonesfield Scouts

Scouts reach the target for phase 2 of the Woodland Community Hut

We are really pleased to have reached the target through our crowdfunding campaign for the second phase of the hut build. You have all helped us raise just over £112,000. We had already raised quite a bit before we

started the campaign, but it has been great to see the £30,000 grant from West Oxfordshire District Council matched by other pledges. We pledged all our duck money and ‘rainy day’ funds to push us over the line, but there has been £26,000 worth of donations from companies, individuals, trusts and other supporters, all of whom have a link to the group and the village. Thank you all again. Please check up on our progress on our website or look at our Facebook pages. We are still looking for donations and support to help balance the books, so please get in contact if you can help.

Camps and walks galore for the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts: do you want to be involved?

As the warmer days get closer, the groups are venturing out into the countryside for camps, walks and other trips. We are attending a Fun Day in Abingdon, having many camps with other groups, and we will be sure to toast the odd marshmallow (or four). If you want to get involved then please get in touch with anyone on the team or email chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk. It is great fun and we need people just like you! Learn new skills and play a part in this great village community.

Get your ducks in a row for the Stonesfield Scout Duck Race on Saturday 12 July 2025! It's a fantastic family day out with plenty of fun for everyone. Keep an eye out for posters and announcements in the village. This is a great opportunity to support the Scouts while enjoying some competitive duck-shouting.

Ben Whitworth

chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk

The Megalosaurus Society

Our next meeting takes place on 2 April when Graham Rutson will talk on Roman villas and Roman life. This will be followed by the opportunity to view, handle and learn about the wide range of artefacts and coins which have been found in the area.

A reminder that annual membership fees are £15 per calendar year, renewable in January. If you wish to join the Society, or would like more information, please get in touch by emailing us at **megsoc25@gmail.com**.

Viv Kendall and Trisha Williams
megsoc25@gmail.com

Stonesfield Sports & Social Club

After a very busy month, we have yet another busy month ahead! The FOSS Village Fete will be held on the playing field, with support from the Social Club, on 22 July which is very exciting. There will be lots of stalls and activities helping to support the School.

With the warmer weather we continue to cheer on the men's football every Saturday.

There's a special Easter bingo planned with lots of prizes to be won, a fortnightly quiz and Aunt Sally is starting soon.

On top of all this, we continue to host darts and pool competitions on Sundays where everyone is welcome.

For full details of our events this year, visit our website: www.stonesfieldsocial.com

From all at SSSC

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

Church news

Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield

(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Rector: Revd Ralph Williamson,
rector@scbenefice.org, 01993 891872

Churchwarden: Lindsey Sellar
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

St James' Centre bookings:
sjcsbookings@gmail.com

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

From the Rector - Easter People

The date of Easter moves about each year, and people often wonder why it cannot be fixed, like that of Christmas. The short answer is that the timing of Easter is linked to the phases of the moon, as the Passover Festival was for the Jewish people. For that reason it can fall between March 22nd at the very earliest and April 25th at the latest. The Eastern Orthodox churches use a different calendar, so for them the date of Easter is usually different too (as it is for Christmas), just to confuse things. This year, our Easter is 'late', and falls on the 20th April, right at the end of the two-week school holidays.

Although Easter has become less prominent in our society over recent decades (while Christmas has remained as popular as ever), it is the most important festival of all for the church and is full of

drama, passion and symbolic meaning. It defines who we are - Easter people - who claim the victory of Christ over death in our own lives and in the equally challenging life of the world. On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in humility, riding on a donkey. This is followed by the days of 'Holy Week' when we remember Jesus in the city, as he spoke about the love of God, and challenged religious leaders about their misuse of power. We remember the plot to kill him, his arrest on trumped up charges, his trial and suffering as the fickle crowd was turned against him, and his crucifixion and death outside the city wall on Good Friday. Then, after the solemnity of Holy Saturday, at Easter we light a new Easter ('Paschal') candle, and carry it into church with the words, 'The Light of Christ!' to celebrate Christ bursting from the tomb, defeating the forces of darkness. From that Paschal candle the flames of individual candles are lit to show how the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the gift of light and life for each of us, and for the entire world.

This is the church's great festival, the celebration of God's gift of life for the world. Please come and join us for any or all of our services at Combe, or at Stonesfield, and I look forward to wishing you all a very Happy Easter!

Revd Ralph Williamson

Church services:

Sunday 6 April [Lent 5]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion – for all the family
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion – for all the family

Sunday 13 April [Palm Sunday]

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

Thursday 17 April [Maundy Thursday]

7.30pm	Stonesfield	Maundy Thursday Communion
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Friday 18 April [Good Friday]

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

Saturday 19 April [Easter Eve]

7.30pm	Stonesfield	Easter Liturgy
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Sunday 20 April [Easter Day]

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

Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (30th is Morning Prayer)
11am	Combe	Morning Prayer (2nd, 16th, 30th)

A record of recent funerals and memorial services:

3rd March: Doris May Prewitt

Our prayers are for family and friends at this time

Lindsey Sellar

New Church thought

Many worrying things are happening in the world that I can do very little about. So in an effort to find at least a little calmness, I'm trying to keep in mind some quotes from the Lord's Word that I've always found soothing.

- The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all His works.
- Trust in the Lord, and do good, and He will give you the desires of your heart.
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret - it only causes harm.
- ... and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Dale Morris

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for April

- Sunday 6 11am To be arranged
Sunday 13 11am Julia Biggs
Sunday 20 11am Revd Stephen Bywaters
Easter Day Holy
Communion Service
Sunday 27 11am Martin Hannant

World Day of Prayer

Thank you to everyone who came and supported the Service here on 7 March, prepared by the people of the Cook Islands.

With colourful flowers and sounds of the Pacific ocean, we were reminded of how 'Fearfully and Wonderfully' God made us. The message overflowed with love, hope and justice for each and every human being.

The kind gifts amounted to £205 and all funds raised are for the WDP. Charity is given each year to support groups around the world.

Easter is almost here, and the simple words of this old hymn say so much.

There is a green hill far away, outside a city wall,

where the dear Lord was crucified, who died to save us all.

Cecil Alexander. StF 284 verse 1

All the Blessings of Easter be yours.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

Roman Catholic Worship

Prayer for the Jubilee 2025

Father in heaven,
may your faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the
Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within
both humanity

and the whole cosmos in the sure
expectation

of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread

The joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,

Be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.

Pope Francis

Holy Mass

Sunday Mass 9.15am

Weekday Mass

Wednesdays: 9.15am

Fridays: 9.15am

For Easter services, please see St Teresa's website as below.

For more information about Aid to the Church in Need's (ACN) 2025 Jubilee Pilgrimage to York, please contact Suze Mathews:
suzemathews899@btinternet.com

For Parish updates, more information and further support, please go to:
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or contact Fr Clive Dytor, Parish Priest:
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More details at
www.stonesfieldgardening.info



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