



Issue No 559 July 2025



Where has the year gone?

It was one year ago, 14 June 2024, when I had the pleasure of taking over the White Horse.

What can I say? It's been a great first year meeting all the lovely people of Stonesfield and the surrounding areas.

We have worked very hard to provide you a village pub you can be proud of, giving you consistently great food, drinks, service and the many events we have put together.

We have always said this is to be a proper pub welcoming everyone, to use for what you

need, whether it's a quick drink with friends, great food, coffee and cake or a birthday get-together - bringing everyone together and supporting the local community.

Let's go back to the start on Friday 14 June 2024. After two weeks hard work before opening, it was finally time to open the door and welcome you all in. What an opening weekend it was, lots of new faces along with a lot of regular faces who really enjoyed being back in their local pub. We felt nothing but pride from that moment onwards.

Cont p6

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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:

### June

28	Men's Walk and Talk	St James' Centre (meet)	10am
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### July

1,15,29	Dominoes	SSSC	8pm
1,8	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall Clubroom	5-6.30pm
1,8,15,22,29	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
1,8,15,22,29	Zumba HIIT	Village Hall	8-9pm
1-13	Pictures @ The Pub: Three artists	White Horse	pub hours
2	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
2,9,16,23	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.30am
2,9,16,23,30	Strong Nation HIIT	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
2,9,16,23,30	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
3,6,10,14	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
3,10	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
3,10,17	Upholstery Group	Village Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
3,10,17,24,31	HIIT	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
4,11,18	Baby & Toddlers Group	Village Hall	10am-12 noon
5	Stonesfield Village Garage Sale	Village Hall	11am-3pm
6	Bridewell Walled Garden Open Day	OX7 3DT (see p16)	11am-4pm
7,14,21,28	Monday coffee	St James' Centre	10am-12 noon
8	Bingo	SSSC	Eyes down 7pm
9,23	Quiz	SSSC	8pm
10	Unitary Councils consultation	Witney (see p16)	3-7pm
12	Tea Afternoon	Methodist Church	2-4pm
13,20,27	Combe Sunday cream teas	Reading Room	2.30-5pm
14	Gardening Club talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
16-31	Pictures @ The Pub: Textile Group	White Horse	pub hours
19,20,26,27	Roman Villa Open Day	North Leigh	11am-5pm

**Continued on p4**

## Dates for your diary:

### July (cont)

20	Wildlife by the Evenlode	Combe Mill	10.30am-4.30pm
20	Crawford Cup Day	SSSC	see p26
21,24,28,31	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
25	Raffle draw	SSSC	7pm
26	Men's Walk and Talk	St James' Centre (meet)	10am
26	Village Idiots	SSSC	7pm
26,27	30th Anniversary weekend	SSSC	see p26
27	Family Funday	SSSC	12 noon-4pm

### August

1-31	Pictures @ The Pub: Textile Group	White Horse	pub hours
2,3	Roman Villa Open Day	North Leigh	11am-5pm
3,10,17,24	Combe Sunday cream teas	Reading Room	2.30-5pm

### 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 us.

The Editor

editor@stonesfieldslate.uk

The Publishers

Publishers@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 July:**

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

# Notices & news

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## Walter Forster

Walter, who lived in Cockshoot Close until the age of 102, had a charmed, happy and adventurous life. Born in Winlaton, Gateshead, he joined the RAF as an aircraft apprentice and was posted to North Africa in 1941. Various postings took him south and he trained as a pilot in Rhodesia in 1942, where he later married Kathleen (Kay). The RAF still caused him to move again and after 21 years of marriage, the couple had moved 22 times and had four daughters.

Walter was awarded the Air Force Medal in 1952 for acts of bravery or devotion to duty while flying. He later left the RAF and became a trainer at CSE Kidlington. Retirement kept him very active with golf, skiing and caravanning; he drove his car until he was 101.

Walter's ashes will be interred in Stonesfield with those of his beloved wife Kay.

Sally & Carol Forster and Colleen McIntosh

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## Village Hall news

We have again been super busy at the hall over June, with a variety of extra events, such as the yearly Folk Dance weekend (the 52nd at the Hall), the Repair Café, summer fete and Folk Dance Day, as well as our usual weekly regular bookings.

Last minute slots are still available until 2 July for our Stonesfield Village Garage Sale 5 July – please

email [info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com](mailto:info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com) for your place to be showcased on the map. Café and maps will be available at the hall during the day.

If you have any difficulties using the new booking system, please just call or email. July is slowing down a bit with the summer holidays coming up, so check in with your groups to see if and when you finish for the summer.

Claire Renshaw (07359 338 490)

Stonesfield Village Hall Bookings

[info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com](mailto:info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com)

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

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## Pictures @ The Pub

The current exhibition of work by Fredrica Craig, Emma Ladds and Jenny Lines remains on view until mid-month. This will be followed by an exhibition of textile art created by some 20 members of the Evenlode Textile Group which runs from mid-July to the end of August.

There will be an exciting variety of work on show including landscapes, animal studies and portraits depicted in a realistic way, alongside work where more abstract forms have been created through pattern and stitch celebrating shape and colour.

We hope you will enjoy the summer programme!

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub  
([trwynwil003@gmail.com](mailto:trwynwil003@gmail.com))

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse  
Community Pub

## What a Year! (cont)



The feedback we have received whether it's been on Barbara's amazing food, the events we have put on or the general feel around the pub has been very positive.

We had our first firework party in November which included a barbecue and a live band and was a great night all round. This will become an annual event.

Our first Christmas in the pub was very special, welcoming friends, families, and the village to be together over the festive period. Our first Christmas menu went down a storm with some amazing food on offer.

We had a great New Year's Eve bash with live music from Stonesfield local Ollie Charles, and a great buffet to see in the New Year .

We have introduced regular events throughout the year including rock'n'roll bingo, open mic nights and quiz nights, which have proved very popular. Also our regular weekly food specials of steak night, fish Friday and lunchtime pie specials.

A thank you to Nick Hooper and his crew for bringing the sounds of folk music back to the pub which will return after a summer break .

We were involved in the first ever Oxfordshire Ale Trail which has received great feedback and will become regular at the pub at certain times of the year.

I am also very proud of the fact that we received third place in the north Oxfordshire CAMRA pub of the year.

All in all it has been a positive start to our journey at the White Horse and lots more to come as we continue to grow and build our business with more exciting times ahead.

We have to say a massive thank you to all members of our team past and present, and to those who have dipped in to help along the way, you are all superstars, as without you we cannot do what we do.

We would like to thank the committee for the hard work they put in to secure the pub, and for their continued support and backing in the work we are doing to grow this into the best community pub around, as without that we would not be here running it today.

There is lots more to come, so keep your eyes peeled and thank you as always to the amazing customers who visit us on a regular basis and keep the White Horse as the village pub.

Looking forward to Year Two, spread the word and let's grow together .Thank you and much love

Craig and Barbara

### **Publisher's note:**

Thank you to Craig and Barbara for a great first year and here's to many more to come! All the best.

Diane and Paul

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## **Stonesfield Players: Cold Comfort Farm**

We have now rescheduled the performances of Cold Comfort Farm, which we postponed from the spring following the sudden death of Andy Tacon. They are 13, 14 & 15 November at the Village Hall.

If you purchased tickets for the spring production, haven't claimed a refund and wish to carry them over to these performances, please email [thestonesfieldplayers@gmail.com](mailto:thestonesfieldplayers@gmail.com).

Becki Sherlaw-Johnson

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## **Men's Walk and Talk**

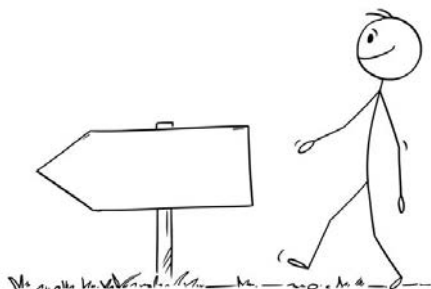
Get outside – meet new people – talk about anything that's on your mind...

On the last Saturday of each month – next dates are 28 June and 26 July.

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

No need to book, just turn up.

For more info text / call Neil 07812 332653



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## **Village Idiots free gig**



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.

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## **Methodist Church Teas**

The Tea Afternoon takes place at the Methodist Church on Saturday 12 July, from 2 - 4pm. Do come along and enjoy delicious cake and a cuppa! Any items for the bring and buy table will be very much appreciated.

A warm welcome awaits you on the day - join the good company of friends, new and old. Hope to see you there!

Kathleen Albért (891733)

### **Please use our new email addresses**

**Articles:** [editor@stonesfieldslate.uk](mailto:editor@stonesfieldslate.uk)

**Advertising and enquiries:** [publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk](mailto:publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk)



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## Art in Textiles: an exhibition by Evenlode Textile Group

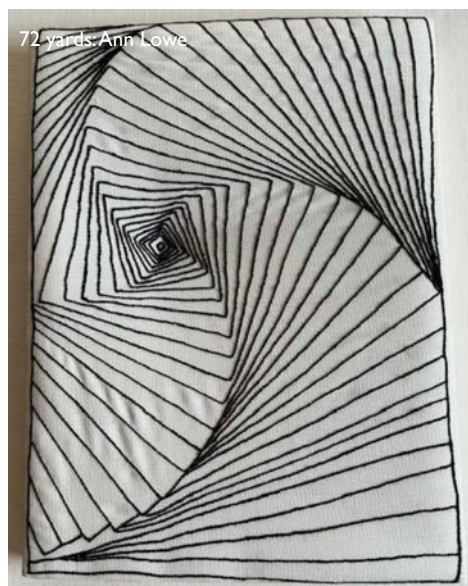
‘Sewing’ but not as you know it!

If you are visiting The White Horse between 16 July and 31 August and savouring the excellent fare on offer, you can also enjoy a feast for the eyes in the form of the first exhibition by The Evenlode Textile Group.

The exhibition will display a wide range of approaches to textile art including printing and painting on fabric, eco dyeing, photo transfer and collage together with hand and machine stitching.

The group meets monthly at St James’ Centre and provides members with the opportunity to work on their own projects, to share knowledge and skills and to explore techniques relating to textile and mixed media art. At present the group has a waiting list; if you are interested, please contact: [mmslorach@gmail.com](mailto:mmslorach@gmail.com).

Margaret Wilmore



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## A display of poppies for Remembrance Day

The Flanders poppy has long been a part of Remembrance Day and you may have seen displays of knitted and crocheted poppies in towns and villages, as a heartfelt and meaningful way to participate in this annual commemoration. Poppies have appeared in cascades tumbling down church walls, over post boxes and lych gates, lining pathways and adorning trees.

These displays have inspired a wish to create a river of knitted and crocheted poppies around the Stonesfield War Memorial. As a small group who look after the Memorial, we appreciate all the supportive comments about the garden. We’d like to ask the knitters and crocheters in the village to join us in crafting a Remembrance Day display that the whole community can be proud of.

We can supply you with wool and a pattern for both knitted and crocheted poppies, or you may want to use a pattern you already have. The aim is to have up to 1,000 poppies by the end of September, ready to form the ‘river’ for the November display.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved with this project, please get in touch with Lynn Stevenson (01993) 891681 or Karen Ball (01993) 898103.

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## Stonesfield shines at Oxford’s Great Big Green Week

In early June, Oxford held a Great Big Green Week, with multiple events throughout the city. There were some fascinating talks: Dr Pete Sudbury (Green Party) graphically illustrated just how dire our global warming is and what we need governments to do to avoid the lights going



out. Two members of Extinction Rebellion, neither of whom had thrown soup at priceless paintings or brought motorways to a halt, discussed how everyone can be an ‘activist’ through even the smallest actions. And Roman Krznaric (no, I couldn’t pronounce it either) told us how we can be ‘good ancestors’: he was a brilliant speaker, and you might want to buy his book of the same name if you care about what you can do to hand over a better planet to your children and grandchildren.

Next door was a hall full of activity around the themes of food, travel, energy, nature and reducing waste. The stall encouraging us to be citizen scientists and monitor our rivers knew of and valued the work Stonesfield’s Environment Group is doing on the Evenlode by contributing to the national surveys and databanks. Our excellent tree planting group came to mind, and of course our draft Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to record your views on the importance of green spaces. A stall called Share Oxford advocated setting up a Repair Café and Library of Things – I was pleased to tell them we’ve done that! They stressed sharing resources: well, our Food Group makes use of food from Oxford’s Food Hub which would otherwise go to waste and serves a free meal to anyone in the village every Tuesday evening in the village hall; currently around 75 hot dinners and take-aways every week.

Well done Stonesfield. I was proud of what our community is doing to address climate change, reduce waste and improve our environment. If you have ideas on how we can do more, please get in touch.

Caroline Friend

[caroline.v.friend@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.v.friend@gmail.com)

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## Woodstock open-air pool



It wouldn’t be summer in West Oxfordshire without Woodstock open air pool. This year we’ll be offering all the usual fun-filled activities like swimming, dive sessions, cool water swims and pool parties. Over the summer holidays, Yellow Submarine Charity will also have their on-site café open daily, serving a selection of drinks and light snacks.

The pool will be open seven days a week, with a mix of general swims, family sessions, and dedicated lanes for fitness swimming. The cool water swim period will continue until Tuesday 22 July 2025, and there will be a small selection of hot drinks available for swimmers to enjoy.

The warm water swim period will run from Wednesday 23 July to Sunday 31 August.

Opening times and activity information will be available on the Better UK website ([Better.org.uk](http://Better.org.uk)). Walk-in sessions are available all day every day, but to avoid possible queues or oversubscribed sessions, it is recommended that you book in advance online or via the Better UK app.

## Woodstock Music Society's 50th Anniversary Concert

Woodstock Music Society Choir and Chamber Orchestra present Haydn's *The Creation*, on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 July, 2025 at 7.00 pm, at St Mary Magdalene Church, Park Street, Woodstock.

Soloists are:

Eleanor Broomfield: soprano

William Smith: tenor

Edward Robinson: bass

and the conductor is Paul Ingram.

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

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

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

WOODSTOCK MUSIC SOCIETY  
CHOIR and CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTED BY PAUL INGRAM

50<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

JOSEPH HAYDN  
THE  
CREATION

Eleanor Broomfield: soprano William Smith: tenor Edward Robinson: bass

Friday 4th & Saturday 5th July 2025  
St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, at 7.00 pm  
by kind permission of the Rector and Churchwardens  
Registered Charity No. 1035897

TICKETS

AT THE DOOR £15 (full-time students £5, accompanied children under 16 free)  
IN ADVANCE £14 from The Woodstock Bookshop, 23 Oxford St. cash and cheques only  
OR Contact [concerts@woodstockmusic.info](mailto:concerts@woodstockmusic.info) or <https://bookwhen.com/woodstock>

## Combe cream teas

You are invited to enjoy cream teas in the delightful garden of Combe Reading Room. These will be held every Sunday from 13 July until 24 August, 2:30-5 pm.

Each Sunday is hosted by a different organisation from the village, which share the proceeds at the end of the summer for their fund raising. Any questions? Call 01993 891134.

We look forward to seeing you.

Elaine Sherrott

## Combe Mill

For our event on 20 July we have invited exhibitors involved with local wildlife, including Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, and there will be children's activities. All machinery will be running 'in steam' and volunteers will be on hand with lots of interesting information.

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

We are also open every Wednesday for self-guided tours; volunteers will be around for questions: Adults £5; seniors £4 and accompanied children are free, and the tea room will be open.

Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills,

Combe OX29 8ET

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## Combe Women's Institute

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

Our WIWAC group (Women's Institute Walk and Cake) is now a regular monthly addition, with interesting walks planned around favourite tea and cake stops.

WI membership is open to all women over the age of 18. The subscription is now reduced to £38.25 which lasts until March next year. 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 are charged £6 per meeting.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe from 7.30 to 9.30pm.

Our next meeting on 14 July is our annual garden party for members only. We don't meet in August but we look forward to starting our new season of speakers on Monday 8 September, when Jenny Olivier will be giving us an introduction to Letterpress Printing.

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

Julia Sharpe (891058)

Secretary Combe WI

combewi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

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## 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 19, 20, 26 and 27 July; 2, 3 August and further weekends in August and September.

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



## Bridewell Walled Garden

Come and 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.

Open day is on 6 July, 11am to 4pm, with a pop-up café, plants, produce and organic sparkling wine from our vineyard for sale. Suggested donation is £5.

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

(Do check a map before visiting us as sat navs are not reliable.)

# Politics & local affairs

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## Stonesfield Parish Council

Report from the June 2025 Meeting:

### Community and village matters

Updates were shared on a number of local issues:

- Mirror at Laughton Hill: Work is still pending from the contractor.
- Community Orchard: An informal meeting was scheduled for Saturday 7 June to gather more information, with Cllrs Simon Powell and Claire Renshaw attending.
- Bins: The Clerk was awaiting an update from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).
- Footpath to Ruddywell: The Clerk had replied to residents' correspondence.
- Microsoft Office: The Clerk was now fully set up and operational.

### Planning Applications

Two planning applications concerning Stonesfield Manor (the house) were considered. The Parish Council raised no objections but noted the importance of heritage oversight and biodiversity, given the listed status of the property.

### County and District Councillor Reports

Cllr Andy Graham (OCC) and Cllr Tim Sumner (WODC) were in attendance and gave brief updates. Topics included road safety, local infrastructure planning, and funding opportunities. Councillors noted their reports.

## Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was to meet with Councillors on Wednesday 11 June to discuss community and statutory feedback on the draft plan. No Parish Council decisions would be made at this meeting, but recommendations would be brought forward for discussion in July. The Clerk was compiling a log of correspondence from consultees as requested.

## Finance and Governance

The Parish Council:

- Approved payments and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024–25
- Added five additional Councillors as authorised signatories to the Council's bank account to ensure smooth operations during absences
- Adopted the HR Committee and reviewed the Terms of Reference for all working groups, with a note to ensure alignment with the final Neighbourhood Plan once adopted
- Approved a new IT Policy and updated the Financial Regulations, removing outdated references
- Deferred a decision on the Biodiversity Policy due to time constraints.

## Community Engagement

Cllrs Ursula Rice and Simon Warr would meet with the Stonesfield Community Trust to discuss collaboration in support of

the village school and attracting young families to the area.

## **Correspondence and Notices**

Items of note included:

- A resident's concern about crop spraying near the Woodstock Road allotments
- Notice of a temporary road closure in Fawler from 24-26 July (overnight)
- Reports of a leaning speed sign on Woodstock Road
- Defibrillator service confusion at the Village Hall, which was being resolved
- A reminder about the upcoming Community Orchard meeting on 7 June.

## **Next Meeting and Future Items**

The Council will consider several items in July, including:

- A village maintenance scheme (bus shelters, noticeboards)
- The Common: fencing, boundary discussions, and grants
- Clerk's communication methods
- Membership of HR and Working Groups
- Hedge maintenance at the Village Hall
- The Biodiversity Policy.

The next full Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 7.00 pm, to be held at Stonesfield Primary School.

Kay Linnington

Clerk, Stonesfield Parish Council

clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

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## **Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group is now analysing the feedback from residents, landowners and statutory consultees following our public consultation process. The feedback has been largely positive, with great appreciation shown for the hard work and professionalism that has gone into collating your survey responses and writing up the policies that flowed from them.

Any critical feedback has been sorted into topics (housing, environment, infrastructure etc) and then into categories:

- Does the feedback address specific Aims, Objectives, Policies, or Aspirations?
- Is the feedback within the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan?
- Comments
- Recommendations

We have also received feedback from WODC on the draft Plan. Again, this has been largely positive, with some detailed comments that need to be considered.

Once we have assessed all this feedback, we will be making 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 in its final form to West Oxfordshire District Council.



You can read the draft Neighbourhood Plan online at [www.stonesfield.online/neighbourhood-plan/](http://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: the deadline for feedback has now passed. If you have any questions on the draft Plan and next steps, please contact the Parish Clerk on [clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk](mailto:clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk).

Caroline Friend

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

## **From our District Councillors**

### **West Oxfordshire Council Service Performance**

Overall, the Council's performance this quarter has been largely positive, with significant progress made in areas such as the reduction of long-term empty properties, the percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days and leisure centre visits. Customer satisfaction, planning determination times and gym memberships also remain strong, reflecting the Council's commitment to delivering quality services.

However, the number of affordable homes delivered was under target. A further 122 affordable homes are expected to be

completed by July 2025. Importantly, more than half of the homes delivered this year – 101 in total – were for social rent, ensuring that genuinely affordable housing is being prioritised to meet rising demand across the district.

The percentage of household waste recycled has also reduced: the target is 62%, but we achieved 57% of household waste recycled. In general UK recycling rates lag behind many EU countries, due to confusion over what can be recycled. Placing unrecyclable items in the recycling bin can spoil whole batches of recycling. Want to do more? Read what can and can't be put in your blue recycling bin at: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/what-to-put-in-your-bin/recycling-blue-lidded-bin-and-black-box/](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/what-to-put-in-your-bin/recycling-blue-lidded-bin-and-black-box/).

### **West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 - Preferred Policy Options Consultation**

The Preferred Options Report for the emerging Local Plan 2041 will be open for consultation at the end of June 2025. The report includes policies for stronger focus on genuinely affordable, energy-efficient housing; a more sustainable pattern of growth based on well-connected towns and strategic transport corridors, a commitment to achieving net zero through zero-carbon construction, renewable energy, and climate resilience.

It also aims to reduce car dependency through better public transport, active travel routes, and by safeguarding land for a potential future rail link between Carterton and Oxford. Alongside this, it proposes stronger infrastructure delivery, covering schools, health services, water, digital connectivity, and green spaces, while supporting local jobs, small



businesses and green industries. Protections for West Oxfordshire’s historic landscape, biodiversity and natural assets have also been strengthened.

Under the Government’s new standard method for assessing housing need, West Oxfordshire is required to provide around 905 new homes each year. From April 2025 to March 2041, this equates to 14,480 new homes. To ensure this target is met and in the event that some selected sites are delayed or fail to come forward, the Council is proposing to add an extra 10% buffer to the overall supply, increasing it to 16,000. The preferred policy options report outlines in broad terms where this is expected to take place, with Carterton and Witney expected to be a key focus, supported by proportionate growth at key service centres and larger villages.

Later in the year, there will be a further consultation, seeking views on preferred development areas to help inform the final draft version of the plan. What do you think? Does the emerging Local Plan cover the right areas to help West Oxfordshire thrive, provide opportunities for our young folk, and protect our environment? Are the issues that are important to you covered? Please take a good look, and feed back your views to make the new Local Plan as strong as possible.

Genny Early  
West Oxfordshire District Councillor for  
Stonesfield  
genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk

**Oxford airport**

As District Councillor for Stonesfield, I am on the Oxford Airport Advisory Committee. A recent meeting provided a

useful insight into the workings of the airport.

Firstly, there has been a reduction in proposed 'Botley West' solar panels around the airport because (a) a zone must be kept clear for any enforced landings by trainee pilots, (b) there is the known risk for pilots of 'glint and glare' off solar panels and (c) solar fields can produce electromagnetic force which can interfere with aircraft electronic systems.

Overall, aircraft movement in and out of the airport is down, mainly because fewer private jets are using the facility. Helicopter flights are up, alongside training flights; the latter accounting for some 66% of all aircraft movement.

Finally, attention is being paid to mitigating the visual impact of new buildings.

Please let me know of any concerns regarding flights affecting Stonesfield and I will follow up.

Tim Sumner  
West Oxfordshire District Councillor for  
Stonesfield  
tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk

**More from West Oxfordshire**

West Oxfordshire District Council’s latest quarterly report (January – March 2025) shows that essential services continue to perform strongly, despite the challenges of growing demand and national financial pressures. Satisfaction with Council services remains extremely high, with 97% of residents surveyed saying they were happy with the help they received by phone, and 95% expressing satisfaction with face-to-face support. Planning services performed well, with 100% of

major applications and over 97% of smaller applications determined within target timescales. Leisure services saw a significant increase in demand. Affordable housing delivery, although currently below the annual target, continues to move in a positive direction with a total of 198 affordable homes completed over the year, more than half of which were for social rent, and an additional 122 expected to be delivered by July 2025.

### **New two-unitary local government**

Five existing councils are currently working together to propose two strong and locally accountable unitary authorities for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. These unitary authorities, proposed by the government, will replace the present system of district and county councils. The proposal (one of three possible approaches for this area) is for two new unitary councils.

The new Oxford and Shires Council would comprise the existing districts of Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire; while the new Ridgeway Council would be made up of West Berkshire Council, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. Having two councils would meet the government's size criteria and they would be financially viable and strengthen public services, while small enough to meet the needs of the individual areas.

The councils will carry out an extensive public consultation exercise throughout these districts between 4 June and 15 July, to ensure that the final proposals reflect the needs of residents and stakeholders. The local meeting closest to Stonesfield, from the time of the July Slate's publication, will be held in Witney on

Thursday 10 July, at Unit 14a, Marriotts Walk, OX28 6GW, from 3 - 7pm.

Further information is on [www.twocouncils.org](http://www.twocouncils.org).

### **Grants for businesses and community projects**

New business support grants will provide targeted capital investment to help businesses improve their physical premises, enhance the visitor economy, and support rural innovation and resilience. The funding aims to boost vibrancy in the district's market towns, enhance tourism offers, and help agricultural and rural enterprises to diversify and thrive.

The Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme will provide capital grants of up to £1,000 for businesses to improve the external appearance of their shop fronts and make their premises more accessible.

Visitor Economy Grants will offer businesses and organisations in the tourism sector between £1,000 and £5,000 in capital support for most projects, and up to £10,000 for larger initiatives.

Rural Enterprise Growth Grants will deliver between £5,000 and £20,000 capital funding opportunities to rural and agricultural businesses.

Further information is from [www.westoxon.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support-and-advice/finance-and-funding/](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support-and-advice/finance-and-funding/)

Businesses are encouraged to begin preparing for applications for these grant schemes now, as grant schemes are due to open soon, and sign up to the Business Matters e-newsletter at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/businessmatters](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/businessmatters).



West Oxfordshire District Council is also launching a Community Activity Grant, offering £22,000 over 2025-26 to support projects to combat problems relating to age, disability, background or financial pressure, including loneliness for older people. One-off grants of between £500 and £1,000 will be available to voluntary groups, charities and new community-led projects. Applications will be open 1 July to 12 August and details available soon on [westoxon.gov.uk](http://westoxon.gov.uk).

### **WODC considers response to Botley West**

At its meeting in early June, the WODC Development Control Committee was to consider the Council's response to the Botley West Solar Farm proposal that has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. The response document covers the impact on heritage and landscape, ecology and nature conservation, flood risk, ground conditions, minerals and waste, traffic and transport, public rights of way, noise and vibration, climate change, socioeconomic impacts, human health, agricultural land use, air quality and aviation impacts. The agreed response will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the examination process.

The Council does not support the proposal as it stands as it has significant

shortcomings that have not been addressed. The response will also say the developer has not listened sufficiently to a range of concerns highlighted by the council and local communities.

### **From our MP**

I continue to work hard, with the support of my small team, to represent you in Parliament and to ensure that the issues you raise with me are addressed. I want to update you on some of them.

My team and I were heartbroken when we learnt the dreadful news that we had lost three members of our community in the fire at Bicester Motion. Firefighters Jennie Logan and Martyn Sadler, and business owner Dave Chester were well known and loved in Bicester. My thoughts and prayers are with their bereaved families and the two injured firefighters.



Hundreds of staff who work at the BMW MINI plant live in our constituency of Bicester and Woodstock. The automotive industry is facing multiple challenges which had led to uncertainty around jobs: both at the plant and in the many local firms that contribute to its supply chain. I have met with Unite the Union and the management team at BMW to understand more about the challenges they face, and I took these concerns to the Industry Minister. She and I discussed US Tariffs as

well as the steps the Government could take in the forthcoming industrial strategy.



At the request of a public meeting held last November, I chair a group of local stakeholders working towards a new GP surgery in Woodstock. The current premises has only 38% of capacity it should. I am pressing Ministers on GP surgeries funding in our area, using Woodstock as an example.

In my submission to Oxford United FC (OUFC)'s planning application to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for their stadium at the Triangle, I reflected the views residents and local representatives have shared with me. I have met with CDC, Chiltern Railways, National Highways, OUFC, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police.

Congratulations to all councillors elected to the County Council in May. Oxfordshire now has a Lib Dem majority administration after they won 36 of the 69 seats. I know that your councillors are committed to working hard for the benefit of all in the county and I look forward to working with them.

Calum Miller  
calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

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## **Police and community support**

For information or advice on security concerns, please call 101 or contact [woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:woodstockNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk)

## **Road rage incident, Cornbury**

The police are appealing for witnesses to a road rage incident, on Monday 9 June at about 4 pm on the B4022 near the Cornbury estate. The driver of a green Mini was assaulted by the driver of a black VW Golf. If you witnessed the assault, or saw the Golf driven in a careless and inconsiderate manner, please contact Thames Valley Police and quote reference 43250284697.

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## **Neighbourhood Watch**

Information on Neighbourhood Watch is available at: [www.ourwatch.org.uk/](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/) Anyone interested in joining the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme may find details and register at: [www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join](http://www.member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/30/Join). Clicking on 'Join a scheme' and selecting 'Stonesfield' will complete the request.

Deanna Asplundh  
Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch  
Coordinator

# Education, culture & more

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## 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

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## Home Library Service

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

01865 810259, or email to:  
[homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Deborah Wilson (01865 815181)

Library Manager

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## I'm a Resident

It's June. It must be duck time soon.

About 14 years ago we moved to the village one summer and not long after, we noticed a long line of people walking down to the river on a Saturday afternoon. The Stonesfield Scout Duck Race was running and I looked on in bemusement as 1800 ducks gracefully floated by to some plonker standing in the water with a look of excitement and dread, with the smell of BBQ wafting in the breeze. I thought this

was a fun, if not mildly eccentric event, and thought little more of it.



Nine years later I found myself standing in the river waiting with a surprisingly high level of anticipation for the first duck to hit the net, and realising that if I moved to pick it up too early then my movement would stop it winning, but if I moved too late I would never recognise it from all the others. This challenge was only compounded by having the bridge full of kids and adults, all cheering their duck on, waiting to be the judge and jury if I got it wrong. I realised this was high stakes stuff!

For those of you who don't know, the Scout Group raises £2500 - £3000 each year from this event. We think some of these ducks are around 30 years old and each

year they are counted out (see the photo) to make sure that enough have survived the winter and the previous race. We have to get a licence to sell them, ask permission to float them, and buy enough food and drink to keep a very remote field full of villagers happy. I have organised four duck races, in pandemics, heatwaves, monsoons and gales and I often find myself asking this question

‘What's the point?’

I was never a Scout and I still have a slight aversion to wearing a woggle to this day, however in 2020 I found myself as Chair of a 75-year old village institution with an asbestos-ridden, condemned hut. I viewed getting involved as a way to ensure I could keep the group running and, as a result, have one night off from the kids. I was not the only one to think this, as almost all of us are current parents or have had kids in the group recently. I quickly realised that my fellow trustees and the leaders in the village are, without a doubt, an amazing group of volunteers that make a complex set of events look easy, and put on an outstanding set of sessions and events for all the kids in the local area. As a group, we punch above our weight for the size of our village. It is this sense of community that drives the group forward and it has allowed us to raise £200,000 for a hut, and eventually get it built. My kids have loved, and still love being in the groups, but I get a lot from it too.

This is not meant to be a sales pitch (although I really think you should get involved in some way or form as it really is good fun and we are on our 4th generation of residents going through the group, if not 5th). It's a thank you to all those who get involved and make days like the Duck Race

possible. It takes time, when we all have jobs. It takes commitment, when we all have families. But it makes friends, it forces us to get involved with others on our doorstep, and it is a way to keep something that is special going for years to come.

And that's the point.

Ben Whitworth

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## **Stonesfield Primary School**

Dear Stonesfield Community,

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Executive Headteacher of Stonesfield Primary School – a role I am absolutely delighted, excited, and honoured to begin.

With over 30 years of experience in education, including the past six years as Headteacher of Clanfield CE School, I bring a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of school improvement. I have also served as a Local Authority Advisor and an Ofsted Inspector – roles that have deepened my understanding of what makes a school thrive. I am confident that these experiences will help me support Stonesfield in making the positive changes it deserves.

My position will involve a two-days-a-week commitment to Stonesfield through to December 2025, followed by one day a week until the end of the academic year. Working alongside me will be Aisling Hill, who will serve as Head of School and be present five days a week, with the aim that she becomes substantive head in due course. She will lead the day-to-day operations, ensuring continuity and care for our pupils and staff.

One of my passions is building strong relationships with the local community. I



believe in the power of connection – bringing the community into the school and taking the school out into the community. At my current school, Clanfield, we embrace the ethos that ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ We cherish childhood, nurture curiosity, and create a safe, inspiring environment where children can flourish. I hope to bring this same spirit to Stonesfield.

Over the coming months, we will be working together to lovingly restore and revitalise the school, making it a place that families from near and far are proud to be part of. As part of this, we are planning a **‘Love Your School Day’** during the summer holidays. If you have skills in carpentry, gardening, painting, or home improvements, we would love to hear from you! Please contact the school office so we can keep you informed about the date and how you can get involved.

On behalf of the Governing Body and the entire team at Stonesfield, I wish you a joyful and restful summer. I look forward to meeting many of you soon and working together to make Stonesfield School the heart of our community.

Warm regards,

Kim Rogers

Executive Headteacher

Stonesfield Primary School

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## Nature notes

### A new butterfly species for Stonesfield

The Brown Hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*) has not been observed in our parish so far this century.



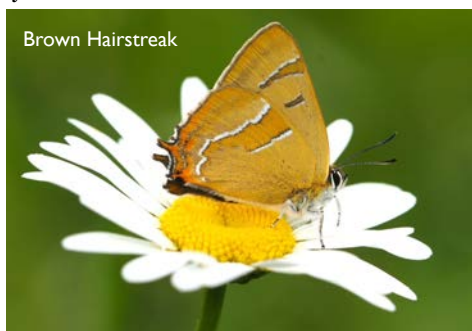
Late in the evening on 16 May 2025, several larvae of this species were observed and photographed along Bagg’s Bottom, detected using an ultra violet light on the new growth of a number of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) bushes. It is known that Brown Hairstreak larvae photoluminesce and our timing fitted in perfectly with this stage of its development. Five suspected larvae were detected and photographed but the images (under UV light) didn’t show enough detail to make a positive identification.

A further ‘UV safari’ was undertaken in late May to confirm the initial observation and to obtain better photos without using UV light. A number of larvae were photographed, confirming beyond any doubt that the Brown Hairstreak has a healthy colony at Bagg’s bottom.

The dome-shaped eggs are usually laid singly on the bark of its blackthorn host plant, where they remain for eight months until the following spring. During the winter months, once the leaves have fallen, the eggs are quite easy to detect, standing out like small white pearls against the dark, bare stems. Regrettably, a lot of eggs are destroyed each year by hedge trimming.

The eggs hatch in March/April and after a brief period the newly emerged larvae commence eating the fresh leaves of their host plant. Unfortunately during the larval stage about 80% of these caterpillars succumb to predators such as birds and other insects. They feed at night, making them easy to detect with a UV torch.

After several weeks of feeding, the fully fed caterpillar pupates. It is reported that ants attend the chrysalis and that the developing butterfly rubs its legs inside its pupal case causing 'chirruping' noises, referred to as substrate-borne vibrations; no-one is sure why they do this. Mice and other small mammals manage to find these pupae amongst the ground litter and a substantial number are devoured each year.



After a month the butterfly emerges from its pupal case. It's the largest and brightest of the European Hairstreak species, with beautiful orange undersides, and was once referred to as the Golden Hairstreak. It's an elusive species that spends most of its adult life living in the tree canopy. Butterflies can favour one tree, referred to as a master tree, often an ash, where they can congregate in numbers and only occasionally come down to the ground to feed on nectar-rich flowers. The butterfly has one brood a year, emerging in late July into August. It's not until late August and

September that the females start to lay their eggs, preferably on the new growth of blackthorn bushes; often only a few feet above the ground.



The Joint Nature Conservation Committee oversees species status assessment using accepted international guidelines. The Red List for butterflies was last updated in 2010. There are 62 species of British butterflies; nine are assessed as vulnerable and the Brown Hairstreak is in this group. The assessment for this butterfly species is that its habitat has reduced by 43% on a 25-year trend, with a population decline of between 30-49%.

The Brown Hairstreak has a 'protected status' in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. It is classed as a Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and listed in Schedule 5 of this Act, which means that intentionally killing, injuring, or taking this butterfly is illegal. This has implications for how the blackthorn thickets and the adjacent path can be managed along Bagg's Bottom. Blenheim (the land owners) have been very quick and positive in responding and have come forward with a plan of action, after having walked and discussed details with the authors.

John Sampson & Martin Gascoigne-Pees

## **Bagg's Bottom: Integrated blackthorn management**

Bagg's Bottom, part of the Stonesfield Common, Bottoms and Banks SSSI in West Oxfordshire, is a rare chalk grassland ecosystem. With its complex topography, spring-fed slopes, ancient pollards, and upright brome-dominated grassland, it represents a landscape shaped by centuries of human interaction. It is now under increasing encroachment from blackthorn (sloe) succession. The site holds great importance for numerous butterfly species, bats, and chalk-specialist flora. The management of such landscapes must honour ecological complexity, cultural continuity, and future resilience.

Blackthorn is a structural and ecological keystone within chalk grassland margins. It offers dense overwintering sites for invertebrates, vital early spring forage for pollinators, and is a host plant for Lepidoptera including the Brown Hairstreak. It features in folklore, hedgerow farming, and traditional boundary formation, and blackthorn expansion must be balanced to avoid grassland loss.

The interpretations by Oliver Rackham (the renowned countryside and woodland ecologist) of wood-pasture, pollarding, and scrub ecology are central to this strategy. Management here adopts the temporal mosaic of coppicing, grazing, and veteran tree care he described. Bagg's Bottom, with its ancient willows and open-grown blackthorn, echoes these past land uses. Conservation here thus becomes not only ecological but archival: a memory landscape kept alive.

The people of Stonesfield have long stewarded their local ecology. Their

generational knowledge contributes phenological records (the dates of seasonal, cyclical events), invertebrate sightings, and management histories that deepen scientific observations. The management team from Blenheim Estate will work in co-governance with local communities, ensuring that formal monitoring frameworks are continuously informed by those who live close to the land.

Scrub control will follow a rotational model, mimicking traditional coppice and wood-pasture structures. Scalping (curved-edge) clearance every 4-7 years will prevent uniform successional gradients and maximise edge diversity. No blackthorn will be cut during flowering (March-April), preserving early forage for *Osmia* (mason bee), *Andrena* (mining bee), and *Bombus* (bumblebee) species. Sloes will be left for autumn food for thrushes and mammals. Veteran willow pollards will be protected through light clearance and monitoring of root zone compaction and shade load. No herbicides will be applied at any stage.

A system measuring plant height, specific leaf area, clonal spread, and leaf nitrogen content will enable detection of scrub encroachment. Vegetation plots will be permanently marked, revisited annually, and assessed with photographic baselines; and citizen observations taken into account in terms of phenological and habitat tracking. Management interventions will be triggered at predetermined thresholds, e.g. coppicing when blackthorn cover exceeds 25% in key grassland areas.

This plan recognises that landscapes are not static but evolve in dialogue with people, pollinators, plants, and pressures.

It seeks to preserve not only biodiversity, but the cultural and ethical threads that make conservation enduring.

Filipe Salbany

Blenheim Estate

Editor's Note: A full version of this article and more photographs can found in Community Action News on [www.Stonesfield.online](http://www.Stonesfield.online)

## Two more firsts

At a time when so much news on insects is poor, we have more good news; another couple of 'fantastic firsts' for the village.

The first 'first' is a nationally scarce hoverfly – *Parasyrphus nigritarsis* (Zetterstedt, 1843) – a beneficial stripy yellow and black pollinator that has had its first record noted for the whole of the vice-county of Oxfordshire, much to the delight of the experts running the UK's Hoverfly Recording Scheme. Unlike most of its relatives which have aphid-eating larvae, the larvae of this one prefer the taste of beetle eggs and larvae – in this case those of the metallic Green Dock Beetle, *Gastrophysa viridula* (De Geer, 1775), as well as a couple of other leaf beetle species, which are consumed with great gusto. A few of its eggs were found nestled amid the bright yellow egg batches of the beetle on the profusion of dock plants down by the river last month and were retained for rearing; a lone adult female was also seen. A return trip revealed more eggs so we hope this species will prove to be established here.

The other 'first' is another fly, a delightful tachinid (a 'parasitic fly') that goes by the wonderful name *Gymnosoma rotundatum*



*Gymnosoma rotundatum* (male)

(Linnaeus, 1758), a fitting name for it with its balloon-like abdomen, that was found in a lay-by nectaring on hogweed, a veritable 'pollinator magnet' of a plant. This lovely fly has been spreading slowly north and west from its original range in the far southern counties. This is its first record for West Oxfordshire; the few previous Oxfordshire entries being south of Abingdon.

Tanya Bainbridge

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## From Wild Oxfordshire...

### Swift Awareness Week

**28 June – 6 July**

Swifts are the real Mavericks of the bird world as they can do almost everything in the air. Swifts' feet and legs are not designed for sitting on the floor or a perch. They can perch vertically, but they can't sit like a robin or pigeon as their wings are far too long. They are perfectly designed for flight – true acrobatic flyers.

Swifts have one of the longest migration journeys in the world. Our swifts migrate approximately 14,000 miles to return to our swift boxes in Oxfordshire every year. What a journey!

The swifts we see in our towns and villages have overwintered in Africa and come back each year to nest and raise their chicks.

Sadly swifts are endangered and need swift boxes on buildings to nest. You can find out more on [www.cherwell-swifts.org](http://www.cherwell-swifts.org).

## Gardening in July

Heading into the hottest months of the year, we need to be looking out for our local wildlife that could be harmed by the heat. Fortunately, there are lots of easy ways to lend a helping hand.

Even the most heat-loving species can suffer without enough to drink so consider providing a shallow bath of water in your garden. Add some stones around the dish so that bees and butterflies can climb out if they fall in.

It's also important to provide some shade in your garden. A small pile of logs can be a great hiding place for insects from the sun.

Make sure you're also helping your grass and flowers survive the heat as grass can reduce surface temperatures by 10°C compared to concrete, and flowers are a

vital wildlife food source in the hot weather.

## World Conservation Day – 28 July

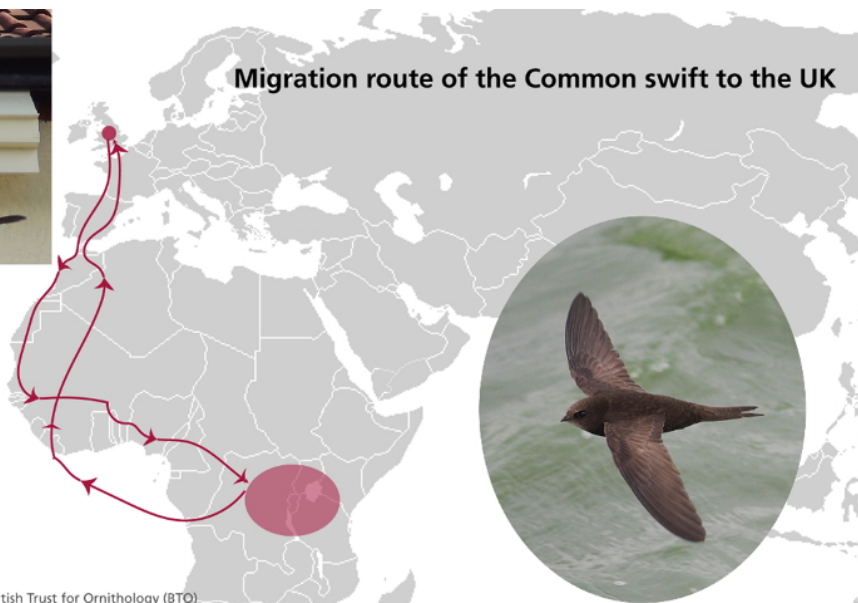
Annual World Conservation Day is a great reason to join your local nature group and see how you could help create space for nature in your area. Check out our map to find the group closest to you: [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/community-groups](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/guidance/community-groups).

Rhiannon Young

[www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/)



## Migration route of the Common swift to the UK



Data source: British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)

# Clubs, societies & sport

## Stonesfield Sports and Social Club

Cheers to 30 years!

This year is a very special year, as we turn 30 years old. As a result we are having an exciting birthday weekend with lots to do:

- Friday 25 July there will be a big Birthday Raffle – you can get your numbers now from behind the bar
- Saturday 26 we have the amazing Village Idiots playing, and a BBQ
- Sunday 27 is a family fun day with stalls, music, food and sports team demos!

It's that time of year again for the Crawford Cup, on 20 July, an annual memorial cricket event with a full day of cricket. Ask the cricket club for more information.

This month is going to be very exciting and we look forward to seeing you all to celebrate our birthday.

All the staff and committee at SSSC



The Village Idiots at Septemberfest 2023

## Stonesfield Tennis Club



Another win for the Stonesfield team: Edward, Jane, Lindsey and David won against Chipping Campden in the Wychwood league

## My tennis journey

I grew up in North West London and at just five years old, spent hours bashing a heavy ball against the wall at Kenton Tennis Club. I was trying to emulate my then-hero, Kevin Curren, imagining I was on centre court at Wimbledon. I genuinely loved the sport as well as the camaraderie and fun of group sessions at my local club.

As I improved, I sought out competition. At nine I entered my first tournament at Paddington Tennis Club. I ran out onto the court with my trusty racket, full of energy and determination. I won the first game... then the second. A crowd began to gather. I was going all-out, trying to hit winners off every shot. It was thrilling but unsustainable, and momentum quickly shifted. I lost 6-2, 6-1. I was overwhelmed by the occasion, but my spirits lifted when



people watching came over to compliment my game

So, what's the lesson here? There's always a winner and a loser in tennis. But don't let that be your only measure of success. If you perform well, learn something, and grow through the experience – then you're a winner!

In practical terms:

Use the warm-up to establish a consistent rhythm. Focus on tracking the ball from your opponent's racket, to the bounce on your side, and keep your own racket poised and ready. If your rhythm is comfortable, shift your attention a bit to your opponent. Watch how they move, what shot they prefer, is their forehand more dangerous than their backhand? Do they have a driving forehand or slicing backhand? What potential weaknesses can you target? Focusing on tactics while sustaining a rally is difficult, but can often get you out of trouble in the heat of battle.

Keep learning, stay curious, and – most importantly – enjoy playing on our excellent local courts. Further tennis tips in August.

Alex Dillon (Level 3 LTA coach)

## **Tuesday coaching with Alex Dillon**

1-2 pm Adult improvers

4-5 pm Junior red 5-8yrs (please contact if interested)

5-6 pm Junior orange 8-11yrs

6-7 pm Junior Yellow 11+ yrs

7-8 pm Adult social night

Join the Club

Visit our website for more information:  
[clubspark.lta.org.uk/](http://clubspark.lta.org.uk/)

StonesfieldTennisClub

Or email us: [stonesfieldtc@gmail.com](mailto: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 Alex:

Alex Dillon 07876 194 008

[alexandergjd@gmail.com](mailto:alexandergjd@gmail.com)

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## **Stonesfield Football Club**

Lots of people will remember it as the day Crystal Palace beat Man City to win The FA Cup, but our wee club will remember it as the day they went to Hailey in the Semi-Final of The Fred Ford Cup, with a lovely big group of vocal supporters and made it to the final, winning the game 4-2 after extra time. It was a warm afternoon, and the pitch was rock solid which meant the game was more of an old-fashioned battle than a classic football match, but ultimately our boys thoroughly deserved their win.

They played the final against RAF Brize Norton at Farringdon Town and although our boys had their chances, they lost 2-0. Interestingly, that's not the end of the story as their opponents had played an ineligible player, so it was over to the Witney & District FA to decide what happens next. At the time of writing, it hadn't been decided if the game was void (likely), the cup handed to Stonesfield by default (unlikely) or a replay ordered. That final option is also unlikely as this was the last game of the season. This is the final club report for season 24/25, so I'll update at the start of the new season.

At the end-of-season awards night, the club proudly displayed the W&D Premiership Trophy as just reward for a hugely successful season. Awards for The Firsts were as follows: Players' player & Manager's player, Dan Newman; Young player, Louis O'Keefe; Supporters' player, Ollie Wynn; Top scorer, Raffy Rice. Awards for The Reserves went to: Players' player, Jake Burden; Supporters' player, Charlie Brand-Wiggins; Managers' player & Top scorer, Marko Babic. Congratulations to Ben Franklin and his boys: The Reserves had a great season finishing in 3rd place in Division 3, and have been rewarded with a promotion place that will see them start their stuff in Division 2 next season!

Many thanks to all the staff at The Sports and Social Club for hosting our teams this season: your warm welcome, hard work and after-match buffets have all been greatly appreciated. At Stonesfield we have a lovely pitch and that is down to the hard work of The Playing Field Committee and the groundsman who do such a great job in providing the football club with excellent facilities. I'd like to express my own gratitude to the good people of The Slate, always helpful, always accommodating and always patient, thank you. Last, but by no means least, our loyal band of Stonesfield Supporters (you know who you are), who follow our teams, home and away, win, lose or draw, The Football Club thanks you for your unyielding support and the players dedicate their successes this season to you.

Tom Flanigan (891979)

## Masters Basketball



Two of our local residents have been selected to represent Great Britain at the FIMBA Masters Basketball World Championships!

Wendy Murray has been selected for the Ladies over-60s team and will captain the team. Wendy has represented GB at a number of masters tournaments.

Steve Murray has been selected for the Men's over-70s team. Steve was a member of the over-70s team that won gold at the European Masters tournament in Pesaro, Italy last year.

The tournament, which will be in Switzerland 27 June to 6 July, will be streamed live. Good luck to Wendy and Steve, and hopefully they will let us know how they get on.



## Stonesfield Scouts

The annual Stonesfield Scout Duck race will be on 12 July from 5pm. They seem to have been breeding as we now have 1800 of them! Please take the opportunity to sell these to friends and family, as well as colleagues at work. 1st prize is £150, so it is worth a go. There will be a BBQ and a bar, as well as the chance to cheer on your favourite duck. For all the details and to buy ducks just search online for 'Stonesfield Duck Race'. If you have any donations of time, cake or prizes for our tombola, please drop them off with one the group.

The weeks have been busy with lots of great scouting activities for the 70 young people we have in our group – bushcraft, den building, cooking, litter picking, and kayaking. They are all on a number of camps around the region: it really is an amazing thing to be involved with. Make sure your little ones are signed up too!

Some of our volunteers have been around for a while now. Our children are moving on. It's time for the next generation of volunteers to step up. It's your turn. It's up to you – it's your children.

It's an exciting time to join our Group with our new hut. By the way, we are all

incredibly busy just like you. But it is great fun and one of the most rewarding things you can do with your time.

We have been making progress and we would like you to come and see what we have been up to. We have moved soil, had internal walls put in, will soon have windows and doors, with some internal plastering. Plumbing and electrics are lined up, and so we are really looking forward to furnishing and using the hut. If you want to help, or know someone who could, drop us an email. We are currently looking for someone to help with the finished flooring - might it be you?

Ben Whitworth

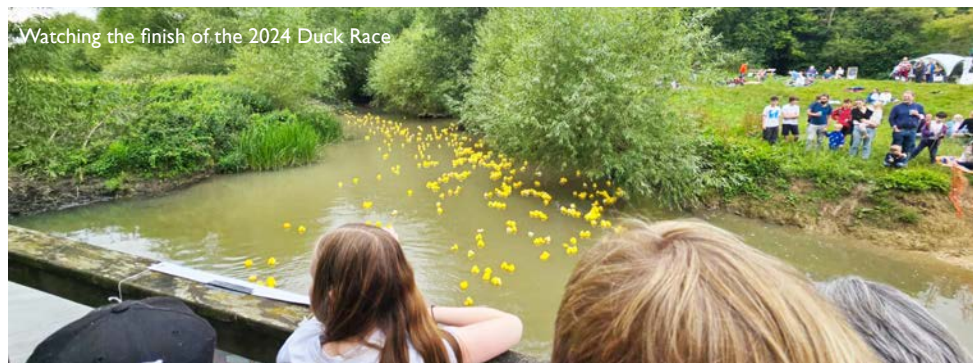


# duck race 2025

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

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

search stonesfield duck race



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## The Megalosaurus Society

At the end of May we had an interesting afternoon in Hook Norton which was led by Owen Green of the Oxfordshire Geology Trust and science writer and geologist Nina Morgan. We had a tour of the village where we engaged in learning about the iron ore industry, the domestic architecture, and visiting the church and its graveyard where much can be learnt from the gravestones and the lichens they host. We finished with a visit to the village museum and afternoon tea at the Brewery.



Ammonite in a Hook Norton wall

Our next event on 16 July is an eagerly-awaited talk by Dr Emma Nicholls and Dr Duncan Murdock from Oxford University Museum of Natural History on the dinosaur trackways at Ardley, as featured on the BBC's *Digging for Britain*. For this event only, we will be able to offer a limited number of places to non-members at a cost of £5. If you would like to take advantage of this, bookings may be made **from 5 July** by emailing us at

megsoc25@gmail.com. Places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Finally, we are very pleased to be able to tell you that the Poem Project is coming to fruition – the panel is currently in production and we are planning to have it installed in the pub garden for the beginning of September.

If you are interested in joining the Society or would like more information, please get in touch.

Viv Kendall and Trisha Williams

megsoc25@gmail.com

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## 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](mailto: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)

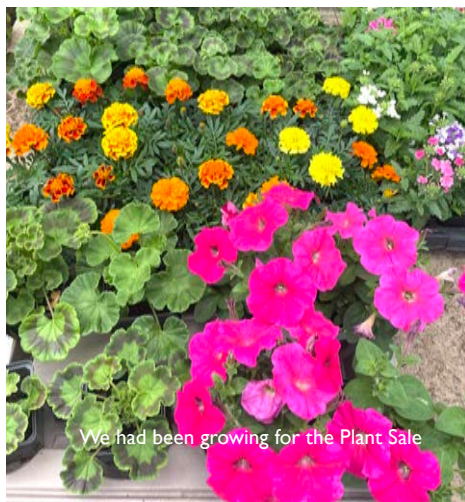
## Stonesfield Gardening Club



Talking roses

We welcomed H  l  ne Tronc from the Oxford Botanic Garden to our June meeting, when she came to share her passion for the rose. She described the various forms of wild roses that have been used to create the wonderful variety that we know and love. Versatile as well as beautiful, she likes to use roses in pots as well as in mixed borders; a far cry from the classic rose garden of bare earth and pruned hybrids.

The club had a stall selling plants at the school fete on 22 June and a sociable walk round four gardens in the village on 30 June, so June was a busy month.



We had been growing for the Plant Sale

In July we are being visited by Nicola Hope, organic horticulturalist, who will be talking to us about designing an organic garden. She will be with us on Monday 14 July at 7.30 pm in St James' Centre.

Happy gardening.

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

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

### STONESFIELD LUNCH CLUB

Stonesfield Lunch Club meets every Weds 11 till 2 (for members) at the St James' Centre.

Lunch Club provides a social occasion, friendship and support for our more mature residents along with refreshments, activities and a freshly cooked 2-course meal each week.

Volunteers are always welcomed for many roles and this is a lovely way to be involved in village life. Contact me if you would like more information on becoming a member or in volunteering.

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



# Church news

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **From the Rector: Celebrating the Ordinary**

We are fascinated by the things which are out of the ordinary. Extreme wealth, weather, endurance, looks, danger or lifestyles are interesting to those of us who feel that we live merely ordinary lives. The life of the stars, the Royals, the heroes of sport, those coping with extremes of any kind, or the saints of the church fire our imagination, but can also make our lives seem lacklustre in comparison. Our activities, diet, clothes, conversation and abilities may seem dull or limited compared to those whose lives are 'extraordinary'.

The word 'ordinary' came into use in English around the time our churches in Combe and Stonesfield were built. It soon came to mean *common in occurrence*, and not distinguished in any way. It came from

the French word 'ordinaire' and before that from the Latin *ordinarius*, meaning customary, regular, usual, or orderly. From this Latin root we have the phrase 'ordinal numerals' to mean a numbered sequence - first, second, third and so on. The church uses the phrase 'ordinary time' in this numeric sense, to refer to the long weeks of summer, in the period after Trinity Sunday.

Christian faith celebrates the presence of God in what at first glance seems ordinary. The God of creation was born as a human infant, and Jesus had an ordinary working life in a home which would have been modest at best. The disciples and followers of Jesus were ordinary men and women, mostly from very humble backgrounds. The examples which Jesus used in his teaching were from the ordinary life which people knew – farmers sowing and reaping, shepherds protecting their flocks, vines and fig trees, a widow seeking a lost coin, a man building a house, and so on. When Jesus was not teaching and travelling, he spent his time enjoying the simple pleasure of sharing a meal with friends. God's presence in Jesus of Nazareth is not so much about giving us a path to an extraordinary life in heaven, as about helping us recognise God's presence every day, in the simple tasks, actions and interactions which order our lives. God is with us in the ordinary, and waiting to be recognised and known. Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her epic poem *Aurora Leigh* wrote:

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes...

Where will we recognise the presence of  
God this summer?

Rev'd Ralph Williamson - Rector

## Church services

### Sunday 6 July [Trinity 3]

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

### Sunday 13 July [Trinity 4]

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

### Sunday 20 July [Trinity 5]

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

### Sunday 27 July [Trinity 6]

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

## Wednesdays

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (weekly except 2 July)
11am	Combe	Holy Communion (9 July), Morning Prayer (23 July)

## A record of recent funerals/ memorial services:

9 June 2025: Melvyn Arthur Crawley

Our prayers are for family and friends at  
this time.

## Stonesfield Methodist Church Services for July

Sunday 6	11am	To be arranged
Sunday 13	11am	The Reverend James Skinner
Sunday 20.	11am	The Reverend Andrew Biggs: Holy Communion Service
Sunday 27.	11am	Penny Fowler

## God's gifts are best, that's definite!

Some folk have green fingers, others sing  
like the songbirds, the gifts go on.

At a Ladies Breakfast event, our lovely  
speaker arrived, and she told of her lifelong  
family journey where each step along the  
way became entwined with God. Her gift of  
this sharing enriched us and her story was  
loved and appreciated.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve  
one another, as a good steward of God's  
grace. 1 Peter 4 v10

The Tea Afternoon on Saturday 12 July will  
be from 2 - 4pm. All are very welcome; do  
invite your friends and family.

Kathleen (891733)

k.m.albert14@gmail.com



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# Roman Catholic Worship

## Mission

‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ Matthew 28:19-20

The mission of Christianity is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, emphasising the spread of the Gospel message to all. This mission calls for evangelisation, the promotion of social justice, and the offering of charity to those in both spiritual and material need. By sharing the sacraments, teaching the faith, and serving the vulnerable, the Church aims to bring individuals closer to God while fostering a sense of community and purpose.

Ultimately, the Church seeks to reflect Christ’s love and compassion in all its endeavours, embodying His command to love one another. Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) 1 explains

‘Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives a new horizon and decisive direction.’

As Christians we are all called to be missionaries. To be a missionary is to embrace a life of service, carrying a message of hope and love to those in need. It is a calling that transcends borders and barriers, demanding both courage and humility. Missionaries sow seeds of compassion to those who need it: at home and further afield, tending to both spiritual

and material needs with unwavering faith. As missionaries we become bridges between communities, fostering understanding and unity among diverse peoples while living out the Gospel in action. Pope Francis told us:

‘Those who have opened their hearts to God’s love, heard his voice and received his light cannot keep this gift to themselves.’  
Lumen Fidei n.37 (2013).

## Holy Mass

Sunday 9.15 am

Wednesdays and Fridays 9.15 am

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 [stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/) or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, Parish Priest:  
[fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk)

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**Membership is open to anyone** with an interest in gardening on payment of the **annual subscription (£10 per adult or £18 for a couple at the same address).**

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



## Stonesfield Tennis Club

The club was established over 100 years ago with membership open to all at very competitive subscription rates.

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

Website:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/StonesfieldTennisClub>

Email: [stonesfieldtc@gmail.com](mailto:stonesfieldtc@gmail.com)  
Facebook: [@stonesfieldtennisclub](https://www.facebook.com/stonesfieldtennisclub)  
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