



Issue No 558 June 2025

We are the Champions!



Premier League Champions 2024-25

Photo: Geraint Lewis Photography

Back row (L to R): Brian Clarke, Tom Green, Liam Hatton, Jacob Oliver, Carry Rice, Raffy Rice, Mike Phipps, Dan Newman, Shaun Kemp, James Cox, Jordan Newman (Captain), Charlie Ibbitson, Louis O'Keefe, Pete Searle.

Front Row (L to R): Jake Burden, Sammy Hart, Max Brand-Wiggins, Jack Barker, Will Barker, Marco Babic, Oliver Wynn.

They've only gone and done it – The Firsts are Witney & District FA Premier League Champions for 2024/25!

In 1964, The Forth Road Bridge was opened; BBC 2 started broadcasting; Top of the Pops and Match of the Day first aired and Stonesfield FC won the W&D Premier League for the first time. Now, after missing out two years ago on goal-difference, the lads have done the village proud by winning the club's second Premier League Title– after 61 years!

The victory march started off in tame fashion, with a walkover win after Tower Hill failed to raise a side. The boys travelled to Bampton

and could have been crowned champions, but a ridiculous blunder by the referee (!) gave the home side a penalty and the game ended in a draw (1-1). But this only delayed the inevitable and gave our boys a shot at glory on home soil against Hanborough. In a tense match in front of very vocal home support, a Raffy Rice thunderbolt won the game (1-0) and a historic league title. The celebrations were long and noisy in The Social Club afterwards, with the champagne flowing freely and Brian Clarke breaking the bank by dishing out Fredos to every player!

Cont p27

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.

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

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

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Dates for your diary:

May

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| 31 | Men's Walk and Talk (see p8) | St James' Centre (meet) | 10am |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------------|------|

June

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 2,5,9,12,16 | Taekwondo | Village Hall | 5.30-6.30pm |
| 2,9,16,23,30 | Monday Coffee | St James' Centre | 10am-12noon |
| 3 - 30 | Pictures @ The Pub - Three artists | The White Horse | pub hours |
| 3,10,17,24 | Stonesfield Social | Village Hall Clubroom | 5-6.30pm |
| 3,10,17,24 | Zumba | Village Hall | 7-8pm |
| 3,10,17,24 | Strong Nation HIIT | Village Hall | 8.15-9.30pm |
| 3,17 | Dominoes | SSSC | 8pm |
| 4 | Parish Council meeting | Primary School | 7pm |
| 4,11,18,25 | Gatehouse Pilates | Village Hall | 9.30-10.30am |
| 4,11,18,25 | HIIT Class | Village Hall | 7-7.45pm |
| 4,11,18,25 | Folk Dancing | Village Hall | 7.45-10.15pm |
| 5, 2,19,26 | Upholstery Group | Village Hall | 9.30-12.30pm |
| 5-8 | Folk Dancing weekend | Village Hall | |
| 6 | Summer Quiz Evening | St James' Centre | 6pm |
| 6,7 | Open Gardens and Flower Festival | Wootton (p11) | 2-5.30pm |
| 6,13,20,27 | Baby & Toddlers Group | Village Hall | 10am-noon |
| 7-27 | Varsity-80: Crossing time exhibition | Woodstock Museum | See p22 |
| 8 | Open Studio | Grey Cat Studio (p5) | 10am-4pm |
| 9 | Combe WI outing | Friars Court, Clanfield | See p10 |
| 9 | Gardening Club talk | St James' Centre | 7.30pm |
| 10 | Bingo | SSSC | 7pm |
| 10 | Morris dancing | White Horse garden | 7.30pm |
| 14 | Community and Repair Café | Village Hall | 10am-2pm |
| 15 | Bridewell Open Day | Bridewell Garden | 11am-4pm |
| 15 | The Mill at Work | Combe Mill | 10.30am-4.30pm |
| 19,23,26,30 | Taekwondo | Village Hall | 5.30-6.30pm |

Continued on p4

Dates for your diary:

June (cont)

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 20,21 | Hamlet | Sarsden Glebe | See p12 |
| 21,22 | Roman Villa Open Days | North Leigh | 11am-5pm |
| 22 | FoSS Summer Fete | Playing field | 12noon-4pm |
| 25 | FoSL Library volunteers' meeting | SSSC | 7pm |
| 27 | Act Fast First Aid Training | Village Hall | 9am-4pm |
| 27 | Botanical training | Glebe land (p16) | 6-6.30pm |
| 28 | Men's Walk and Talk (see p8) | St James' Centre (meet) | 10am |
| 28 | Bell striking competition | St James' church | from 5pm |
| 28 | Music from Jake & Dan | SSSC | 8.30pm |
| 29 | Day of dance – Folk Dance Society | Village Hall | 10am-5pm |

July

| | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| 5 | Stonesfield Village Garage Sale | all village | See p6 |
| 26-27 | 30th Anniversary weekend | SSSC | See p29 |



Are you looking for a first aid course that's practical and engaging? For yourself or for your workplace or organisation?

After years of working as a teacher, trainer and Forest School leader/trainer in outdoor settings and in schools, I have recently qualified as a

First Aid Instructor, and I'm excited to bring first aid training to our local area. I train with Act Fast First Aid, who are accredited through the national awarding body, ITC First.

I will be running the following **accredited first aid courses** at **Stonesfield Village Hall** on **Friday 23rd May and Friday 27th June** from 9am until 4pm.

- Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work
- Level 3 Paediatric First Aid (blended option)
- Level 3 Emergency First Aid for Schools

When attending a course with us, you will receive a set of our unique casualty cards and your certificate valid for three years. You can combine courses to save time and money whilst receiving multiple qualifications.

I can also deliver a range of other courses, including bespoke courses for your school or organisation. Visit the Act Fast First Aid website (<https://actfastfirst.co.uk>) for more information, or to reserve a place on one of our courses or contact me directly on sarah.walker@myforestschool.co.uk. Keep an eye on the Stonesfield Facebook page for more courses later in the year.



Notices & news

Andy Tacon

I am sure that most of you will have heard by now about the sudden death of Andy on 13 March in Bolzano. He suffered a massive heart attack while skiing in the Dolomites. It was a huge shock for all his family, friends and the groups he was involved with. As you know, he was slim, fit and made very healthy choices in his life. It's still difficult to believe it has happened – I often expect him to walk through the door after a meeting with the Players, the Sports and Social Club, or any of the other organisations he was involved with, file under his arm.

We held a celebration of his life at the North Oxfordshire Crematorium, Tackley, on 22 April. Around 300 people attended, demonstrating how many organisations he was involved with, and how many lives he had touched. It was a lovely service with a positive message in spite of everyone's sadness at his loss. Thank you to Rev Ralph for leading the service and supporting the family. This was followed by afternoon tea at our Village Hall, organised by the Stonesfield Players. All the cakes were home-made and baked specially for the occasion by the Players and many other villagers. A big thank you to everyone who contributed to the day.

On a personal note, I'd also like to thank you, the members of our great Stonesfield community. You have been so kind to me in all sorts of ways: visiting, sending cards, flowers, poems, and providing me with meals, company, sympathy and lots of meaningful hugs. It's a time when the community came together and I am so grateful to live in this village. I really appreciate all your support at this life-changing time.

Andy's ashes have now been interred in the cemetery in Churchfields, in the front row, so he couldn't be closer to home. You will all be able to sit on the seat and have a little chat with him, ask his advice, and maybe receive inspiration. Rest in Peace, Andy, you were so loved.

Rosie Harris

Rachael Sherlaw-Johnson: Studio Open Day

On Sunday 8 June, Rachael's studio will be open between 10am and 4pm. Come and see her latest work and have a chat with the artist: paintings, cards and books will be on show. Grey Cat Studio, Woodlands Rise, Stonesfield, OX29 8PL.

For more information, contact rebeccasj@btinternet.com or 01993 891318.

Please use our new email addresses

Articles: editor@stonesfieldslate.uk

Advertising and enquiries: publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk

Village Hall news

We have continued to be super-busy at the hall over May, with a variety of extra events such as the Teak Furniture show, FoSS Quiz night and various parties, as well as our usual weekly regular bookings. If you have any difficulties using the new booking system, please just call or email.

June looks to be busy too, with the 52nd Folk Dancing weekend, and their day of dance on 29 June. Folk dancing is our longest running group, using the hall each week for 52 years! Also don't forget the Repair Café (14 June) and FoSS Fete (22 June).

Another reminder of our planned Stonesfield Village Garage Sale, 5 July 2025 – book your spot on the map, please email info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com for your place to be showcased.

Claire Renshaw (07359 338490)
Stonesfield Village Hall Bookings
www.stonesfieldvillagehall.com
info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com

Friends of Stonesfield School (FoSS)

We want to thank everyone from the community and beyond for supporting our Curry & Quiz night. It was a sellout and the hall was buzzing with energy. Our chair, Adam was Quizmaster, with Sarah & James busy shaking cocktails at the bar. Robyn was organising teams and being a table host.

We were lucky enough to have delicious Thai Curry from Chris from Nuak; Finstock's very own pop-up Thai. He had a team of kitchen assistants; Hannah,

Evelyn, Carol and Sara who worked incredibly hard to serve over 80 people.

The winning team won a luxurious hamper which included a £40 voucher for classes with Hannah Bathe Fitness. It was fantastic to see so many people out on a Saturday night supporting fundraising for our wonderful Primary School. We are thrilled to reveal our grand total raised: £1,837.12. We can't wait to see how we can use this to support our wonderful pupils at Stonesfield Primary School.

The FoSS Team

80th VE Day anniversary



War memorial for 80th VE Day

The Memorial Garden was decorated to commemorate VE Day. We made the knitted poppy tribute, planted the front bed in a simple way with red geraniums, and added a few plants to the black summer planters. We don't usually risk planting out so early but the amazing weather meant we were able to do this.

War Memorial Group
Stonesfield Gardening Club

Stonesfield Village Fete

Sunday 22 June from 12-4pm

We are busy planning this year's Fete, and we are thrilled to be supported by Stonesfield Sports and Social Club and The Playing Field Committee to host our fete on the playing field this year. We hope to welcome the whole community, with proceeds going to Friends of Stonesfield School.

The Bar and BBQ will be run by SSSC this year and we have a great programme of events lined up, including performances from Sol Samba, Ukulele Disaster and Wychwayz Morris.

We have a wide variety of craft & gift stalls, a plant stall, as well as our own stalls with a Tombola, Raffle and Jolly Jars. There will be a variety of traditional games, a bouncy slide and face painting. Bring your friends and family along for a fun-filled afternoon, and we will keep everything crossed for good weather!

We are a very small committee of parents and would welcome volunteers on the day. If you would like to help, we would love to hear from you! Additionally, we are welcoming local groups and organisations to exhibit, so if you would like a stand please get in touch with us via the email below.

The FoSS Team

info@fossteam.org



Church Bell Striking Competition

On Saturday 28 June there will be a Bell Striking Competition at the church from 5pm and an evening social in the St James's Centre. The six-bell competition is an annual event that takes place in one of the towers in the Witney and Woodstock Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Bell Ringers, and this year it's Stonesfield's turn to host the event.

There are two trophy competitions: call-changes and method ringing, and the judges give their results for all the competing tower teams at the end. The team of ringers that score the lowest number of striking errors win the trophies; so unlike the Eurovision Song Contest a score of '*nul points*' is the winner!

Stonesfield Ringers

Pictures @ The Pub

A busy summer ahead!

We have had a very successful Spring Show by a group of Stonesfield artists running from mid-April and throughout May alongside the Oxfordshire Artweeks Festival.

For the month of June and until mid-July, we are showing the work of three artists - Fredrica Craig, Emma Ladds and Jenny Lines - who will be showing a diverse range of work including oils on canvas, mixed media landscapes and atmospheric etchings.

This will be followed by an exhibition of textile art by some 20 members of the Evenlode Textile Group which is scheduled for mid-July to the end of August.

We hope you enjoy viewing these works in the coming weeks.

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub
(trwynwl003@gmail.com)

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse
Community Pub

Community and Repair Café

We would love to see you at the next café, on Saturday 14 June in the club room at the Village Hall. We open at 10am with fresh coffee, tea and delicious homemade cakes on offer. Lunch is available from 12 noon (as well as cakes) in the form of soups with a selection of breads - all homemade. Although we do suggest prices, we operate on a 'pay what you feel' basis, with all proceeds used to support village causes.

The repair team will be in the main hall. We are passionate about supporting WODC's recycling initiative by reducing the number of items sent to landfill. Did

you know that all items brought in are weighed to calculate how much has been saved from landfill by the fabulous work of the repairers? Not everything can be fixed and sometimes items do just have to go, but before you arrange a trip to the tip do drop by to see if it can be fixed.

This month we will be repairing and maintaining bikes as well as everything else so do bring yours along if it needs a bit of TLC. If parts are needed, please bring them with you.

Do pop in and have some refreshments while you wait for a repair, catch up with friends, or, if you've been to the library, quietly get stuck in to your new book.

Susan Rudlin and Mike Sofroniou

Men's Walk and Talk

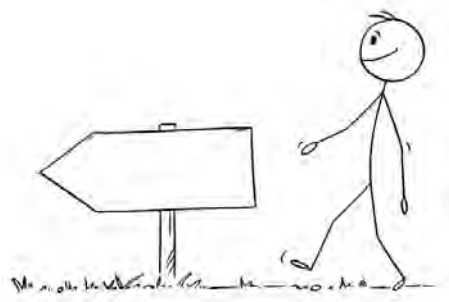
Get outside – meet new people – talk about anything that's on your mind...

On the last Saturday of each month – next dates are 31 May and 28 June.

Meet outside the St James' Centre at 10am for an easy walk of about an hour.

No need to book, just turn up.

For more info text / call Neil 07812 332653



Visit to Ardley Incinerator

A group from Stonesfield went on a tour of the Ardley Incinerator at the end of April to find out how our grey bin rubbish is disposed of.

Sitting right next to the M40, the building looks like a piece of post-modernist architecture plonked onto an old landfill site. Inside it's an incredible mass of modern engineering designed to process 378,000 tonnes of waste each year, burning it, extracting and recycling the metals, and cleaning the fumes so that the smoke leaving the chimneys is roughly as toxic as an average car's fumes, but of course there's a lot of it. The heat generates electricity which powers the plant but also puts 28MW into the grid, enough to power 80,000 homes.

As Jessica, the visitor centre manager, said "It's not perfect, but it's the best available technology, that is being constantly improved. Were all the rubbish to go to landfill, it would need sixty times the area of the current site."

Sticking stuff in your grey bin should be a last resort and Jessica gave us an introductory talk on what can and cannot be recycled and the importance of sorting. She emphasised that our responsibility is to try and rehome and reuse items, but also consider our shopping habits and ultimately buy less.

We were then taken to the control room where banks of computers show how every stage of the process is constantly monitored. A glass wall overlooked a cavernous hangar where 100 lorries a day discharge their contents. Two operators control vast claws which grab the rubbish and pile it up into a mountain of waste 20

metres high. From there the claws pick up the waste and lift it over the wall into the incinerator. The ash goes onto a conveyor belt, where magnets pick out the metal which goes to be recycled, and the residue is used in road-building. The fumes get treated in several ways to extract the harmful elements before being released from two very tall chimneys. We were led round the plant, keeping to the designated walkways while lorries moved about and loud bangs exploded every few minutes, testing for toxic fumes, while we admired the intricate apparatus of piping, huge tanks, ladders, gantries, and conveyor belts – a Heath Robinson setup for the twenty-first century, designed to eliminate whatever we throw away and leave barely a trace behind.

Outside we inspected the remains left by dinosaurs millions of years ago - a track of visibly identifiable footprints leading up to the facility – miraculously preserved in the antediluvian mud. They could not know that they too would be disposed of, with so few remaining clues that they ever existed.

Mike Sofroniou

Summer Quiz Evening

Are you ready for another challenge, fun and good company? Come and join in the Summer Quiz Evening at St James' Centre on Friday 6 June at 6pm – bring your family, friends, or come on your own; everyone very welcome. Buffet supper at half time – all free of charge.

It would be helpful to have an indication of numbers, so if you know you would like to come, please contact me.

Lindsey Sellar, Churchwarden (898757)
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

Morris at The White Horse



Ducklington Morris

For over an hour on 13 May Wychwayz Border Morris (from Charlbury) and Ducklington Morris entertained the crowd in the pub garden, demonstrating two different styles of Morris dancing.



Wychwayz Border Morris

They return at 7.30pm on Tuesday 10 June.

Craig Tipper

St James' Centre – available for hire

St James' Centre (opposite the school) is available for hire – a perfect venue for family gatherings, children's parties, meetings, workshops, fitness groups, fundraising ventures etc. The Centre offers two light, characterful and spacious rooms, with a well-equipped kitchen and beautiful

garden. If you would like to have a look round, need further information or wish to book, please do contact me on the email address below.

Ruth Sellar

St James' Centre Bookings Administrator

sjcsbookings@gmail.com

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org/activities/st-james-centre/

Village Idiots free gig: Advance notice



On Saturday 26 July from 7pm the Village Idiots will be playing a free outdoor show at Stonesfield playing field. Admission is free, with the Sports & Social Club running an outdoor bar and BBQ /burger food.

Combe Women's Institute

We are an enthusiastic group of women from Combe and Stonesfield and we're looking forward to an exciting year ahead with speakers, outings and activities in line with the WI's main principles of encouraging friendship, tolerance, learning and community spirit.

Our new WIWAC group (Women's Institute Walk and Cake) has now enjoyed two excellent walks, and we look forward to developing this into a regular additional opportunity for our members.

WI membership is open to all women over the age of 18. The annual subscription is £51 which covers 11 meetings throughout the year, but if you're not sure the WI is for

you then come along and try us out. Guests are limited to 3 meetings a year and charged £6 per meeting.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe from 7.30 - 9.30pm. Our next meeting is on the afternoon of Monday 9 June, when we will be visiting Friars Court in Clanfield for a tour of the garden and afternoon tea. The outing will cost £15 per person.

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

Julia Sharpe (891058)

Secretary Combe WI

combewi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

Bridewell Walled Garden

Visit Bridewell's walled garden and organic vineyard, as featured on BBC Gardeners' World. Learn about Bridewell's work, gardening and working with nature to support people who have experienced serious mental ill health.

The walled garden and vineyard are open to the public for our Open Day between 11am and 4pm on 15 June. High-quality plants will be on sale, together with home-produced jams and chutneys and our acclaimed organic sparkling wine. Make a day of it: bring a picnic blanket and relax in the vineyard with friends and family. Speak to Bridewell staff about the recovery service and the support provided at the gardens. Dogs on leads are very welcome; families and children are encouraged to explore the site.

No booking is required; suggested donation is £5 per person.

Bridewell Gardens, The Walled Garden, Wilcote, Oxfordshire, OX7 3DT

(nb: do check a map before visiting us as sat navs are not reliable.)

Wootton Open Gardens, Flower and Craft Festival

The Wootton-by-Woodstock Festival for 2025 will be held on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June 2025, between 2 - 5.30pm. Flowers and crafts are in St Mary's Church, Wootton, and garden tickets are available for £8 from the church. The Festival is in aid of church funds.

**Wootton-by-Woodstock
OPEN GARDENS
AND
FLOWER FESTIVAL**

**Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June
2.00 pm - 5.30pm**

Flower Festival in St. Mary's Church.
Theme: "All God's Creatures, Great and Small."
Also - displays of local crafts.

Garden tickets: £8.00, on sale at the church.

Afternoon teas, cake stall, plant stall, raffle.
Ice-creams available at the Village Stores.

**Proceeds in aid of the Parish Churches of
Wootton, Glympton and Kiddington.**

Oxford School of Drama: Hamlet



In their 15th season at Sarsden Glebe, students from the Oxford School of Drama will be performing William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Performances will be on:

Friday June 20th: Doors open at 5pm for drinks on the lawn, ready for a 5.45pm performance

Saturday June 21st: Doors open at 4pm for tea on the lawn, ready for a 4.45pm performance

The performances are open air, so please wear warm clothes and bring rugs or parasols. Chairs are provided. Plays normally last around 2 hours. You are welcome to bring a picnic to have in the garden after the performance.

Tickets are £25.00 a head and all proceeds go to the Oxford School of Drama

Hardship Fund. Please RSVP to glebeevents@hotmail.com, with your request for the number of tickets required and the evening you would like to attend. Confirmation of tickets and payment will then be sent to you via email.

For further information, please contact Amanda Wordsworth on 07879 818620

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

The seven-year rule: Why you can't just give it all away

The seven-year rule sounds simple: give away assets, live seven more years, and avoid inheritance tax. But HMRC has a catch – if you die before the seven years are up, they take their cut.

Giving everything away doesn't guarantee tax freedom. If you die within three years, the full 40% inheritance tax applies. Between three and seven years, taper relief reduces the tax rate gradually – but only on taxable gifts so if your gift doesn't exceed the inheritance tax threshold, taper relief won't help.

And you can't cheat the system by giving away your home while still living in it rent-free. HMRC counts that as still part of your estate under the 'gift with reservation of benefit' rule.

There are exceptions: you can gift up to £3,000 a year tax-free, plus £250 per person annually. Wedding gifts also dodge the tax – £5,000 for children and £2,500 for grandchildren.

While strategic giving can cut your tax bill, it's no magic trick. You need a proper plan – not just an attempt to outwit HMRC at the last minute. Start early, consult a solicitor, and don't assume you can hand everything over and walk away unscathed.

Anna Boucher (01865 987781)

The Burnside Partnership

Do you have a story to tell?

We hope you have enjoyed the history, nature, other articles and historic photographs which have appeared in *The Slate*.

We're hoping to find more Stonesfield residents who will contribute their own 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

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

Politics & local affairs

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Stonesfield Parish Council

Report on the Meeting of 7 May:

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The meeting kicked off with the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for the 2025/26 Council Year. Cllr Claire Renshaw proposed Cllr Ursula Rice for Chair, seconded by Cllr Laura Bate, and the motion was unanimously approved. For Vice Chair, Cllr Ursula Rice proposed Cllr Claire Renshaw, seconded by Cllr Philippa Lowe, and this too was unanimously approved.

Planning Applications

The Council reviewed a planning application for Windrush Cottage on Laughton Hill, proposing works to replace the existing conservatory roof and wall frames. There were no objections.

Finance and Policies

The council ratified all payments made via bank transfer and noted the appointment of an auditor for the 2024/25 audit process.

Future Agenda Items

- Annual Governance and Accountability Reports – End of Year Accounts for signing off
- Neighbourhood Plan Update
- Formal adoption of HR Committee and review of the Working Groups’ Terms of Reference
- Review of Council policies and Governance documents
- Biodiversity Policy

Next Meeting

The next full Parish Council meeting is scheduled for 4 June 2025 at 7pm.

Kay Linnington

Clerk, Stonesfield Parish Council

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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Stonesfield Annual Parish Meeting

The Stonesfield Annual Parish Meeting was a community affair, with 20 residents gathering to hear updates and reports from various local groups and representatives. The meeting, hosted by the Stonesfield Parish Council, showcased the vibrant community spirit that defines our village.

Opening Remarks

Cllr Ursula Rice, Chair of the Parish Council, warmly welcomed everyone and officially opened the meeting.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th May 2024 were reviewed and approved.

Parish Council Reports

The Parish Council presented brief reports on their activities over the past year and outlined their future plans. This included updates on ongoing projects and initiatives aimed at improving village life.

Reports from County and District Councillors

County Cllr Andy Graham and District Cllrs Genny Early and Tim Sumner

provided insightful updates on broader issues affecting the community.

Thames Valley Police Report

A representative from Thames Valley Police was not able to attend.

Local Group Presentations

Several local groups and organisations shared their achievements and future plans - here are some:

Diane Bates from *The Slate*.

Gaye Olesen from the Gardening Club.

Viv Kendall covered the Voluntary Transport Scheme and the Megalosaurus Society, detailing their contributions to local mobility and heritage.

Claire Renshaw provided an update on the Village Hall.

The Scouts shared their adventures and community service projects, inspiring everyone with their dedication and enthusiasm.

All reports will be attached to the minutes.

Questions and Answers

The meeting concluded with a Q&A session, where residents had the opportunity to ask questions submitted in advance. This interactive segment allowed for a productive exchange of ideas and concerns.

This Annual Parish Meeting was a testament to the strong sense of community in Stonesfield. The reports and discussions highlighted the collective efforts to make our village a better place for everyone.

Kay Linnington

Clerk, Stonesfield Parish Council

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for your feedback!

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group mounted two exhibitions publicising the draft Plan to the village. The first was on 15 March in the village hall; the second on 29 April in the St James Centre. Over 100 people came to read a display of extracts from the draft Plan, and to chat to us and ask us questions. Thank you for showing up – and thank you to all those who submitted feedback on the draft Plan, whether online or on paper: 156 submissions have been received. Your interest, involvement and feedback were much appreciated and is vital to ensure the draft Plan reflects residents' views on where they live and work.



The steering group is now analysing the feedback from residents, landowners and statutory consultees. They will then make recommendations to the Parish Council who will decide what, if any, amendments and/or additions should be made to the draft Plan. The steering group is working on behalf of the Parish Council and can only make recommendations: it is for the Parish Council to decide whether or not the draft requires amendments and/or additions prior to its submission to West Oxfordshire District Council.

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



Please scan the QR code to open the Stonesfield website and access the draft Plan but the deadline for feedback has now passed. If you have any questions on the draft Plan and next steps, please contact the Parish Council Clerk on clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk.

Caroline Friend
info@stonesfieldplan.com

From our District Councillor

I met with James Edney, WODC Youth Development Officer, together with Julie Curran and Tim Sumner. We discussed ideas for new activities, and how existing village groups might be made open, welcoming and available to young people. We also talked about some of the issues young people face in the village. James has worked with Oxfordshire Youth, and gave us the benefit of his experience – this is about providing opportunities for young people to meet, have fun and perhaps learn new skills in a variety of ways. If anyone

would like to get involved or has ideas, please do get in touch.

Joe Grainger-Hull wrote in the April Slate that he would be running a botanical session in Stonesfield, and had a great number of responses. If anyone else would like to learn more about the wonderful variety of plants around Stonesfield, the date will be Friday 27 June – starting at Glebe land, top of Brook Lane – see Dates for your Diary for times but **please contact joe.graingerhull@gmail.com first**. No experience is needed.

As I set off today in our heavily packed van to drive into London to set up for RHS Chelsea, it is a moment to reflect on how our small business has changed over the years. Stonesfield has a wide range of small and medium sized businesses, providing services and jobs locally. Within West Oxfordshire, most businesses (97.8%) are small or micro-sized, with only 0.2% classified as large enterprises. It is a challenge to run a business, requiring skills and problem-solving at all levels! There is a wealth of information on the WODC website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support-and-advice/.

If you have questions or ideas for how WODC could support small businesses better, please do get in touch.

Genny Early
genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk

From our County Councillor



I just wanted to thank you for all your support in helping me win the recent County Council elections a few weeks ago. The result of 1517 for me against the Conservative candidate's 900 was a significant increase on 4 years ago.

Stonesfield has a particular distinction; always active as a community, and has always made me feel welcome even when talking about potholes. Well, we are getting those fixed and more money has been put in the budget to get more road surfacing done across Oxfordshire.

One of my high points during the campaign was the conversations we had on the doorstep, in your garden or down at The White Horse. I learnt a lot from you and I know the value you place on living there in Stonesfield.

So going forward, let's together get more done. Keep positive and I'll keep smiling whatever. It is a privilege to represent you.

Thank you again,

Andy Graham

County Councillor - Woodstock Division

Andy.Graham@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

From our MP

If you need help or have a query, please feel free to email me and we will be in touch. It has been an honour to serve you and our community so far, and I look forward to continuing working together to advance the interests of an amazing area.

Calum Miller

calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

Police and community support

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

Scam messages apparently from DWP

The police report an increase in scam text messages appearing to come from the Department for Work and Pensions. They relate to unclaimed benefit payments and invite people to click on a link. The police and DWP remind customers that they should be vigilant and that the DWP will only send links to the official gov.uk website. Do not click the links; block the number from your mobile phone, and refer the text messages to Action Fraud.

Dogs in hot cars

Concern has been raised about dogs being left in vehicles during hot days. Even with windows cracked, a car can become a death trap within minutes. Temperatures inside can soar to deadly levels, putting pets at serious risk of heat stroke or death.

If you see a dog in distress in a hot car, please call 999 immediately. Time is critical. Public awareness and quick response can save lives.

Oxford police appeal for witnesses

Police are appealing for anyone who witnessed an attack on a man outside Boots the Chemist, in Ambassador Road, Oxford Retail Park (just off the Oxford Eastern by-pass) on Friday 2 May at about 2pm. The attacker got into a green Mini Cooper with a female passenger and drove away.

If you witnessed the incident, or have any recorded footage or relevant information, please call 101 or make contact via alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk, quoting reference number 43250214832.

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.

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch
Coordinator

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

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



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
(£7.55 per session) Cereal, toast and fruit juice included

Pre-School Sessions

9am – 3pm daily for children aged 2–4 years (£20.60 per session)

After School Club

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday; 3.15 – 6pm
(£19.20 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)

I'm a Resident

Where the river still flows – A reflection on Stonesfield's calm

Stonesfield, May 1997

I had woken that morning with a nagging feeling that today might not go well. I was booked on an afternoon flight to Beirut – five hours on a stuffy MEA plane loomed. Ignoring my negative thoughts, I took a stroll to the river. It was a spectacular spring morning as I stood on the old wooden bridge breathing the morning air; the calming ripple of the Evenlode beneath me. I didn't want to go to Beirut, but work dictated otherwise.

Beirut International Airport, midnight

The flight was long and much delayed. The dilapidated airport terminal was chaotic as I wheeled my suitcase through a throng of travellers. I craved sleep. I searched for Monique, the Lebanese PA/translator sent to meet me. I finally spotted her, dodging through the crowds in the arrivals hall; she embraced me. "I'm so sorry I'm late, Chris. My car's outside."

Warm Mediterranean air blows my hair as Monique's small jeep drives into the city. We enter the Green Zone – the demarcation line in a bloody civil war, separating the Muslim factions in West Beirut from the predominantly Christian East Beirut. Deserted, war-ravaged buildings slip past, liberally strafed with bullet holes. Monique's Jeep sputters and dies.

Bonnet lifted, we stare at the knackered engine which, despite repeated attempts refuses to start. "Can we call someone?"

"I don't have a cellphone" sighs Monique.

"Are we far from the hotel – could we walk?"

"It's too far to walk."

I dream of my bed in Le Gabriel, a smart boutique hotel; instead, I am here, sweating in the humid night air of a godforsaken place, where no soul or car has passed for over half an hour.

Headlights approach: the male occupants of a beaten-up, two-door BMW spot the pretty Monique and screech to an abrupt halt. Two men, mid-20s, get out, both clearly interested in Monique, who converses with them in Arabic. The men are clearly from West Beirut, as the Christian Lebanese converse in French or English.

"They say they will give us a lift to my parents' house, and from there I can call you a taxi" says Monique with little enthusiasm. Every bone in my body is uneasy about this.

"Do we trust them?" I whisper.

"I don't know, but what choice do we have, Chris?"

My suitcase is too big, so the boot lid is left half open and I worry it might bounce out. I climb into the back of the car, giving an English Palin-esque smile of gratitude, met with a dead-eyed stare. Monique and I squeeze into the back of the small two-door car; the front seats slide back, sealing us in. Monique gives directions in Arabic, gesturing ahead. She gestures ahead a lot, and in the direction we were travelling before her Jeep broke down. The driver guns the engine and completely ignores Monique's directions; instead he hard-U-turns in a squeal of rubber on tarmac and heads at speed back towards West Beirut. Unexpectedly he then throws the car into a

hard left turn, down an unmade road and into a dusty alley of bullet-sprayed walls, emblazoned in Hezbollah graffiti. Monique grabs my arm – my world goes into slow motion with one recurring, dreadful thought: *I am going to die tonight*. The aching feeling is like no other I have ever experienced in my entire life; a strange certainty, and curious acceptance, that this is where it all ends.

I think of my children safe in their beds in Stonesfield; that only that morning I was standing on the wooden bridge, the scent of spring blossom, the chatter of birdsong against the soothing flow of the river beneath me.

As the car bounces and rattles deeper into hell, my mind scrambles for options, a plan of action. I consider grabbing the driver in a stranglehold, but swift retribution from his powerfully-built passenger would surely follow. The alleyway opens into a deserted square of shot-up buildings with the gaping holes of mortar fire. We skid to a halt, as a dust cloud envelops the car. The engine goes off. The young Arab men exchange glances, my heart pulses in my ears. No words are spoken. Time stops: ten seconds maybe, pass like minutes. Something is about to happen...

And that's when it did happen. The silence is broken with, what I can only describe as the delicate voice of an angel. Monique is speaking, and her voice is so soothing, so utterly calm as gentle Arab words are spoken. Her words elicit no reply from our captors: only silence; utter silence. The engine fires up. The car skids around and we are suddenly bouncing back up the same alleyway at alarming speed. We skid onto the road, heading back to where Monique's broken jeep still stands. With no

words, both men jump out allowing Monique and myself to alight. Behind the car I grip the handle of my suitcase in the open boot, as simultaneously the car speeds away. Incredibly my suitcase remains in my hand. Monique and I stand in the silent street.

"Whatever did you say to them, Monique?"

"I just said my parents' house is not down this alleyway. That I am so sorry for my terrible Arabic and you must have misunderstood me."

I realise she had, in utter brilliance, given the men a golden bridge of retreat; a chance to reconsider their plan. A bridge with no loss of macho ego, should they choose to take it. Which they did. The calming ripple of the Evenlode plays in my ears.

Chris Bartle

Chris plays keyboards with Stonesfield band, The Village Idiots, and has a weekly radio show (Wednesday 6pm) on WRFM local radio, called The Movie Jukebox.

Combe Mill

For our 'In Steam' event on 15 June we look back to when Combe Mill was a working sawmill, forge and carpenter's shop. Come and see our display of historic records, photographs and objects from the past, and let your imagination roam!

Combe Mill is a late 19th Century restored water mill by the river Evenlode, on Blenheim Palace Estate. The event is open 10.30am to 4.30pm, with a tea room, barbecue, tombola and gift shop. Adults' entry is £9.00, seniors £7.50 and accompanied children are free.

Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills,
Combe OX29 8ET

Midsummer Morn

As I walked out one midsummer morn

I spied a maiden all forlorn

Lingering by the riverside.

“Oh maid, may I with you abide?

Tell me maiden, what ails thee,

Sitting 'neath the weeping tree?”

“My heart is broken”, she replied,

“My love proved faithless and denied

Our true vows spoken 'neath this tree,

Declared that ne'er did he love me.

My life is worthless now, I swear,

Without my lover's touch and care

And so you find me crying here.

The river runs so deep and clear

To bear my body deep beneath

And wash away my woe and grief.”

“Oh dear maiden”, I declare,

“Your sorrow seems too strong to bear

But pray reflect on my advice,

Hark now, I won't relate this twice...

Get down to the shops and buy a new gown,

Slap on some lippy, go out on the town,

Take up a hobby, sign up at the gym,

Address your own life with vigour and vim.

No matter how handsome, no matter how tall,

No matter how dashing or how hard you fall,

No man is worth the loss of your life

And there are other futures than being a wife.

So don't pine by the river,

Don't cry for lost love with your pride just a sliver –

Oh, give him the shove!

Nicky Holland

Woodstock Museum

Ursula Corcoran, Museum Director, says that The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock is always enthusiastic to see projects that bring in new friends and use the collections in innovative ways.

An example of this is the coming exhibition, *Operation Varsity: Crossing Time*. It was developed in partnership with Outside In (www.outsidein.org.uk), a charity providing a platform for artists who encounter significant barriers in the art world. The exhibition results from Outside In running a Step Up: Curating Exhibitions course with the Museum, earlier this year.

Outside artists participating in the course chose to honour Operation Varsity from the Museum's collection: the largest allied airborne operation in history to take place in one day and in one location, involving



over 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircraft, as part of the push to cross the Rhine towards the end of World War II.

The resulting exhibition will include displays of clothing and equipment, a new portrait in oils and a clay portrait sculpture of Phillip Aucott, a veteran who celebrated his 100th birthday on 12 April and who spoke of his experiences in the military to members of the team.

Varsity 80: Crossing Time will open with a launch event on Saturday 7 June and run until 27 July, and will include a special workshop and Share Art event on 16 July.

North Leigh Roman Villa

Please do come along in 2025 to one of North Leigh Roman Villa's Open Days, to see the site looking better than it has in decades. The Mosaic House will be open 11am to 5pm on June 21 & 22, and six further weekends throughout July, August and September.

Major conservation and renovations in 2024 renewed the Mosaic House roof and windows, made the Custodian's Cottage a useful base for the site's volunteers, and above all improved the condition and appearance of the exposed Villa rooms, several showing underfloor heating.

North Leigh Roman Villa is considered to be one of the largest villas in Roman Britain, with a history of occupation spanning five centuries. At its most extensive in the early 4th Century, it included three bath suites, 16 mosaic floors and 11 rooms with underfloor heating.

The Mosaic House hides the real gem of a near-complete mosaic floor. The mosaics form the floor of the villa's winter dining

room and, as the only example in Oxfordshire still found in their original location, they give a powerful sense of the Villa's original opulence.

For more details about openings and access to the site, please visit: www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa/

Nature notes:

Wild Oxfordshire

Swift Awareness Week:

28 June – 6 July

See if you can spot any swifts this month and search for Swift on www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/news, to find out about events and walks taking place close by.

Let it bloom June!

If you enjoyed 'No Mow May', bring even more wildlife to your wildflowers and take part in 'Let it Bloom June'! Mowing at the end of May removes the free buffet you've created through the month for your bees and butterflies. Let it bloom June allows the nectar source to stay that little bit longer. Why not leave an area that has the most flowers? If you can, a way to provide nectar all through the summer is to leave this section uncut until September and then strim it. All these options give your garden even more of a chance to diversify and provide for wildlife.

Open Garden days

Look out for open garden events in your local area, and see if you can spot how many are gardening with nature in mind, creating havens for wildlife and beautiful spaces for us. Many local open gardens are registered on: www.opengardens.co.uk/open_gardens_in_oxfordshire.php

Wildlife-friendly gardening jobs for June

June is another busy period for garden wildlife. Birds diligently seek caterpillars to nourish their chicks, while bees, moths, butterflies and other pollinators thrive among blooming plants on sunny days. If you avoid deadheading roses, they create rosehips for the birds later this year.

At night, hedgehogs forage for beetles, millipedes, and other invertebrates along our borders to provide for their young. As if this wasn't enough, this season's amphibians will venture from garden ponds in search of cool, moist refuge for the first time.



Put out and top up water

Make sure you have water sources in your garden – water is crucial for wildlife, far beyond drinking. Keeping the bird bath topped up means birds can drink and bathe in dry weather. With clean feathers, birds are better able to regulate their body temperatures, fly from predators and are less likely to get disease. Amphibians like newts, frogs, and toads use water for shelter and breeding, while butterflies obtain essential minerals from muddy water. Any water source, from puddles to ponds, attracts and helps wildlife – particularly now we're in the warmer months.

- Try placing water dishes and bird baths near trees or shrubs so that wildlife using them can get to safety easily.
- Try putting water at ground level in dishes or a dug-in pond so that hedgehogs can drink (make sure your pond has an easy escape route).
- You could also put in butterfly puddling stations – shallow dishes of gravel and water, to help butterflies get the minerals and hydration they need.

Create a cool, damp spot for amphibians to take shelter

Make a log pile in a shady corner: bury the bottom layer of logs and fill nooks and crannies with fallen leaves and moss to make it good for amphibians. Or use the Wildlife Trust's 'how to' to make a hibernaculum. This is a dug-down structure that can be used by reptiles and amphibians for shelter in the summer and hibernation in the winter.

Rhiannon Young – Wild Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Engagement Officer

www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

Glowing around Stonesfield

Did you know that we have glow worms in the UK? I didn't either until a few months ago, when I discovered an empty Roman snail shell, perfectly hollowed out and devoid of any damage or residents. I couldn't help but wonder what animal could have so cleanly left the shell and nothing else; certainly not a bird, so perhaps something smaller? In fact, the culprit was most likely a very hungry glow worm larva!

Despite their name, glow worms are in fact a beetle and are part of the same family as other fireflies around the world, however I



Glow worm: *Lampyris noctiluca*

personally believe they are much more extraordinary.

Glow worms spend the first two years of their life hiding or underground as larvae, eating snails and slugs. They do this by stalking them, biting them and injecting a special saliva that basically turns their body into a soup that they can lap up (gross!) A single glow worm can eat over 70 slugs and snails in its lifetime, growing bit by bit until it's ready in the summer of the second year to emerge as an adult.

Once adult, it is only the females that can glow, and strangely enough they have lost the ability to fly. Unlike their female counterparts, the smaller males can fly, but do not glow. This way, females act as lighthouses for the males, revealing where they are so that the males can find them. This all happens in around two weeks, as once the glow worms have mated, the females lay their eggs and perish soon after, giving way to the next generation.

Unfortunately, glow worm population numbers are in decline all over the world due to human actions. Glow worms require a mix of open grassland and protective undergrowth in order to be happy, and

because they do not move very quickly it is easy to destroy an entire site under new construction. Slug pellets used to get rid of slugs and snails can quickly cause problems up the food chain for predators that eat them to survive. The glow worm is one of these, and like other predators these slug pellets can poison them too. In the summer, males find females through their glowing light, but light pollution can easily drown out these small bugs, and make it impossible to find each other.

These problems can be helped, however. Using less or preferably no pesticides or slug pellets can help stop natural predators that already eat snails and slugs from being poisoned. As well, turning off lights at night can help many other critters and not just glow worms. We shouldn't have to watch as these beautiful insects slowly disappear from the UK. If you are interested in helping save glow worms, keep reading on how you can help further.

Molly Stuart

Glow worm survey

We are planning to survey the Glebe Land for glow worms; female and male. As Molly has mentioned the males don't glow: we will be following the method used by the National Trust, with many thanks to the Trust's Ben Cooke.

In addition we are going to survey the village for glow worms; the date is still to be confirmed but will be between mid-July and mid-August. If you would like to be involved, please drop me an e-mail.

John Sampson

john.sampson9@btinternet.com

Clubs, societies & sport

Tennis tips with coach Alex Dillon



Alex Dillon

Meet your coach

Alex Dillon is a Level 3 tennis coach certified by the LTA. He will be sharing helpful tennis tips with our community to help you improve your game and have fun on the court.

Coach's corner

Tennis is a tricky game, and you won't become great at it overnight. But don't worry – you probably already have some skills that can help you. If you've played sports like football, hockey, basketball, netball, or cricket then you already know how to move while tracking a ball. So,

whether you're just starting tennis or coming back after a break, don't stress about getting the technique perfect right away. Focus first on getting used to how the ball bounces.

Start by standing in a ready position with a strong athletic base. Try to initiate your movement by widening your stance, move lightly on your feet to reach the ball, then get strong and balanced. Having a wide solid base will help you transfer your weight into the ball and hit better shots as your technique improves.

The easiest time to hit the ball is just after it bounces and starts to drop. That's when it moves more slowly and is easier to time. As you get better, you can try hitting the ball earlier – but this is a great place to start.

Join the Club

Want to be part of our tennis community? Membership is affordable and open to all! Visit our website for more information: www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/StonesfieldTennisClub or email us: stonesfieldtc@gmail.com.

Annual Membership Prices:

Adult: £42.50 / Junior: £10.00 / Family: £85.00

Contact for Coaching

Have questions or want to book a coaching session? Get in touch with me.

Alex Dillon (07876 194008)
alexandergjd@gmail.com

We are the champions! (Cont)

The Premier League Trophies (the official one is held for a year and a commemorative one retained for all time) were presented following the home game against Heyford Athletic. It was an entertaining match, with our boys proving to be worthy league champions with an emphatic win (3-0).

Captain Jordan Newman lifts the Trophy



Seeing Jordan Newman lift the Premier League Trophy on behalf of the club was a special moment, and the players were cheered and applauded by the very happy Stonesfield support. A quick thank you to Heyford, who showed respect to our boys by staying for the trophy presentation and adding their applause: nice touch!

It's normal for the players to get the plaudits, but special mention must go to the Tom Green / Pete Searle management dream team who guided our boys to this historic win in their first season in charge: well done guys!

They rounded-off their league campaign with an emphatic win (4-0) at Milton, which leaves the final league record looking like this:

Played 20, Won 16, Drawn 3, Lost 1

Goals For 58, Against 13

Points 51, 10 clear of last season's winners Hailey in second place!

The Firsts also made it to the final of The Ted Young Senior Cup following wins against Aston (3-2) and Eynsham AFC (2-1), but they missed out on more silverware in the final against Hailey, losing 2-1 to a scrappy goal in the last minute. The players were disappointed not to win the cup, but they know that their league campaign has been a brilliant one and they are worthy champions.

The Reserves have also had a very good season, finishing third on Division 3. Their final league game was at home against Spartans and they put on a brilliant show in yet another goal-fest, winning 7-2. Their interest in The Hughes cup ended with an away defeat at Uffington United (2-0). However, it is the league campaign that has been the highlight of the season for them and it's their home form, where they didn't lose a game, that set them up for an excellent third place finish. Their games have been highly entertaining with goals aplenty – 76 for and 52 against – showing that they have been great to watch. I'm saying this quietly, but with league reconstruction likely, it's very possible that our boys could be promoted to Division 2.

The Reserves always play second fiddle to The Firsts, but they have provided several players to them throughout the season and they haven't looked out of their depth at the higher level. A big 'well done' to player manager Ben Franklin who has once again done a brilliant job with his team; many of whom have come through from The Strikers and are now making their mark on

Men's football. Long may that conveyor belt continue.

With Brian Clarke dishing out Fredos to everyone after the Premier League Title was secured, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this month's Fredo was a foregone conclusion, which it is, of course, but a couple of players deserve special mention. Raffy Rice has been a bit of a goal machine for The Firsts since coming back from injury, and Marco Babic has done very well for The Reserves, especially with his hat-trick in the demolition of Spartans. Having said that, Brian called it right with Fredos for all our worthy league winners. Never in the history of The Fredo Award has the collective winner been so well deserved.

The Firsts celebrate their success



To all those who have stood on the sidelines cheering on our teams down the years, this one is for you: Stonesfield FC, W&D Premier League Champions, I thought I'd never get the chance to write that, now that I have, it just feels right!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

The Megalosaurus Society

By the time this issue arrives, we will have had a fascinating visit to Hook Norton, led by Owen Green of the Oxfordshire Geology Trust and Nina Morgan from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. It included a tour of the Brewery Museum, a talk on the iron ore industry, a village walk looking at the architecture and learning about gravestones, and finishing with afternoon tea at the Brewery.

The Society will be participating in the Stonesfield Fete on 22 June – if you would like to know more about what we have to offer, do come and see us.

Plans for the installation of a reproduction of the Poet Laureate's poem *Megalosaurus*, commissioned by Oxford University Museum of Natural History, are well underway. We aim to have this in place by the beginning of September, to coincide with an exhibition entitled *Celebrating Stonesfield* at the White Horse. Fundraising has been going well but there is still some way to go – if you would like to be part of the celebrations by making a donation, however small, please get in touch with us.

Looking beyond September, our autumn meetings will focus on Stonesfield's glove-making industry and the iconic late-20th century Avro Vulcan bomber.

If you would like more information on joining the Society, please get in touch with us.

Viv Kendall

megsoc25@gmail.com

Sports and Social Club

I would like to start with huge congratulations to the men's football First team, who have won the League after over 60 years! A truly deserving group and they are a great support to the club.

We have had a lovely, varied month at the Social Club, with everything from meetings, supporting large fundraisers, football celebrations, bingos and our normal sporting activities. The good weather has meant that the patio is in full use and it is great seeing the club and playing field so busy. This year we are supporting FoSS bringing the village fête back to the playing field on 22 June, from 12-4pm. The Social Club will be open as normal but we also have music throughout the day, a BBQ, the pizza man, and with all the extra space FoSS are extending the list of family fun activities!

It's been another very busy and fun month for the Social Club, and we'd like to thank everyone for their continued support.

Save the date

July marks the 30th anniversary of the Social Club opening. We have lots planned for the weekend and we are extremely excited to confirm that the Village Idiots will be playing on Saturday 26 July from 8.30pm, with a bar and BBQ. On the Sunday we are having a family fun day and showing off everything the club does, with music from the Combe boys and a children's disco.

Stonesfield Sports and Social Club

Stonesfield Scouts

1st Stonesfield Scouts have been enjoying the better weather and have moved back outside. We are still hut-less (more on that later) but the light evenings have allowed the groups to go on camps and be outside in our beautiful woodlands. They have been learning about camp craft, how to cook outdoors, pioneering, growing seeds, as well as playing lots of games that build friendships and foster a sense of community. Soon they will be off on even more camps, being away from home in the great outdoors, many for their first time. Massive thanks go to the leaders and volunteers who make that happen.

Over the last few weeks the Scout Section has spent time covering map work and planning and organising their own camp. This was run by our oldest scouts, resulting in a brilliant weekend at Youldbury Scout Activity Centre, with minimal input from leaders! The activities for their camp involved a hike in an area unknown to them, requiring careful map reading and we are happy to report that they all returned to camp successfully without adult supervision. Next was making cardboard box pizza ovens and cooking their own pizzas in them over an open fire for dinner, and a morning of pioneering to build a rope bridge.

Throughout the term, two scouts have achieved their Chief Scout Gold Awards, the highest award in scouts, and many others have completed their climber's badge after a mid-term visit to Far Peak climbing centre and an evening at Youldbury on the Jacob's Ladder climbing activity.

Scouting is not just for the young people!

This is a theme we are really pushing this year. Many of the volunteers who run the group have been doing so for many years, and we all say we have enjoyed it enormously. We realised that we get as much from the sessions as the young children who are involved. We are going to be needing to recruit more volunteers in the very near future, so if you have always liked the idea of scouting then it is not too late. Likewise, if you were a scout or girl guide and enjoyed it, then pay it back and inspire the next generation.

Hut update

I have become wary of posting too many promises on the hut, but please stand by for even more progress updates on the hut over the summer. Hopefully by the time you are reading this the hut will be a hive of activity. (If it isn't, then get in touch and we can get you helping!) The plan is to try and get the groups based in the hut in the autumn.



duck race 2025 

Sat 12th July from 5pm
raffie, bbq, bar and races

buy your ducks from a scout,
outside the shop or online

search stonesfield duck race



Duck Race!

And finally, the Duck Race will be on 12 July from 5pm, down at the river. This is an amazing event that helps us raise around £3000 each year. Please put a date in your diaries and remember to get the ducks nearer the time. If you can sell ducks at work then that is an amazing way of supporting the group.

Ben Whitworth

Stonesfield Food Group

Emergency Food help

One of the aims of the Food Group is to support Stonesfield residents who are struggling to afford nourishing food. We are able to do this using the funds raised by the Community Cafés run alongside the Repair Café, and through other generous donations.

We are currently able to offer food parcels or emergency supermarket vouchers. If you, or someone you know, could benefit, contact Kate Harris, on 01993 898781 or via email at kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk.

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

Julie Curran (07973 730907)

Stonesfield Gardening Club



Our May meeting was a stimulating talk about bees, in particular wild bees, by Filipe Salbany, who works as an ecologist at Blenheim and has been instrumental in finding the dozens of colonies of wild bees that have made their home in the numerous lovely old oak trees on the estate.

Wild bees have been on the planet for millions of years, whereas the honey bee we know, kept in hives, has only been around since the 1600s. Filipe is a passionate advocate for nature and a strong voice for the importance of putting nature's needs front and centre of all we do. This was a talk for the brain as well as the heart!

June will be a busy month for the club as we have three events in our calendar.

On 9 June we have a visit from Helene Tronc, who is a rose lover and will be telling us all about them and how we can get the best out of them.

At the School Fete on 22 June we will be having a plant stall and would be very grateful for all donations from members' gardens. We had fewer plants to sell at the April plant sale this year, so are hoping that a couple of months on people will have

some nice annuals, vegetables and perennials that we can share.

Finally on 30 June we will be having a members' Village Walk. We will start at 6pm at the Black Head, where Laura and Pete have very kindly agreed to show us round. From there we will visit The Tees, Boot Cottage and finally end up at Evenlode for drinks and nibbles.

Plenty to keep us occupied when we're not enjoying our own gardens at this lovely time of year.

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

Church news

.....

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St James' Centre bookings:
sjcsbookings@gmail.com

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

From the Rector: Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost, once known as Whitsun, falls on 8 June, and is the Church's celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The concept of the Spirit has always been enigmatic. In the opening words of the Bible's Book of Genesis we are told that 'In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while *the spirit of God* swept over the face of the waters'. The word in Hebrew for 'spirit' is the same as that for 'breath', or 'wind', and it is a feminine noun. So from the very beginning the 'Spirit of God' has been associated with creation, creativity, the generation of life and the wind of change. In the New Testament the 'Spirit of God' or the 'Holy Spirit' is shorthand for God's active presence and power, which brings about

the fulness of life and the love which is the hallmark of God's presence, most perfectly in Jesus Christ. The Spirit is depicted with beautiful imagery as the breath of God, as wind and as fire. May the breath of God's Spirit animate and recreate us in love. May the wind of God's Spirit blow away all which holds us back from his love. And may the fire of God's Spirit kindle the flame of love in us. Please join us in June as we worship God, whom we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Revd Ralph Williamson - Rector

Church services

Sunday 1 June [Easter 7]

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

Sunday 8 June [Pentecost]

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

Sunday 15 June [Trinity Sunday]

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

Sunday 22 June [Trinity 1]

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

Sunday 29 June [Trinity 2]

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

Wednesdays

| | | |
|--------|-------------|---|
| 9.30am | Stonesfield | Holy Communion (4, 11 June), Morning Prayer (25 June) |
| 11am | Combe | Holy Communion (11 June), Morning Prayer (25 June) |

A record of recent funerals / memorial services:

22 April: Andrew Tacon
24 April: Jean Edith Hall
6 May: Lilian May Fowler
Our prayers are for family and friends at this time.

Roman Catholic Worship

A new Pope

Irrespective of one’s religious persuasion or none, the world watched with bated breath as the white smoke billowed from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel, heralding a new chapter for the Catholic Church. The newly elected pope, chosen after days of prayerful deliberation by the

College of Cardinals, has already captured the hearts of millions. Catholics worldwide (1.4 billion) have been celebrating Pope Leo XIV - the 267th as our new spiritual leader.

A humble servant of the faith, each modern pope brings a fresh vision of faith, his love of the Gospels and sense of continuing mission contextualized within his experiences as a priest of several decades; the pressures of the world and the priorities awaiting his attention.

With his election, Pope Leo XIV embraces not only the weight of tradition but also the urgency to address the challenges of the modern era. His papacy is expected to focus on fostering dialogue among diverse faiths, addressing global inequality, and revitalizing communities of worship around the world. His humility and steadfast dedication have been instrumental in shaping his pastoral approach, which resonates deeply with both clergy and laypersons alike. Observers anticipate his leadership to highlight environmental stewardship as a sacred duty, reinforcing the Church's commitment to care for creation as outlined in previous encyclicals. Across continents, there is a palpable sense of hope for a renewed Church bolstered by Pope Leo XIV’s vision for unity, compassion, and service.

Holy mass

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Sunday Mass | 9.15am |
| Wednesdays and Fridays | 9.15am |

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 www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, Parish Priest: fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

New Church thought

Recently I have taken on a job for an organisation called New Christian Bible Study (www.newchristianbiblestudy.org). I'm proofreading a digitised set of Bible study notes – the original books were written by a renowned New Church Sunday school teacher in the early 1950s. Each lesson covers 6 age groups, from preschool children to adults, and the lessons progress from the Creation story in Genesis through to the final chapters of Revelation, with special lessons on Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Easter. We used these study notes with our own children.

I'm enjoying this work, not least because it's a useful nudge to take up studying the Bible myself. As each lesson moves through the age groups, I get an increasingly deeper understanding of the different Bible stories. By the end of every lesson, I have a pretty good grasp of what each one is about on a literal and spiritual level.

It's a way I can help my church while not living anywhere near its physical church building.

Dale Morris

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for June

| | | |
|-----------|---------|--|
| Sunday 1 | 11am | Mr Martin Hannant |
| Sunday 8 | 11am | Mr Andrew Maisey |
| Sunday 15 | 10.45am | United Service at Chipping Norton; Mr David Sarbutts. No Service at Stonesfield |
| Sunday 22 | 11am | The Reverend Jason Cooke Holy Communion Service |
| Sunday 29 | 11am | Mrs Julie Biggs |

Watch the birdie!

The rooks nearby are very entertaining. As dusk approaches, two or three begin to fly together. Others come and join the fun, circling and chatting, bolstering their wellbeing before the day is over.

Jesus says this, 'When two or three come together in my name, I am with them.'

St. Matthew's Gospel 18:20

His words, to secure our wellbeing!

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért
k.m.albert14@gmail.com

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All members receive a membership card entitling them, amongst other benefits, to discounts at local garden centres.

Visitors are welcome to attend a meeting for a fee of £4, deductible from membership if you join at the meeting.

More details at
www.stonesfieldgardening.info



Stonesfield Tennis Club

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The two astro-turf tennis courts were re-laid in 2018 and are in excellent condition with plenty of court availability.

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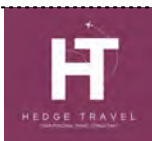


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| | |
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| The Conference of Birds: Bridget McCrum | 27th April - 17th September |
| Standing with Giants Installation | 1st May - 30th June |
| Giffords Circus | 22nd May - 2nd June |
| Pip and Posy | 23rd May Onwards |
| Formal Gardens Painting Classes | May - September |
| Blenheim Palace Triathlon | 7th - 8th June |
| Nocturne Live | 18th - 22nd June |
| Blenheim Palace Flower Show | 27th - 29th June |

JULY

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Battle Proms | 5th July |
| DogFest | 12th - 13th July |
| British Transplant Games | 31st July - 3rd August |



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