

The Four Parishes News Magazine

BECKLEY
FOREST HILL with SHOTOVER
HORTON-cum-STUDLEY
STANTON St JOHN



Remembrance Sunday Concert at St Nicolas, Forest Hill

December 2023/January 2024

The editor writes



Having now reached the end of my sixth year as editor of this magazine, I am beginning to run out of things to write in about! 2023 has been a very busy year for me and for most of my friends and colleagues, perhaps because we are still trying to catch up on things that we missed out on due to the pandemic. As the hearings at the independent public inquiry on Covid-19 in the UK continue to be in the news, I am finding it harder and harder to really remember what it was like when the pandemic first arrived and I suspect I am not the only one.

One thing I often reflect on is how lucky we are to be living in this quiet corner of Oxfordshire, with the countryside on our doorstep and a wealth of educational and cultural opportunity just around the corner. Of course life isn't rosy for everyone in our locality and we need to look out for those who are struggling for any reason but in general we have much to be thankful for.

If the commercial pressures of the festive season start to get you down, don't forget to take advantage of the many Christmas concerts and services on offer in our beautiful village churches.

I hope you have a happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas.

Julia

All contributions to this magazine are the sole responsibility of the author and do not imply or represent any official editorial view or endorsement.

Our cover photo

was taken by David Walker from Forest Hill. The St Nicolas Choir and Friends raised £309 for war charities at their annual 'Far from Home' Remembrance Day Concert, which included a new poem and two new songs composed by inhabitants of Forest Hill.

If you have taken a photo which you think might be suitable for the cover of the next magazine, please email it to 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

Benefice of Beckley, Forest Hill with Shotover, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John

Vicar: Reverend Anthea Beresford

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We welcome contributions for future issues, but please get in touch with the editorial team beforehand at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com to discuss any piece you'd like to write. Contributors typically live in the Four Parishes, or have a strong personal connection to the area. The editors reserve the right to reject any submitted content at any stage of the editorial process.

*Recent issues of the magazine are available to view online at
www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine.*

The closing date for the February 2024 issue is 15 January 2024

**To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA
adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com**

News or notices for the individual 'Village pages' should be sent to:

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Benefice of Beckley, Forest Hill with Shotover, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John

The Reverend Anthea Beresford is Vicar of the Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Beckley, St Nicolas Church in Forest Hill, St Barnabas Church in Horton-cum-Studley, and St John the Baptist Church in Stanton St John. Anthea is supported by a team of voluntary clergy, lay ministers and churchwardens, whose details are listed below.

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Stanton St John

Vacant at present

The Four Parishes News Magazine has 10 issues per year and is distributed free of charge to approximately 850 addresses in Beckley, Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John. It is funded by advertising revenue, which is used to cover the printing costs. We are dependent on volunteers to assemble the content, book and invoice the advertisers, compile and edit the magazine, collect it from the printers and distribute it throughout the four parishes.

Editor: Julia Stutfield

Assistant Editors: Jonathan Barker, Anthea Beresford

Church Services in the Four Parishes, December 2023

	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley
3 December <i>1st Sunday of Advent</i>	11am Confirmation Service at St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley			
	4pm Children's Christingle Service and St Nicolas Day Celebration at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
	6pm Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall			
10 December <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>		9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	4pm Messy Church/Family Church Christmas Party at Stanton St John Village Hall			
	6pm Advent Carol Service at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
13 December	7pm 'Looking for the Light' Service at Beckley Church			
17 December <i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i>	11am Holy Communion			
		6pm Carol Service	6pm 'Carols & Claret'	3pm Carol Service
19 December	7pm 'Traditional Nine Lessons & Carols'			
24 December <i>Christmas Eve</i>	4pm Crib Service	4pm Crib Service	4pm Messy Crib Service	4pm Crib Service
	11pm Holy Communion at Forest Hill		11pm Holy Communion at Horton-cum-Studley	
25 December <i>Christmas Day</i>	10am Holy Communion at Stanton St John		10am Holy Communion at Beckley	
31 December <i>1st Sunday of Christmas</i>	10am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Horton-cum-Studley			

Church Services in the Four Parishes, January 2024

	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley
7 January <i>The Baptism of Christ</i> <i>1st Sunday after Epiphany</i>	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer
	4pm Children's Service at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
	6pm Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall			
14 January <i>2nd Sunday after Epiphany</i>		9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	4pm Messy Church at Stanton St John Village Hall			
	6pm Epiphany Carol Service at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
21 January <i>3rd Sunday after Epiphany</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am BCP Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Iona Service at Beckley			
28 January <i>Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)</i>	10am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Stanton St John			
	3pm Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest			
	4pm Candlemas at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
	6pm Taizé Service via Zoom			

Please check the website www.fourparishes.org.uk for any updates. If you are not on the church mailing list and would like an invitation to a Zoom service or a regular reminder of weekly services, please email Anthea: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk.

A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



My goodness, I must be getting old! Well, I am, although I am not THAT old just yet – but it feels as though I must be getting on because the years are whizzing by at a seemingly ever-increasing pace – and is not that something we say as we get older? Where has this year gone, I ask myself? I cannot quite believe that I am sitting here writing my letter for the December/January edition of The Four Parishes News Magazine.

I was shocked in early November when I noticed my first Christmas decorations in a house as I drove by – not in the Four Parishes, but nearby. I wonder how excited the children in that house are by the time Christmas comes – or have they become so used to the decorations that they are no longer a novelty as Christmas nears, and the excitement has waned. Maybe that is a rather clever ploy by the parents. Have any of you tried it? I have not thought of that possibility before. I think I have shared previously that when we were children, the Christmas tree went up on Christmas Eve when my Dad got home from work – maybe that was a ploy by my parents to try to keep four excitable children bearable in the lead up to the Christmas festivities. I wonder! Or did it have something to do with the trees dropping their needles if in the house too long? Whatever the reason, it certainly did nothing to dampen the excitement once we got going! We had very little sleep on Christmas Eve and so I expect neither did my parents. But we had fun setting our alarms and unwrapping our presents from Father Christmas and delving into our stockings in the middle of the night! Such fond memories!

The season of Advent that we begin on 3 December this year is a time of watching, waiting and preparation. I am not sure many treat it as the penitential period it is, like Lent, including fasting. It seems to me there is always a tension in the season of Advent to hold the period as special for what it is, while at the same time there is a gradual build of excitement towards the joy and celebrations of the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. There always seems so much to pack into December, both in the Church calendar, in our communities, and as we meet with family and friends, that

the season of Advent, of watching and waiting, gets a little lost. And whilst there are some fabulous Advent hymns, I think we are also in a rush to start singing our favourite Carols.

I am already looking forward to the formal and informal, Church and village community activities in December. Please do have a good read of the magazine so you do not miss out on anything that may be of interest. And how about reading one of the books I suggest for Advent, or join me in the Advent challenge, as a way of marking the season? Putting a little time aside alongside the busyness of the month if you can.

The Christmas season is not easy for all. It can be a time when we especially miss loved ones who are no longer with us, or we can feel very lonely, as we perceive everyone else is having a great time with family and friends and we may be alone. It can be a time when family frictions come to a fore. There can be pressures on finances. There are also many within our community who are ill or are caring for loved ones who are ill. As we await the celebrations of the coming Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us, please do remember, that in both the joy and the sadness of the season, you are never alone.

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and very best wishes for the New Year ahead, remembering that whatever we are facing in our lives, we are never alone.

Please do get in touch if you need someone to talk to. Take great care and God bless you and your loved ones.

Anthea



The Reverend Anthea Beresford is Vicar of the Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Beckley, St Nicolas Church in Forest Hill, St Barnabas Church in Horton-cum-Studley, and St John the Baptist Church in Stanton St John.

CHURCH MATTERS

All the churches in the benefice are open daily. Beckley: 10am-6pm; Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John: 10am-4pm.

Remembrance Sunday

Acts of Remembrance and Remembrance Sunday Services took place on Sunday 12 November around the Benefice, as they did in cities, towns and villages up and down the country, and further afield. The weather was far kinder to us than the forecast suggested it might have been, but it was not the beautiful sunny day of last year – but I think sometimes not such nice weather adds to the solemnity of the occasion, helping remind us of the sacrifices made by others. After all, it is far easier for us to stand outside in glorious sunshine, but less comfortable in pouring rain – nothing compared to what those we were remembering had to face.

The individual fallen soldiers from our parishes were each remembered by name, and crosses and wreaths were laid in their memories. I find it striking to hear the long list of names for such small villages – young men lost, never to return home. Thanks to all those who read the names, led the services, played the organ, piano, recorder, trumpet and bugle, and for those who decorated the churches so beautifully, and made sure the churchyards looked their best for the day.

The day was once again rounded off with a concert in Forest Hill, titled 'Far from Home', which featured local musicians, singing, storytelling, poetry reading, and audience participation in singing well known wartime songs. It was particularly poignant hearing a number of war poems written by Ukrainian poets, as well as once more hearing some 'traditional' war poets. Thank you to all those who made the evening possible.

Confirmation Service, 3 December at 11am, Horton-cum Studley

This is a reminder that on 3 December we are all gathering in St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley for a benefice Confirmation Service at 11am. Bishop Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester, will be leading this service. It is exciting to have a Confirmation Service in the Benefice, and it will be wonderful to welcome Bishop Gavin to the benefice for the first time. All are welcome. There will be no other morning services that day.

Advent challenge and beyond

3 December marks the beginning of Advent this year. I thought for the Advent Challenge I would suggest we read the Gospel of Mark, as it is the Gospel for the coming year. This should not be too onerous for us, as it is a mere 16 chapters. We might like to experience reading it 'at one sitting', rather like a novel. It is a quick paced Gospel, and we might get a good sense of this, and the action of the story by doing this. If we have time, we might then like to read it in a more prayerful manner, perhaps reading a chapter a day, asking God to speak to us as we read it slowly. I appreciate that December is a month packed with lots of activities, so please do not push yourselves too hard. It would be great to have a sense of Mark's telling of the story of Jesus as we begin this new Church year. I look forward to hearing how you get on.

As our 'beyond' part of the challenge this year I thought you might like to join me in reading the Bible in a year, starting in January. It is a tough challenge but a good one to have a go at. The important thing is not to get dispirited if you get a little behind, but to get going again. I hope we can encourage each other. I have found a plan where we read some Old and some New Testament each month. This might be easier than reading first the Old and then the New in order. So in January we will aim to read the whole of Genesis, Exodus up to chapter 26, and Matthew up to chapter 20. I look forward to hearing how you get on. Please do let me know.

Private devotion during Advent

In the November magazine I suggested a couple of books you might consider reading during Advent to help your private devotions in the season. Here are some other books you may wish to delve into. I would love to hear how you get on if you choose any of the books I have highlighted, or if you read something else, I would love to hear about that too.

Mary's Voice: Advent Reflections to Contemplate the Coming of Christ by Dr Amy Orr-Ewing;

Journey to the Manger: Exploring the Birth of Jesus by Paula Gooder;

Walking Backwards to Christmas by Stephen Cottrell;

Sleepers Wake: Getting serious about climate change by Nicholas Holtham

An Advent Book of Days: Meeting the characters of Christmas by Gregory K Cameron

Looking for the Light, Wednesday 13 December at 7pm, Beckley

This service is an opportunity for quiet reflection in the lead up to Christmas. There are four short Bible readings and reflections, a short time of silence between each for us to gather our thoughts, two carols and some short prayers. It is aimed at everyone, but especially for those for which Christmas is a difficult time.

Generally, Christmas is seen as a season of joy, celebration and happiness. But thinking about my own experiences, and through talking to others over the years, Christmas can be a time of pain and of darkness. Some may be facing Christmas alone as the result of a broken relationship, which Christmas brings to the fore. Some may be facing Christmas for the first time without a loved one who has died in the year, and there is a special person-shaped hole which is even bigger than we have previously noticed, and we dread the empty chair at the dinner table. Or we may be facing Christmas for the umpteenth time without a loved one we lost some years ago, or because we have no-one to share Christmas with as usual. So, at this time especially, we are looking for light in the darkness of our situation or our personal pain, or simply a time of quiet amongst the busyness of the season. The service lasts around 35-40 minutes.

Children's Autumn Craft Workshop UPDATE

Betty Dye, who leads these workshops, has been asked by the Abingdon Arms to run a **Christmas Workshop in the pub after school at 3.30pm on 1 December, so we are relocating our December Children's Craft workshop to the Abingdon Arms**, and are **not meeting again on 8 December**. All are welcome. We will let you know in the new year about the next season of workshops in Beckley Church and look forward to seeing regulars and newcomers. In the meantime, do join us in the Abingdon Arms on 1 December at 3.30pm. We look forward to seeing you.

Children's Christmas Party, 10 December, 4pm, Stanton Village Hall

The Children's Benefice Service, Messy Church and Family Church does Forest Church are all joining together for a party once again. This is aimed at primary school children who have been involved in these activities over the year, but all are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. It would be really helpful if you are planning to come along if you could let us know, so we make sure there is enough food and craft activity

provisions. Please do come along and have join in the fun. Please email one of the children’s group leaders: Laura Murmet-Burnet at mamancoton@gmail.com; Julia Stutfield at julia.stutfield@gmail.com; Betty Dye at betty.dye10@gmail.com; or Anthea at anthea@fourparishes.org.uk. Please do ask if you have any questions.

Give it Back, Mak!’ Riding Lights Theatre Company 22 December, 2pm, Millenium Village Hall, Horton-cum-Studley

For more information about this fun production, see page 32.

Carol Services, Christmas Services and activities around the Four Parishes

Please do look carefully at the rota pages and the individual village pages for details and timings of the various activities going on in our four churches and village halls. It would be lovely to see you at any you can get to. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Ongoing midweek activities on Zoom

We are continuing Morning and Evening Prayer and the Benefice Book Group on Zoom as detailed. Please do get in touch with Anthea for invitations if you wish to be included.

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Morning Prayer at 9am		√		√
Evening Prayer at 6pm	√		√	
Benefice Book Group at 7.30pm			√	

Please note that there will be a break over the Christmas/New Year period after Morning Prayer on 22 December. Everything will start again on 3 January.

Home Group Study on the Gospel of John

The study group looking at the Gospel of John is continuing on Monday afternoons at 2pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley. Anyone from around the Four Parishes is welcome to join in. The group is taking a break over Christmas from 4 December, resuming on 14 January. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Annie Payne by email at anniefpayne@gmail.com. All are welcome.

Dates for diary for children and family church activities

Children's Service at St Nicolas, Forest Hill 4-4.30pm	Messy Church Stanton St John Village Hall 4-5pm	Family Church Bernwood Forest Horton-cum-Studley, 3-4pm
3 December (Children's Christingle Service)		
10 December (Joint Christmas Party SVH 4-5pm)		
7 January	14 January	28 January
4 February	11 February	25 February
3 March	10 March	24 March

Please always look out for email updates.

Book Group

At the time of going to print we had not decided on the book we are reading for Advent, but we begin on 7 December. New members are always welcome. We meet virtually by Zoom on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm for an hour.

On 4 January, we will be starting our next new book, so that might be a good time to join us if you have been thinking about it for a while.

Please do get in touch if you would like to join. All are welcome

Prayers for Peace

As the war continues in Ukraine, with the awful situation in the Middle East, and as God's peace is not present throughout the world, we continue to pray for peace. We will meet for 15 minutes at 12pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays in December and January across the benefice as follows:

	December	January
Beckley	6 and 16	3,13 and 31
Forest Hill	9 and 27	6 and 24
Horton-cum-Studley	13 and 23	10 and 20
Stanton St John	2, 20 and 30	17 and 27

GENERAL

'smallspaceflowers'



A big thank you to everyone who has bought flowers from me this year. We have made about £1000 and the profits will be divided between two charities: Butterfly Conservation who work to save butterflies, moths and the environment; and the Open Spaces Society who have been campaigning since 1865 for access to greens, commons and footpaths and gave me some very helpful legal advice when I needed it.

I have a garage full of dried flowers and foliage and will be making these into wreaths and other decorative items for sale at the market in **Stanton village hall at the 'Turn on the Lights' evening on Friday 8 December.**

Catherine Rye, Stanton St John, smallspaceflowers@gmail.com

Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity News of recent Bursaries

The Trustees have invited some of the young people who have received bursaries from the Charity to write a paragraph for inclusion in this magazine. Our first piece is from a 14 year old who lives in Stanton St John:

"The residential trip to Portsmouth for my school was an unforgettable experience. My dorm of ten was the largest, resulting in a lot of enthusiasm and a lively atmosphere. Exploring historical sites such as Fishbourne Roman Palace and Salisbury Cathedral improved my appreciation for the past, while entertaining activities such as bowling provided a layer of enjoyment to the trip. My favourite part of this itinerary packed residential was our excursion to Brownsea island where we studied the ecological significance of nature reserves, the topographical features of the landscape, and analysed animal habitats. This journey taught me the value of cultural exploration as well as the long-lasting influence of shared adventures with friends that will last a life time."

The Charity grants educational bursaries for school aged children and young people up to the age of 25. For more information, contact Alison Finch, HolfordtrustChair@gmail.com.



Royal Mail Deliveries



“A local issue which is regularly raised with me, [is] that of Royal Mail deliveries. In some specific post code areas across the constituency mail is not being delivered on a regular basis and indeed at times people have not received post for over a week. I have challenged Royal Mail on this on a number of occasions and in September met with senior staff to pursue matters further. A number of issues were explained as I set this out on my website at the time. In a recent follow up meeting I was advised that there have been some changes in senior personnel with someone specifically brought in to oversee improvements to delivery in this area. Whilst due to staff absence and shortages they are not able to guarantee daily deliveries in some areas as yet they have committed to every second day deliveries within the next month. Where there are delivery problems in specific post codes Royal Mail has promised a local investigation if given the post code detail. Staff shortages remain and if anyone is interested do look online on the Royal Mail website where vacancies are advertised. It was also interesting to learn that some of the delays are with distribution via third party carriers before mail gets to Royal Mail itself for delivery. With sight of the envelope the team at Royal Mail can use the codes to track the precise journey of a letter to see where they delays are coming from. It was interesting to learn that organisations such as the NHS use these carriers which may explain why some important letters offering appointments are delayed. The situation will remain under review with Royal Mail.

On other matters, if there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. If you would like to know more about my work on behalf of the Government, and in the Constituency, please do look at my website. The address is www.johnhowell.org.uk. My contact details are also on the website.”

The above is an extract from John Howell’s Monthly Parish Newsletter, November 2023.

Footprints in the Snow

by Lyn Ebbs

With luck we will see some days this winter with a crisp layer of snow on the ground. And if we do, footprints in the snow may help to reveal some of our neighbourhood wild mammals. Most of the mammals in our area are more active at night-time and thus difficult to see but, using bit of detective work, you may be able to identify some of our bigger mammal neighbours.

Many mammal species, from mice to humans, have five toes on each foot



Badger footprint in snow by Stefan Czapski

and walk flat-footed with their heels (or wrists) touching the ground – mammals that walk this way are known as ‘plantigrades’. An example is the Badger; their prints show a wide, squarish foot pad with five toes at the front that have long claws for digging. Badgers are creatures of habit, following the same routes when they’re foraging, so leave well-worn trails wherever they search for food. Even without snow on the ground you might spot straight tracks across

fields or coming out of woods.

Plantigrades aren’t built for speed though. Whether a hunter or prey, if a mammal wants to move faster, it needs to get up on its toes. Digitigrades evolved to walk on their fingers or toes and the equivalent of our big toe (or thumb) lost contact with the ground. So, though a Badger’s feet are about the same size as a medium-sized dog’s, the digitigrade dog’s footprint will show four toes, not five. Cats are digitigrades too, and among local wildlife, so are foxes. So how can you tell if a paw print was made by cat, dog or Fox?

Dogs have four toes arranged two in front and one each side of a roughly triangular footpad, with big claw marks in front of the toes. Cat prints are generally smaller and, because cats retract their claws when walking, they have no claw marks at all. Foxes and cats often leave a straight line of pawprints, because each back foot tends to overlap with where the front foot was on the previous step. As wild cousins of dogs, foxes’ prints also have four toes, with visible claws but their footprint is



Fox - front, hind & tail drag

a neater diamond shape. The triangular foot pad is smaller, and the two front claws form a point.

There are other tell-tales. If you look at the positions of the foot pad and the toe prints, you can trace a cross on a fox's print without touching any of the footmarks. On a dog's print, you can't draw two crossing lines without them touching part of the print. If the snow is thick enough, you might also be able to see where the fox's brush has dragged through the snow.



As I wrote in an earlier article, we have several species of deer locally and all their tracks are roughly the same shape: two tear-drops alongside each other, like an upside-down heart. They belong to a group of mammals whose feet evolved further still, so that they are literally walking on their finger (or toe) nails! Deer belong to a specific group which has two toes on each foot – they're called artiodactyls.

If you want to test your detective skills still further, then a visit to Otmoor might reveal some Otter prints. Also plantigrades, they have five teardrop-shaped toes around a large pad, but one toe is usually off to one side – as if you spread your hand out and look at your thumb. The otters on the reserve are actually quite active during the day, so you could be lucky enough to see one without resorting to fieldcraft techniques.



Hopefully we will have some crisp winter days so you can put this knowledge to the test. Failing that, mud makes a good medium for prints too. For more information, I recommend the Field Studies Council Wild ID Guide: Mammal Tracks and Signs.

Lyn Ebbs has lived in Stanton St John for 35 years and has been volunteering at the RSPB Otmoor Reserve at Otmoor Lane, Beckley, since 2009.



108: NEW Timetabled bus service in the Four Parishes

On behalf of OFOG, the Otmoor Flyer Organising Group, we are happy to announce that the twice weekly service we have run since 2016 into Headington and Oxford will be replaced from Monday 27 November 2023 by the new 108 bus service into Oxford and into Bicester.

The 108 will run six days a week, Monday to Saturday.

Oxfordshire County Council have been successful in securing monies for a resumption in rural timetabled bus services. In most cases these rural areas were unserved by public transport following the withdrawal of Oxfordshire's bus subsidy budget in 2016. The four villages of Forest Hill, Stanton St John, Beckley and Horton-cum-Studley have been fortunate to have the old 108 service restored. ***Once we have finalised our accounts, OFOG will be in a position to refund unused Otmoor Flyer travel cards – watch this space for further information in the New Year.***

108 timetables - see next page - will be on display in Stanton Village Shop and on village notice boards. It can also be downloaded from the Oxford Bus Company website. Senior citizen's bus passes can be used on the new service.

Please note that the current timetables for the 108 that have been released are simplified versions of where the bus will stop for the first round of its journeys into Bicester and into Oxford. We understand that the routes are being monitored and may be adjusted time-wise once the demand has been more accurately gauged.

Bus Stops for the 108:

1. **Horton cum Studley:** bus shelters on the Brill Road near The Forge and at the bottom of Horton Hill.
2. **Beckley:** bus stop at the Abingdon Arms pub on the High Street.
3. **Stanton St John:** bus stop at the village shop on Middle Road.
4. **Forest Hill:** bus stop in Powell Close and on the Stanton Road (B4027) near Mickle Way.

*Anne Purse and Jill Meyjes
The Otmoor Flyer Organising Group*

towards **Oxford City**
via Piddington, Horton-cum-Studley & Beckley

108

Mondays to Saturdays (except Public Holidays)

Bicester Pioneer Square stop 1		1120	1430	
Langford Medical Practice		1130	1440	
Blackthorn Bus Shelter			1449	
Piddington Bus Shelter			1454	
Boarstall St James's Church		1142	1500	
Horton-cum-Studley Forge Close	0727	0915	1147	1505
Beckley The Abingdon Arms	0735	0923		
Forest Hill Powell Close	0745	0932		1614
Stanton St John Village Shop	0749	0936		1618
Beckley The Abingdon Arms				1623
Headington Shops stop HS2	0806	0946	1200	1518 1633
Brookes University stop B5	0811	0951	1205	1523 1638
Oxford Carfax	0826	1001	1215	1538 1653

No service on Sundays or Public Holidays

towards **Bicester**
via Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley & Piddington

108

Mondays to Saturdays (except Public Holidays)

Oxford Turl Street stop T1	1010	1310	1550	1735
Brookes University stop B2	1021	1321	1601	1751
Headington Shops stop HS6	1025	1325	1605	1755
Forest Hill Powell Close		1334	1614	1804
Stanton St John Village Shop		1338	1618	1808
Beckley The Abingdon Arms		1343	1623	1813
Horton-cum-Studley Forge Close	1035	1350		1820
Boarstall St James's Church	1040	1355		
Piddington Bus Shelter	1046			
Blackthorn Bus Shelter	1051			
Langford Medical Practice	1100	1410		
Bicester Pioneer Square	1110	1420		

No service on Sundays or Public Holidays

Buses commence running on Monday 27 November.

We urge as many people as possible to use the service, not only for your own benefit but also for the benefit of those who have a greater need for it.

For any concerns and queries, contact:

Horton cum Studley and Beckley - Jill Meyjes: telephone 01865 351496

Stanton St John - Jill Meyjes: telephone 01865 351496 or John Battye: telephone 01865 358984, email john.battye1@gmail.com

Forest Hill: Malcolm Leeding, telephone 01865 872034

Enhanced Winter Fuel Allowance A Message from Barton Community Association

Sometime between November and December many of us will receive the enhanced Winter Fuel payment from the Government. This extra payment is to help those who need extra support with their fuel costs and will certainly ease the burden of increased bills during the coming months. We regularly work with many families as well as individuals who will be hit hard during the Winter when they may have to review their priorities within their limited budgets. We do all we can to ensure that they receive as much help and support as possible, but sometimes this just isn't enough.

We channel a lot of our energy into the Barton Community Larder where members are trying hard to support themselves and their families but need just a little extra help to keep afloat. We currently serve around 180 families (equates to approx. 900 residents) and 40 individuals. Some of them fall into poverty through no fault of their own, working on minimum wage or zero hours contracts and they deserve our help in a time of crisis. But the Larder reflects a much bigger picture. It addresses loneliness and social isolation, usually seen in our older residents, but certainly not exclusive to that age group. We operate a free to use Community Café that runs alongside the larder and this offers a friendly space for members to share time with likeminded people.

This ongoing help and support comes at a price and this is where you may be able to help us. If you feel that you are able to manage without the extra fuel allowance this year and would like to donate it to the Barton Community Larder we would be very grateful for your help and this kindness will enable us to continue working with our families to enhance the quality of their lives and take away some of the stress they will undoubtedly face during the winter months.

If you would like to make a donation, please get in touch with me using the contact details below.

Sue Holden, BCA Company Secretary
sue@bartoncommunityassociation.com 01865 761987 / 07866 460446

Barton Community Association Ltd. Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Underhill Circus,
Barton, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9LS. Registered Charity No. 1102476



Carpenter/ Multi Trade

MINIBUILD LLP

Forest Hill, Oxford



I am looking for a skilled all rounder with Carpentry background who is willing to carry out varied tasks working alongside me on my projects.

Our work is local home refurbishments:

- * Garage conversions
- * Kitchen diner remodelling
- * Structural work
- * Patios
- * Bathrooms
- * And More...

It is full time work with good rates of pay for the right person as long as you are reliable, hardworking, have attention to detail and a good sense of humour!

Call or email Andy for more information

minibuildoxford@gmail.com

07717 128949



The Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA), working in partnership with Wheatley Parish Council has secured funding to deliver a weekly Junior Youth Club in Wheatley.



The project is designed for Children and Young People in School Years 6, 7 and 8 (Ages 10 to 13) and will be delivered at the Merry Bells in Wheatley on an evening TBC from 6pm to 8pm. The sessions will last for 2 hours and will be delivered weekly.

We are recruiting Play Workers / Youth Workers to work 5 hours per week (2 hours prep, 2 hours direct delivery and 1 hour monitoring and reporting) at an hourly rate of £12.68 per hour (£14.21 per hour including Holiday Pay).

As this job involves working with Children and Young People it will be subject to an enhanced DBS / CRB check, satisfactory receipt of 2 references and completion of relevant Safeguarding Children and Young People Training.

We are unable to accept CV's for the role, to request an application form please contact Martin Gillett, OPA Manager:

Telephone: 07436 270267 or Email: martin.gillett@oxonplay.org.uk

Merry Christmas from The Maple Tree!

This month we have some dates for your calendar as well as our ongoing programme:



9 December: Christmas Tree pick up, The Maple Tree Market, gift stalls, refreshments, with mince pies galore! 10–11.30am

16 December: Double Trouble at Twinnies Christmas! 10–11.30am

22 December: Christmas Disco from 4-5.30pm

20 January: the return of our popular Silent Auction

Mondays: Messy Mondays at 10-11.30am and Twinnies at 2- 4pm

Tuesdays: Once Upon a Time at 10-11.30am

Wednesdays: Baby and Bump Cafe at 10am-12pm

Thursdays: Little Explorers at 10-11.30am

Fridays: Little Chatterboxes at 10-11.30am

3rd Saturday every month: Family Fun at 10-11.30am,

Village Outreach: The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall on Thursdays from 11am-12pm.

We are here to help if you need advice or support: 01865 236700 or 07849 466249 Email: info@mapletree.org.uk. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported us this year. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a very happy, healthy 2024!

Laura Spencer, The Maple Tree Centre Manager

STANTON HOUSE

REST RESTORATION RENEWAL

welcomes
residents of the
Four Parishes to



Pound Lane
Stanton St John
OX33 1HF

Christmas Tea



hot drinks, mince pies, carols, activities for children,
light trail through the gardens



Saturday 16 December 4pm-5.30pm

BECKLEY

Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 14. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday, a dull and damp day, 16 adults and a child stood in the churchyard for the Act of Remembrance, led by the Revd Stephanie Bullock. As always it was a sombre and deeply moving occasion. Crosses were placed under the memorial tree for the Beckley villagers who died in the 1914-1918 War, and this year also for two who fell in 1939-45, and one in the Falklands. The 2 minutes' silence was marked by the bugle call of the Last Post and Reveille, again played very beautifully by John Stradling, to whom we are always so grateful.

'Carols and Claret' Sunday 17 December, 6pm

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to our wonderful celebration of Christmas with carols and readings by candlelight, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. The church can be chilly, so do wrap up well. The candlelight is beautiful, but in some parts of the church it can be difficult to see to read the carols, so do bring a torch if you wish.

Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Monday 11 December at 7pm in Beckley Village Hall**. Any changes to the published meeting dates will be on the website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

The Clerk's email address is clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk if you would like to get in touch with the Parish Council and Parish Council information can be found on the website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

For information on Beckley Village Hall please see www.beckleyvillagehall.org and to enquire about a booking please contact the Booking Secretary, Mel Green, at booking@beckleyvillagehall.org.

Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd
More than a Pub programme <https://bacbs.org/events>

Christmas Crafts, 1 December, 3.30pm



*Christmas decorations for children, wreath making
for adults, all free!*

Sunday evening talks

Last Sunday of the month, 6.30 pm in the pub

Talks are usually from local experts and cover a wide range of topics. Do join us in the pub for a drink and a stimulating evening! If you absolutely can't make it and would like to listen to a recording or would like more information, email info@bacbs.org or go to bacbs.org/events.

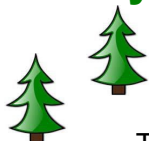
There will be no talk in December, but **talks begin again on 28 January 2024 at 6.30 pm in with Beckley's Tom Smith**, who will be talking about the work of his company Thermofluidics. The company has developed a highly efficient water pump that allows water to be brought to the surface from much deeper than conventional surface pumps. Its robustness and low cost make it ideal for use by the poorest people in the world as well as in state-of-the-art industry.



Christmas Tree Recycling **Folly Farm, Common Road, Beckley**

Return your old tree here by
Monday 8 January 2024

Trees left after this date will not be accepted
Trees larger than 6 ft must be cut down in size



Working
together

FOREST HILL

News from St Nicolas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 14. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Christmas Dates for your Diary

See www.stnicolasforesthill.org/ or contact julia.stutfield@gmail.com for more information

Sunday 3 December, 4pm - Children's Christingle Service

Sunday 10 December, 6pm - Advent Carols with the St Nicolas Choir

Tuesday 19 December, 7pm - 'Nine Lessons and Carols'

Thursday 21 December, 6pm - Carol Singing in and around the Village Hall

Could you be the new village representative for Forest Hill?

Linda Goffey has indicated that she would like to step down after many years of serving our village community as the first point of contact for the Forest Hill pages in this magazine. The village reps send out a reminder email to regular contributors a few days before the deadline for each issue. They then combine all the content into a single document and send it to the editors. If you live in Forest Hill and think this is something you can take on, please contact linda@goffey.co.uk for more information.

Christingle Workshop for Children

Forest Hill Village Hall

Sunday 3 December 3pm



Come and make a Christingle (and learn a new song about it) then join a procession, with candles, to St Nicolas church at 4pm for a short service with stories and songs, and a St Nicolas tradition - chocolate coins in your shoe!

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

**For more information, please contact Julia Stutfield
07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com.**



Forest Hill Village Email List

To receive reminders about community events in Forest Hill, please sign up for our mailing list at www.stnicolasforesthill.org/community-events.

There is also a new community Facebook page called 'Four Parishes What's on Forest Hill, Stanton, Beckley, Horton' for anyone to post events in our villages or items for sale. <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Four%20Parishes%20What%27s%20on%20Forest%20Hill%2C%20Stanton%2C%20Beckley%2C%20Horton>



Jazz on the Hill at Forest Hill Village Hall Tuesday 12 December and Tuesday 9 January, 7.30-9.30pm



Join Julie, Will and their musician friends to celebrate jazz with plenty of opportunity for instrumentalists and vocalists to make music with a house band, and to take the seat in the rhythm section as well if wished. Or just come to listen and soak up the atmosphere! All welcome. No need to book, just turn up on the night.

Soft drinks available, bring your own alcohol if desired. Suggested donation by card or cash £5. Parking available in the village streets. Wheelchair accessible.

'Pop Up Coffee Shop' in Forest Hill Village Hall

Friday 26 January, 10.30am -12.30pm



Tea, coffee and cake
All profits to local charities



More information from Julia Stutfield
07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com

The Maple Tree at Forest Hill, Thursdays 11am-12pm

The Thursday morning 'stay and play' sessions in Forest Hill Village Hall are a wonderful way for parents, grandparents and carers of small children to meet and chat in a friendly and supportive environment. Through our affiliation with The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley (see page [n](#)), we also have access to all sorts of support and advice.

If you have a new baby or are expecting one soon, why not drop in to introduce yourself to us or get in touch with Julia Stutfield 07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 7 December at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall**. Dates of future meetings can be found on the Forest Hill website www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover and on the Village Hall noticeboard. Current agendas and minutes are posted on the noticeboard outside the Village Hall. Archived agendas and minutes can be found on the website.

Mickle Way and parking on the white lines - reminder to residents that the junctions are to remain clear at all times, as per the Highway Code, so residents can enter and leave the junctions safely.

20-mph wheelie bin stickers are available from the Clerk and can be picked up from the village hall before the PC meetings. Two stickers per household to be used on green and grey bins.

You can contact the Clerk by email at theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk or telephone 0844 884 3328, between 9am and 5pm.

What do Santa Claus and St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill share in common?

[Editor's Note: this article is one of three which were commissioned to mark the 750th anniversary of the dedication of the church in Forest Hill to St Nicolas. Earlier articles can be found at www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine]

"Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house not a creature was stirring not even a mouse ..."

"A visit from St Nicholas" was written in 1822 by New Yorker, Clement Clarke Moore and invented the modern Santa Claus (Dutch for St Nicholas) or Father Christmas. The poem describes many of the things he is best known for: an old man arriving on the roof top by sleigh, driven by eight reindeer and delivering a bundle of toys down the chimney. The poem was an immediate success and soon children everywhere were putting out stockings on Christmas eve.

St Nicolas Church is named after the same St Nicholas, but his image has changed numerous times over the centuries. The church was founded 750 years ago in 1273 at a time when saints were an important part of everyday life. St Nicholas was one of the most popular and was adopted as the patron saint of children, seafarers, brewers, pawnbrokers, students and even repentant thieves. Unlike other saints with reputations for virtues like celibacy or asceticism, Nicholas could be called upon to fulfil more worldly needs, so naming a church after him would have been a popular choice. There are 436 other St Nicholas churches in England and numerous across Europe and Russia, where he is particularly venerated.

But Nicholas's story goes a lot further back in time. In life he was a Greek bishop who lived in what is now the Turkish city of Demre, near Antalya. He died in 343AD but his reputation for generosity lived on. He was particularly well known for saving three impoverished daughters of a nobleman, who might otherwise have ended up on the street, by passing them three bags of gold through a window at night. Today Christmas stockings still have three gold coins (albeit chocolate).



Statue of St Nicolas in Demre,
Turkey

700 years later in 1071 Nicholas's reputation could have disappeared forever had it not been for four intrepid monks who travelled to Anatolia from Italy to save his relics or bones from Seljuq Turks who were invading. Entering the tomb where his bones lay, they smashed a marble floor revealing the saint's remains 'swimming in an envelopment of all perfumes'. Fleeing for the coast the monks waded into the sea and grabbed a boat holding Nicholas's bones carefully wrapped in silk. Now located in Bari on the Adriatic coast Nicholas's renown got a major boost as the Normans, who then controlled the area, spread his reputation into northern Europe and even as far as Forest Hill!

Having a church named after him in Forest Hill wasn't enough for St Nicholas (shame on him!); he was destined for something far bigger – the New World. Like many others the Dutch adored him, but after converting to Protestantism in the 1600s were forced to down play his generous, fun loving nature. All were not happy and in 1663 an insurrection of 11 year old children ridiculed the authorities by marching for their rights to eat gingerbread, a treat traditionally handed out by St Nicholas.

By this time the Dutch had colonised a small peninsular in north America, which they called New Amsterdam, taking their traditions with them. There was a feast day dedicated to St Nicholas on 6 December and by then he had taken on supernatural powers such as coming down the chimney as well as delivering presents to children (in imitation of the three impoverished daughters), but only if they were well behaved – puritanism didn't altogether disappear.

It was not to last. Shortly afterwards, the British took control, renaming the town New York. But the Dutch did not give up their traditions easily and they kept St Nicholas alive as a sort of cultural dyke against overbearing British traditions such as Thanksgiving. Around the same time Christians were worried his popularity might undermine Christ so in the 1900s St Nicholas's day of gift giving was moved to Christmas Day, reinforced by his renaming as Father Christmas in Britain. This, and Clement Clarke Moore's poem, sealed his special place in millions of people's hearts and his popularity remains undiminished. If only the clergy who dedicated our village church to him 750 years ago, could be aware that they had chosen a saint with such staying power!

Jonathan Barker, Forest Hill

The Late Mrs Rita Hannelore Heath

Rita Hannelore Heath died on 20 September 2023 and was buried a week later in Forest Hill cemetery.

Rita was born in 1926 in the Weimar Republic. She came to England after the Second World War and moved to Powell Close in Forest Hill when it was built 59 years ago.

Rita was talented, clever and well educated. She spoke excellent English. During her long life she saw many changes. She was concerned about current politics: she remembered what happened in Germany when there was a weak government and related it to our current weak governments.

Rita loved Forest Hill and her house and garden. She was very interested in history. She was well-read and long conscious of Forest Hill's Associations with John Milton, Mary Powell and William Julius Mickle.

Rita was an environmentalist. She was very conscious of her carbon footprint, so she walked or bussed everywhere. She hated traffic and loved nature. She wanted to save this planet earth. She loved animals, particularly dogs and cats. She supported the Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary for fifty years. Latterly, she loved the birds and the insects in the garden. She viewed her garden in Powell Close as a haven for them.

Rita also loved St Nicolas church building, especially the light playing through stained glass when they walked their little dog, Poppy, around the churchyard. She loved art, particularly sacred art.

Rita had high standards of conduct. She was hard working, kind, always forgiving and always non judgmental. She was a rock in hardship. She was upbeat and was always ready to laugh. She was never boring. She enjoyed places and people. She liked good neighbours and took them in. She was respectful, honest and kind. A good friend and a good mother.

* * * * *

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

News from St Barnabas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 14. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Remembrance Day Poppy Appeal 2023

The total raised in Horton-cum-Studey was £766.04. Thank you to all our generous contributors!

Pop-Up Pub, 3 November

St Barnabas made a great setting for a trial 'pub' social opportunity. Plenty of conversations took place and it was an opportunity for people to get to know other villagers in an informal atmosphere. The 60+ villagers that turned up confirmed it is something to repeat. We will confirm dates for 2024 in the new year.

Village Autumn Supper, 5 November

Although our annual supper clashed with firework parties, we had a good number of attendees. We were treated to delicious lasagne and salad, followed by an assortment of fruit crumbles and custard, and raised £300 for church funds. Thanks to all the chefs (apologies for the complicated recipe, but it was authentic, and worth the effort!), helpers, and supporters. Particular thanks must go to Lisa and Nick who masterminded both of these events and provided a very happy weekend for many of us.

Coffee and Chat, 9 December and 13 January, 10am-12pm

In St Barnabas church. Everyone, including dogs, always welcome.

St Barnabas Carol Service, Sunday 17 December at 3pm

Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service.

St Barnabas Crib Service, Sunday 24 December at 4pm

This is a wonderful start to Christmas, a family friendly short service whereby the children are involved in building the Crib, with prayers and short readings. I'm again asking children to either bring up a figure, or assist in a reading or Prayers, which you will receive prior to the event. If you wish to be involved, please contact me, and don't forget to bring your torches. *Lynn Whitaker 07795 550851 lyndawhitaker@btinternet.com*

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS



'Give it back Mak!'

Friday 22 December, 2pm

The Millennium Village Hall
The Straight Mile, Horton-cum-Studley, OX33 1AE

Admission: Adults £5, under 16s free

Box office: www.fourparishes.org.uk/give-it-back-mak

Tickets will also be available on the door

Millennium Village Hall

Just a reminder to please close the main gate after your visit – we have had previous joy riding on the field and recently 'donuts' on the gravel car park, and an open gate could be an invitation to more of the same!

We are investigating replacement of the activity structures at the playground. We think the current variety is appropriate for a range of ages, and we want to know if you have alternative suggestions – there may be something(s) your children love that we don't have, or something we have that you think is not popular? Please email or call me Stuart MacFarlane s.macfarlane799@btinternet.com 07906 216549.

SIR GEORGE CROKE'S CHARITY

(Registered Charity No 203974)

ALMSHOUSE VACANCY

A vacancy currently exists at The Almshouse Cottages, Horton-cum-Studley for a single person or a married couple. Preferred applicants will be elderly, retired persons of limited financial means, who are in a good state of health but now in need of sheltered accommodation. Preference will be given to those from the parishes of Chilton, Waterstock, Beckley or any other within 6 miles of the almshouse buildings.

- ◇ **Comfortable ground floor accommodation, overlooking a large secluded garden**
- ◇ **Self-contained kitchen/sitting-room, bedroom, bathroom/WC**

For further details about the vacancy and an application form, please contact A J Robson, Sidleys Chartered Surveyors, 6 King Edward Street, Oxford OX1 4JL

Tel: 01865 720616

Email: arobson@sidleys.co.uk

Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council News

Parish Council meetings, open to all in the village, are normally held on the second Thursday of the month, the next meeting being on **Thursday 14 December, 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall.**

The **change of use of Otmoor Farm to become an office base for RSPB** continues to be cause for concern with an increase in traffic along Ragnalls Lane and Church Lane. RSPB manager David Wilding alerted the Parish Council to the start of demolition work in November for 2-3 weeks. The Parish Council arranged for Oxfordshire County Council to enhance signage of the restricted byway to make clear that only authorised vehicles (requiring access to properties) should proceed with caution along Ragnalls Lane. RSPB asked that they are notified of any vehicles which appear to disregard safety along the route.

The **new bus service to the village** is a welcome return of public transport facilities in rural areas, connecting us with Oxford and Bicester. The timetable has been published for Route 108 by the Oxford Bus Company and we have confirmed that, although not stated on the timetable, buses will stop at both bus-shelters in the village.

The Parish Council has taken action to remove a collection of **books placed at the bus-shelters**, following a report from a concerned parent that unsuitable material was included. The Parish Clerk should be approached for any request concerning the bus-shelters.

Cherwell District Council are collaborating with Community First Oxfordshire to offer Cherwell residents the chance to become part of CFO's oil scheme for FREE (usual cost: £24 per year).

The Community First Oxfordshire oil scheme is in partnership with AF Affinity who purchase over 100 million litres of oil every year from a variety of oil suppliers and, due to their relationship with them, can give the best possible price available to them on the day of your oil order. The scheme also offers direct debit and payment plan options. If you are already a member of the scheme and live in Cherwell but have paid this year, then CFO will reimburse you (we have your details and will be in touch shortly)

Visit their website: www.communityfirstoxon.org

Telephone: 01865 883488 Email: oil@communityfirstoxon.org

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

During these winter months, many gardens and hedgerows are alive with colour. An abundance of berry-laden shrubs, evergreens, winter-flowering specimens - even the dead mops of hydrangeas – lend themselves to creating colourful indoor arrangements. I recently read an interesting article online describing how three-foot long stems of forsythia brought in on a reasonably mild day, soaked in warm water, kept moist and exposed to any available sunlight, will flower indoors after a couple of weeks or so. There are many websites offering ideas for simple, natural Christmas decorations, and it is so gratifying to enjoy a display created for free from your own cuttings rather than bought in a garden centre.



In October, Hugh Warwick gave us an entertaining talk on attracting hedgehogs to your garden, and ensuring that they stay safe and well if you're lucky enough to have them visit. The bring-and-buy plant sale was a hit, and we are hoping to make this a more regular feature of future meetings or events.

After our final talk of the year on 21st November (Avril Hughes on The Woodland Garden), we will be looking ahead to the AGM on January 16th, 2024. The AGM is always a fun evening, with mince pies and mulled wine, and some kind of additional entertainment in the form of a quiz or competition (details will be circulated to members in due course). It is a good opportunity for anyone thinking about joining the Club to come along and hear about plans for the coming year, which are already underway. There are some lovely visits in prospect, including Upton Wold ('The Hidden Garden of the Cotswolds') in May, Kingsbridge Farm at Steeple Claydon in July, along with talks on composting, photographing garden flowers, birds and insects among options being set up for 2024.

Do come and join us: at £15 for a year (or £25 for joint membership), which includes all talks in the Millennium Hall plus the summer social evening, it is still cheaper than a plate of fish and chips in many restaurants, especially if you join with a friend!

Melanie Jones Chair Mjcbt2013@gmail.com 07766 708303

STANTON ST JOHN

Stanton Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 14. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall

6 December and 10 January, 10.30am, - 12pm

Come for tea, coffee and cake! Everyone is welcome. For further details, please contact Sue Baker 01865 351449 /Sarah Coyne 01865 358876.



CLASSIC CAROLS
AT STANTON ST JOHN
CHURCH
2ND DEC 7PM

**THE SHOTOVER SINGERS.
COME, SING AND LISTEN**

WELL KNOWN CAROLS FOR YOU TO JOIN IN WITH AND
GET INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT
ADMISSION FREE
DONATIONS TO CHURCH FUNDS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED.

Shotover Singers Concert in Stanton Church

Saturday 2 December 7pm

Ashley Goodall and the Shotover Singers return to Stanton Church with a well chosen selection of carols to help us get into the Christmas spirit. Admission to the concert is free but donations to church funds will be gratefully received.

Friday 8 December, Millenium Green, 6 – 8pm

Village Celebration ‘Turn on the lights’ (see next page).

Stanton St John Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council is on Monday **18 December at 7.30pm** in Stanton St John Village Hall.

Electric car chargers have arrived in Stanton St John

To support the energy transition away from fossil fuels, the Stanton St John Parish Council has installed two public chargers for electric vehicles (EV) in the Village Hall car park. Each charger will be able to charge up to 22 kW (fast charging), which is three times faster than home charging but is dependent on the charging limitations of your car. Two parking bays in the Village Hall Car Park are designated for charging EVs only.



Funding for these chargers has been secured via the On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS), 50%, an SODC Capital Grant, 28.53% and the remainder via the Parish Council.

On behalf of the Village Hall Committee the chargers will be operated by Pod Point. Charging your vehicle is done via the Pod Point App, which can be downloaded on your phone via Google Play or the Apple App Store. The Pod Point App has a map with the Stanton St John chargers on it, which can be selected to advance with the charging. The initial tariff has been set at 47p/kWh and will be reviewed after more usage information becomes available.

For further information please contact Parish Councillor Michiel Stofferis, who has been coordinating this project (michielstofferis@outlook.com)

Andrew Clark, Chair of Stanton St. John Parish Council

STANTON ST JOHN CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

FRIDAY 8th DECEMBER 2023
6.00 P.M.

Millennium Green, Village Hall

RINGING OF THE BELLS * CAROLS
LIGHTING & BLESSING OF THE TREE
HOT DOGS * MULLED CIDER * HOT CHOCOLATE
CRAFT STALLS * RAFFLE

Film Nights in Stanton St John Village Hall

On either side of Christmas, the Stanton St. John Film Club presents two heartwarming movies:

Saturday 9 December: A beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood



Based on the true story of a real-life friendship between US children's TV star Fred Rogers and journalist Lloyd Vogel. "Tom Hanks puts cynicism on the naughty step"

Saturday 13 January: Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom



A disillusioned teacher finds meaning in his life in a remote Himalayan school in Bhutan. A charming and visually stunning first feature.

Both films will start at 7.45pm but doors will be open at 7pm. Before and after the film, delicious cakes and drinks are available whilst the bar will serve wines, mulled wines (December) and Black Yak cocktails (January).

Since only 60 seats are available in the Village Hall, please reserve your seats as soon as possible for the screenings via Sue Baker (susanjbaker24@gmail.com) or in the Village Shop. Tickets at £5 (cash only) will be sold at the door. Any profits raised will be used to enhance the Village Hall for future screenings.

Stanton St John WI

Stanton St John WI would like to thank everyone for their support at our October Coffee morning and Craft sale. It was a successful morning and we enjoyed seeing so many people getting together.

Our December programme starts off with **lunch at the Talk House on Tuesday 5 December at 12-12.30 to celebrate our 101st birthday.**

Our usual monthly **meeting on Tuesday 12 December** will be a Christmas Miscellany hosted by Isabell Oetinger. We also plan to fill the wonderful selection of Christmas stockings decorated in November with treats for youngsters from Barton Community. We are also collecting gifts for some of their elderly residents living on their own, who might appreciate being remembered at this time of year.

Our **meeting on Tuesday 9 January** at the usual time of 7.30pm, is going to be an eye opener. Paul Walker will tell us about his involvement in a charity which rehomes battery chickens and hens. Animal welfare is a "hot topic", so do feel free to come along and join us. We always welcome visitors and only ask for a small donation to cover costs.

We are finishing the month off by going to see an Oxford Operatic Society production of "Oliver" at the New Theatre.

As you can see, we have had a range of events going on over the year.

Contact details: stantonstjohnwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk.



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Christmas Services and Events in the Four Parishes



Please refer to lists of church services and individual village pages for further details

Date	Village	Event
1 Dec, 3.30pm	Abingdon Arms, Beckley	Christmas Workshop for Children
2 Dec, 7pm	Stanton Church	Shotover Singers Carol Concert
3 Dec, 3pm	Forest Hill Village Hall	Children's Christingle Workshop
3 Dec 4pm	Forest Hill Church	Children's Christingle Service
8 Dec, 6pm	Stanton Millenium Green	Christmas Lights
10 Dec, 4pm	Stanton Village Hall	Benefice Children's Christmas Party
10 Dec, 6pm	Forest Hill Church	Advent Carol Service
13 Dec, 7pm	Stanton Church	'Looking for the Light' Service
17 Dec, 3pm	Horton Church	Christmas Carol Service
17 Dec, 6pm	Beckley Church	'Carols and Claret'
17 Dec, 6pm	Stanton Church	Christmas Carol Service
19 Dec, 7pm	Forest Hill Church	'Nine Lessons & Carols'
21 Dec, 6pm	Forest Hill Village Hall	Carol Singing
24 Dec, 4pm	All	Christmas Crib Services in all churches
24 Dec, 11pm	Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley	Christmas Eve Holy Communion Service
25 Dec, 10am	Beckley, Stanton	Christmas Day Holy Communion Service

