



Hooray, we've moved!



Hooray, Stonesfield Pre School have finally moved on to the School site!

After many years at Glovers Yard, where we enjoyed a very happy and productive time, the old Building was beginning to show its age and after conversations with the Community Trust it was decided that we needed to find another home and thankfully the school were very supportive in allowing us to move in to the Portacabin Building that is freestanding from the school, which would allow us our own separate access.

Although we had moved some of our equipment during the long wait for Ofsted approval, once received we decided to move mid-term as opposed to waiting until the

October half term break. So, over the weekend of 4 - 5 October we bit the bullet and went for it!

Although it was full on and hard work on both days, the end result is a nice new modern interior, with acres of space and an amazing outside play area. The children have settled well and have really enjoyed the weather to explore the outside grassy area. Some of the After School Club children have also commented that it used to be their classroom and it has changed beyond recognition, and they are delighted they can play on the mound again.

Cont p19

Do you want to send in an article but have no email?

Just call the Editor (see below) who can arrange to collect your handwritten copy.

Do you want to advertise?

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

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www.stonesfield.online or via QR code



Dates for your diary: November

1-23	Pics @ Pub: <i>Paint & Print</i>	The White Horse	pub hours
1	Stonesfield Players Community Café	Village Hall	10am-noon
1	FOSS Halloween Disco	Village Hall	6pm
1	Shoebox event	Methodist Church	2-4pm
3,10,17,24	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
3,6,17,20,24	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
3,17,24	Baby & Me (Postpartum Yoga)	Village Hall	10-11.15am
3,17,24	Bump & Me (Antenatal Yoga)	Village Hall	7.30-8.30pm
3,17,24	Hannah Bathe HIIT Class	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
4	North Leigh History Society	NL Memorial Hall	7.30pm
4,18,25	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5-6.30pm
5	Parish Council Meeting	Stonesfield School	7pm
4,18,25	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
4,18,25	Zumba Strong	Village Hall	8-9pm
5,19,26	Little Squirrels	Village Hall	1.50-3pm
5,19,26	Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.45am
5,19,26	Hannah Bathe HIIT Class	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
5,19,26	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
6,13,20,27	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
6,20,27	Upholstery Group	Village Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
6,20,27	Hannah Bathe Strength & Condition	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
7,14,21,28	Baby & Toddlers	Village Hall	10am-noon
7	Maggie's Oxford Pop-up Café	St James Centre	10.30am-3pm
7	Firework Bash (details p6)	The White Horse	starts 5.30pm
8	First Aid at Work	Village Hall	9am-4pm
10	Gardening Club Talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
10	Combe WI	Combe Reading Rm	7.30-9.30pm
13,14,15	<i>Cold Comfort Farm</i>	Village Hall	7.30pm
14	Witney Music Society	High Street, Witney	7.30pm
15	Methodist Church Bazaar	St James' Centre	2-4pm
21	First Aid at Work	St James' Centre	9am-4pm

Continued on p4

Dates for your diary: November (continued)

22	Rock & Roll Bingo (booking req)	The White Horse	8pm
26-30	Pics @ Pub: <i>Midwinter Show</i>	The White Horse	pub hours
28	<i>Mrs Warren's Profession</i>	Combe Community Cinema	8pm
30	Combe Mill Christmas Fayre	Combe Mill	11am-4pm

December

5,12	Baby & Toddlers	Village Hall	10am-noon
6	Repair & Community Café	Village Hall	10am-2pm
12	Witney Music Society	High Street, Witney	7.30pm
14	Grey Cat Studio: Art & Craft Show	Woodlands Rise	10am-4pm



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 November:
Viv Kendall

01993 891803 or stonesfieldvts@gmail.com

Fitness Classes

HannahBatheFitness@hotmail.com

Monday 7^{PM} **Ladies only HIIT**

Wednesday 7^{PM} **Ladies only HIIT**

Thursday 7^{PM} **Ladies Strength & Conditioning**

☎ **07974 100 076**

**STONESFIELD
VILLAGE HALL**



Notices & news

Lesley Taylor



Lesley, who had lived in Boot Street for many years, died in hospital this summer. Her friends and acquaintances are arranging a get-together to commemorate her passing with tea, cake and memory sharing. If you knew Lesley from the village, from RDA or in any other way and would like to join us, you will be very welcome.

We will be at St James' Centre, High Street on Tuesday 18 November, 2-4pm.

Please reply, by Wednesday 12 November, to viviennekendall@gmail.com to help us to estimate numbers.

Viv Kendall and Wendy Gould

Village Hall news

We continue to be busy which is great news, November is a bit up in the air with The Stonesfield Players rehearsal, set up and play of *Cold Comfort Farm*. Please see dates for regular groups or contact the leadership. Before that on the 1st is the Community Café raising funds for the Players, and FOSS disco in the evening. First Aid training on the 8th, contact me for more information.

Don't forget that Community Café slots are available for local groups to fundraise on the first Saturday of each month. The hall and club room are also a great hire for parties and events, with a stocked kitchen to cater for up to 100 people.

Claire Renshaw (07359 338490)

info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com

www.stonesfieldvillagehall.com

St James' Centre – available for hire

A reminder that St James' Centre (opposite the school) is available for hire – a perfect venue for Christmas events, family gatherings, children's parties, meetings, workshops, fitness groups, fundraising ventures etc. The Centre offers two light, spacious rooms, with a well-equipped kitchen and beautiful garden. If you would like to have a look round, need further information, or wish to book, please email sjcsbookings@gmail.com

Ruth Sellar

St James' Centre Bookings Administrator

Thank You

This is the final issue of *The Slate* that Fiona will edit and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to her for all her hard work. We will miss her cheerful, thoughtful contributions and her calm efficiency. We hope that life gets a little less hectic in the future!

We have already managed to acquire the services of a replacement editor in James Summers who will take on his duties from September 2026 issue, and in the meantime will shadow Dale for the next couple of months.

Diane and Paul

Publishers of *The Stonesfield Slate*

Pictures @ The Pub

Our special exhibition *Celebrating Stonesfield* was very well received, not only by our residents but also those who visited the village to see the Megalosaurus poem panel including the Interim Director of OUMNH, our District and County Councillors and our MP, Calum Miller. Many thanks again to everyone who made this exhibition possible.

Paint and Print opened mid-October and features Melissa Stuart's landscapes of the Cotswolds and further afield, and Jody O'Reilly's linocut prints of local scenes and family life. There are sure to be some scenes familiar to you and we hope that you will come and have a look – this exhibition runs until 23 November.

Our *Midwinter Show* opens on 26 November and is a group exhibition featuring etchings, paintings, collage, poetry, textiles, botanical drawings, and mixed media works. This will run

throughout the festive period and into the New Year.

If you are interested in showing your work next year, please do get in touch with us at trwynwil003@gmail.com.

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

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse
Community Pub

White Horse News

This is the first of our news slots letting you know 'what's on' at The White Horse.

Our dog calendar will be arriving very soon and promises to be a great Christmas gift for dog-lovers. All money from the calendar will be donated to local charities.

Our second annual firework bash will take place on Friday 7 November starting at 5.30pm. We draw pet-owners' attention to the fact that there will be a 15-minute firework display at 7pm. We will round off the evening with live jazz from the Alvin Roy Quartet between 8pm and 10pm and there will be food, drinks, a fire pit, and sparklers for the children.

Rock & Roll Bingo returns on Saturday 22 November at 8pm. Please reserve a table to guarantee your spot - £5 per person.

Our Christmas menu is available from 20 November to 20 December and will run alongside our regular dinner menu. Advance booking and pre-ordering is required; full details and the menu are on our website:
www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Craig Tipper, The White Horse (672059)
info@thewhitehorsestonesfield.com

Maggie's Oxford Pop-up Café

Join us on Friday 7 November at the St James' Centre from 10.30am until 3pm!

Morning coffee and cake will be segueing into lunch and then segueing gracefully into afternoon tea with more delicious cake...plus an exciting bottle raffle!

The cafe will be raising money for Maggie's Oxford, our local cancer care centre in the grounds of the Churchill Hospital offering free practical, emotional and psychological support for people with cancer and their families.

As many of you will know, Maggie's Oxford has supported me since I was diagnosed with myeloma in September 2023. Myeloma is an incurable, life changing, blood cancer.

My son Bertie is running the London Marathon next year for Maggie's Oxford, and this event is to support his fundraising.

Please support us by coming along on the day, and we are also looking for kind people to bake cakes and donate bottles.

Thank you so much,

Eleanor Bailey and amazing support crew - because myeloma means I can't do it on my own!

eleanorbailey55@gmail.com

alwenaappleton@hotmail.com

charles@sandon-house.co.uk

bolivern@icloud.com

Dinner by Donation!

Stonesfield's (Almost) Secret Supper Club raising funds for the local community.

You will be served a three course meal in the comfort of a private home where you will dine with friends and neighbours and make new connections too!

Bring your own drinks and a cash donation for the designated fundraiser.

The first three dates have been reserved for The Stonesfield Scouts who are planning a Spring Trip to Brownsea Island and into next year we will be supporting Stonesfield School, Stonesfield PreSchool and Chrissie's Owls.

The Scouts are also learning some hospitality skills and earning lots of badges along the way!

October 11th raised £475

November 8th - a few places left

December 13th - now booking

If you would like to join my mailing list for ongoing events and information please contact me

kateharris58@yahoo.co.uk.

Methodist Church Bazaar.

The Bazaar will be held at St. James' Centre on Saturday 15 November, from 2-4pm.

Gifts, cakes and plenty more, with teas and coffees, all await you. Do come and buy, browse or just enjoy the company! Donations to stalls are always very much appreciated.

See you there.

Kathleen (891733)

Repair and Community Café

The quarterly Community Café, run by a small offshoot of the Food Group, started back in January 2022, with the aim of raising monies to support households in the village that need a little extra help. Although we do give customers indicative prices, we operate on a 'pay what you feel' basis and in the last three years, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our customers and their love of our food, we have raised £5,684.35. That need for a little extra help is real; at the Food Group AGM in September we noted that in the last year alone £1,930.00 of supermarket vouchers has been distributed to households.

We would love to see you at the Community Café on Saturday 6 December in the club room at the Village Hall. We will open at 10am with fresh coffee, tea and delicious homemade cakes on offer. Lunch is available from noon (as well as cakes) in the form of soups with cheese scones and a selection of breads - all homemade.

The repair team will be in the main hall. They are passionate about supporting WODC's recycling initiative by reducing the number of items sent to landfill. Before you arrange a trip to the tip, do come and see if something can be fixed.

Everyone is welcome, whether you are waiting for a repair, catching up with friends, need a warm space to sit for a while, out for a walk and would welcome a pit stop, or have been to the library (and want to quietly get stuck into a new book).

We look forward to seeing you.

Susan Rudlin and Mike Sofroniou
07530 958111 (Mike)

Macmillan Coffee Morning - A Big Thank You!



Thank you for all the support received for this year's Stonesfield Macmillan Coffee Morning event, raising £1,240 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Thank you for the delicious cakes, 100 bottles, and donations, all culminating in another wonderful fund raising result, helping to support those living with a cancer diagnosis and beyond.

St James' Centre is now booked for Stonesfield's Macmillan September 2026 event... which includes another warm sausage roll delivery to Stonesfield Garage!

Jane O'Gorman & the Stonesfield Macmillan Coffee Morning Team

November Community Café

The Stonesfield Players are running the next Community Café at the Village Hall on Saturday 1 November. Come and join us from 10am till 12 noon for delicious cakes, tea and coffee. Enjoy a relaxing morning and a chance, if you're interested, to find out more about The Stonesfield Players and our next production, *Cold Comfort Farm*, which we'll be performing on 13th, 14th and 15th November (see p33). We look forward to seeing you.

QUEEN BEE | YOGA

Motherhood, Connect, Move, Breathe

Monday Classes

Bump&Me

(Antenatal Yoga)

7:30pm - 8:30pm

Baby&Me

(Postpartum Yoga)

10am - 11:15am



**Stonesfield
Village Hall
OX29 8HA**

£10 block booking

£13 drop in class

Contact me to reserve your Mat!

 @queen.bee.consultancy

Email: queenbeeconsultancy@gmail.com

With love, Nadia

Great Estates From Above

This new series from Channel 4 featured Blenheim Palace in the first episode which aired on 9 October, now available on catch up. The programme shows the scaffolding that has been put over the main part of the palace roof, incorporating a walkway for visitors to get a bird's-eye view of the park. An estate forester is interviewed, showing the tiny oak saplings he has grown from acorns, and Filipe Salbany, the estate's naturalist who came to talk to the gardening club earlier in the year, shows the estate's wild bee colonies.

Diane Bates

Poppies around the War Memorial

There has been such an enthusiastic response to the appeal for knitted and crocheted poppies to create a special display on the railings of the Stonesfield

War Memorial for this year's commemoration of Remembrance Sunday on 9 November and Remembrance Day on Tuesday 11 November. We asked, quite optimistically, for 1,000 poppies and that is what we have! At the time of writing this, the display panels are being completed and we would like to thank the many people who have worked hard to create so many poppies and make this idea a reality.

Bike Day Thank You!

Many thanks to everybody who turned up on not such a nice day as ones we have been enjoying over the summer months. However the bands played on and an enjoyable day was had by all. A big thank you goes out to Sam and her team at the SSSC, to Emma for organising the trade stands and of course the bands who generously gave their time - Mofo, Them Combe Boys, Kaimana, Mudflap, Lady Duo, Trauma and finally Dead Silence. Funds raised will shortly be on their way to the British Heart Foundation and Cancer Research. We look forward to seeing you all again next year. Keep your eyes out for the date.

The Bike Day organising team

Christmas Art & Craft Show

Grey Cat Studio will be opening its doors on Sunday 14 December for our annual Christmas show. This year we have paintings, prints, jewellery and other crafts from Kerry Burniston, Jenny Lines and Rachael, Becki & Griselda Sherlaw-Johnson.

Open from 10am - 4pm. Come and join us for unique Christmas presents, a glass of mulled wine and a chat

Malton Croft, Woodlands Rise, OX29 8PL

Book Break - Cold Comfort Farm

The Book Break group have been reading *Cold Comfort Farm* in anticipation of the performance in November by the Stonesfield Players. I issued a challenge to the group to produce a diagram of *Cold Comfort Farm* and its configuration with its shed, outhouses etc because the description in the book makes it sound architecturally impossible.



To our amazement, one member, Margaret Wilmore, came up with an exquisite piece of textile work (above).

Wendy Lynch

A Stonesfield tradition

What are the qualification criteria for a modern Stonesfield tradition (if that's not too much of a contradiction)? Our nomination is the Reverse Advent Calendar. Launched in the dark days of the pandemic, this is a simple, but effective way of ensuring that no one has to go without in our village over Christmas. It has built fantastic support over the past 5 years, with more than 50 boxes delivered last year, and it is one of the most tangible signs of community spirit we have.

So, with Covid cases returning, and cost of living pressures unrelenting, the pub committee is calling for all those who want to get involved to support us once again with this lovely act of generosity to our friends and neighbours.

It's easy: simply wrap an empty cardboard box - ideally in festive paper - leaving the top open. Then use the advent calendar (opposite) as a shopping list, adding to the box as you go. It's okay to freestyle, if you don't want to follow the list exactly, but please don't include anything containing nuts or alcohol and remember food may have to be served cold and needs to have a long shelf-life. The crucial point is that everything helps and is always gratefully received. If, as in previous years, your generosity exceeds the number of boxes requested, we will pass excess parcels to Stonesfield Mutual Aid for distribution in January (hence the need for long shelf-life). The calendar starts in November. This is because parcels distributed via the school and pre-school need to be handed over well before the end of term, so the earlier you can start the better.

Next big ask – please could you deliver your completed parcel to The White Horse (at either 11.30am or 5pm between 9 and 14 December), after which the Mutual Aid Food group will oversee deliveries.

We'd love to know if you're taking part so we have a feel for how many parcels may be heading our way, so do drop us a line to steve@backthewhitehorse.com. Likewise, if you are unable to deliver the parcel, please let us know and we'll endeavour to make arrangements for its collection.

If you need some extra support this Christmas, please look out for the list of who you can contact in December *Slate*.

Stonesfield Reverse Advent Calendar

with Stonesfield Community Pub Limited

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

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

We hope you enjoy the festive season.

North Leigh History Society

On Tuesday 4 November Trevor Jackson will be giving a talk entitled *My Gulf War*. The Gulf War remains a significant chapter in modern history with long lasting effects on international relationships in the Middle East. For those who were there it will always be part of their personal life history.

Do come and find out more. We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in North Leigh Memorial Hall, OX29 6SA at 7.30 (doors open at 7pm). All are welcome. Members £20 per year, visitors £5 per talk. Further details are available from Diana Power (01993 882301) or Robert Kyte at kyterobert@gmail.com and 01993 880368.

Witney Music Society

The second concert in Witney Music Society's new season offers an unmissable opportunity to see and hear an outstanding string sextet when Piatti & Friends perform works by Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky and Schoenberg. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 14 November at High Street Methodist Church, Witney. Tickets (£18, £1 for under 19s) will be available at the door from 7pm or in advance online.

The final concert in 2025 will be given by cellist Daniel Schultz and pianist Sejin Yoon. Their programme will include works by Schumann, Dvořák and Chopin. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 12 December.

For more information, please telephone 01993 898020 or visit the Witney Music Society website www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

Combe Mill Christmas Fayre

On Sunday 30 November Combe Mill is holding its Christmas Fayre, this event is not 'in steam' and will run from 11am-4pm.

Don't miss out, come along and bring the children, 'Listen to a story with Santa' and receive a present, (book a slot on Combe Mill website). Browse the market stalls for a Christmas gift, enjoy hot food from the BBQ. Our tea room and gift shop will be open, and we are hosting a Grand Raffle with fantastic prizes and a tombola. Combe Mill's blacksmiths will be in the Forge to make pokers. Our Blacksmiths' items will be on sale and wood turners items are also a very popular Christmas gift.

Combe Mill, a late 19th Century restored Water Mill on Blenheim Palace estate by the River Evenlode. Come along and see the Blacksmiths in the forge.

Free parking and entry. Dogs on leads are most welcome.

Combe Mill cannot be held responsible for attractions that cancel.

Combe Mill

Blenheim Palace Sawmills, Combe OX29 8ET

Combe Community Cinema

National Theatre Live on Friday 28 November

Mrs Warren's Profession. New life is breathed into George Bernard Shaw's moral classic with a brand new staging of the drama centred on the contentious relationship between Kitty Warren and her daughter Vivie. Everything changes in their relationship when Vivie, a successful Cambridge graduate, learns exactly how her mother earned a fortune to pay for her education.

Mrs Warren's Profession stars real-life mother and daughter, four-time Olivier Award-winner Imelda Staunton (*The Crown*) and Bessie Carter (*Bridgerton*). Joining them to complete the cast are Kevin Doyle, Robert Glenister, Reuben Joseph and Sid Sagar. Classification 12.

'The script's intellectual restlessness is still enlivening too; the mother-daughter battles are excellent, twisting and switching our sympathies. Kitty, by turns, seems selfish and honest, Vivie puritanical and moral' (*Guardian* review)

'I had the immense pleasure of seeing *Mrs Warren's Profession* in the West End, featuring the formidable Imelda Staunton and her daughter, the equally compelling Bessie Carter. This production was nothing

short of a theatrical triumph – exquisitely acted, emotionally layered, and profoundly resonant' (Audience review).

Doors and bar open at 7.15pm for performance at 8pm. Running time 117 minutes; no interval.

Tickets: On the door, if available: £12.50

Online: £13.01 (including booking fee 51p).

To book online go to

www.ticketsource.co.uk/combe-community-cinema/t-zzexpox

Combecommunitycinema@gmail.com

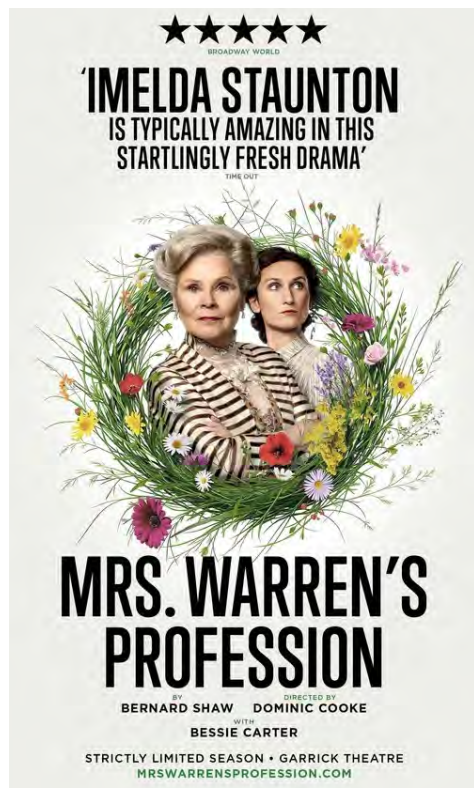
Combe Women's Institute

WI meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Reading Room, Combe from 7.30-9.30pm. We also have a walking group who meet monthly on an ad-hoc basis and a social group who meet on the last Thursday of the month to enjoy outings to nearby places of interest – both groups usually end with cake!

WI membership is open to all women over the age of 18. We have an interesting programme of speakers, outings and activities in line with the Women's Institute main principles of encouraging friendship, tolerance, learning and community spirit.

Subscription from November – March is now reduced to £25.50. If you're not sure the WI is for you then come along and try us out. Guests are limited to 3 meetings a year and charged £6 per meeting.

Our next meeting is on Monday 10 November when Jonathon Cox will be talking about his *Nostrils* series of books. The series follows the career of Chris Pritchard, nicknamed 'Nostrils', as he



works his way through the ranks of the Metropolitan Police.

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

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

Are your headlights on?

Now that the nights are drawing in, beware daytime running lights.

A recent article in the *Telegraph* asked:

Why do so many cars not have their rear lights on? The reason is, because daytime running lights do not work on the back of most cars, they only work on the front.

So remember, in low light or dusky conditions, turn your lights on.

Police and community support

How to contact us

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

Neighbourhood Watch

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

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch

For Sale

- 2 single Adjustamatic single beds, 30" x 76" (75cm x 190cm). Head and feet can be raised. They also have massage function. Full working order.
- Dining table, 60" x 30" (150cm x 75cm). 'Blonde' wood top with chrome legs.
- Child's snooker table, complete with snooker balls and cues. 48" x 30" (120cm x 75cm).
- Large dog cage. 45" x 30" (112cm x 75cm) Folds flat.
- Child's car seat. Basic model. Rarely used by grandson.
- Playstation wheel and seat with controls (all in one). Used for motor racing games.

All need collecting (Stonesfield) and are going **for free**, but any donations will go to the Oxfordshire Air Ambulance.

Contact 01993 891372

SAT 1 NOV
7.30 PM
FINSTOCK
VILLAGE HALL
£10
small children free
older children £6

CEILIDH
BARNDANCE
ALL HALLOWS



FINSTOCK FESTIVAL BAND will bring you tunes to dance to and songs to join in with to celebrate the end of the Celtic year. Come and wake up the ancestors and welcome in the winter... Dances will be called—no need to bring a partner.

BAR proceeds to Finstock for Nature
DO BOOK:
kath@songspace.co.uk 07854514102

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

Stonesfield Parish Council met on Wednesday 1 October 2025 at Stonesfield Primary School. The meeting was very well attended, with around 45 members of the public present.

Planning: A number of residents spoke regarding the planning application for 20 new houses west of Combe Road. Concerns were raised about the impact on the Cotswolds AONB, local wildlife, drainage, traffic, and the need for genuinely affordable housing. No residents expressed support for the application.

The Parish Council noted all comments and agreed that its formal response will be submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council on 7 October 2025. The Council's full planning comments will be published with the minutes on the community website.

Neighbourhood Plan: The Council noted progress on the Neighbourhood Plan, including completion of letters to landowners for the proposed Local Green Spaces and preparation of the required consultation and condition statements.

Finance: Payments were approved, including the cost of materials for the knitted poppy display at the War Memorial.

Website: Following consideration of three quotes, the Council agreed to appoint Parish Online as the provider for the new Parish Council website.

Policies and Insurance: The Council approved updates to its IT Policy, including a new clause for reporting inappropriate communications, and approved the Risk Management Policy, Representatives to Outside Bodies Policy, and the annual insurance renewal.

Village Maintenance: The Council approved the maintenance log and will continue to clarify areas of responsibility with Oxfordshire County Council. Enquiries will also be made into the OCC Delegated Model, which could fund the Parish Council to carry out small local works.

The advert for a new Maintenance Operative will be discussed at the November meeting once boundary maps have been confirmed.

Video Conferencing Equipment: The Council discussed contributing to a shared 360° conferencing device to allow remote attendance if needed. It was agreed that Cllr L. Bate would speak with the local pub group about possible shared arrangements.

Finally, we received a resignation from Cllr Simon Warr and we thank him for his service as a Parish Councillor.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 November 2025 at 7pm at Stonesfield Primary School.

Kay Linnington
Clerk, Stonesfield Parish Council
clerk@stonesfieldpc.uk

From our District Councillors

Draft spatial options for the emerging Local Plan 2041

Why do we need a local plan?

It sets out a council's vision for how an area will grow and change over the next 15–20 years. Guides where new homes, jobs, shops and infrastructure will go and protects important places like green spaces and heritage sites. Once approved, it's used to decide planning applications and shape future development.

The draft spatial options for the emerging Local Plan 2041 have now been made public, see www.meetings.westoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=1372&Mid=2577.

It is planned to go out for public consultation in November – to make sure we get the right type of housing in the right places, please take a look and add your comments. The required housing supply will come from a mix of sources: around 2,330 homes from existing planning permissions once non-delivery is factored in; approximately 2,250 from smaller 'windfall' sites that typically come forward over time; a further 5,375 from allocations already identified in the current Local Plan 2031, including major sites such as Salt Cross Garden Village, North Witney, East Chipping Norton, West Eynsham and the REEMA sites; and around 8,000 homes that will need to be identified through new allocations. In the proposed plan, Stonesfield is designated as a Tier 3 large village, in which small (1-10) and medium (11-50) sized developments would be considered.

Motions passed at the 1st October Council meeting:

Five motions were passed at the last West Oxfordshire District Council meeting:

Israel-Palestine

Many residents and community groups of West Oxfordshire have raised concerns about the humanitarian crisis in Israel/Palestine. Some residents are directly affected by the situation with family there. The Leader of WODC will write to local MPs and the secretary of state to draw their attention to the concerns raised by residents.

Asylum Seeker Community and Council Support

The Council reaffirms its pride and appreciation in the way our local community has come together to support asylum seekers. Local organisations, voluntary groups and our officers have shown professionalism and empathy to the plight of the families staying in the hotel in Witney for short periods while their asylum applications are processed.

Tackling the Unsafe Use of illegal E-Bikes in West Oxfordshire

The number of e-bikes and e-scooters being used illegally across Witney and the wider district has increased significantly in recent months. Council resolved to work with Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council to explore options for enforcement and awareness campaigns targeting unsafe and illegal e-bike use.

Boosting Workplaces and Young People by Supporting Work Experience in the District

Council asks for development of an effective simple system for employers to be kept aware of the work experience dates for

schools in the district, and for employers to be able to indicate willingness to offer work experience places, so that the process is more equitable for young people.

Part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill on Local Planning and Environmental Protection

The government's Bill in its current form replaces local Environmental Impact Assessments with "Environmental Delivery Plans" (EDP) signed off by the Minister for Housing (not the Environment) and allow developers to pay into a nationally run Nature Restoration Levy, with no guarantee of biodiversity protection or improvement in the local area. Council asks for measures that retain local control of environmental planning. The main factors slowing down housebuilding are not nature protections, but skills and materials shortages, inequality in the housing market and slow buildout of approved plans.

For full details of the motions, please see the WODC website.

Upcoming Events:

Building West Oxfordshire's Tomorrow: Housing Growth and Your Voice in Local Democracy. Tuesday 11 November 6-8 pm. Discussion on proposed housing growth for the area, its impacts e.g. rivers, and decisions on what kind of local democracy is going to represent us after local government reorganisation.

Genny Early

West Oxfordshire District Councillor

Genny.early@westoxon.gov.uk

More from West Oxfordshire

Home energy advice

Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) is a charity working locally to improve your warmth and well-being. In a preventative approach, our free helpline provides you with a single point of contact for services, advice and financial support in order to help improve the energy efficiency of your property.

Home Energy Assessment: We offer free home visits to provide housing support for residents and carry out warm and welcome assessments to see how we can help you feel warmer and safer in your home. You can choose a date and time that suits you and a member of the team will assess your needs, from insulation or damp issues to advice on reading your energy meter.

Priority Service Register: If you are pensionable age, have long term medical conditions or live with children under five years old, we can assist you with checking your eligibility and signing your household up to the Priority Services Register so you find out about any issues and outages with your home energy immediately.

Financial Support: Our team of experts can work with households to apply for grants and funding to help you with your home energy. Schemes like the Warm Home Discount can take £140 off your bill and ECO Funding can replace heating systems as well as install insulation. Call us to see if you're eligible and start the process.

All advice is free, confidential and tailored to the resident. To speak to one of the team please call 0800 107 0044 between 9am and 5pm.

www.bhbh.org.uk

From our MP

Over the summer months, I have really enjoyed spending more time with businesses, charities and individuals in our community. I am returning to Parliament full of admiration for the many volunteers who serve others across our area. Thank you, too, to all those who have shared their concerns about what is happening personally, locally, nationally and internationally.

Many people spoke to me about the level of development proposed for our area. At Salt Cross by Eynsham, in Yarnton, Begbroke and Kidlington and in Bicester, thousands of homes are already planned. Some have been held up by the underfunding of new road connections. Challenges in getting connections and service for energy, water and telecoms are also real constraints – and we know that we need more doctors, dentists and health services alongside childcare and school places.

I have been working with local residents on two specific issues. In Bicester, this is a crunch month for a decision about the London Road crossing. East West Rail will bring new connections to our area but our campaign has been to ensure that it does not come at the cost of cutting Bicester in two. In Woodstock, I continue to work with the GPs, the local NHS, the councils and Blenheim to develop a firm proposal for a new doctor's surgery, which I believe we can deliver by the end of 2028.

Over the summer, we have heard more detail on new proposals for the Puy du Fou resort, a whole new town at Heyford airfield and the strategic rail freight interchange at Ardley. These only further highlight the need for the national government to take responsibility for

delivering infrastructure – both physical and social – before new developments open. I will continue to press ministers for these commitments.

If you need help or have a query, please feel free to email me and we will be in touch.

Calum Miller MP

calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk

Thames Valley Police Launches 24/7 British Sign Language (BSL) Access for Non-Emergency Calls

Did you know about our partnership with Sign Video, a British Sign Language (BSL) online interpreting service? This free service allows deaf and hearing-impaired residents to contact us using their mobile phone, tablet, or computer for non-emergency matters.

Use the Sign Video app or visit Video Relay Service App for BSL Users And Interpreters | SignVideo : SignVideo. You can then contact Sign Video for free, through the Sign Directory by tapping on Thames Valley. For more information, please visit www.signvideo.co.uk.

This service is simple, secure, and designed to ensure that everyone can reach us in the way that suits them best. Officers will communicate through the interpreter, with no change to how the call is managed.

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Library

Note our new phone number:

01865 815181

Opening hours:

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

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

Home Library Service

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

01865 810259, or email to:
homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Deborah Wilson (01865 815181)

Library Manager

Hooray, we've moved! (Cont)

At some point in the near future we plan to hold an Open Evening for all parents old and new, neighbours and friends to come and have a look at our new facilities.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Community Trust for being our landlord for 20-odd years and their understanding on the protracted move due to circumstances beyond our control. We would like to thank the School Governors and Matt Jarvis, the previous head, who



agreed to us moving on to the school site and thank the new leadership team, Kim Rogers and Aisling Hill for their enthusiasm and support as we are all convinced that the move is a huge benefit to both establishments.



Finally, we would like to thank all the contractors who have worked on the new building and our committee and staff who have worked tirelessly to make the transition as smooth as possible. It would also be remiss of us to not to mention Andrew Tacon, who was our Treasurer and who helped in the initial negotiations to move and was a source of great wisdom and financial astuteness.

Simon Hopkins (Chair) and Louise John (Manager)

Stonesfield School

As we head towards half term, the leaves on the trees are changing colours and there is a definite chill in the air, and I am reflecting on the first half term of the school year and what we have achieved so far.

This term our children have been authors, writing information texts on Dragons and making posters to warn villagers about a fearsome wolf. We have been archaeologists and historians learning about Stonesfield's close association with dinosaurs, the treasures of Sutton Hoo and ancient China and the Shang Dynasty. We have been scientists, looking at forces and mechanisms and mathematicians as we learn about place value and addition and subtraction and we use maths in everyday life.

Every Thursday we welcome our music teacher, Jenny Larsen, in and our hall echoes with music for the day as she runs singing assemblies and a choir as well as teaching every class in the school. She also arranged a drumming workshop for one class and has been teaching another class to play glockenspiels. Alongside this in assemblies we have explored how we can follow our school rules or be ready to learn, respectful, kind and safe in everything we do, welcomed Rev Ralph to talk to us about World Peace Day and next week we will celebrate our school Harvest Festival.

Early this morning our oldest children headed off to Yenworthy in Devon for a week of adventures. It seems very quiet without them, but we are excited to hear their tales when they return.

As many of you may be aware, Stonesfield Pre School has now moved into their new

home on our site, and it has been lovely to see them settling into their new premises. We look forward to continuing to work closely with them.

If you have a child who is approaching school age, then please come along to our open morning on 6 November and see what we have to offer.

Mrs Aisling Hill

Head of School

Can you be a school governor?

Two of our long term governors are stepping down and we have a couple of vacancies for Community / Co-opted Governors at Stonesfield School. School governors are responsible for overseeing the management side of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. They enable their school to run as effectively as possible, working alongside senior leaders and supporting teachers to provide excellent education to children.

Being a school governor is a commitment to attending governing body meetings which consider issues such as setting the school vision, mitigating financial risk and scrutinising educational outcomes. They are also involved in the school community, acting as critical friends to the headteacher and senior leaders.

At Stonesfield School we meet five or six times a year as a full board. There are also opportunities to join one of our committees, Finance or Performance and Standards, where a more detailed analysis of the school's work takes place. These happen three or four times a year during term time.

Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to

the governing board and schools benefit greatly from working with skilled volunteers, for example anyone with experience of finance, law, premises management or human resources. A governor with business know-how can transform the running of a school.

At Stonesfield some experience of building work and / or fund raising would be particularly beneficial but not essential enough to stop any willing and suitable volunteer from applying.

To be eligible to volunteer as a governor in a school you need to:

- be aged 18 or over
- be willing to apply for a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check

- be willing to undertake safeguarding training
- not be disqualified under the relevant rules and regulations

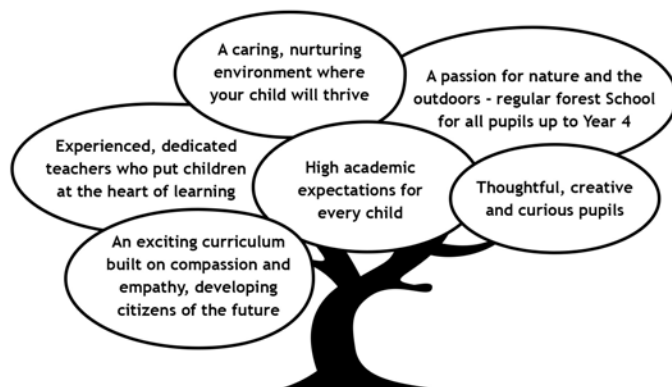
For more information about this role please contact either Mark Burniston, Chair of Governors:
mburniston@oxfordshire.oxon.sch.uk or Katherine Spencer, Vice-Chair:
kspencer@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

Stonesfield Primary School

Learning together to achieve our best.



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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
Headteacher email: head.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

In remembrance - Staff Sergeant Geoffrey Bright, Glider Pilot Regiment



Geoffrey Bright first came to my attention when my youngest son was given a primary school project about the Great War, finding out about villagers commemorated on the Stonesfield war memorial. Looking at the names engraved, my interest was piqued by a Second World War combatant, the sole casualty from the village of that conflict. Unlike the villagers lost in the Great War, the battle in which he was killed is mentioned, as is his date of death. Poignantly this was only seven weeks before the war in Europe came to an end. He died in the Rhine Crossing on 24 March 1945 aged just 25, leaving behind in Stonesfield a wife, Doris, and two young children - Sandra and John. The internet revealed little direct information about Geoffrey other than an entry on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website, showing that he was a

Staff Sergeant in the Glider Pilot Regiment and was buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany. It did however lead me to a first-hand account given by a fellow pilot, Clifford "Nosmo" King (the military are great at nicknames - Clifford King was, unusually in those days, a non-smoker) who had been Geoffrey Bright's co-pilot during Operation Mallard on D-Day, 6 June 1944 and again at Arnhem in September 1944. King was promoted to first pilot before Operation Varsity and avoided the same fate as Geoffrey.

Research thanks go to The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock and the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop in Hampshire. I am grateful for the help of Craig Ward, Geoffrey's grandson. Geoffrey was a friend of Frank Hall, who also served with the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry (LI) and I received helpful information from Frank's sister Mary. On-line resources including the CWGC, Pegasus Archive and Paradata were used, all of which answered questions and raised others. Claude Smith's 'History of the Glider Pilot Regiment' provided me with background information on training and operations, as did 'The Wooden Sword' by Lawrence Wright.

Geoffrey Bright was just 25 when he was killed. Prior to the war it seems he worked as a chauffeur and gardener at Evenlode on Churchfields, living in accommodation above the barn. In July 1940 he joined the army as a soldier in the 2nd Ox & Bucks LI. That battalion had recently returned from India and was going through major changes. It now formed part of the 31st Independent Brigade Group, a highly mobile unit able to respond quickly to any invasion threat. It was stationed in various parts of the south and was undertaking

intense platoon and company training. In October 1941 it was chosen to become an airlanding brigade in the airborne division. Emphasis was put on physical fitness and the bar was set high, those who failed being moved to other assignments. In April 1942 the Regiment moved to Bulford, on Salisbury Plain, where intense air training started in earnest and many took their first glider flight.

The records at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum show that Geoffrey Bright transferred to the Army Catering Corps in August 1942 and was attached to the Glider Pilot Regiment (formed in February that year). By March 1944 he had put down his ladle and completed his elementary flying training and initial glider training, probably in Hotspur gliders, and had been transferred to No 1 Heavy Glider Conversion Unit, very likely learning to fly Horsa gliders. This unit was based at RAF Shrewton in Wiltshire and later at RAF Brize Norton. In fact many glider training units were Oxfordshire based – Kidlington, Thame, Weston-on-the-Green and one hopes that a local lad might have been able to visit home more often than would otherwise have been the case.



Glider pilots of 6th Airborne Division and RAF crews are briefed at RAF Harwell

In May and June 1944 he was stationed at RAF Harwell and preparing for the massive aerial operation that was part of the D-Day landings in Normandy. He flew

in Operation Mallard on the evening of 6 June and his mission was to deliver soldiers of his old regiment, the 2nd Ox & Bucks LI and 195 Field Ambulance Unit, to Landing Zone W near Le Port, west of the Orne Canal on the left flank of the landings. Having delivered his 'cargo', he and his co-pilot would have been expected to pick up their personal weapons and join the fight alongside the infantry, until they were ordered to return to their unit.

A squadron Glider Pilot Regiment Harwell June 1944



Back in the relative safety of England he would have resumed training exercises until called for further action. This happened in September 1944 when 'A' Squadron, of which he and Clifford King were members, was ordered to take part in Operation Market, the aerial element of Operation Market Garden. Taking off from RAF Tarrant Rushton in Dorset as part of the second lift, he was to deliver personnel and equipment of 250 Light Coy, Royal Army Service Corps to landing zone X to the west of Arnhem in Holland on 18 September. The losses amongst the Glider Pilot Regiment in this operation were heavy but fortunately both Geoffrey Bright and his 2nd pilot Clifford King survived the intense fighting, returning to friendly lines by crossing the Rhine at Nijmegen and then to what remained of their squadron in England.

By the Spring of 1945 the allies were close to winning the war in Europe but had still to overcome the major obstacle of the River Rhine in order to take the fight into Germany. The ground element of this assault was to be known as Operation

Plunder and the air element Operation Varsity. Varsity was to be the largest single airborne lift ever made and the GPR would be taking 440 gliders into action as part of the 6th Air Landing Brigade.

‘A’ Squadron was based at RAF Rivenhall in Essex for this operation and I assume that this is where SSgt Bright flew from. The main objective of his squadron was Hamminkeln, a town just over the border in Germany. ‘A’ Squadron was allocated three landing zones to the south and east of the town (P, R & U). Those gliders landing to the east at zone U would be carrying troops from the 2nd Ox & Bucks LI and the 1st Royal Ulster Rifles, those heading for zone R contained troops from 12th Devonshires.

The Germans were expecting an airborne element to be part of the coming battle and had prepared substantial anti-aircraft defences to counter the threat. To add to the mayhem, there had been heavy bombardment of the town of Wesel by the allies to try to suppress these defences, creating smoke and dust over a wide area. Also, a smoke screen had been laid to hide the river crossing and this had drifted towards the landing zones. These combined to create very difficult flying conditions at low level. Geoffrey Bright, along with all the other glider pilots, would have been flying into this maelstrom of gunfire and smoke in an unpowered aircraft with just one chance of getting it right. It is little wonder that 75% of the gliders were hit by flak or small arms fire.

SSgt Bright was one of 95 glider pilots killed on that day. I am told that he crashed, though whether this was due to enemy fire or the extreme conditions in which he had to land I do not know. He

was buried initially at the town in which he probably died – Hamminkeln – amongst his comrades from the 12th Devonshires. All of those buried alongside him had been killed on 24 March and I am assuming that this is an indication of who he took to the battle and where he landed or intended to land – Zone ‘R’, which was the landing zone allocated to the Devonshires.

Two years later, in 1947, under a policy of ‘consolidation’ he and the others buried at Hamminkeln were re-interred at the large CWGC cemetery in the Reichswald Forest, where he still lies. His family had inscribed on the headstone ‘Love’s last gift, remembrance. Loving wife Doris and children Sandra and John’. Those of us learning his story might also include ‘Gratitude’.

John Hounsell

.....

Building Regs and Home Extensions - Part I

In my last article, I discussed Permitted Development and Planning. The next stage involves Building Regulations—which deal with safety, structure, and energy efficiency.

If you're personally managing the job, you are responsible for ensuring compliance with Building Regulations. If you employ a builder, responsibility typically falls to them, and you should confirm this arrangement at the outset. As the building owner, you may still be held accountable if work violates regulations, regardless of who carries it out.

If your work is categorised as ‘building work’ under Regulation 3, compliance is mandatory. Building Regulations also applies to alterations that will temporarily

or permanently affect structure, fire, or access requirements.

The work must meet regulatory standards and must not compromise the safety or function of existing structures or systems. For instance, window replacements must not reduce escape routes. Regulations also apply when a building changes use—for example, turning a garage into a bedroom may trigger additional compliance requirements for insulation, ventilation, or fire protection.

A key part of the regulations is Part L, which addresses energy efficiency. This applies to any building or extension designed to maintain indoor climate control. However, exemptions include Listed Buildings, buildings in Conservation Areas where alterations would impact their historic character and other such as temporary structures and small garden

rooms. Conservatories, porches, and open-sided carports under 30m² are also exempt in some cases—but must still comply with safety glazing rules under Part N.

Building Regulations Approval is essential not just for legal compliance but also for insurance purposes. Insurers typically require confirmation that your project meets these standards, and non-compliance may affect your cover. Once your project is complete, make sure you receive a Completion Certificate, this is your proof that the work complies and may be requested by insurers or solicitors.

Understanding your obligations is vital, as failure to comply can lead to enforcement action or expensive corrective work.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc
www.jlda.co.uk

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Nature notes

What is Farmland Bird Aid Network?

Twenty years ago in Charlbury, Louise Spicer started what has become a remarkable conservation project. Deeply worried about the critical decline of farmland birds, she decided she had to take direct action. This is now the project Farmland Bird Aid Network (FBAN). FBAN provides much needed supplementary feeding during the 'hungry gap' (Nov to May) to small farmland birds to help increase their numbers across West Oxfordshire. Species include yellowhammers, skylarks, bramblings, tree sparrows, corn buntings and linnets. This small local charity has provided supplementary feeding of rape seed, millet and ground grain every year for the past 20 years, and continues to grow.

The aim is to build up a network, linking areas between Witney and Chipping Norton, including the villages of Stonesfield, Charlbury, Eynsham, Finstock, Taston, and Hailey to provide a corridor of support for the district's farmland birds. Volunteers and farmers feed daily over winter and bird numbers are surveyed monthly. Figures show an increase in farmland birds in all areas where FBAN feeds, thousands of linnets and yellowhammers.

More than 40 volunteers from the local community distribute seed by hand daily throughout the winter from late October to early May. With advice from the RSPB, support from generous donors and landowners, we now have approximately 20 feeding stations on farms and fields locally. We also work closely with the NE

Cotswold Farmer Cluster, who provide locally-grown seed.

What has worked best at our Bird Aid sites?

Thick hedges with lots of scrub at the base for shelter and nesting. Also a few tall trees as farmland birds are shy and like to perch high. Beside the hedge, keep grass low or even bare soil so it's easy for the birds to see the food, flit down and feed. Seed mix – best to feed crushed wheat/barley grain, millet and rape seed daily from Nov to May. Pest-proof bin to store the seed mix near the feeding site. Feed daily by hand just enough for the birds to eat in a day – early morning if possible – we do a rota with someone feeding a day a week. Volunteer to survey the site – we survey for farmland birds once per month from Nov to March.

Why have farmland birds declined?

The number of farmland birds in the UK has declined dramatically since the 1970s, falling on average by 48% across the country, while some species such as tree sparrows and corn buntings have been reduced by 80%.

These birds have declined because they used to feed over winter on seeds in the stubble fields before the land was ploughed in the spring. The modern practice of immediate ploughing after harvest has created a period of severe food shortage each year that has devastated local bird numbers.

Added to this, hedgerows tend to be cut annually which further reduces the farmland bird's safe habitat for roosting and breeding. Insects for feeding broods during the spring/summer have declined.

‘Farmland birds are used as an indicator of the general quality of the farmed environment because birds sit near the top of the food chain and trends have been well monitored by the British Trust for Ornithology since 1967.’

If you would like to get involved in feeding birds in Stonesfield on one day a week, please get in touch at:
info@farmlandbirdaidnetwork.org

Genny Early, Jane Ellis

2025: North Leigh Roman Villa's Best Year Yet

North Leigh Roman Villa's volunteers have welcomed over 2,200 visitors to see its splendid mosaic floor in 2025. This represents more visitors than in any previous year since the group formed in 2019. Visitor donations in 2025 have also been very generous, with over £1,000 given to help improve the site. Since starting, the volunteers have now shown nearly 9,900 visitors the 4th century Roman mosaic.

In 2024 the site was much improved by the work carried out by English Heritage, funded by a generous donation from the Michael Bishop Trust: the 200-year-old Cottage can once again be used; the building protecting the mosaic has a new roof and windows, improving visibility of the mosaic; while the work begun to stabilise the exposed Roman remains is due to continue in 2026.

Even though volunteers had already created colour leaflets, a family trail, and an audio guide to the site in previous years, the aspirations of the group to enhance visitors' enjoyment of visiting North Leigh Roman Villa led to a number of new initiatives in 2025. Blenheim Palace kindly

provided two new benches in the spring. An artistically talented volunteer has painted panels to show how the decorated wall plaster in the dining room where the mosaic lies might have looked in the villa's heyday 1,700 years ago. Another volunteer with expertise in textiles has begun an ambitious project to embroider an accurate representation of the surviving mosaic. Community members are welcome to participate and add their "stitches in time" to this tapestry as it is being worked on.

Digital technology has been embraced as well. A competition ran over the summer, whose prize was kindly funded by Blenheim Palace, in the digital construction game Minecraft to show how the villa would once have looked. The winning entries will be shown on site next year in a further step to bring the original villa buildings and courtyard back to life for visitors. The results of the dedicated gamers' efforts are quite remarkable.

Originally North Leigh Roman Villa was the heart of a large working farm. The Romans were responsible for introducing many plants to Britain that we take for granted today. To highlight this important aspect of our Roman past, ecology and gardening-minded volunteers have begun carefully planting species that first arrived with the Romans. This enhancement to the site will continue in 2026.

After the major investment made in 2024, it is very pleasing to see increased visits to North Leigh Roman Villa in 2025 and so many further improvements.

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

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa

Clubs, societies & sport

1st Stonesfield Scout Group

Big news!

There are lots of updates coming from Stonesfield Scouts. First of all a massive thank you to all those who came and helped paint, prime, clean, clear out and get the hut ready for the building control inspection. I am really pleased to announce that we are well on the way to being ready to use the hut with the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts after Half Term.

Unofficial Hut Opening, with Tea and Biscuits

We would like to invite people to come and have a drink, and have a look round, from 2-3.30pm on Sunday 9 November (after the Remembrance Service). This is the unofficial Hut opening event, but we want to mark the start of the next chapter in the groups' life. All are welcome, and we will tie in the short (but necessary) formalities of running the section with a 20 minute AGM. We are planning on holding a big celebration of 1st Stonesfield Scouts in April or May to formally open the hut (once the weather has cleared up).

Finally, we are hoping to encourage some of the young people involved in the group to write their thoughts for *The Slate*. So, the first in what may become a running feature...

What goes on in Beavers (by Audrey aged 7)

"In Beavers I like doing Night Hikes. Last night we went to Blenheim Palace. We started at Combe Gate and walked all the

way round Blenheim, but not past the Harry Potter tree. We saw the big bridge and the covers on the palace. Some people had head torches, but it was a bit annoying because most of them blinded us with them. At the half way point we had some biscuits and we had a break for a rest. Our leaders were called Maple, Willow, Holly and we had other parents come with us. It was really good fun.

When it is cold in winter we are indoors. I liked learning to tie a reef knot. I also liked learning about how Beavers, Cubs and Scouts started. I am now the third oldest in the Beavers. I am the Red Lodge leader. In the Summer it is fun building dens in the forest and seeing if it is waterproof. Last Easter we went to Dry Sandford and we played on the gym equipment and did an Easter Egg hunt. It was so fun! We went to the same place in the summer and we saw the gym equipment had been upgraded with a new climbing wall in place of a balance beam. We slept in tents and made lots of friends.

I really enjoy Beavers and if anyone would like to join or help us it would be really nice!"

As ever, follow us at stonesfield-scouts.org.uk or email to get in touch.

Ben Whitworth

chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk

Stonesfield Cricket Club

A languid Saturday September afternoon, still warm enough for shorts and possibly a last chance to get some colour on my varicose veins. I am swinging gently in a hammock hung between two chestnut trees, the hammock adorned in a kaleidoscope of colours, would not be out of place on the beaches of Cannes and Stonesfield have just beaten Australia at Field Close in front of 15,000 people. A shiny brown conker falls from its lofty sanctuary, hits me on the head and I open my eyes. The enduring power of profanity allows an expletive to slip from my lips as the conker, having shed its spiky overcoat, rolls haphazardly to a stop next to a pile of damp leaves disturbing a three-legged frog in the process. Stonesfield have not beaten Australia, but Cumnor most certainly have.

Early season excitement, reminiscent of waiting for love's first kiss, had morphed into a contagious apathy as The Stones slipped to their fifth consecutive defeat and a mid-table finish. Fred Holloway's top score of (40) saw The Stones set a below par 157 which included 44 extras.

If Ed Black thought, after batting below Liam Walker at number 10 in The Stones innings, his day could not get any more humiliating, he would shortly discover it would. Cumnor's Mathew Launchbury certainly lived up to his name as he launched a one-man assault on a beleaguered Stones. At one stage with Launchbury wreaking more havoc than Achilles managed across the Trojan plains, Sam Tomlin the social club's manager thought it prudent to despatch a colleague to nearby Screwfix to purchase safety helmets as Launchbury peppered the social club roof smashing 106 including 18 fours

and 6 sixes. Ed Black coming on first change produced a variety of bowling, emulating all but one of Heinz's 57 varieties. Ed's three over spell saw him concede 47 runs. That's equivalent to 15.66 runs per over, 2.61 runs per ball or 3.61 runs per minute. Other comparisons are available. Cumnor secured victory at 160-4.

Meanwhile the 2's, in third place, were at Shipton-under-Wychwood knowing victory over their hosts, and defeat for second place Freeland at runaway champions Ascot-under-Wychwood, would secure promotion. If Charles Dickens had great expectations, the 2's expectations were greater. The folk of Shipton could have been forgiven for thinking they were in the firing line of some mad man firing Swedish meatballs from an ancient blunderbuss as skipper Richard Walker blasted an incredible 125 including 7 fours and 14 sixes. Andy Oliver hit 97 sharing a 170 run second wicket partnership with Walker as The Stones hit their highest ever league total of 289-5.

In reply Shipton had no intention of going down quietly. At one stage there was more twitching going on in the Stonesfield team than you would find in any UK wetland location. For the purists I believe twitchers are now referred to as 'birders'. Raffy Rice and Andy Oliver certainly got the bird as they did their utmost to emulate Ed Black's bowling in the 1's keeping excitement at fever levels both returning figures of 0-55 off 5 overs. Walker came on at the death to claim 4-29 as Shipton fell 51 runs short at 238-9.

Meanwhile at Ascot the champions had set Freeland 170 for victory. This seemed more than enough to beat Freeland, in the corresponding fixture in June Ascot had

won by 138 runs, bowling out Freeland for just 99. At 111-5 with just 11 overs to go and with their star batsmen Stephenson back in the pavilion, Stonesfield would have been very confident that Ascot would press home their advantage. It was not to be as in the final overs Ascot sportingly bowled some very occasional bowlers, two of whom, bowled 5 overs between them at a cost of 49 runs, enabling Freeland to secure victory, with just 2 balls to go. We congratulate both Ascot and Freeland on their promotions, we wish them well for next season.

We now have a long wait before shouts of 'how's that' next resonate around Field Close. With the expectation of a few new players, a new first team captain and improved training options, we say goodbye to *The Slate* as we negotiate, like the endangered *Erinaceus europaeus*, a period of hibernation.

David Burns (07554 920351)

.....

Stonesfield Football Club

Is it just me or are the mid-autumn leaves particularly vibrant this year? I've heard a rumour that it's due to the drought conditions that we suffered (?) in summer with the trees producing more sugar in their leaves: no idea if it's true, but that's the nature of rumours. One thing I do know is that our boys are desperate to get back to playing home games again, after the much-needed pitch renovations that were undertaken in response to the aforementioned drought. The Firsts put their first win on the board following a walk-over win against CHQ United who failed to raise a side. Next, they travelled to East Hendred, who have joined the W&DFL from the North Berkshire League. On

paper, a tough fixture and so it proved. This was a game that our boys really should have won with Hendred playing the last 30 minutes down to 10 men following a straight red card. With the score at 1-1, our boys played well and created loads of chances but couldn't break down a stubborn defence, eventually conceding an OG to lose 2-1. That was a sore one, but at least they're creating chances. A trip to Witney Royals in the Fred Ford 1st Round was more like it, with our boys cruising into the next round following a 3-0 win. In the league, they are currently 6th, but with more composure in front of goal and games at home, hopefully the coming months will see a big improvement.

Following a great start to life in League 2, reality has struck our Reserves, and it looks as though the season will be every bit as tough as anticipated. They travelled to Kingham AB (their first team) and were easily beaten 4-0. Then it was another away day at Hanborough, and they suffered another loss 1-0. All is not gloom and doom, as they took on Watlington Town in the first round of the inaugural Oxon FA Junior Cup (for reserve teams) and recorded a thumping 4-1 win! After 6 league games they are in 5th place and like the firsts there's room for improvement.

The Fredo Committee has had no reason to meet up this month as none of our players has set the heather on fire. There was a temptation to award it to Mark Hatton for the work that he's done to help bring our fabulous playing field back to life, but as one influential committee member remarked 'You can't give a Fredo Award for sitting on a tractor!'. True, but that playing field really is looking magnificent.

Just a quick note to the players: that's September and October with no Fredo awarded time to get those shooting boots on!

Tom Flanigan (891979)

Stonesfield Food Group

Emergency Food help

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

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

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

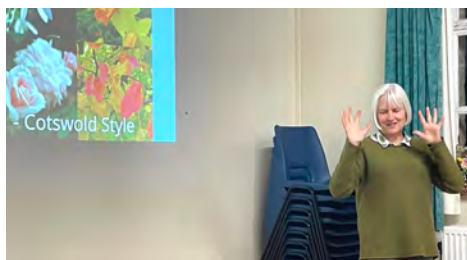
Julie Curran (07973 730907)

Stonesfield Gardening Club

October's speaker was Mandy Bradshaw, who showed us some stunning photographs of Cotswold gardens that are a must to visit at certain times of the year.

In winter / spring, she recommends Colesbourne Park Gardens for its amazing snowdrop display, which is so popular you may need to book ahead.

Also good for snowdrops and other spring bulbs is Painswick Rococo Garden, with the added bonus of its attractive romantic follies. Cotswold Farm Garden opens



regularly in February for people to admire its snowdrops. Westonbirt, the National Arboretum, though known for its autumn colour, is also spectacular in the spring, with its huge rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias thanks to its acid soil.

For summer, Mandy suggests Miserden Park Gardens and Sudely Castle and Gardens. One other garden she really admires is Temple Guiting Manor, but sadly this is no longer open to the public to view the gardens. If you wish to see it, you need to organise an eye-wateringly expensive wedding or family gathering!

In autumn we have the ever-reliable Batsford Gardens, so good for leaf colour as well as berries. And don't forget Aston Pottery locally which really comes into its own at this time of the year.

For a garden that looks lovely at any time of the year, Mandy likes to visit Cerney House Garden. An absolute gem, this garden is also open all year via an honesty box.

Our November meeting features the welcome return of Harriet Rycroft, who will be talking to us about planting pots for winter interest. She is a very good speaker and she demonstrates as well as talking – always very popular with club members!

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

The Megalosaurus Society - Into the 20th century

Our end-of-September meeting brought three former Stonesfield glove-makers and the daughter of one more into the spotlight. Russell Shearer hosted a roundtable exploration of the very varied and technical roles they played in making Stonesfield's high-end sports gloves in the latter part of the last century (true – they were for people like Gary Player and Paddy Hopkirk, and shipped all over the world).

In a fascinating discussion they each explained their own special part in the process – the cutting, stitching, stretching, fitting, finishing and labelling – which took place first in the former glove factory in Churchfields (one of the cottages alongside the allotments) and later in Glovers Yard. The discussion was complemented by a large display of glove-makers' tools, patterns, gloves and an old sewing machine, with many photos of the glovers at work.

Our huge thanks to panel members Di Dawe, Doreen Moss, Julie Newell and Caroline Jeffrey, whose mother Winnie Griffin was the driver who delivered part-finished gloves in a little yellow van to those working at home who would take them to the next stage. These ladies told us about their work, their fun and how they had felt part of a family in Pickard's Gloves, and they brought it all to life. We recorded the discussion and are working on compiling a booklet about this piece of Stonesfield's history.

Our thanks also go to the Charlbury Museum, the Museum of Oxfordshire, Woodstock and the Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre for the loan of glove-making items and photos.

In November we stay in the 20th century but move to darker times. RAF Wing Commander Mike Pollitt will make a presentation on the Avro Vulcan bomber, which was the mainstay of the UK's nuclear defence during much of the Cold War. We are not able to offer this event on a drop-in basis for non-members but anyone joining the Society at this meeting will benefit from membership for the whole of 2026.

Viv Kendall and Trisha Williams

Megs0c25@gmail.com

Stonesfield Players

Don't miss the Stonesfield Players next production at the Village Hall: Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm* dramatised by Paul Doust. Doors open at 7pm, curtain up is at 7.30pm.

Why is *Cold Comfort Farm* cursed?

Will Flora be able to redeem the farm's inhabitants?

And what was the nasty thing in the woodshed?

A colourful parody of rural life in the early 1930s, Stella Gibbons' classic brings us a melting pot of thwarted ambitions, eccentric characters, a bizarre religious sect, an insane agricultural matriarch, and a three legged cow!

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There's something nasty in the woodshed

Church news

.....

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www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

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

Churchwarden: Lindsey Sellar
stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

St James' Centre bookings:
sjcsbookings@gmail.com

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

From the Rector – Sparkle

When our daughter was little, we asked her what her favourite colour was, and she replied, “Sparkle!” It often feels to me as though November is the month of sparkle, as the clocks have gone back and we switch on our lights earlier and earlier. Shop windows are illuminated and decorated to light up our imagination as the darkness deepens. The gorgeous colours of autumn, when lit by afternoon sunlight, are vibrant around us and underfoot. The windows of houses are aglow in the afternoon and evening as we go through the village or the town. For many people the month sparkles with fireworks and bonfires, while in church we light candles to remember the departed and celebrate the example of the saints, who bore the light of Christ to their communities in every age. In many faiths, winter darkness is an opportunity to turn

to the light. Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains have just celebrated the victory of light over darkness at Diwali (in October this year). In Judaism, the celebration of Hanukkah (in December) recalls the light of the golden Menorah lamp, which burned miraculously after the temple was liberated and rededicated in 165BC. For Christians, All Saints Day at the start of November is followed by the beginning of Advent on 30th November, when we will begin to light our Advent candles as the celebration of the birth of Christ, the light of the world, approaches.

Perhaps we might use this month to give thanks for all that sparkles and brings joy in our lives - friends or family, parents or children, neighbours, as well as those whom we remember with love; our pets, the activities and places, music and more which sparkles for us; and the saints or activists who dedicate their lives to the service of God, the care of the world and the painstaking work of building peace. Perhaps we might use this month to thank God for the light of love which shines for us and in us when we turn our lives towards it.

Revd Ralph Williamson - Rector

Sunday Church services

2 November [All Saints Sunday]]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
9.30am	Combe	All Age Worship
11am	Stonesfield	All Age Worship
5pm	Combe	Thanksgiving service for the departed

9 November [Remembrance Sunday]

8am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion [BCP/said]
10am	Combe	Remembrance Service followed by War Memorial at 10.45am
10am	Stonesfield	Remembrance Service followed by War Memorial at 10.45am
5pm	Stonesfield	Thanksgiving service for the departed

16 November [Second Sunday before Advent]

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

23 November [Christ the King]

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

30 November [Advent Sunday]

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

Wednesday Church services

9.30am	Stonesfield	Holy Communion (every week)
11am	Combe	Holy Communion (12th), Morning Prayer (26th)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Services for October

Sun 2	10-45am	United Service at Chipping Norton
Sun 9	No Service	
Sun 16	11am	Penny Fowler
Sun 23	11am	Peter Allen
Sun 30	11am	The Reverend Stephen Bywater Holy Communion

Hallelujah! The rains have returned -
along with the chilly mornings.

Gone for now are those scorching days
with their sun hats and shady spots.

Greenness has gently emerged and the year
ambles on as our Creator declares.

This month is one of Remembrance. An
abundance of folk from saints to soldiers
and others in between, some known only to
ourselves, all remembered, never
forgotten, loved and held in our Maker's
safe hands.

Out of darkness into marvellous light.
I Peter 2:9b

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen (891733)

k.m.albert14@gmail.com

Roman Catholic Worship

How can we increase faith?

Jesus taught us that faith in him is an
unimaginably different and entirely new
type of faith. As such, it is not something
we learn, earn or merit, and certainly not
the fruit of cleverness but, rather faith born
of love. In this gift of faith, God shares his
own knowledge of himself with us, as the
core of all authentic love. 'Heart speaks

unto heart' (St John Henry Newman). In Christ, the heart of God has spoken to our hearts. Faith is the conviction that the profoundest truth about us is that we are loved because we exist.

Meditation by St John Henry Newman (1848)

God knows me and calls me by my name....

God has created me to do Him some definite service;

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission — I never may know it in this life,

but I shall be told it in the next.

Somehow I am necessary for His purposes...

I have a part in this great work;

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught. I shall do good,

I shall do His work;

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore I will trust Him.

Whatever, wherever I am,

I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;

In perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;

If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond us.

He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life, He may shorten it;

He knows what He is about.

He may take away my friends,

He may throw me among strangers,

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide the future from me — still He knows what He is about....

Let me be Thy blind instrument. I ask not to see — I ask not to know — I ask simply to be used.

Holy Mass at St Theresa's, Charlbury

Sunday Mass 9.15 am

Wednesdays and Fridays 9.15 am

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

Roman Catholic Community in Stonesfield

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



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2026 Events and talks

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March 9	Talk
April 25	Plant Sale
May 11	Talk
June 28	Open Gardens
July 13	Visit
Sept 14	Talk
Oct 12	Wine tasting & talk
Nov 9	Talk
Dec 14	Social & Quiz

See website for details

www.stonesfieldgardening.info



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Tue - No food

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