THE
Stonesfield Slate

Issue No 574 November 2026

Neighbourhood Plan



You may remember that three years ago a survey of village residents took place, where everyone was invited to complete the form posted through letter boxes, when your opinion was canvassed on various aspects of village life. Those responses were included in a thorough survey of Stonesfield's housing, economy, amenities, transport, nature and historic environment. In particular, an assessment of housing needs in the village showed a desire for appropriate development for local people.

Five years of hard work by a Parish Council steering group have gone by and finally come to fruition in the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has now been approved by an Independent Examiner and West Oxfordshire District Council.

This is an important document that gives us all a voice on every aspect of village life and, if accepted, must be considered when looking at all areas of planning.

It is now the turn of Stonesfield residents to vote on whether to accept the Plan. There will be a yes/no referendum held on **Thursday 12 November**, which will be run on the same lines as any local or national election. You will be able to cast your vote in the village hall between the hours of **7am and 10pm**.

Don't forget that, as in other elections, **you will need to present photo ID**.

Please do vote.

Slate Publishers

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Dates for your Diary:

October

28	Bingo	Sports & Social Club	7pm
29	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2pm
31	Shoe Boxes for Eastern Europe	Methodist Church	2pm
31	Fancy Dress Halloween Band Night	Sports & Social Club	8.30pm

November

1-25	Pics @ The Pub: Textile & more	The White Horse	Pub hours
2,9,16,23,30	Monday Coffee	St James' Centre	10-11.30am
2,9,16,30	Baby & Me Postnatal Yoga	Village Hall	10-11.15am
2,9,16,30	Pickleball	Village Hall	12.30-2.30pm
2,9,16,30	Taekwondo	Village Hall	5.30-6.30pm
2,9,16,30	Bump & Me Antenatal Yoga	Village Hall	7.30-8.30pm
2,9,16,30	Hannah Bathe Strength & Condition	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
3	North Leigh History Society talk	NL Memorial Hall	7.30pm
3,10,17,24	Seniors Café	The White Horse	3-4pm
3,10,17	Zumba	Village Hall	7-8pm
3,10,17	Zumba Strong	Village Hall	8-9pm
3,17	Quiz Night	The White Horse	8pm
4	Parish Council meeting	Village Hall	7pm
4,11,18	Hannah Bathe Strength & Condition	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
4,11,18	Folk Dancing	Village Hall	7.45-10pm
5,12,19,26	Book Break	Stonesfield Library	12.30-2.00pm
5,12,19	Hannah Bathe Strength & Condition	Village Hall	7-7.45pm
6	Fireworks Bash	The White Horse	5.30pm
9	Gardening Club talk	St James' Centre	7.30pm
9	Combe WI talk	Combe Reading Room	7.30pm
10	Open morning	Stonesfield School	9-11am
10	Folk Music	The White Horse	8pm

Continued on p4

Dates for your Diary:

November (cont)

10,17	Pickleball	Village Hall	12.30-1.30pm
10,17	Stonesfield Social	Village Hall	5-6.30pm
11,18	Pilates	Village Hall	9.30-10.45am
11,18	Yoga & Relaxation	Village Hall	11-11.45am
12	Neighbourhood Plan Referendum	Village Hall	7am-10pm
12,19	Upholstery	Village Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
13	Witney Music Society concert	Methodist Ch, Witney	7.30pm
14	Christmas All sorts	Methodist Church	2-4pm
19	Talk: *Lost Villages of Oxfordshire*	St James' Centre	7.15pm
20	Baby & Toddlers	Village Hall	10am-noon
26,27,28	*Inspector Drake & the Perfekt Crime*	Village Hall	7pm
27	National Theatre Live: *Golden Boy*	Combe Hub	7pm
27-30	Pics @ The Pub:Midwinter Show	The White Horse	Pub hours

December

1-31	Pics @ The Pub: Midwinter Show	The White Horse	Pub hours
1	North Leigh History Society talk	NL Memorial Hall	7.30pm
4	Witney Music Society concert	Methodist Ch, Witney	7.30pm
4,11	Baby & Toddlers	Village Hall	10am-noon
6	Christmas Fayre	Combe Mill	11am-4pm

STONESFIELD VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Our 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

Notices & news

Nigel Collier: 1945 – 2026

Thank you to everyone from Combe and Stonesfield for your kind messages, flowers and cards following Nigel's death on 13 September.

Nigel was brought up in Combe at Alma Grove, then a thriving mixed farm, by his adoptive parents, Albert and Linda Collier. Alma Grove and Boltons Farm were both rented from the Blenheim Estate and the family raised beef cattle, had an award-winning dairy herd and a lot of chickens! Both the milk and eggs were sold around Combe by the Collier sisters by horse and cart. Nigel lived in Combe for more than half his life and served on the Parish Council in the late 1980's/early 1990's. He and Bob Smith also organised the Combe Firework display for many years.

His mother, Linda, a Franklin, was raised in Stonesfield and we moved to the village in 2002. Due to health problems, Nigel had time on his hands and joined the Stonesfield Voluntary Transport Team for quite a few years. He enjoyed the company, having a purpose – and driving! I think some of his more infirm passengers may not have appreciated having to climb into a Range Rover, though!

He ended his days at Katharine House Hospice, Adderbury. I cannot praise this place and its wonderful staff highly enough. I asked for the collection at his funeral at St Laurence Church, Combe to go to Katherine House. If you would like to make a contribution in Nigel's memory, please go to www.khh.org.uk.

Jane, Rosie and Charlie (891372)

21 Greenfield Road, Stonesfield

Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

For more information on the referendum being held on 12 November, please see pages 18 & 19.

Stonesfield Village Hall News

Another busy month, November is busy too as we have block bookings for two of our week's Qigong Training (3-5 only daytime sessions are cancelled) and The Stonesfield Players Autumn Show 21-29, with all normal sessions cancelled. Please speak with your session leader for confirmation.

November 12 is your chance to vote for our Neighbourhood Plan, and join us for the Village Hall AGM 7pm.

We would like to highlight all the different activities we offer at the Hall, here is our timetable of regular activities.

Monday

10-11.15am	Baby & Me Yoga
2-2.30pm	Pickleball
5.30-6.30pm	Taekwondo
7-7.45pm	Strength & Conditioning
7.30-8.30pm	Bump & Me Yoga

Tuesday

Noon-2pm	Pickleball
5-6.30pm	Stonesfield Social
7-8pm	Zumba
8.30-9.30pm	Zumba Strong

Wednesday

9.30-10.30am	Pilates
7-7.45pm	Strength & Conditioning
7.45-10.15pm	Folk Dancing

Thursday

9.30-12.30pm	Upholstery Group
5.30-6.30pm	Taekwondo
7-7.45pm	Strength & Conditioning

Friday

10am-noon	Baby & Toddlers

Don't forget the hall and club room are also a great hire for parties, events, training and meetings, with a well-stocked kitchen to cater for up to 100 people and alcohol licence. Available for hire from £9.20 per hour, please see our website, booking is easy, the calendar and booking is all online.

Also, that Community Café slots for 2027 are available for local groups to fundraise on the first Saturday of each month.

Claire Renshaw

Stonesfield Village Hall Bookings

info@stonesfieldvillagehall.com

www.stonesfieldvillagehall.com

Pictures @ The Pub

We hope you have been enjoying our exhibition of Ann Lowe's colourful *Journal quilts* and John Taylor's paintings, prints, and collage which will be showing until the 25 November.

Thereafter we will be putting on our third Midwinter Show of work by artists in Stonesfield and the surrounding area which will run throughout the festive period and into the New Year. At the time of going to press, we are almost fully booked and are expecting paintings, etchings, textile art, painting on slate, collage, woodblock prints, poetry, recycled metalwork and digital art.

River Evenlode Valley: Looking much further ahead, the team is considering mounting an exhibition on the theme of the Evenlode valley, which has been suggested by a Stonesfield artist. The work could be in any medium provided it is two-dimensional, ie. would hang flat on a wall. If this inspires you and you might like to enter a piece of artwork, please get in touch with us as soon as you can as we will need to have sufficient positive responses before we can make arrangements for a group show. In terms of timing, we can advise that this would not take place before April 2027. For more information and/or to put forward your name, please get in touch with us at: triwynwil003@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Trisha Williams for Pictures @ The Pub

triwynwil003@gmail.com

Team: Kerry Burniston, Jenny Lines, Ann Lowe and Trisha Williams

Claire Renshaw for The White Horse Community Pub

White Horse News

Sausage and mash Wednesdays are back! Every Wednesday, at lunchtime and in the evening, enjoy sausage and mash with a complimentary drink for £14. We offer a different choice of sausages each week, including vegetarian Glamorgan sausages. Booking is welcome, or just pop in for a warming midweek treat.

We are putting the finishing touches to our **dog calendar**, which will be available to buy from the end of November. As always, all proceeds will be donated to the Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary. If you missed the photoshoot and would like your dog included, please contact us. There are still a few of our four-legged regulars who have not been included yet.

The **quiz** is back at the pub every other week throughout November, so why not come along, put a team together and see if you can become quiz champions? There is no need to book; just turn up and grab a table, or contact us if you would like to reserve one. Teams can have a maximum of six players, and there is a chance to win a cash prize if you find the correct key to open the box. The next dates are 3 and 17 November.

Folk music returns to the pub on Tuesday 10 November from 8pm. Come along, enjoy some light-hearted entertainment and show your support.

Our **Christmas menu** is now available to pre-order and will be served from 25 November to 20 December. Pop in for a copy or contact us to make a booking. The menu and full details are available at www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com. Advance booking is required, along with a £10 deposit per person and a pre-order.

We will once again be hosting our annual **Firework Bash** on 6 November, starting at 5.30pm and 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. There will also be food, drinks, a fire pit and sparklers for the children.

Keep an eye on our social media and the Nextdoor app for more upcoming deals and events.

Facebook – The White Horse Pub, Stonesfield

Instagram – thewhitehorsestonesfield14

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Craig Tipper, The White Horse (01993 672059)
info@thewhitehorsestonesfield.com
www.thewhitehorsestonesfield.com

Henderson:Hooper 25th anniversary concert

We would like to thank everyone who came to the concert on 26 September in the Church of St James the Great marking the 25th anniversary of our very first concert as fiddle and guitar duo *Henderson:Hooper*.

We greatly enjoyed playing and were really moved by the warmth of our audience, added to by the glorious September sunshine that streamed into the church.

An enormous thank you to Ralph, Lindsey and the wonderful team of helpers. And thank you for all your donations - able to pass on over £800 to the Alzheimers Society!

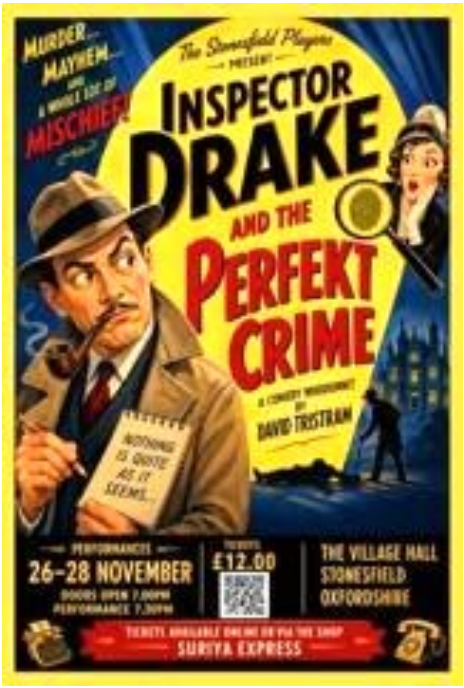
Judith & Nick Hooper

Guitar tuition

Learn to play the guitar in the comfort of your own home.
Complete beginner to intermediate.
Children and adults.
£20 per hour
No guitar? Don't worry, I can lend you one!

Call Matt: 07880 724708

Stonesfield Players



The Stonesfield Players' November production will be *Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime* by David Tristram. A gloriously chaotic 1930s-style whodunnit packed with murder, mayhem, mistaken identities and one very determined detective! Please do join us for a night of comedy and laughter with performances on Thursday 26, Friday 27 and Saturday 28 November at the Stonesfield Village Hall. Doors open at 7pm and curtain up at 7.30pm.

Tickets are on sale and available now. Get them online via www.tickettailor.com/events/thestonesfieldplayers2/24382565 or you can scan the QR code, or look out for a poster around the village. Some tickets are also available at the Suriya Express shop.

Gareth Meager

Churchfields Allotments

What a year we are having, the hottest and driest we can remember. Plenty of watering and discussions about future years; is it time to test out vegetables that manage in hotter climates? Then some rain and late warmth, giving runner beans, tomatoes and the ever present cucumbers another chance. Beware our padron peppers that have been spicier than usual.

Please get in touch if you would like to join the waiting list for a Churchfields allotment. Expect a warm welcome from the allotment community.

After five years I am stepping back as Chair and a new committee is taking over in November.

Please contact davidjweston1@yahoo.com to go on the waiting list

John Sampson

Stonesfield Macmillan 2026



A huge thank you to all who helped, baked, donated and came to this year's Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday 25 September at St James' Centre. Our total raised this year was an amazing £1,063, bringing our total raised for Macmillan over our past four Coffee Mornings to £5,292.50!

I will be taking a break next year from coordinating Stonesfield's Macmillan Coffee Morning. I had the privilege of taking over the reins in 2023, following a cancer diagnosis in 2022 then again in 2024. The support I received from Macmillan via literature and funded nurses was unforgettable.

Since 2023, I've had such fantastic support for each MacMillan Coffee Morning, there's no way I could have done any of them without you...Sarah, Claire, Julie, Tina, Ali, Eileen, Jill, Helen, Emma, Orla, my wingman, Daniel, my mum, plus our amazing cash register!

If anyone would like to run Stonesfield Macmillan next year, please let me know!

Thank you, Stonesfield, you continue to do Macmillan proud.

Jane O'Gorman

Christmas All sorts

It's here; the annual Methodist Church Christmas Event. Do come along to St James' Centre on Saturday 14 November from 2pm until 4pm. There will be cakes, games, raffles and more, in fact all sorts! Light refreshments will be served so a great occasion for an afternoon of enjoyment. Donations will be very much appreciated.

Everyone is welcome, see you there.

Kathleen Albért (891733)

October Community Café

Thank you for all the support received for the October Community Café run by The Stonesfield Players. We had a great team of bakers and helpers but it would not have been a success without all the villagers and visitors who came along to enjoy the delicious cakes, muffins and cookies.

We raised £300 which will go towards costs for future productions, we sold some tickets for our autumn production of *Inspector Drake and the Perfekt Crime* and enjoyed a happy morning with a strong community vibe – young football players and their families also appreciated a treat and warm drink after their matches.

The Stonesfield Players

Local Private Carer available
Monday-Friday, Hourly rate
Experienced, reliable, trustworthy and kind-hearted
Victoria 07930 342087

Wanted: Studio space

Sasha Lee is a young sculptor living in Combe. He is currently searching for a local studio. He will mostly be working with clay and stone. He only requires a fairly basic space with light, electricity and a hard floor.

If anyone has any recommendations or leads, please send an email to sashanikolaslee@gmail.com or telephone him on 07342 766741.

Deborah Manning

Stonesfield Scouts

Wanted: One person who likes spreadsheets. Also, several people who like marshmallows.

1st Stonesfield Scouts needs a treasurer and more section volunteers. Take our quiz to find out which one you are.

Last April, thanks to the generosity of the village, our new Scout Hut opened its doors. Children now spend their evenings building shelters, lighting fires (safely, and on purpose) flogging ducks (not that way) and coming home happily filthy. The hut is the easy part. What keeps it all going is people, and right now we need more of them.

So, grab a pen. Answer honestly.

1. A friend hands you a crumpled receipt for 40 tent pegs. You:

a) Smooth it out, log it, and quietly feel at peace.

b) Ask whether you can be the one to bang them in.

2. Your ideal Monday evening involves:

a) A tidy set of accounts and a cup of tea.

b) Teaching a seven-year-old to tie a reef knot, then untying the granny knot they tied instead.

3. The phrase 'Gift Aid reclaim' makes you:

a) Strangely excited.

b) Reach for the marshmallows.

Mostly a's; you are our next treasurer: We are looking for someone to look after the group's finances: paying the bills, keeping the books, claiming Gift Aid and helping the trustee board make sensible decisions. You do not need to be an accountant. You need to be organised, reliable and willing to give a few hours a month, mostly from the comfort of your own kitchen table. You will join a friendly committee and help steer a charity that matters to a lot of local families.

Mostly b's: you belong in a section. Our leaders are brilliant, but they are stretched. We would love more adults to help run our sections, whether that is every week, once a month, or just for a particular activity or camp. You do not need to know how to put up a tent. Most of our best volunteers did not, when they started. What you need is enthusiasm and a tolerance for mud.

A mix of both? Even better. Come and talk to us.

'But I don't know what I'm doing' Good news: nobody expects you to (and nor do we from time to time). Scouts have a well-established training programme and we have a lot of experience and pre-planned sessions, so you will be supported by experienced leaders. All the checks, guidance and kit are taken care of. You bring the time; we will provide everything else.

'But I'm too busy.' Lots of our volunteers are. Flexible roles exist precisely for you. An hour here and there genuinely makes a difference.

And there are perks. You will learn new skills, meet great people in the village, and occasionally be told by a nine-year-old that you are 'actually quite cool'.

Interested, curious or just want a chat? Email Ben Whitworth, group chair, at chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk, or pop down to the scout hut on a Monday, Thursday or Friday evening. No commitment, no pressure, and we promise not to hand you a woggle on the spot.

Combe Connect

Combe Connect is the local magazine for your neighbouring village. You can read the latest issue at www.combeconnect.co.uk.

Editor@combeconnect.co.uk

Clarion call

Have you heard of the Oxford Clarion?

It is a twice-weekly journal published online by a group of volunteers, who wish to shine a light on various aspects of life in Oxford and Oxfordshire. They cover everything from politics to planning, leisure to travel.

Always entertaining and informative, you can subscribe by going on to their website and it will be delivered to your inbox. Alternatively, you can just log on now and then to see what they have to say.

www.oxfordclarion.uk

The Oxford CLARION

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

Combe WI

Unfortunately, our October speaker was unable to join us, so we did what the WI does best and entertained ourselves with a selection of quizzes and plenty of friendly chatter!

As well as our monthly meetings, Combe WI has a walking group that meets once a month on an ad hoc basis, and a social group that gets together on the last Thursday of each month.

Our regular meetings take place on the second Monday of every month, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, at the Reading Room in Combe.

Our November meeting will feature a change to the original programme, and we are delighted to welcome Steven Bruce, who will be talking about buying and selling at auction. He will also be offering valuations of some of our own treasures, so do bring along an item you would like him to look at!

If you are interested in finding out more about the WI, why not come along and give us a try? The WI is open to all women aged 18 and over, and visitors are very welcome to attend up to three meetings before deciding whether to join. A suggested donation of £8 is requested from guests.

As space in the Reading Room is limited, please get in touch beforehand if you would like to attend as a guest, so that we can make sure everyone is comfortably accommodated.

We look forward to welcoming you to Combe WI!

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

Contacting *The Stonesfield Slate*

Do you have a story to share?

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

We're hoping to find more Stonesfield residents who will contribute their own articles, poems, drawings or photographs to publish throughout the year.

If you have a story to tell, or anything to share, please send it to us.

A reminder of *The Slate* email addresses.

To submit an **article**, please email **editor@stonesfieldslate.uk**. – deadline 15th of the month for the next month's issue.

To **advertise** – deadline 10th of the month for the next month's issue, or for general enquiries please email **publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk**

No email?

The editorial team and publishers are conscious that not everyone has access to email and/or a computer. If you are in this situation and would like to submit something for publication, please get in touch with the Editor in order to make alternative arrangements. We are happy to collect something handwritten from you or to take it down over the phone. The Editor's name and contact number appears on page 2 of each issue.

Paul & Diane Bates, Publishers
publisher@stonesfieldslate.uk
The Editor
editor@stonesfieldslate.uk

Politics & local affairs

Stonesfield Parish Council

The Parish Council met on 7 October, with discussions covering the Neighbourhood Plan referendum, the Manor Field development, the Council's budget, playground safety and Parish Council land.

Neighbourhood Plan and Manor Field

The Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan referendum will take place on Thursday 12 November 2026, with voting at Stonesfield Village Hall from 7am to 10pm (see more on pages 18-19).

Following the refusal of the Manor Field planning application, the Council authorised the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to prepare and coordinate its response if an appeal is lodged. The group will continue in a monitoring role until April 2027, subject to volunteer availability.

Local Plan and Walking and Cycling

The Council approved its response to West Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2043 consultation, ahead of the 9 October deadline.

Councillors also considered the Charlbury Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The Council supports the proposals, particularly improvements to the route between Charlbury and Stonesfield, which reflect aspirations in the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan. Further work will be undertaken, with any necessary approvals brought back to the Council.

Playground

The playground has reopened following urgent safety work. Repairs have been completed, and equipment that could not be repaired has been removed. Further maintenance and improvements will be needed. The Council will work with the playground committee and explore potential funding opportunities, including grants highlighted by District Councillor Tim Sumner.

Parish Council Budget

The Council began considering its budget for 2027/28, including provision for legal advice if required and potentially more frequent grass cutting during dry periods to reduce fire risks. The Council also discussed retaining provision for Community Speedwatch volunteers. No final budget decisions were made; proposals will be considered further at a future meeting.

County and District Council Updates

County Councillor Andy Graham reported that a Government announcement on local government reorganisation was expected shortly. He also provided an update on plans for a new library in Woodstock, the reopening of Botley Road and changes to Oxford's traffic restrictions, with traffic filters replacing the temporary congestion charge.

District Councillor Genny Early discussed the WODC Local Plan 2043 and changes to planning rules that could mean fewer applications being considered by planning committees. She highlighted the importance of parish councils and residents continuing to have a voice in planning decisions.

District Councillor Tim Sumner encouraged greater engagement with young people through WODC's Youth Officer and highlighted grants available for arts, heritage and leisure projects.

The Common

The Council heard that machinery needed for proposed wetland and pond work on the Common had been repaired. A meeting was being arranged to obtain a quotation for the work.

Councillor Vacancy

There is still a vacancy on Stonesfield Parish Council, with no applications received to date. The Council will circulate a further notice encouraging residents to consider becoming a parish councillor. Anyone interested can contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@stonesfield-pc.gov.uk

Date of next meeting

The next full Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 November 2026 at 7.00pm in Stonesfield Village Hall.

Evenlode Catchment Partnership

The Parish Council is considering proposals, in partnership with the Evenlode Catchment Partnership, to create shallow scrapes and ponds on the Common flood meadow to improve biodiversity and provide wetland habitats. Further details and costs are still being considered and no final decision has been made on whether the works will proceed.

You can read more about the Evenlode Catchment Partnership wetland creation scheme at: www.evenlodecatchment.org.uk/

Kay Linnington, CiLCA, Parish Clerk

clerk@stonesfield-pc.gov.uk

www.stonesfield-pc.gov.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.neighbourhoodalewrt.co.uk/30/join. Clicking on 'Join a scheme' and selecting 'Stonesfield' will complete the request.

Police and community support

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

Deanna Asplundh

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator



Stonesfield
PARISH COUNCIL

YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU!

Become a Voice for Stonesfield — Join the Parish Council

Are you passionate about your community? Do you want to help shape the future of Stonesfield? Stonesfield Parish Council currently has vacancies for new councillors. We are looking for enthusiastic residents from all walks of life to join our team. No prior experience in local government is needed—just time, curiosity, and a care for your community.

Why Join Us?

- 🗳️ Make a Real Difference: Have a direct say in decisions that affect your neighbors and local area.
- 🌳 Protect What Matters: Help manage local services, village facilities, green spaces, and community projects.
- 📋 Influence Local Planning: Ensure the community's voice is heard on planning applications and housing needs.

What's Involved?

- Attending our regular monthly council meetings.
- Contributing a few hours of your time each month to local initiatives.
- Listening to and representing the views of Stonesfield residents.

💬 Find out more and apply!

To apply or to chat informally with a current councillor about what the role involves, please contact the Parish Clerk:

- 📧 Email: clerk@stonesfield-pc.gov.uk
- 🌐 Website: Visit Stonesfield Parish Council for more details.

Come to our next meeting and see us in action!

From our MP



The summer and autumn gave me a great opportunity to visit community groups, schools, cafes and pubs and to hold open meetings across the constituency. Thank you to everyone who welcomed me. I was reminded what an amazing community we have, with so many people doing so much for one another.

As we approach winter, many tell me they are worried about fuel and energy costs. In Parliament, I will keep pressing the Government to support hard-pressed families and small businesses. Locally, advice and signposting to help is available on the Cherwell District Council and Oxford County Council websites.

Major proposed developments remain a challenge locally. In too many cases, the Government has overridden local decision-making and imposed outcomes. This is clearest with the planned asylum centre at MOD Bicester. The Government is ignoring local knowledge and pushing through a scheme that is wrong for residents, asylum seekers and the taxpayer. I have worked with the 'Wrong Plan, Wrong Site' campaign group to support their legal challenge.

Elsewhere, the Government has (again) extended its own deadline to decide on the Botley West solar plant, delayed an inquiry into Campsfield House Detention Centre in Kidlington and is considering a huge new rail freight terminal at Ardley. There are planning applications for up to 9,000 homes at Heyford Park and for the Puy du Fou historical attraction near Bucknell.

In every case, my argument is that the Government must decide its priorities for the area and adopt an 'infrastructure first' approach. We have shortages of electricity, water, road space and rail connections. Constituents repeatedly tell me how hard it is to get a doctor's appointment, while finding an NHS dentist is, well, like hen's teeth. Before adding so many developments the Government must commit to investing in hard infrastructure and local services.

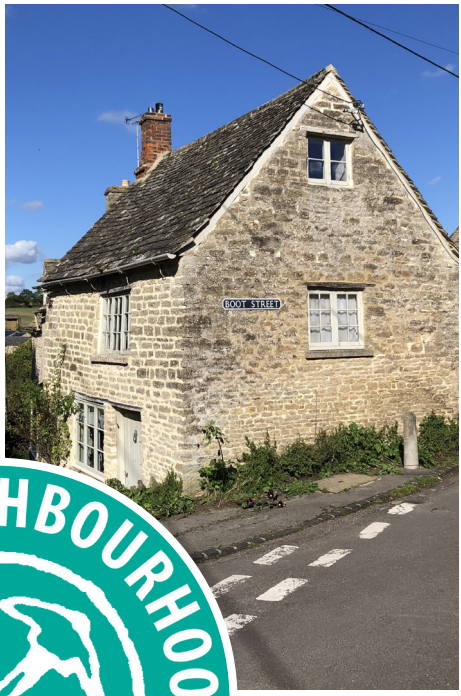
On the environment, I am delighted that the illegal waste tip by the River Cherwell has been cleared, with no pollutants leaching into the river. The successful campaign, which I was proud to be part of, was among the first in the country to gain national attention and I believe it prompted Andy Burnham to call tackling this crime a top priority.

I am deeply concerned by the Environment Agency's slow response to forever chemicals contamination at the former RAF base at Heyford Park and now at Islip's former RAF fuel depot. The science linking forever chemicals to human health is not yet clear, but the levels found are so high that we need rapid action to establish the facts. I will continue to press for that.

As ever, if you would like to raise any issues with me, please get in touch via calum.miller.mp@parliament.uk or by calling 01869 520123.

Calum Miller MP





STONESFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN





Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Thursday 12 November, 7am – 10pm at the Village Hall

Stonesfield Parish Council are pleased to announce that West Oxfordshire District Council confirms it accepts the recommendations of the Examiner's Report on the Draft Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan. WODC gives notice that a referendum on the Plan will be held in Stonesfield on **Thursday 12 November 2026**.



The Referendum version of the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan together with the Regulation 18 Decision Statement and its associated Appendix and Referendum Information Statement can be found by going to www.westoxon.gov.uk/stonesfield

The Referendum version of the Plan can also be read online using the Stonesfield Library public computer. Librarians will help anybody find the documents.

It is important to note that this article in the *Slate* is not intended to amount to influence by the Parish Council to persuade you to vote either 'yes' or 'no' in the Referendum. The Parish Council per se is advised that it is not permitted to exercise such influence. The advice is that the Council is simply allowed to urge you to vote one way or the other and to inform you factually in a neutral way or to correct mis-statements of fact.

Stonesfield Parish Council has been developing its Neighbourhood Plan for the last five years. In Spring 2025 the draft Plan was submitted for five weeks of public consultation. The Council responded to residents' feedback, making significant modifications. The revised Plan was then submitted to an Independent Examiner who reviewed it to ensure that it complied with all national and local planning requirements. The Examiner asked for modifications to be made to some of the policies to ensure compliance, all of which the Council accepted and implemented.

In September the Neighbourhood Plan was accepted by the Examiner and WODC as compliant with all necessary regulations and should go forward to a village referendum, the final stage of developing our village plan.

What is a Neighbourhood plan?

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities to have a say about the future of where they live and work. It gives them the power to produce a plan with real legal weight that regulates development in their local area.

What is the Plan based on?

Three years ago, we surveyed village residents, asking what you like (and don't like) about living here and what you would like to see improved.

Some 612 residents (aged 16+) gave us their opinions about everything from the countryside to road safety; village facilities to housing. A Housing Needs Assessment analysed housing availability and use in the village based on the survey and data from other local and central government sources. Village Character and Landscape Assessments were commissioned from external technical experts. This research was used to write the Plan.

The resulting Plan is a thorough document, over 100 pages long, covering many aspects of life in Stonesfield. Importantly, and necessarily, it will become a document that the Parish and District Councils must have regard to when considering local planning applications.

How do I cast my vote?

The Referendum, including the count, is being run by WODC in the same way it runs local and national elections.

Where and when will the Referendum take place?

The Referendum will take place in Stonesfield Village Hall on Thursday 12 November between 7am and 10pm.

Who can vote?

Any resident over 18 years old, registered on the Stonesfield Electoral roll, can take part. Voters will be required to show photo ID. Acceptable forms of photo ID include: driving licence, passport, bus pass, a blue badge. For more information go to: www.westoxon.gov.uk/about-the-council/elections-and-voting/voter-id-what-you-need-to-do/

Postal votes

If you are registered for postal-voting you will be able to use this service. If you aren't already registered for postal-voting but wish to use this service, you must register immediately as it usually takes eleven days to process.

What will the question on the ballot paper ask?

The ballot paper will have a simple question as follows:

Do you want West Oxfordshire District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Stonesfield to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

❑ YES ❑ NO

When the count takes place, the result will be determined on a simple majority vote, either for acceptance (YES) or rejection (NO).

Why should I bother?

This is your chance to invest in the future of the village. The Plan has legal weight and will affect planning decisions from the moment it is adopted.

Kay Linnington, CiLCA
Stonesfield Parish Clerk
Clerk@stonesfield-pc.gov.uk

Education, culture & more

Stonesfield Library

Note our new phone number: 01865 815181

Opening hours:

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

Val Phillips (891455)

Friends of Stonesfield Library

Home Library Service

The Home Library Service is free and there is no charge for requests or late returns. To register for this service or for further information, telephone your local library or the Home Library Service on 01865 810259, or email homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

- A caring, nurturing environment where your child can thrive
- A passion for nature and the outdoors - regular forest school for all pupils
- High academic expectations for every child
- Experienced, dedicated teachers who put children at the heart of learning
- An exciting curriculum built on compassion and empathy, developing citizens of the future

Join us at our open day 2026

10th Nov

Any questions or to book a visit contact the office on office.2353@stonesfield.oxon.sch.uk

Stonesfield Primary School

As we go to press, preparations are well underway for our Harvest Festival, which we look forward to celebrating with our school families and wider community at St James Church. Harvest provides an important opportunity for us to reflect on those around us and to consider how we can live out one of our school's core values: kindness.



Throughout the year we encourage our children to think about how small acts of kindness can make a difference, whether that is supporting a friend in the playground, helping someone in our village or contributing to community initiatives. We are proud of the close relationship that exists between our school and the community we serve and we see Stonesfield Primary School as being very much at the heart of village life.

This deep sense of belonging and our desire to honour both our heritage and our future is reflected in the way we think about the symbols that represent our school. A school logo is much more than a symbol. For many years our current logo has represented the children, families, staff and wider community who have helped shape our school and create the strong sense of belonging we value today.

As our school continues to evolve we have taken the decision to refresh our logo to better reflect our vision for the future, while remaining true to the values, history and community that have always been at the heart of Stonesfield Primary School.

We recognise that change can bring mixed emotions, particularly when something has been part of the school's identity for so long. The current logo has accompanied countless memories, achievements and milestones and we are grateful for everything it has come to represent over the years.

Our new logo is not intended to replace our history, but to build upon it. It reflects the next chapter of our journey and our commitment to providing a nurturing, ambitious and inclusive environment where every child can thrive. We hope it will become a symbol that current and future generations of pupils will come to recognise with the same sense of pride and connection.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of our school over the years. The strength of Stonesfield Primary School has never been found in a logo alone, but in its people, its relationships and its shared commitment to helping children flourish.

As we introduce our new visual identity over the coming months we look forward to celebrating both our proud history and our exciting future together.

Mrs Hill and team

Welcome to Jurassic village



It's nice to have a sense of pride about the place we live. We have our interesting history of slate mining and glove making. We have a community pub! Oh, yes and that Megalosaurus thing: the very first dinosaur ever to be scientifically named. Well if you thought there was something special about the village – it's about to get a lot more special.

Few of us actually realise just how important this little village is to the story of our planet. The Oxford Museum of Natural History (OUMNH) have called Stonesfield 'The ultimate historical landmark for palaeontology.' The global science of palaeontology started not just in this country – but specifically right here. We are world famous!

Apart from the naming of *Megalosaurus* let's chalk up some other remarkable fossil discoveries on the Stoney slate. Let's start with family: the mammals.

In 1824 William Buckland announced the first discovery of a fossil Jurassic mammal. This caused a sensation because few could accept mammals were contemporary with these giant beasts we now call dinosaurs. The Regency media called the Stonesfield mammal fossils "the bones of contention" and the argument raged for 20 years until Buckland won the day. In fact we've found lots of tiny and super-rare mammal bones since then, leading the OUMNH to describe Stoney as 'home to the world's most diverse assemblage of Middle Jurassic vertebrates.'

Special amongst these discoveries is the very first 'mammal cousin' of its type ever identified: *Stereognathus*. It was a very ancient species indeed and represents one of the last of its kind. It was like a cross between a beaver and a rat (our own little Brat!) and was part-way between a mammal and reptile. It probably looked rat-like but it may have laid eggs! True mammals emerged on an evolutionary branch very close to *Stereognathus*. But it wasn't a spoiled Brat. It must have had a hard life scurrying around, probably at night, trying to avoid being eaten by the many dinosaur predators around.

Talking of predators we know all about the *Megalosaurus* discovery, but here in Stonesfield we have also identified another much smaller Jurassic predator called *Iliosuchus*. Like many fossil discoveries, we only have a few fossil remains. Some scientists think *Iliosuchus* is its own species; possibly an early ancestor of *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Others (and this is exciting) think this might just be… wait for it… a baby *Megalosaurus*!



Meg, baby-Meg, and 'Brat'! And that's not all! I'll share more about our amazing Jurassic village in a future *Slate*.

Rod Theodorou

Combe Hub

Combe Community Cinema



On 27 November we have another in our series of National Theatre Live presentations. We are screening a brand new production, *Golden Boy*: 'a searing revival of Clifford Odet's classic, a propulsive drama exploring ambition, identity and the high price of success.' The play stars Josh O'Connor whom you may remember from *The Crown* and *The Durrells*.

Doors open at 7pm and the play begins at 7.30. Drinks available at our bar.

Book tickets (£13 including booking fee) in advance online at www.ticketsource.com/combe-communityy-cinema/t-aaymnrl

Byron Russell

combecommunitycinema@gmail.com

Combe Mill

Sun 6 December: Annual *Christmas Fayre*

Combe Mill will close for the winter from 28 October to carry out general maintenance in preparation for when we open again on 21 March 2027, but we still have the Christmas Fayre: 11.00am to 4.00pm (Not in steam)

Browse the Christmas market stalls to find that special Christmas gift.

Children's activities and reindeer trail in the grotto. Don't miss out, come along and bring the children. Grand raffle with fantastic prizes, tombola and gift shop, hot food and tea room open. Combe Mill's blacksmiths will be in the forge to make pokers. Blacksmiths' and woodturners' items on sale, all make for a very popular gift for Christmas in the gift shop with rustic reindeers made by a volunteer.

Dogs on leads most welcome. Free entry & car parking.

Margaret Gruber, Blenheim Palace Sawmills Combe, Oxon OX29 8ET

North Leigh History Group

If you missed the talk on 3 November about *Coleshill, the Nerve Centre of British Resistance,* then join us on Tuesday 1 December for *Christmas in the Cotswolds* presented by Sean Callery, at the North Leigh Memorial Hall, 7.30pm. Arrive a little earlier if you can for mulled wine, mince pies, tea/coffee before the talk. Members and visitors, all welcome. Visitors £5.

Into the New Year, on Tuesday 2 February 2027, Stephen Barker will talk about the *City of Oxford during the English Civil War*. King Charles I was based in the overcrowded city, along with soldiers, courtiers and refugees, and disease was rife. Come along and find out more!

Tea, coffee, and biscuits served before each talk. All welcome.

For more information contact Robert Kyte on kyterobert@gmail.com 01993 880368

Witney Music Society

The second concert of Witney Music Society's new season features the Salzburg-based Amatis Trio performing works for piano trio by Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. The concert is at 7.30pm on Friday 13 November.

The final concert in 2026 will be given by pianist Kasparas Mikužis whose programme will include works by Ravel, Barber, Fauré and Prokofiev. The concert is at 7.30 pm on Friday 4 December.

Both concerts are at High Street Methodist Church, Witney.

Tickets (£18, £1 for under 19s) will be available at the door from 7pm or in advance online. For more information, please telephone 01993 898020 or visit the Witney Music Society website www.witneymusicsociety.org.uk

Mary Lou Scott



Blenheim Palace Fire Brigade with Merryweather Engine

Blenheim Palace - History worth saving

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Blenheim Palace is recognised for its Outstanding Universal Value, forming part of a shared global inheritance**.** Caring for Blenheim has never been about standing still. Roofs weather. Stone weathers. Landscapes mature and change. Collections need attention. A site of this scale requires thoughtful, ongoing care, guided by expertise and long-term judgement.

When we talk about history worth saving, we are not talking about nostalgia. We are talking about responsibility. Every generation that has cared for Blenheim has made decisions that shaped what came next, often working behind the scenes so that others could enjoy this exceptional place in their own day. Its importance today lies in the way it continues to be cared for, understood and shared.



That work continues today through the Blenheim Palace Heritage Foundation, the independent charity that ensures all donations are reinvested directly into the conservation and stewardship of the Palace, its collections and its landscape. It is shaped by a belief that heritage endures only when it is actively looked after, with patience and care and continues to influence how historic environments are cared for today.

People support Blenheim for many reasons. Some feel a deep connection to its history. Others have fond memories of time spent here with family and friends. Many care about the role Blenheim plays in the life of the local area and the opportunities it creates, including education, skills and training and of course, welcoming young people from across the world to experience and learn from it. Whatever the reason, your support is a way of helping to protect something that belongs to all of us.

History worth saving is not just about what has survived. It is about what we choose to look after now, so that future generations can continue to experience Blenheim Palace as a place of learning, enjoyment and inspiration. Caring for Blenheim is therefore both a responsibility and a choice, shaped by environmental stewardship, skills and shared access to heritage. Every act of support, large or small, helps ensure that this extraordinary place remains not only part of our past, but part of our future.

To find out more about how to support Blenheim Palace, please visit: www.blenheimpalace.com/support-us/

HISTORY WORTH SAVING

Your support matters

Clubs, societies & sport

Stonesfield Gardening Club

A large number of members gathered for our October meeting to hear from local Dan Betterton, who came to talk to us about his company *The Kitchen Garden People*. He and his partners set up the business 10 years ago and are now based at FarmEd, the regenerative farm near Shipton-under-Wychwood. Cultivating just 5 acres Dan supplies 120 customers with a vegetable box every week, as well as supplying the café at FarmEd and the kitchens at The Bull in Charlbury.



Dan Betterton

As they work a system of so-called Community Supported Agriculture, the company also relies of volunteers who help out doing all sorts of different jobs.

As you may imagine, this year has proved exceptionally difficult (and expensive) when it came to irrigating the crops. They have a borehole and a spring but all other water has to be bought from the mains, and most of us know how thirsty vegetables can be. One of the ways they reduce the need for water is with the use of shade netting, and Dan recommends that we go back to the old habit of painting greenhouse glass white in the summer to help.

For more details of Dan's vegetable boxes, and his contact details, see his advert on p40.

Our November meeting will feature a return of our friend Chris Day, whose talk is entitled *Reinventing the Garden Border*. He will be coming to us on Monday 9 November, 7.30 in the St James' Centre.

Hope to see you there and, don't forget, if you are not a member we are very happy to welcome anyone who would like to pop in to see what our meetings are like.

Diane Bates

Secretary Stonesfield Gardening Club

www.stonesfieldgardening.info

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)

The Megalosaurus Society

We are looking forward to what promises to be a fascinating talk, *Lost villages of Oxfordshire* with local historian Deborah Hayter, which will take place on 19 November. We have also managed to secure an extra event to our scheduled programme and before Christmas we will have a guided tour of the *Life, as we know it* exhibition at Oxford University Museum of Natural History, with one of the Museum's lead researchers.

Both are open to members only but, if you would like to join the Society now, your membership will extend throughout 2027 – giving access to a whole lot more interesting talks and visits, as well as being able to take advantage of the Society's membership of two history associations.

Please get in touch with us at MegSoc25@gmail.com for details, or just come along to the St James' Centre at 7.15pm on 19 November to sign up for membership.

Viv Kendall and Trisha Williams

1st Stonesfield Scout Group

It's been a busy Autumn so far, with a Cub Camp in Coventry at the start of September followed by Group Camp in early October. The latter saw a mixed group of 11 Beavers, 14 Cubs, 11 Scouts, 1 Young Leader and 9 Leaders enjoying a slightly chilly 2 nights away - fantastic to have everyone together from our youngest camper at just 6 years old to... well, some older campers too! Ella has written a lovely camp report to give you a flavour of what went on.

Week by week, young people in all the sections, along with leaders and volunteers (thank you!) have been out enjoying everything that the change of season has to offer - from making bird feeders (big thanks to Mat and Rekha from the shop for supporting us in our hour of lard-related need!) to night hikes (even more wonderful now the evenings are drawing in). The hut has received some much needed sound dampening measures (thanks to the Whitworth family) and we are very much looking forward to making regular use of the cozy inside space.

As ever, if you're interested in scouting, contact our Chair, Ben, at chair@stonesfield-scouts.org.uk

Hannah Crowe

On behalf of the Trustees, 1st Stonesfield Scout Group

Group Camp Report



From Friday 2 to Sunday 4 October Stonesfield Scouts had an exciting time at camp in Youlbury. Arriving at dusk our campsite was in a beautiful clearing, with trees surrounding the area and bridges crossing a small bog. Scouts helped put up tents, while Cubs hammered in pegs.

Once we were all settled in everyone was tired so we nestled down for the night, ready for the adventures of the following day. We woke up and had some free time. Scouts decided to play a game of hide and seek tag or manhunt. 'Breakfast ready' was all that needed to be shouted to gain a chaotic group of kids running to get their sausage, beans and scrambled egg. We quickly washed up and had more free time before moving on to our activities.

My group did a spider's web which is where you have two pieces of rope, tied between two trees, one much higher than the other. There are lots of knots and twists and loops which make about twelve holes where people can pass through to the other side. There were also other group activities including building obstacle courses and a zip wire.



Later we collected firewood ready for a campfire in the evening, had dinner and played "the pasta game". We sang songs together around the campfire, enjoying a hot chocolate beforehand to warm up our voices. We flopped into our sleeping bags ready for another good night's sleep. In the morning we had another amazing breakfast, helped take down tents, had flags out and then went home.

I had an amazing and fun time and can't wait to go to another Scout camp in the future.

Ella Anderson, Scout

1st Stonesfield Scout Group

Stonesfield Tennis Club

The weather is cooler but there are often some spectacular autumn days when it is lovely to play tennis.

The courts remain open for use all year round and membership can start at any time during the year. Please find information at: www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/StonesfieldTennisClub

Alex Dillon continues to provide coaching as follows:

Adult coaching: Tuesday 1-2 pm - all welcome, particularly those playing tennis for the first time and improvers. There is availability for private sessions if of interest.

Please contact Alex directly on 07876 194008 for any further questions/ enquiries.

Jane Rust

Stonesfield Football Club

Halloween is upon us (or maybe just over) and we're hurtling towards bonfire night with the heady aroma of cordite hanging in the air, which means that our teams are well and truly into the swing of the football season. 'So, how are they doing?', I hear you ask. At the time of writing The Firsts were sitting proudly at the top of the league with full points from 4 games, just ahead of Heyford Utd on goal difference. They've played three games at home in the last month. First up it was Siege and in a scintillating display of incessant attacking football our boys turned on the style winning 8-0. It was 3-0 after just 10 minutes with Raffy Rice scoring a quick-fire hat-trick and he completed a great performance with his 4th goal later in the game. New signing, Alfie Peachey, made his home debut and scored two with Cary Rice also notching a double to complete a wonderful win. Next, it was a hard-fought game against Marcham, but our boys were deserved winners (3-0) with Jack Newman getting man-of-the-match. Then came the local derby with Charlbury and once again our boys were too strong as goals from Sammy Hart (a lovely chip over the keeper), Jack Newman (a thunderbolt from all of 35 yards) and Cary Rice (a clever finish), completed a 3-1 win. Hopefully they can keep this brilliant winning streak going as long as possible.

The Reserves have done reasonably well this month, with two wins, a draw and only one defeat. They welcomed Kingham AB to Stonesfield and won an 8-goal thriller (5-3) with goals from Freddie Holloway, Joey Johnson, Harrison Connolly (2) and Toby Clarke. They then travelled to Hailey and suffered defeat in another high scoring game (4-2). If 'Bouncebackability' is a word (apologies to the English language experts out there) then that is the trait our boys demonstrated as they travelled to Faringdon Town 'A' to snatch a point (2-2), then plundered all 3 away at FC Mills in a fabulous 3-0 win with goals from Jacob Oliver, Liam Salter and Toby Clarke. They may be sitting in mid-table but if it's goals you want to see then our reserves are providing them!

No argument where the Fredo is going this month, it's stays on the Combe Road with Raffy Rice grabbing 4 against Siege and another well-deserved award!

A quick call out for any willing volunteers. Our club has now amalgamated with Stonesfield Strikers under the Stonesfield FC banner and we are seeking any volunteers to join our committee in helping us run what is now a much bigger club. If we could broaden our diversity than that would be brilliant, so any ladies out there who want to join us, PLEASE get in touch, you will be made to feel very welcome.

Tom Flanigan (891979).

Church news

Church of England Worship at St James the Great, Stonesfield

(Benefice of Stonesfield with Combe Longa)

www.stonesfieldparishchurch.org

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

Churchwarden: Lindsey Sellar stonesfield@stonesfieldparishchurch.org

St James' Centre bookings: sjcsbookings@gmail.com

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

From the Rector – Light and Darkness

The month of November stirs up many memories from my childhood. Halloween was not celebrated here in those days and, as my family were not churchgoers, All Saints Day (November the 1st) and the Feast of All Souls (November the 2nd) came and went unnoticed. The real festival for me and my friends was Bonfire Night. Our neighbour would spend the autumn building a bonfire in his garden out of all the garden waste and bits of wood he could find, and my father would buy as many fireworks as he could justify. Dressed in woollen balaclavas and mittens against the 1960s cold, we would gather in the garden for a spectacle of light in which rockets launched from milk bottles and catherine wheels stuck to the fence never disappointed. Best of all were the sparklers we waved around and the hot chocolate which followed (although this may be my memory getting carried away). Our childhood festival of light filled me with wonder and awe - not with any sense of another world, or anything spiritual, but with deep amazement about the beauty to be seen in the world we were actually living in. It has been a great joy to take our children to firework celebrations which were safer and much more spectacular, but I have never lost the feeling of excitement from my own childhood at seeing a rocket illuminate the sky with colour and light.

At this time of the year, at special services of thanksgiving in the church, we remember our loved ones who have died, who have been sources of wonder and light for us. We also mark All Saints Sunday as a celebration of God's light and goodness in the lives of Christians who have gone before us. The secular celebrations of Halloween and Bonfire Night are for us an anticipation of the candles of Advent and Christmas soon to come, which announce the light of God's presence in Christ. But as we get ready for our celebrations of light, I am conscious that for the people of Ukraine, and other lands too, the winter only brings deeper suffering. In Kyiv and other cities, the rockets and lights overhead bring not joy, but death. Explosions there will not provoke gasps of wonder, but cries of anguish and loss. Many more brothers, mothers, sisters, children and friends will be added to the lists of the departed, through the depravity of human violence, greed, and the lust for

power. It seems inconceivable that, after years of fighting, the suffering is only increasing. I hope that the fireworks we see this year will increase our resolve to help and protect the innocent who suffer from the violence of others, wherever they may be. The opening words of the Lord's Prayer express our longing so clearly: 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'.

Revd Ralph Williamson, Rector

Church services

Sunday 1 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

Sunday 8 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 *(*a very warm welcome to all who wish to remember loved ones no longer with us)

Sunday 15 November [Second Sunday before Advent]

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

Sunday 22 November [Christ the King]

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

Sunday 29 November [Advent Sunday]

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 (4th), Morning Prayer (18th)

Stonesfield Methodist Church

Sunday Services for November

1	11am	Richard Bowler
8	Remembrance Sunday: No Service at this Church	
15	11am	Reverend Andrew Biggs Holy Communion Service
22	11am	Ms. Willis
29	11am	Jude Levermore

November has burst upon us with its glorious colour and a change of weather. The month has a blend of events, one being Stir up Sunday, reminding us to stir up our faith as Advent approaches. You may even set to and mix your Christmas pud on that day. Advent begins at the end of the month and Graham Kendrick's hymn is one to look forward to.

> Stars and angels sing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
>
> can this tiny spark set a world on fire?
>
> Yet His light shall shine from our lives, Spirit blazing
>
> as we touch the flame of His holy fire.

After the recent tea afternoon, a donation of £120 has been made to the Methodist charity *All We Can*.

The annual Christmas event to raise funds for the Church is arranged for 14 November at St James' Centre from 2-4pm. Donations and help on the day will be very much appreciated.

Come to a Service soon.

Kathleen Albért
k.m.albert14@gmail.com

Roman Catholic Worship

Why do we have saints?

Christianity is not the only faith to have saints: the concept of sainthood is a universal theme that transcends religious boundaries, manifesting in diverse forms across various belief traditions. At its core, sainthood refers to the recognition of individuals who have attained a high level of spiritual enlightenment, moral excellence, or closeness to the divine. These revered figures often serve as role models, intercessors and sources of inspiration for the faithful.

Colossions 1:2 'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ' and Romans 1:7 affirms, 'To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.' Similarly, Ephesians 1:1 echoes the same: 'To the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus.'

These passages tell us that sainthood is restricted to persons who are eminent for holiness, but are not necessarily dead or martyred. This reinforces the belief that we are all saints in the making while on earth. Saints honoured after their death are those who distinguish themselves by heroic virtue during life and whom the Catholic Church honours as saints either by her ordinary universal teaching authority or by a solemn definition called canonization. The Church's official recognition of sanctity implies that the persons are now in heavenly glory, that they may be publicly invoked everywhere and that their virtues during life or martyr's death are a witness and example to the Christian faithful. (Etym. Latin *sanctus*, holy, sacred.)

Pope Francis in 2016 said 'amid their faults and failings they kept moving forward and proved pleasing to the Lord.' Pope Francis: *Apostolic exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate*: On the call to holiness in today's world, 2016. Thus reminding us that despite sometimes being 'flawed' people, they always focused on their relationship with God and 'kept moving forward'.

Saints provide us with human role models of what holiness may look like in real human lives. Saints show us with their courage, faith, service, repentance, or perseverance model different ways of following God. They connect the Church across time, reminding Christians that they belong to a community that includes believers of past generations. Catholics and Orthodox Christians ask saints to pray for them, much as one might ask another Christian to pray. Worship is reserved for God alone; saints can intercede for us; saints are on our side.

Holy Mass at St Teresa's, Charlbury

Sunday	9.15 am
Wednesdays and Fridays	9.15 am

For parish updates, any further information and further support, www.stteresaschurch-charlbury.com/ or contact Fr. Clive Dytor, parish priest: fr.clive.dytor@rcaob.org.uk

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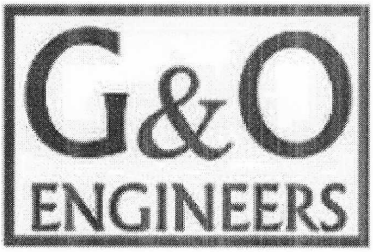
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