



## Hot day for a close race



What a fantastic day we had on Saturday 12 July, as the annual Stonesfield Scouts Duck Race brought joy, excitement, and community spirit to our village once again.

Despite the recent lack of rain leaving the river exceptionally low, and the very hot conditions, the BBQ was fired up and the drinks were flowing, ensuring spirits were high all afternoon.

A massive thank you goes out to all our incredible volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event such a success. From the bustling BBQ and refreshing bar to the popular tombola.

It was great to catch up with people who have been part of this event over many years, and

we even had someone over from Germany (I was not sure if this was only for the event, or if they happened to be passing).

We even managed to sell out of Pimms early – a good problem to have, but we'll be sure to stock even more next year! And, of course, a special shout-out for the monumental task of collecting all the ducks at the end of the race. They've all been hosed down and are safely tucked away, ready for next year!

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that, with your amazing generosity, we raised upwards of £2,500.

Cont p23

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## Dates for your diary:

### July

26	Village Idiots	Stonesfield Playing Field	7pm
26,27	Roman Villa Open Day	North Leigh	11am-5pm

### August

1-31	Pictures @ The Pub: Textile Group	The White Horse	pub hours
2,3,16,17	Roman Villa Open Day	North Leigh	11am-5pm
3	Live Jazz	The White Horse	5-7pm
3,10,17,24	Combe Sunday cream teas	Reading Room	2.30-5pm
4,11,18	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10am-12 noon
4,7,11,14	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6-30pm
5,12,19,26	Strong Nation HIIT Class	Village Hall	8.15-9.30pm
6,13,22	Quiz night	The White Horse	8pm
6,13	Gatehouse Pilates	Village Hall	9.30- 10.30am
6,13,20,27	HIIT Class	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
6,20	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
7,14,21,28	Upholstery Group	Village Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
17	Models and Collections	Combe Mill	10.30am-4.30pm
18,21,28	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6-30pm
20	Lunch Club Coffee morning	St James' Centre	11am-12.30pm
29	Rock n Roll Bingo & BBQ (from 6pm)	The White Horse	8pm bingo
30	Men's Walk and Talk	St James' Centre (meet)	10am
30,31	Roman Villa Open Day	North Leigh	11am-5pm

### September

3	Parish Council meeting	Primary School	7pm
6	Repair and Community Café	Village Hall	10am-2pm
7	Afternoon tea - Cystic Fibrosis Trust	Combe Reading Room	2-5pm
8	Gardening Club talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
13	Bike night - bands, bar & BBQ	SSSC	2-11pm
16	Bingo	SSSC	7pm

# Notices & news

## Andy Tacon Memorial Bench

Andy Tacon is remembered by many people as a driving force supporting and developing many local good causes, including Stonesfield Tennis Club.

A group of tennis players with whom Andy often played have decided to raise money to install a bench at the tennis courts. The bench will be made by a UK furniture maker, from sustainably sourced teak and will have an inscribed plaque to Andy. The cost of the bench, including installation, will be about £550; the Tennis Club has very kindly agreed to help run this appeal.

Please pay any gift you wish to make towards the cost of the bench quoting the following details:

Account name Stonesfield Tennis Club  
Account 67228703  
Sort code 09-01-55  
Reference Andy Tacon or AT  
Miles Barrington-Ward (891315)  
contact@barrington-ward.com

## Village Hall news

We have continued to be super-busy at the hall over July, but with summer here, a few of our weekly classes will be taking a break so please speak with the organisers to check when they are running over the summer.

At the hall we are planning a bit of TLC following the repair of the pavilion wall; a great shout out to Jess our fabulous builder who is doing further repairs too. All will be ready for a busy September, when we are all back from the summer break.  
Claire Renshaw (07359 338490)

Stonesfield Village Hall Bookings  
info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com  
www.stonesfieldvillagehall.com

## Lunch Club Coffee Morning

A coffee morning will be held at St. James' Centre on Wednesday 20 August, from 11 am until 12.30pm. Do come along and spend a little time with the Lunch Club group, and enjoy a coffee or tea while meeting members and volunteers. It's a warm and welcoming place, just drop in and say hello!

Kathleen (891733)

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## Stonesfield Village Fete - a huge success!

Friends of Stonesfield School want to say a huge thank you to everyone who came to support Stonesfield Village Fete on Sunday 22 June. We were incredibly lucky to have so many wonderful volunteers both from the school community and the village community. We were supported by Stonesfield Sports and Social Club and The Playing Field Association to allow us to run this event on the Playing Field with the hope of creating a wider village occasion. We were thrilled to welcome so many families from Stonesfield and surrounding villages to enjoy our community fete.



We were joined by local organisations: Stonesfield Pre School, Stonesfield Gardening Club and The Megalosaurus Society. There was an opportunity to shop with a variety of stalls, including from Stonesfield Primary school students.



Gardening Club plant stall



Sol Samba

We welcomed Sol Samba from Oxford to provide us with lively music as well as Wychwayz Morris and the rhythmical Ukulele Disaster from Charlbury!

We are very proud to announce we raised £2,718. We are hoping to use this to part-fund new play equipment at the school's playground and we are looking forward to working with the new Head Teacher and Head of School in September to set fundraising goals for the next academic year. A special thanks to Stonesfield Garage and Blenheim Palace for sponsoring this event.

Friends of Stonesfield School, FoSS

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## Macmillan Coffee Morning

Please save the date for Stonesfield's 2025 Macmillan Coffee Morning:

When: Friday 26 September 2025

Time: 08:45 - 11:45 am

Where: St James' Centre

Tea, coffee, cake, bottle stall, plus warm sausage rolls this year!

Thank you

Stonesfield Macmillan Coffee Morning Team



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## Pictures @ The Pub

The exhibition of textile art created by members of the Evenlode Textile Group continues throughout August. There is a huge variety of work on show including landscapes, animal studies and portraits alongside abstract forms which have been created with pattern and stitch. If you have not yet marvelled at the skill of the makers, there is plenty of time to do so!

In September, to coincide with the installation of Simon Armitage's poem in the garden, we are planning a special exhibition *Celebrating Stonesfield*. As the title suggests, the exhibits will reflect the landscape and life of our village and will include poetry, textile art, photography, linocuts, etchings, journalism, paintings, graphic design, collage, and mixed media works. Many thanks to all the individuals and groups who are making great efforts to produce new work, loan vintage pieces or hunt out archive items especially for this exhibition.

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub  
(trwynwil003@gmail.com)

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse  
Community Pub

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## I'm a Shareholder

### From California to Stonesfield: A shareholder's visit to The White Horse

In late November 2020, I received an email from a friend who knows I'm a proud Anglophile. The message included a link to a Washington Post article titled 'Village Pours Itself into Mission to Save Its Last Pub, and Its Community'. I was immediately captivated.

The article told the story of Stonesfield, a small Oxfordshire village that had rallied together to save its last remaining pub, *The White Horse*. Their mission was about far more than preserving a building - it was about protecting the heart of their community. I was touched and inspired. Within minutes, I visited the 'Back the White Horse' website and purchased shares.

For the next few years, I followed the project closely as the dedicated committee navigated the challenges of purchasing the building, completing the renovation, and preparing to reopen the doors of their beloved pub. Because I live in California, I could not physically contribute to the local efforts - no painting walls, baking cakes, or staffing fundraisers - I could only support them from afar. And I did, with hope and prayers. All the while, I quietly dreamed of the day I might visit in person.

That dream came true on 30 May this year.



I arrived in Stonesfield on a sunny Friday afternoon, a little nervous but mostly excited. When I walked through the doors of The White Horse, it felt both surreal and deeply familiar. I introduced myself to Craig behind the bar, then ordered a half pint of cider and a vegan sweet potato wrap. The sun was shining, so I headed into the garden and to find a spot to sit. I invited myself to join two welcoming women at a table – they turned out to be sisters – and we quickly fell into easy conversation. As more of their friends joined us, I felt a genuine sense of welcome and community.

The next day, I returned to the pub and spent several hours enjoying the garden. I chatted with a couple who had travelled extensively throughout the US, including along route 1 on the California coast. Later, I met Pete, a member of the pub committee, along with his wife Laura, their baby girl and dog. They shared stories about the long journey to save and reopen The White Horse, and I listened with wonder and appreciation for their dedication.

That evening, I came back once more – this time for dinner. I sat with Mark, another committee member, and we shared a delightful meal and great conversation. I enjoyed a delicious vegan pasta dish, but the real highlight was feeling so at home in this place I had once only known through email updates and photos.

My weekend in Stonesfield was pure joy. The village itself is like something out of a fairy tale – quaint, charming, and peaceful. And The White Horse exceeded all expectations. It offered not just excellent food and drink, but also a welcoming spirit and meaningful connections.

It's extraordinary to think that an article and a link – shared with me nearly four years ago – led to such a rich and memorable experience. But that's the magic of this story. The White Horse is more than just a pub. It's a real-life example of what can happen when people come together with a common goal and a shared belief in community.



And now, I can proudly say, I've had a pint (well, a half pint) at *my pub*.

Lee Huntley

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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.



## Repair and Community Café

The next Repair and Community Café will be held on Saturday 6 September 10 am – 2 pm at the Village Hall. Bring all your items that don't work and need fixing as usual. We are also doing bike repairs and maintenance this time. If any spare parts are needed, please bring them along.

While you're here and waiting, do stop by the café in the Club Room. We welcome everyone and serve fresh coffee, tea and delicious homemade cakes. Lunch (as well as cakes) is available from 12 noon 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.

We look forward to seeing you.

Susan Rudlin and Mike Sofroniou  
07530 958111 (Mike)

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## Hosepipe ban

The hosepipe ban in OX (and other) postcodes came into effect on Tuesday 22 July. The police ask that you don't report any breaches of the ban to them as the ban is a Thames Water responsibility.

For more details see  
[www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-supply-and-drought-update/hosepipe-ban-faqs](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-supply-and-drought-update/hosepipe-ban-faqs)

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## Thank you from Stonesfield Baby and Toddler Group

Stonesfield Baby and Toddler Group runs on a Friday morning (10-11.30 am) during term time in the Village Hall.



We're a parent-led group, welcoming families with children from birth to school age from the village and beyond for a free play session in our lovely hall with cake and hot drinks (proper coffee!) for parents/carers, followed by snacks, stories and song time for the little ones. We ask for a voluntary donation per session of £3 for parent/carer and child, plus 50p for any siblings, which covers our running costs, aside from renting the space.

Our rental of the Village Hall is covered entirely by Stonesfield Community Trust, without whom we wouldn't be able to offer this space, time and community for parents, grandparents, carers and little ones to connect and play. A big thank you to the Community Trust for confirming continued funding for the next academic year!

We are also very grateful to Muriel and Kathleen, who help with refreshments and clearing up, and Claire who comes to play guitar and makes our song time more tuneful!

If you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you. Do you have a craft activity or an idea for creative play you'd like to



help us put on? Do you want to join the incredible tea-making crew? Would you like to bring an instrument and join our song time? Do you fancy baking for us one week? Or maybe you have a little one (or look after one on a Friday) and haven't yet joined us?



We look forward to welcoming familiar faces and new ones in September, after the summer holidays.

Hannah Crowe & Topaze Skerrett  
stonesfieldbabyandtoddlers@gmail.com

## Bell ringing at St. James' Church

June 28 saw a gathering of around 50 people at SJC for the annual Witney and Woodstock 'Striking Competition'. Strict rules are adhered to and ringers from seven towers competed. It was Stonesfield's turn to host the annual event (we didn't compete), which in practical terms meant preparing St. James' Centre to receive the competitors for the bring and share supper to follow the actual ringing, and providing welcome drinks on arrival and as it proceeded.

Ringers arrived from Combe, Church Hanborough, Freeland, North Leigh, Wootton, Witney and Woodstock. The teams converged on Stonesfield for a friendly, but definitely robust, competitive ringing of church bells, either ringing *call changes* or a *method* in turns, and being

marked on the ability of both 'bands' and their 'captains' (conductors) to convince the judge of their precise and accurate bell ringing under pressure.

Ringling for Church Services and special events and to mark rites of passage like christenings, weddings, funerals, and to celebrate dates like New Year's Eve or the Coronation form the voluntary and extra duties of a competent bell ringer. In competition ringing, marks are awarded for different aspects of the ringing. In this case, the even and regular striking of all six bells was highly important.



The whole event was great fun, entertaining, an eye opener and another angle on one of the most challenging new interests of mine since moving to Stonesfield. The technique is crucial and requires learning and practising. Our church tower is a small, cosy one and the belfry houses a ring of six bells of differing weights, from the treble to the tenor. The June summer evening was perfect in terms of the glorious weather, the unique occasion, the skill and general atmosphere, not to mention the tasty and delicious range of food for supper which was gratefully enjoyed by all in either the hall or the beautiful garden of the Centre, overlooking the tower and churchyard.

Church Hanborough and Witney 'bands' were judged to be the joint winners of the call changes trophy, while Witney also won the method ringing trophy. The various factors necessary: skill, technique, training, experience and a dose of luck for those who topped the board, should not be underestimated – winning, although clearly important, did not dim the achievement of each participant. For those of us hosting, it was a unique, friendly event, which one day I'd like to 'strike' in. Personally, I'm grateful for the unexpectedly demanding opportunities and new horizons afforded by plunging into the world of campanology.

Ray Sofroniou

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## **The egg lady has retired**

Those of us who have been buying our eggs from the stand in Brook Lane will be very sad to learn that Joanna Browne has – very reluctantly – decided to call it a day. Her hens were being destroyed: eaten, she thinks, by foxes. The hens disappeared, usually overnight, one at a time. She mounted guard, secured the henhouse and fences and did all she could to protect them but the fox outwitted her (if indeed it was a fox). 'I just haven't got it in me to keep facing the daily loss, it is too upsetting', she told me.

Joanna has been keeping hens all her life. She started when she was about eight years old: chickens in the back garden were a feature of family life, and she has had them ever since. She came to Stonesfield about twenty years ago, and when setting up her hen house, thought 'how nice it would be to make people happy by selling the eggs'. At their peak, the flock numbered about 100 birds. Eggs were plentiful, and involved Joanna in a rigorously disciplined routine

of early morning collections, seven days a week, plus weekly clean-outs. She even went to the trouble of hand-delivering them to loyal customers. In more recent years, the egg stand operated an honesty box. 'But it was never about the money; I just wanted to be of service'.

I find it most peculiar now, buying mine in a shop, and I miss the guaranteed freshness and wonderful taste of those laid in a field five minutes from my house. Thank you, Joanna, for all your hard work, and for those poached, fried, boiled and scrambled eggs, omelettes and cakes that the Brook Lane Chickens made possible for so many years. Stonesfield won't be the same without them.

Caroline Friend

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## **A call out to crafters - poppies for Remembrance Day**

Thank you to the knitters and crocheters in the village who contacted us in response to our piece in the July Slate. We still welcome anyone who would like to join in and knit or crochet poppies for the Remembrance Day display around the War Memorial.

We can supply you with balls of 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 get involved, please get in touch with Lynn Stevenson on (01993) 891681 or Karen Ball on (01993) 898103.

## North Leigh Roman Villa

### Open Days

Enjoy the beautiful weather at one of North Leigh Roman Villa's FREE Open Days this summer. The volunteers have already welcomed approaching a thousand visitors to the site this year. There are new decorative panels to see in the Mosaic House, which will be open 11 am to 5 pm on the following weekends:

26-27 July

2-3, 16-17, 30-31 August

20-21 September

Set within a peaceful landscape on the banks of the River Evenlode, North Leigh Roman Villa is considered to be one of the largest villas in Roman Britain with a history of occupation spanning 5 centuries. At its most extensive in the early 4th century AD it included 3 bath suites, 16 mosaic floors and 11 rooms with under-floor heating.

Today visitors can imagine the villa's former richness as they walk through the rectangular footprint of its walls – but 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.

### Minecraft Competition

We are launching a Free Competition, with support from Blenheim Palace, to come up with the most faithful recreation of how North Leigh Roman Villa would have looked when it was the centre of a large estate, created in the popular online game, Minecraft.

We're looking for a 1:1 recreation of the main villa building and its internal courtyard in the game, with a screen recorded video (no longer than ten minutes) shared to YouTube for judging purposes. The winner will not only be hailed as the best builder, but will receive a £100 prize, courtesy of Blenheim Palace. This reconstruction will also be used as an educational tool on site at the villa during Open Days. Runner up samples from a shortlist of five may also appear online and for a future display in our Custodian's Cottage.

Whether you're an expert Minecraft player or new to the game, we're providing all the resources you'll need to bring this 2000-year-old site to life; included in the entry form: [www.forms.gle/hDgySG5yrcdgWWjy5](http://www.forms.gle/hDgySG5yrcdgWWjy5).

Rome wasn't built in a day, but we're hoping this little slice of Romano-British life can be realised by you.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

NORTH LEIGH ROMAN VILLA

## Mosaic Open Days

**Saturday May 17 & Sunday May 18**  
11am - 5pm

**Saturday June 21 & Sunday June 22**  
11am - 5pm

**Saturday July 19 & Sunday July 20**  
**Saturday July 26 & Sunday July 27**  
11am - 5pm

**Saturday August 2 & Sunday August 3**  
**Saturday August 16 & Sunday August 17**  
**Saturday August 30 & Sunday August 31**  
11am - 5pm

**Saturday September 20 & Sunday September 21**  
11am - 5pm

The competition is open for a little over three months, 21 June - 29 September, with the winner and runners up revealed on our final Open Day on 29 October. Judging will involve site volunteers, English Heritage and Blenheim Palace.

If you can make it to the villa in person over the summer, we'd love to welcome you on one of our Open Days.

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/)

Follow us on X: @villa\_north

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/northleighromanvilla](https://www.facebook.com/northleighromanvilla)

To join Friends of North Leigh Roman Villa or arrange a special opening, email: [nlrvols@gmail.com](mailto:nlrsvols@gmail.com).

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## Exotic Open Garden

Steve Moodey will be opening up his 'Exotic' garden again this year on Saturday 16 August between 10am and 5pm.

Since 2014 Steve has raised over £7,000 for his chosen charities. As is usual, entrance is by donation only please and his chosen charities this year are Maggies, Blue Cross and Hedgehog Cabin.

There will be a plant sale, and tea and cakes will also be available.

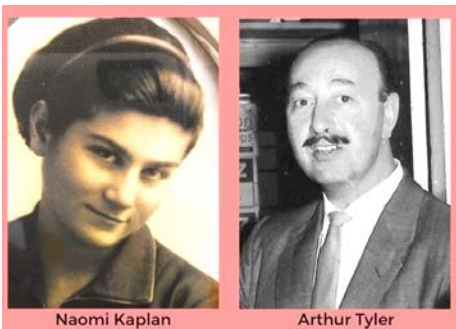
53 Springfield Drive, Abingdon, OX14 1JF

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## New art exhibition: Act of kindness to a Holocaust survivor

From Saturday 9 to Saturday 30 August 2025, the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock will display a new exhibition created by local artists and inspired by the story of a simple act of kindness during the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April 1945.

The Oxfordshire Yeomanry, a Territorial Army regiment serving as an Anti-Tank battery of the Royal Artillery at the time, was among the first to enter the Bergen-Belsen camp when it was handed over to British forces. Ordinary soldiers, they were not prepared for what they would find inside – camp survivors were starving while typhus was spreading rapidly, made worse by cramped conditions, poor sanitation and lack of clean water, as well as around 10,000 dead left unburied.



Camp survivor Naomi Warren, Polish and Jewish, was desperate to contact her surviving family having already lost many held at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and approached her liberators for help. Oxfordshire Yeoman Arthur Tyler came forward – he began writing letters to her uncle and sister living in Houston, Texas. This simple act of kindness would eventually see Naomi reunited with them;

ultimately settling and rebuilding her life in the US.

The new exhibition will combine artwork and film created in response to the story of Naomi and Arthur. The exhibition is the culmination of the *Lifelines* community art project which brought together a group of artists from diverse backgrounds. Inspired by this story, the work on display explores the themes of witnessing, kindness, vision and positivity.

This new exhibition will coincide with the Holocaust Memorial Trust's *80 Candles 80 Years* display, visiting the museum on its tour of the UK in the run up to Holocaust Memorial Day 2026.

The *80 Candles for 80 Years* project has involved 80 communities and organisations across the UK who have created unique candleholders, each one inspired by the life story of Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust, and other individuals targeted by the Nazi regime.

*80 Candles for 80 Years* will go on display at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock from 12 to 30 August 2025.

## **Combe Mill: Models and Collections event**

On Sunday 17 August we will be joined by local model clubs exhibiting their models of fairgrounds, train sets, tractors, buses, a Bluebird model and much more. We are also organising a display of classic motor cycles.

Combe Mill, a late 19th Century restored water mill on Blenheim Palace Estate by the river Evenlode, will have all machinery running 'in steam'. Volunteers will be on hand to explain everything. The tea room will be open, and also a BBQ, gift shop, tombola and raffle.

Come and browse the market stalls; bring the children along and they will enjoy it all.

The Mill is open 10.30 am to 4.30pm; last entries 3.30pm. Dogs on leads are most welcome, and parking is free. Adults £9.00, seniors £7.50, accompanied children free.

We are also open every Wednesday for a 'self-guided tour' with volunteers around.

Adults £5.00 seniors £4.00 Accompanied children free.

Combe Mill, Blenheim Palace Sawmills,  
Combe OX29 8ET



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



## **Tell us about using the NHS App!**

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear about your experiences of using the NHS App to manage your health and care.

We want to know things like:

- Have you heard of the NHS App?
- Do you use it, or do you prefer to deal directly with your GP practice?
- Would you like to use the app but can't?
- What works well and what doesn't?

Whether you use the NHS App or not, we would really like to hear from you.

Please share your views and experiences by completing our short anonymous survey: [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AppNHS/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AppNHS/).

The survey will be open until Friday 15 August.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an independent charity for people who use health and social care services. It finds out what matters to local people and ensures their views are heard by decision-makers.

We will use your feedback to tell the people in charge of local NHS services how well the app is working well and what could be better.

If you would like a paper copy of our survey or would prefer to talk to us about this please contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire on 01865 520520 or at [hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

To find out more about the work of Healthwatch Oxfordshire see [www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)

# **STONESFIELD STUDY HUB**

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**LAUNCHING OCTOBER 2025**

**A NEW GCSE AND A-LEVEL  
TUITION COMPANY LAUNCHING  
IN STONESFIELD.**



# Politics & local affairs

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## Stonesfield Parish Council

The July 2025 Parish Council meeting will be reported in the September *Slate*. There is no Council meeting in August.

The next full Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 3 September 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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## From our District Councillors

### Mental Health Summit

I attended a Mental Health Summit hosted by WODC this month, which showcased the support available from 13 mental health organisations in West Oxfordshire. This included talks by ‘Tough to Talk’ who work to reduce male suicide and break the silence surrounding men’s crises and poor mental health. Our local mental health charity, Bridewell Gardens, who provide social and therapeutic horticulture in a working garden were also there. Turning Point, who have a hub in Witney, provide support for people with drug/alcohol addictions and their families. The Community Wellbeing team at WODC can provide more details of the services available locally.

### Evenlode Catchment Partnership

I attended the July Combe meeting by the Evenlode Catchment Partnership, who are running a 6-month campaign to investigate

the impact of Combe sewage treatment works (STW). In 2024, Combe STW discharged untreated sewage into the River Evenlode for over 2430 hours. The River Evenlode is designated by Thames Water as an ‘ecological high priority site’! The sewage discharges increased by 486 hours from 2023, to win the ECP’s second place in the ‘Top of the Poops’ awards. If you would like to get involved with the citizen science to measure the impact, please get in touch.

## 3. Local Plan

WODC is preparing a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2041, to make sure that our planning policies and proposals are up to date and effectively tackle vital issues such as climate change, health and wellbeing, housing and the economy. Once adopted, it will replace the current West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, which was approved in September 2018. Please review the draft Local Plan preferred policy options consultation paper and give your **feedback by 8 August** at [www.yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/local-plan-june-2025-feedback](http://www.yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/local-plan-june-2025-feedback) Your feedback is really important to make the new local plan fit for purpose and to meet the needs of all of Stonesfield’s residents.

Genny Early:

West Oxfordshire District Councillor

Genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk

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## More from West Oxfordshire

### What you can put in your blue recycling bin...

This an official update from WODC (dated 15 July 2025) for what you can put in your **blue lidded recycling bin**. This now includes **flexible plastics** i.e. plastic bags etc.

The WODC website is in the process of being redesigned to reflect these changes, hopefully as soon as possible to stop any further confusion. The most up-to-date and reliable information about what you can and can't put in your bins is available on the 'What to put in your bin' page on the website. Our printed and downloadable leaflets are currently being reviewed, as they don't yet reflect some recent changes.

Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) means clean and dry items that can be recycled together in one bin. These items are sorted later at a recycling facility. It's important that they're not contaminated with food or liquids.

Typical items you can include in your recycling (blue lidded) bin are:

- **Paper and cardboard** – like newspapers, magazines, and packaging
- **Plastic bottles, pots, tubs, and trays** – such as drinks bottles, yogurt pots, and fruit punnets
- **Metal tins and cans** – including food tins, drink cans, and aerosols
- **Cartons** – like juice or milk cartons, and tubes from products like custard or gravy granules
- **Flexible Plastic bags** – like bags, bubble wrap and film

Please be aware that recycling rules can vary between councils, depending on the facilities they use.

What about flexible plastics?

Although it's not yet a legal requirement, all councils will need to collect flexible plastics for recycling by 2027. West Oxfordshire is already preparing for this. Our recycling contractor can currently accept some flexible plastics, but the national infrastructure for recycling them is still developing. **This means WODC can collect flexible plastics** in your recycling bin., although they can't yet guarantee that all of it will be recycled. **They encourage you to include it**, as separating it now helps them prepare for the future and supports the growth of recycling systems.

### Free parking will continue

West Oxfordshire District Council has confirmed that parking will remain free in all Council-run car parks, as part of an updated parking strategy that sets out plans to improve parking across West Oxfordshire through to 2031. A recent review found that Witney currently has a good level of available parking, but in Burford, Woodstock and Charlbury, there is not enough space to meet demand.

The Council currently owns and manages 16 public off-street car parks across the district. While there is no legal requirement to offer parking, the Council wishes our car parks to support the residents and local businesses, and help our towns and villages remain welcoming to visitors. This provision will continue to be free of charge.

## New affordable homes in Witney



A recent parking survey has shown that Marriotts Walk car park in Witney (Woodford Way, always intended for ultimate use for housing) is underused during the day. The District Council intends to bring forward plans to use the area for a development to offer one- and two-bedroom affordable homes for local people, which are currently in short supply. The location of this type of housing, close to local services, would be ideal. The Council aims to retain about 70 car parking spaces to meet overnight parking needs.

## A new rail link?

An independent study for WODC has investigated the benefits to travel, the environment, housebuilding and the economy of reinstating a rail link between Carterton, Witney and Oxford. The report concludes that investing in a rail link would relieve pressure and congestion on the A40, as well as contributing to progress towards environmental targets.

## Funding available for community projects

West Oxfordshire District Council has pledged more than £114,000 to support community-led projects through its crowdfunding initiative, Westhive. This is enabling community organisations to unlock additional funding in a wide range of activities to enhance local services,

spaces and support. Westhive has already allocated over £423,000 since 2023 for community projects. Current projects seeking support are in the areas of meeting recreational needs for people with health issues or financial difficulties, and restoring endangered natural habitats.

## WODC's climate change strategy



West Oxfordshire District Council has approved the West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy that will help guide the district's transition to net zero emissions by 2050, while building resilience to climate change and accelerating nature recovery.

The Council has made significant progress in carbon reduction and is helping to accelerate the drive to net zero through energy advice services, targeted grant funding for low-income households, energy planning and building decarbonisation. It has cut its own emissions through reducing energy demand and has been named the top performing rural district in the UK following the release of the 2025 national Council Climate Action Scorecards.

The strategy, which runs from 2025 to 2030, outlines a net zero pathway for reducing carbon emissions across West Oxfordshire. It builds on the Council's ongoing commitment to tackling the climate and ecological emergency declared in 2019 and supports priorities set out in the Council Plan 2023-2027.

Projects that contributed to this success included supporting vulnerable households to improve energy efficiency through the *Better Housing Better Health* programme, retrofitting council-owned buildings with low carbon heating systems and renewable technologies, and facilitating the planting of community food orchards to enable community food growing, restore habitats for wildlife, and address climate change.

The Council also continues to deliver carbon literacy training to staff, as well as climate awareness training to council members. Furthermore, a Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool has been introduced to embed climate considerations into decision-making, ensuring Council operations are as sustainable as possible.

By acting to both reduce emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change, West Oxfordshire is helping to create a stronger, greener future for the district and beyond.

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**From our County Councillor**  
**Judd’s Garage junction**

Residents will be pleased to know that I met with OCC officers a few weeks ago on site at the junction of B4437 and the A44 (Duke of Marlborough Pub/Judd’s Garage) with a Wootton parish councillor to consider the need for a safer configuration for the junction, which may also involve a new bus shelter as opposed to the bus stop which is inadequate for bus users particularly in wet weather. The officer team comprised of planning design team, highways engineers and me.



It was agreed that the team would start working on a design possibly including a traffic light option at the junction, reduced speed signs and other pedestrian safety options and this will be consulted upon in the next six months.

So, watch out for the consultation dates in future editions of *The Slate*, something is happening .....reducing accidents at this junction is a priority!

I will keep you in touch.

Cllr Andy Graham, Woodstock division

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**From our MP**

If you need help or have a query, please feel free to email me at [calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk) and we will be in touch.

Calum Miller MP



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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)

### **Police performance**

Matthew Barber, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, has released the results of his second year. The key achievements include a 13% reduction in neighbourhood crime (vehicle, theft, burglary, robbery), and that the number of funded neighbourhood police constable posts more than doubled to 328 in 2025. Victim support was enhanced through the Victims First Hub, including support to over 1,700 domestic abuse victims, and knife crime was down by 7%.

### **Dogs in hot cars**

Police have urged the message that with ever-rising temperatures, it is vital to be aware of dogs left in cars on hot days. Even with the windows partly open, a car can become a death trap within minutes; temperatures inside can rise so quickly that pets are 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.

### **Appeal for witnesses: Fatal collision near Enstone**

Police are appealing for witnesses to a fatal road traffic collision on the A44 near Enstone on 9 July. A grey Audi A3, a grey Jaguar XE, a black Ford Puma and a grey Seat Leon were involved in the collision between Enstone and London Road, Chipping Norton, at around 3.20pm.

Anyone with information or dash-cam footage should call 101 or make a report on

the Thames Valley Police website, quoting 43250344163.

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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.

### **Safety while you're away**

A set of simple security actions recommended by police throughout the country can give up to 50 times the protection for your home, compared to no security. The word to remember is **WIDEN**:

- **Windows** Lock your windows
- **Interior**: Put your interior lights on a timer
- **Doors**: Double or deadlock your doors
- **Exterior**: Put your exterior lights on a sensor
- **Neighbours**: Keep an eye out for neighbours

Most domestic burglaries are committed by opportunists. Criminals will look for homes that seem unoccupied, have little or no apparent security, have doors or windows left open, or homes where they think they won't be seen.

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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## Summer Reading Challenge 2025

### Story Garden: Adventures in Nature & the Great Outdoors!

Have you signed up for the Summer Reading Challenge? It's not too late!

The challenge is to read six books. You can read anything you like – stories, poetry, fact books, graphic novels or listen to audio books – it's up to you. Come along to the library and pick up the Story Garden Booklet and start the challenge: what are you waiting for?

Everyone who finishes the challenge will be eligible to enter the Stonesfield Library prize draw. More information on [www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk](http://www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk).

Please note: There is always a librarian in the library on Mondays 2.30 – 7.00 pm.

Bryony Mallows - Volunteer, Stonesfield Library



## Nature notes

### From Wild Oxfordshire...

#### Share your wildlife sightings!

Everyone can play a part in submitting wildlife observations to local Environmental Records Centres. This is so that they appear on the 'official record' that is consulted by planning authorities and used by other parties to track changes in distribution and abundance.

As well as the value of the data submitted, keeping a systematic note of what you see on your walks and in your gardens adds extra interest and depth to the experience, and can help you to improve your identification skills.

A great way of easily logging records is via the iRecord website ([iRecord.co.uk](http://iRecord.co.uk)) or app, from which Records Centres like the Thames Valley Environmental Records

Centre (TVERC) can extract data. You can also send records direct to TVERC to ensure they get them in a timely fashion – and see below for how you can contribute even if you don't get on with iRecord.

Local groups or parishes can provide focus to their efforts by setting up an 'Activity' within iRecord, whereby all records submitted by participants, within a designated geographical area or within specified window of time, will combine to form an easily accessible overview of what has been seen and where, including a species list.

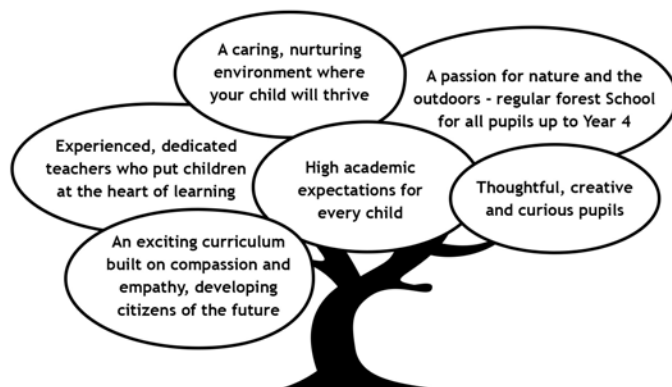
However, you can, of course submit via iRecord observations from beyond the activity area, and historic observations (as long as you still have the relevant information to hand). For greatest efficiency, we recommend that anyone who is interested in contributing to this effort,

## Stonesfield Primary School

Learning together to achieve our best.



Looking for a friendly, inclusive, local school for your child?  
Stonesfield Primary School has places in all year groups - we would love to show you around.



To arrange a tour with the headteacher, please contact the school office.

Tel: 01993 891687

Office email: [office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)  
Headteacher email: [head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk)

or perhaps already keeps records of observations but has not shared them, creates their own iRecord account and uses that to record their sightings, if at all possible. You can also attach photos to records to assist.



Greater Knapweed

Once you have an account, you can find your group's Activity by searching Activities and the name of your group or parish. If it is a 'member-only' Activity, your application to join will need to be approved by the group's administrators before you can access the activity.

Your records are first validated (checked for location errors) and verified (checked for species identification errors) before they are entered into the TVERC database. This ensures that the data passed on to decision-makers is as accurate and informative as possible. The records are shared with local authorities in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. They are also provided through data searches to local groups, parish councils, ecological consultants and researchers. The information is used:

- by planning authorities and developers to make informed decisions on the design and location of sustainable development

- to help farmers, landowners and conservation organisations manage land in the best way to enhance biodiversity
- by nature partnerships to direct wildlife conservation work
- by teachers, students and scientists for education and scientific research

The database currently holds over 5 million records, including over 1.1 million records of Protected and Notable species i.e. those that should be taken into account in planning applications. The vast majority of records in the TVERC database are collected by volunteers and local wildlife groups, showing just how vital your efforts are. So please, make your nature spotting count and submit your records to TVERC.

Joanna Higson, TVERC Biological Recording  
Co-ordinator

[joanna.higson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:joanna.higson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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

Wild   
Oxfordshire

# Clubs, societies & sport

## Hot day for a close race (cont)



Every single duck bought contributed to the fantastic total raised, and we're so grateful for your support. This money goes towards keeping the group running, allowing us to put on camps and trips, as well as keeping the hut-building creeping forwards. This event wouldn't be possible without incredible support from many of you. We extend a special thank you to Blenheim Palace for generously providing access to their land, allowing us to host the race in such a beautiful setting. My personal gratitude also goes to the Scout leaders for their immense effort in preparing the site in the days leading up to the race and, of course, the many volunteers who came on the day; your dedication and hard work are what truly make this event work as well as it does.

Those of you who have walked past the hut will have seen there is continued activity and we're working hard to get it ready for this autumn. As we move closer to completion, there will be opportunities for the community to help us fit it out. If you have skills or time you'd like to volunteer,

please email Ben– your help would be invaluable in getting our new home ready!



Just a reminder that the Stonesfield Scout Group has been a vibrant part of our village for 76 years, offering invaluable experiences, skills, and friendships to generations of young people. To ensure we can continue this legacy, we are looking for new volunteers to join our team. With a few leaders stepping back next year, we are truly desperate for some fresh faces to help in any capacity – whether it's helping at events, assisting with weekly meetings, or behind-the-scenes support. If you're interested in making a difference, please contact any of our current leaders; we'd love to hear from you!

Thank you once again to everyone who bought a duck, volunteered their time, or simply came along to cheer. We hope you all have a great summer! We'll see everyone again in September for a fresh Scouting year, and don't forget to mark your diaries for our popular Christmas Bingo!

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



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## **Stonesfield Sports and Social Club**

August is always a quiet month for events at the club. Everyone enjoys their holidays and we start getting to the end of the summer leagues and ready for the winter teams to start up.

This is a good time to meet up with our lovely sports teams if you fancy joining darts, pool or football.



During this quieter time, over the summer holidays, please come visit and enjoy our facilities, relax on the patio and let the kids run around in the play park and the playing fields.

Sam Tomlin, SSSC

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## **Stonesfield Cricket Club**

While the lack of rain wreaks havoc with pitch preparation on the pitch, 'The Stones' have, so far, had a good start in the Cherwell Cricket League. With the season at the halfway stage, the 1st XI sit third in Division 4B, 8 points behind second-placed Horspath, while the 2nd XI are in second place in Division 8C. The 2nd XI have reached the semi-final of the Crump Cup and will host Marston St Lawrence at Field Close on Sunday 3 August, starting at 1 pm.

The club is also staging two memorial days, with the Andrew Crawford Legacy Cup being played out on Sunday 20 July with an 11am start. Teams from Witney Swifts, Kidlington, Hook Norton & Hanborough competed for the cup.

On Sunday 31 August Kevin Sherbourne's President's XI take on Jamie Burns' Chairman's XI, in a 40-over game competing for the Mike Ogden Memorial Cup. The game starts at 1 pm and there will be a BBQ throughout the afternoon. The bar will, as usual be open from 12 noon. Plans are underway to add a couple of attractions for the children, including inflatable dart football and face painting.

The Cricket Club looks forward to welcoming everyone able to support either, or both of these memorial games.

David Burns (07554 920351)

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## **Stonesfield Tennis Club**

### **Wimbledon fever, and your own tennis journey**

As I write this, tennis fever is high in the UK, with the semi-finals at Wimbledon about to kick off. I would celebrate in equal measure a continuation of the anticipated rivalries between Sabalenka and Swiatek or Sinner and Alcaraz; as I would a new pretender to the throne grabbing their first Grand Slam, or indeed Djokovic putting another notch in his belt in the GOAT debate.

Last month, I shared the start of my tennis journey – and fittingly, Wimbledon also marks the end of my competitive playing days (unless there's a comeback brewing!). I was part of a strong six-person team that battled in a national tournament each year, reaching the finals three times out of four. The grand finale? Played at Wimbledon – well, not Centre Court, but just next door at Aorangi Park while the show courts were being prepped for the pros.

We clinched the title on our third attempt, and while there were no world ranking points or giant prize cheques, we were treated to a Centre Court tour, including the players' dressing rooms, and even a presentation in the Royal Box (albeit with no royals present). It was a memorable send-off to a brilliant chapter.

Of course, Wimbledon is the oldest and most iconic tournament in the sport, and rightly seen as tennis's crown jewel. But tennis is so much more than just Wimbledon. In fact, Wimbledon itself is more than just the singles main draw: it includes doubles, juniors, wheelchair events, and qualifiers that happen away from the spotlight.

Tennis is a year-round global adventure, with four Grand Slams, nine Masters events, sixteen ATP 500s, over thirty 250-point tournaments, and countless smaller competitions. Plus, team events like the Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, Laver Cup, and United Cup keep the calendar jam-packed.

So what's the takeaway this month? Let Wimbledon inspire you to hit the courts, but don't stop there. Your tennis journey doesn't have to peak in July. Whether you're chasing a new personal best, learning to string two backhands together, finally getting past that tricky opponent, or just having a blast in a game of 'round the world' – keep going. Make your own Wimbledon moment.

### **Summer Tennis @ Stonesfield – Tuesdays**

Join our growing tennis community! We've got something for all ages and abilities:

Adult Improvers	1–2pm
Junior Red (5–8 yrs)	3–4pm
Junior Orange (8–10 yrs)	4–5pm
Junior Green (10–12 yrs)	5–6pm
Junior Yellow (12+ yrs)	6–7pm
Adult Social Tennis Night	7–8pm

Private sessions and bespoke group coaching also available during the week by arrangement.

Alex Dillon (07876 194008)

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## Masters Basketball

Stonesfield's Steve Murray and Wendy Murray represented Great Britain at The FIMBA world championships in Ticino Switzerland in early July. Steve was in the over-70s men's team and Wendy was captain of GB over-60s ladies.

The schedule for the tournament meant that both Steve and Wendy had to play in five 90-minute basketball games within seven days; a gruelling task. Both Steve and Wendy performed very well and enjoyed great success.



Wendy's ladies' team unfortunately met Latvia, the reigning champions in their opening game. This impacted their chances of getting a medal, but they ended winning three of their five games, and were a credit to the GB teams.



Steve's team won four out of five games and finished fifth in the world. They unfortunately met USA, the tournament

champions in the quarter-finals, which meant that fifth was the best they could achieve. However fifth remains a great result for the team, who are also the current European champions.

It's great to see that athletes of the tender age of over 60s and 70s are still active, training hard and achieving great success. Congratulations to you both!

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## Stonesfield Gardening Club

Our speaker last month was Nicola Hope, who runs her own garden design company, having previously worked at Highgrove, Lake House, The Abbey House and Cole Park – all beautiful organic gardens with very high-profile owners!

In a talk lavishly illustrated with photographs from the gardens where she has worked, she spoke about designing an organic garden and took us through the gardening year, explaining that if a garden looks good in the winter, then the chances are it will look good at any time.

She emphasised the importance of thinking about the different habitats involved in the garden, meaning biodiversity as well as the plants you want to grow – right plant, right place!

No speaker in August as usual, as we try to keep our own gardens going with a hosepipe ban in place.

Happy gardening.

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

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

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## The Megalosaurus Society

On 16 July Dr Emma Nicholls from Oxford University Museum of Natural History gave a talk on the dinosaur trackways at Ardley, as featured on the BBC's series *Digging for Britain* earlier in the year. This was followed by the opportunity for society members to visit the trackways at the end of July and we will report on the two events in the September issue.

Delivery of the display panel featuring Simon Armitage's poem *Megalosaurus* is expected this month and it will be installed in the garden at The White Horse at the beginning of September. We will let everyone know when it is available to view.

If you are interested in joining the Society or would like more information, please get in touch with us at: [megsoc25@gmail.com](mailto:megsoc25@gmail.com).

Viv Kendall and Trisha Williams

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## Stonesfield Environment Group

### Brook Lane limestone meadow

The Environment Group took on the care of the meadow in June 2024, initially developing a five-year restorative plan for the invertebrates, fauna and flora on the one-acre site. This was done in partnership with Wild Oxfordshire. The emphasis is on understanding which creatures live on and use the meadow, what are their requirements, and then developing a mosaic of habitats to allow the site to thrive.

The first year was focused on clearing some of the dominant shrubs that were starting to overgrow the limestone habitat. The work was developed with a number of specialists who gave their time and

expertise to the meadow. The main work was clearing *Clematis vitalba* (old man's beard, OMB) that smothered most of the surrounding trees and much of the meadow; hence the large piles that were eventually burnt on site. We also removed most of the blackthorn, hawthorn, brambles and roses that were growing into the meadow. This allowed the site to breathe and the limestone meadow to start to re-establish itself.



Meadow seen from Brook Lane

This year there has been little direct management, so we could allow the site to show the effects of the previous year. We continue to pull the OMB out (it has runners just under the surface leading to a nodal point, and it is this point that needs to come out). The creeping thistle is also being removed as it flowers. (Don't dig the roots, as they split and you will have more creeping thistles next year.) We have woolly thistle (great for goldfinches in late summer) and stemless thistle, very close to

the ground. Both favour the limestone habitat and will be left alone.

In mid-July the meadow is looking fantastic, considering the drought, and I hope you have been along to have a look. Today (10 July) I did a survey of the butterflies for 15 minutes, and recorded 65 butterflies from 12 species. The highlight was the eight common blue butterflies: in 2024 we saw none and none were recorded on the 'Big butterfly count' for Stonesfield that year. We have taken particular care of the bird's foot trefoil which is its larval food plant, so I am hopeful that the common blue will be breeding again on site.

It is easy to connect with what is going on in the day, but what about the night ??



Here we are past midnight in mid-June, on the meadow with a generator-powered moth trap (note that we release all moths back to the night). Peter Cuss from the Upper Thames Moth Group is on his knees and giving us great support, advice and the loan of an actinic moth trap.

Moths are very important pollinators, but moth populations are experiencing a steep decline due to habitat loss, pesticides and the climate crisis. The UK has 62 butterfly species and over 2000 UK moth species.

The height of the moth season is from early June to late August.

Moths are a key group for our records in 2025, and we are getting great support from the Upper Thames Moth Group. Moth recording started in March and in four months we have recorded 112 species on the meadow area. Many of the moths rely on trees and shrubs; some are more specific. From those recorded so far, 11 species rely on grasses, 7 on bedstraws, 5 on nettles (the patch of nettles near the Evenlode seat will probably be staying), 4 on lichens (the Footman moths), 3 on bramble, 3 on OMB, 2 on bindweed, 1 on thistle and 1 on bird's foot trefoil. This is the detailed information that can help inform habitat protection and development. For more on Moths, the Upper Thames website is great: [upperthamesmoths.co.uk](http://upperthamesmoths.co.uk).

This was also the night we saw the first glow-worm and we have since done a full survey for glow-worms on the common. Two glow-worms were seen on the Brook Lane meadow, and we have since seen five more. The presence of glow-worms adds to the complexity of habitats needed. A detailed review of glow-worms will come later in the year.

Many thanks to all who have given generous time and energy to the meadow. Please get in touch if you would like to get involved.

John Sampson

[John.sampson9@btinternet.com](mailto:John.sampson9@btinternet.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)

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## **Do you have a story to share?**

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](mailto:editor@stonesfieldslate.uk)

### **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)

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### **From the Rector: Nature**

Over half of the world's population now live in cities, but with increasing urbanisation has come a deepening awareness of the benefits of spending time in nature.

There is nothing new in this. Poets have sung nature's praises, and artists have delighted in the chance to paint and draw in the open, inspired by the beauty of the natural world. In 1854 the American writer Henry David Thoreau wrote '*Walden; or, Life in the Woods*,' after spending two years in a cabin he built in woodland owned by his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. The experiment was an attempt to return to a simpler life, a more spiritual life, through connection to the natural environment. In the USA it has inspired an appreciation of the great outdoors ever since, and has reinforced the Native

American appreciation of the need for harmony between human beings and the world we inhabit. Today we are aware that contact with nature reduces human stress and anxiety, can improve depression, raise self-esteem and improve relationships.

In the Jewish and Christian traditions, understanding the power and beauty of nature has gone hand in hand with an appreciation of the one who made it. Our peace in nature connects us to our maker, whose creative power is inexhaustible. So in Psalm 104, the Psalmist says:

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom have you made them all  
the earth is full of your creatures.

And perhaps the best-known Psalm of all begins with the words:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.  
He restores my soul.

Jesus also encouraged his followers to look at the world of nature to reset their sense of who they are, and what their true needs might be. Instead of worrying about life, and about the future, he told his hearers to look at the birds, and the flowers growing wild around them, all of which are provided for by God, who loves us and will provide for us too. Here in Stonesfield it is such a privilege to be surrounded by the calming beauty and peace of nature. As we feel its power to heal, restore and refresh our bodies and minds, may we also know

the spiritual peace of God, the creator and sustainer of all.

Revd Ralph Williamson - Rector

**Church services**

**Sunday 3 August [Trinity 7]**

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

**Sunday 10 August [Trinity 8/St Laurence Patronal Festival]**

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	Parish Communion
11am	Stonesfield	Parish Communion
7.30pm	Combe	Evening Service on the Green

**Sunday 17 August [Trinity 9]**

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

**Sunday 24 August [Trinity 10]**

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

**Sunday 31 August [Trinity 11]**

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

**Wednesdays**

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (every week)
11am	Combe	Holy Communion (6th), Morning Prayer (20th)



St James's churchyard

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## Stonesfield Methodist Church

### Services for August

Sunday 3	11am	Local Arrangement
Sunday 10	11am	Peter Allen
Sunday 17	11am	The Reverend Andrew Biggs Holy Communion
Sunday 24	11am	Martin Hannant
Sunday 31	11am	The Reverend Charles Harris

### Welcome

It's time once more to welcome a new President of the Methodist Conference. The Reverend Richard Andrews and the Vice President, the effervescent Matthew Forsyth, take up the mantle. They share with Methodists everywhere this theme for the year ahead, 'Our story, our song'. The story looks at the nature of our calling, encouraging its growth and seeking inclusion for all; the song, a new fresh one of hope and togetherness.

T. S. Eliot's poem *Little Gidding* inspired the theme, with thoughts on humanity and salvation – take a look at the poem, it's a powerful one. Look too, at the Methodist website and hear more of the 'Story and Song'!

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen (891733)

k.m.albert14@gmail.com

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## New Church thought

My cousin Lori Odhner

([www.caringformarriage.org](http://www.caringformarriage.org)) has been sending out short inspirational stories every single day for 20 years. She's agreed to me sharing extracts from a recent post she called *Open Door*. It was prompted by reflecting on the doors constructed for plays in her town – and since Stonesfield too has its own plays with stage crews, it seemed appropriate.

"The stage crew that creates scenery for every production amazes me. ... They have a history of building doors, which promotes the illusion of entrances and exits. One year the door got jammed in a performance and the actor improvised by walking around. I loved it. ... In church one time the topic was doors. One of the lingering free-standing entrances from back stage served as a prop. ...

"The Lord describes himself as an entryway, one that is perpetually open. There are no circumstances in which access to Him is denied. ... But part of the onus is on us as well. Out of ultimate respect for our freedom, God does not barge into our lives uninvited."

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.' Revelation 3

Dale Morris

---

## **Roman Catholic Worship**

### **Confession**

The Sacrament of Confession holds a special place for Roman Catholics. Also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it offers individuals an opportunity to seek forgiveness for their sins, reconcile with God, and begin anew. Through the act of confessing to God through a priest, Catholics not only express contrition for their wrongdoings but also receive spiritual guidance and absolution, reaffirming their relationship with the divine and with the wider Church community. This sacrament is both a deeply personal encounter and an act of faith, reflecting the Catholic belief in God's boundless, forgiving mercy and the transformative power of grace.

At the heart of the Sacrament of Confession lies the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Throughout his ministry, Jesus extended forgiveness to those who sought it, offering words of compassion to sinners and inviting them to repentance and renewal. The Gospels recount moments when Jesus proclaimed, 'Take heart my son, your sins are forgiven', Matthew 9:1-2 ; demonstrating not only his authority to absolve but also his desire to restore and heal. Similarly, in Mark 2:5 we see Jesus offering forgiveness linked to healing 'My son, your sins are forgiven'.

Catholics believe that through the ministry of priests, Christ himself continues this work of reconciliation, making his mercy present in every confession. In approaching the sacrament, the faithful trust in Jesus' promise of forgiveness and his call to a life transformed by grace.

## **Holy Mass at St Theresa's, Charlbury**

Sunday 9.15 am

Wednesdays and Fridays 9.15 am

For Parish updates, more information and further support, please go to [www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/](http://www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/) or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, Parish Priest: [fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk)

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

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





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FACEBOOK - THE WHITE HORSE PUB STONESFIELD

THE WHITE HORSE, THE RIDINGS, STONESFIELD, OX29 8EA





***The Stonesfield  
Evenlode Bench***

*This bench was  
created at the end  
of Brook Lane for  
all villagers to have  
a restful view of  
the Evenlode  
meandering  
through the  
river valley  
below Stonesfield  
Common.*

