

# *The Four Parishes News Magazine*

BECKLEY  
FOREST HILL  
HORTON-cum-STUDLEY  
STANTON St JOHN



Wedding at St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley, October 2023

*November 2023*

## The editor writes



I would like to start by thanking David Slings from Horton-cum-Studley who very kindly collected the October magazine from the printers and took over the initial counting and distribution while my husband and I were taking a long awaited holiday abroad. The magazine is entirely distributed by volunteers, some of whom have been doing it for a huge number of years, and their efforts are much appreciated.

This month's magazine contains plenty of information about Christmas events and celebrations in December so do make a note of them for future reference. Don't forget to look beyond your own village to the other 'Village pages'. You will also find some events listed in the 'General' section at the front of the magazine.

If, later on in the month, you find that you have mislaid your printed copy, you can read it online at [www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine). Past issues back to 2018 are also available there.

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 in Horton-cum-Studley.*

*Alona, a Ukrainian guest who was kindly hosted for a year by Horton-cum-Studley residents Tim and Lorraine Dixon, married Gary Willis in St Barnabas Church, on 15 October 2023.*

**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](mailto:4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com)**

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

Vicar: Reverend Anthea Beresford

[anthea@fourparishes.org.uk](mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk)

<b>LIST OF CONTENTS</b>	
<b>Church Services in the Four Parishes</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Letter from Anthea</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Church Matters</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>General Articles and Information</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Village pages: Beckley</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Village pages: Forest Hill</b>	<b>Page 22</b>
<b>Village pages: Horton-cum-Studley</b>	<b>Page 26</b>
<b>Village pages: Stanton St John</b>	<b>Page 31</b>
<b>Classified</b>	<b>Page 34</b>

*We welcome contributions for future issues, but please get in touch with the editorial team beforehand at [4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk/magazine).*

**The closing date for the Dec 2023/Jan 2024 issue is 15 November 2023**

**To advertise in the magazine please email JULIA  
[adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:adverts.4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com)**

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

<b>Beckley</b>	Vacant at present. Send direct to the editor.
<b>Forest Hill</b>	Linda Goffey 01865 873078 <a href="mailto:linda@goffey.co.uk">linda@goffey.co.uk</a>
<b>Horton-cum-Studley</b>	Carol Welch 01865 358122 <a href="mailto:carol_welch20@hotmail.com">carol_welch20@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Stanton St John</b>	Sue Baker 01865 351449 <a href="mailto:susanjbaker24@gmail.com">susanjbaker24@gmail.com</a>

# 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.

## Ministry Team

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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, November 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
<b>5 November</b> <i>All Saints' Day</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			
<i>All Souls</i>	6pm All Souls Service at Stanton St John			
<b>12 November</b> <i>Remembrance Sunday</i>	10.45am at War Memorial followed by Morning Prayer in Church	10.45am at War Memorial with Morning Prayer	10.45am Remembrance Service of Holy Communion	10.45am Remembrance Service of Morning Prayer
	4pm Messy Church at Stanton St John Village Hall			
<b>19 November</b> <i>The Second Sunday before Advent</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am BCP Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Iona Service at Beckley			
<b>26 November</b> <i>Christ the King Sunday Next before Advent</i>	10am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Beckley			
	3pm Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest			
	6pm Taizé Service via Zoom			

Please check the website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://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](mailto:anthea@fourparishes.org.uk).

## A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



I am writing this letter on a most beautiful autumnal day. The sun has been shining all day and the sky is beautifully blue with not a cloud to be seen. These bright days before we enter the shorter days of winter always seem a bonus. And especially surprising is that we have this good weather despite it being half term! It is nicer today than it was through most of the summer holidays!!

And that reminds me of my recent holiday when Bertie and I enjoyed walks in better weather than in the summer. It was not all bright sunshine – we got soaked as well, but a holiday in England would not be so without the odd soaking! And what does Bertie mind as long as we are out walking!



There was a feast for my eyes to behold as I lapped up the countryside – moorland and hills, coastline, and villages. An array of wildlife – hare, deer, pheasants, grouse, birds of prey and a tiny wren; farm animals close at hand, listening to them eating the grass in the otherwise silence of the evening; watching shepherds with their dog moving sheep across the rough terrain, an absolute delight to behold. And then I take in the



changing colours on the trees, the berries in the hedgerows, the ever-changing sky as weather fronts move swiftly through on the strong breeze – bright sunshine one moment, followed by moody grey clouds bringing heavy rain, dried up quickly as the wind whistles through.

How blessed to have these opportunities to refresh and to make memories. Memories of time with a loved one. Special times. Memories that will last for some, as memories for others fade, and memories for when we are no longer together.

November is a time in the church calendar for remembering. At All Souls’,

being celebrated on 5 November this year, we have an opportunity to remember loved ones no longer with us, but whose memories are still dear to us. The loss of a loved one can be painful, whether recent or long since passed, and having an opportunity to acknowledge this quietly before God can be helpful for many (see page 8 for more details). If you want to know more about this or need to talk, please do get in touch.

Remembrance Sunday, a week later, on 12 November this year, we remember those from our communities who have died serving their country in the world wars, as well as those who have died in more recent conflicts. For details of the services throughout the benefice see page 5. You may also like to join us for the concert in Forest Hill in the evening. This is always an excellent opportunity for reflection on the horrors of war.

It seems even more poignant than ever as we listen to the news, especially currently around the conflicts in Ukraine and in the Middle East, how precious peace is, and how horrendous is the human cost of war. As we gather to remember once more, may we also be earnest in our prayers for peace. These prayers may be said in our own homes, but if you want to gather with others, please do remember the twice weekly prayers throughout the benefice (see page 8 for more details).

In darkness, it is always important to remember the hope of Christian faith. Hope that out of darkness there will be light, out of despair there may be joy, out of hatred there may be love. The picture on the front cover should encourage us to remember this hope. May Gary and Alona have a long and happy marriage – what a delight to have been part of their journey.

Please do get in touch if life is hard and 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.

### All Souls': 6pm Stanton Church on Sunday 5 November

All Souls' is the time in the Church calendar when we remember and give thanks to God for loved ones no longer with us. There will be a short reflective service, when loved ones can be remembered by name, or in the silence of your hearts. There will be refreshments afterwards, and a chance for a chat if you would like to.

If you are able to attend in person, that is wonderful, but if you would like someone remembered, and cannot attend, please do not worry, they can still be remembered on the day, and a candle lit in their memory. Whether or not you can attend, would you please let Anthea know the names of loved ones you would like remembered, and their names will be read out during the service.

Many of us have lost loved ones recently who we would like remembered. Others have lost loved ones some time ago, and still their loss is painful to bear. This is an opportunity to remember before God, by name, loved ones we have loved, but no longer see, whether that is recently or longer ago. Please do think about joining us. If you are unable to come but would like a loved one remembered and a candle lit for them, please do let Anthea know.

### 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 November across the benefice as follows:

Beckley: 8 and 18

Forest Hill: 1, 11 and 29

Horton-cum-Studley: 15 and 25

Stanton St John: 4 and 22



## 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			√	

## 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	Craft Workshop Beckley Church 3.30-4.30pm
5 November	12 November	26 November	8 November
3 December (St Nicolas Day Celebration with Christingle)			6 December
10 December (Christmas Party SVH 4-5pm)			

Please always look out for email updates.

## Children's autumn craft workshops

We had a fabulous time at the first Children's craft workshop in Beckley Church in September as we thought about Harvest and made scrumptious bread rolls. We look forward to seeing you in **Beckley Church on 8 November for the next one**, when we will be thinking about Remembrance. The workshops are aimed at primary school children, and are run by the 'Acting the Bible' and 'Messy Church' teams – but you don't need to have attended either of those to come and join in the fun. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. There are light refreshments, and it is a great time for parents to catch up too. Please hold the dates:

**Wednesday 8 November 3.30-4.30pm: Remembrance Workshop**

**Wednesday 6 December 3.30-4.30pm: Christmas Workshop**

If you have never been before, please do come along. All are welcome. Bring a friend!

## Book Group

The Book Group continues to meet virtually by Zoom on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm. We are currently reading *Singing in Babylon: Finding Purpose in Life's Second Choices* by Jeff Lucas. Once we finish this, we will be starting *Kingdom of Fools* by Nick Page. If you would like to join the Group, please do get in touch with Anthea. All are welcome.

## Home Group Study on the Gospel of John

The study group looking at the Gospel of John meets on Mondays at 2.30pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Annie Payne by email at [anniefpayne@gmail.com](mailto:anniefpayne@gmail.com).

## Private devotion during Advent

Advent does not begin until 3 December, but the December Four Parishes News Magazine is rather late to advertise in time for this. There are many different books that are designed for use during Advent. I have two suggestions this year, but you may have a favourite you go to, or one that has been sitting on your bookshelf begging to be read for some time.

My first suggestion is *Preparing for Christmas: Daily meditations for Advent* by Richard Rohr. The second is *Stick with Love: Rejoicing in every tongue, every tribe, every nation* by Arun Arora. If you would like me to get either of these books for you, please do let me know in good time so you have it for the start of Advent on 3 December. They cost in the region of £13 and £9 respectively. I look forward to reading them with you and sharing our thoughts.

## HOLD THE DATE

Riding Lights Theatre Company, 22 December at 2pm

Millenium Village Hall, Horton-cum-Studley

It is so exciting to announce that St Barnabas is hosting the Riding Lights Theatre Company on behalf of the Four Parishes. If you have seen them before, you know you are in for a big treat, and if you have not, hurry to get your tickets so you do not miss out! For more information see page 30 or view a trailer for the show at <https://ridinglights.org/giveitbackmak/>. For now, hold the date!

## GENERAL

### Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity: Applications for Bursaries welcomed

The Charity grants educational bursaries for school aged children and young people up to the age of 25 who are or who have parents resident in Stanton St John, Forest Hill with Shotover, Beckley, Horton-cum-Studley and the ecclesiastical Parish of Elsfeld.

In the past bursaries have been granted for computer software, sporting equipment, residential courses, text books, laptops and other electronic equipment, college courses not funded by Student Finance and music lessons. Applications are not means tested and funding is granted on a case-by-case basis.

The Trustees welcome applications for bursaries addressed to the Chair of Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity, Alison Finch. The email address is [HolfordtrustChair@gmail.com](mailto:HolfordtrustChair@gmail.com) where you can obtain an application form. You can also apply in writing to Alison Finch, 14 Mickle Way, Forest Hill, Oxford, OX33 1DX.

**The next meeting of the Trustees is on Monday 6 November.**



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Forest Hill, Oxford



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- \* Patios
- \* Bathrooms
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**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](mailto:minibuildoxford@gmail.com)07717 128949

## Christmas Trees for Sale

### All profits to Friends of Beckley School



The Friends of Beckley School are selling Christmas trees again this year in order to raise money for our school. The trees are sourced from a sustainable plantation in Scotland and are premium quality Nordmann Fir (non-drop) trees.

If you would like to purchase a tree please use the order form enclosed with this magazine to place your order before 5pm on Wednesday 22 November. You will receive a confirmation by email or phone once your order has been received. Collection will be from Millennium Hall, Horton-cum-Studley on **Saturday 2 December (9am-2pm)**.

Alternatively, email Jenny Goad at [BeckleyFOBS@gmail.com](mailto:BeckleyFOBS@gmail.com) with your tree size, name, email, phone number and how you will be paying for your tree.

All monies raised will be used for resources and activities to enrich the learning of children at Beckley School.

Many thanks for your support.

*Kate, Nin, Jenny and the FOBS committee*

## Opportunities at Stanton House

Since 1879, Stanton House has stood on the edge of Stanton St John, a quiet beautiful estate surrounded by farmland and woods. In 1978 the House was signed over to the Stanton House Trust and it is now a Christian charity, providing a place of Christian retreat, hospitality and spiritual ministry.

Details of new employment opportunities at Stanton House will be available soon. Visit [www.stantonhouse.org.uk](http://www.stantonhouse.org.uk).



# STANTON HOUSE

REST RESTORATION RENEWAL

welcomes  
residents of the  
four villages 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**

### The Otmoor Flyer Bus Service into Headington and Oxford

#### A GREEN AND SOCIABLE WAY TO TRAVEL

*16 passengers - ramp for a wheelchair or a child carrier*

**THE BUS DRIVER CANNOT ISSUE A TRAVEL CARD, ACCEPT CASH OR SELL TICKETS**

**Accompanied children aged 11 and under travel FREE OF CHARGE**

#### **Mondays & Thursdays**

##### **Forest Hill and Stanton St John**

**Picks up at 10.30am in Forest Hill**

*Bus stop in Powell Close and Stanton Road*

**Picks up at 10.40am in Stanton St John**

*Bus stop outside the village shop*

#### **Tuesdays & Fridays**

##### **Horton-cum-Studley and Beckley**

**Picks up at 10.30am in Horton-cum-Studley**

*Bus stop is the bus shelter on the Brill Road*

**Picks up at 10.40am in Beckley**

*Bus stop next to red post box on the High Street*

**Bus stops on the London Road in Headington and at the Town Hall in St Aldates**

#### **Return Journey from Oxford and Headington:**

Picks up from Broad Street outside Balliol College at 1.15pm

Picks up in Headington at the main gate into Bury Knowle Park at 1.30pm

#### **TRAVEL CARDS COST £15 FOR 10 SINGLE JOURNEYS, obtainable from:**

The Village Shop, Stanton St John – Tel: 01865 351532

Malcolm Leeding, Forest Hill – Tel: 01865 872034

The Abingdon Arms, Beckley – Tel: 01865 655667

Jill Meyjes, Horton-cum-Studley – Tel: 01865 351496



Lunch to celebrate the life of  
**Jonathan Hill**  
 20 July 1950 – 15 August 2023

12.00-14.30 Saturday 25 November 2023  
 Millennium Hall, Straight Mile, Horton-cum-Studley, OX33 1AE

Dress: casual, bright colours please

We want to share memories of Jonny with photos, memorabilia  
 and for those who want to share with music  
 we will set up a mic and amp

R.S.V.P. Helen      h.bungay@btinternet.com      All welcome

## Obituary – Jonathan (Jonny) Hill Horton-cum-Studley and Forest Hill

Born in Highgate, Jonny grew up in Saffron Walden with his brother, sister and then two step brothers. After a grammar school education spent at least partly hiding under tables, he went to the Royal Academy of Music to study clarinet and guitar. His professional life included performing and teaching. He was lead clarinet for the Oxford Symphony Orchestra and played in several clarinet and guitar groups, as well as a folk duo with John Thompson. His teaching was inspirational, and he taught several pupils who went on to musical prominence.

He also became an expert woodwind restorer and it was a joy to watch him turn a rectangle of metal into a shiny, smooth clarinet key.

Jonny found his estranged mother in adulthood, and had the chance to know his feisty Georgian mum, from whom his more spirited traits were undoubtedly inherited! He married another musician and raised several Siamese cats, one of his main loves. His other passions included Riley cars, running, and the renovation of the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway (he mapped out and photographed the overgrown track bed, much of which is now back on track). A competitive marathon runner when younger, after meeting me and moving out to these villages he was a familiar runner (never call it jogging) around Horton-cum-Studley and then Forest Hill.

Like many, Jonny had burdens to bear, which eventually caught up with him and his last years were difficult. The very best of Jonny – his musical talent, hard work and intellectual curiosity - lives on in his two amazing daughters, who miss him very much.

*Helen Bungay*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is part of Samaritan's purse, a Christian charity that sends shoe boxes of toys to children in need around the world at Christmas.



Many of you in the Four Parishes have supported this charity individually or through your church, school or community groups. For many years Ian and Erica Cave in Beckley have coordinated the collection and delivery of the boxes from the Four Parishes to the depot. This year I will be doing this on their behalf.

Detailed instructions for preparing and packing the shoeboxes are available online at [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/), together with suggestions for suitable gifts.

A list of **prohibited items** is available on the website.

If individually or as part of a wider group you would like to send a shoe box (or several) and would like me to collect them for delivery to the depot then please contact me.

Filled shoe boxes can be dropped off at each of the Four Parishes churches on **Saturday 11 November and Sunday 12 November** (please leave at the back of the church) and Beckley Primary School (school pupils only) on **Friday 17 November**. Shoeboxes can also be delivered to Stanton Village Shop on **Friday 17 November**.

If you prefer, you can pack a virtual shoebox or simply make a donation at [www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/).

With many thanks.

*Louise Waite, Stanton St John*  
*T: 01865 358428 / l.waite@yahoo.co.uk*

## Bird Flu

by Lyn Ebbs

As well as being informative, I like my articles to be generally upbeat, but I felt I had to tackle a topic which is rather depressing. A few people recently have mentioned that they have seen sick or dead pigeons locally and asked if these could be cases of bird flu. The short answer is yes, they could. Bird flu is an informal version of the name, avian influenza, a disease of both domestic and wild birds. It's similar to the flu virus that infects humans but is one of a number of strains that have evolved over time to mainly infect birds. Bird flu has been a topic of news reports and articles for over two years now because the strain that is currently circulating worldwide is particularly contagious and lethal, and is therefore known as 'highly pathogenic avian influenza' or HPAI. One of the properties that makes it more dangerous, is the range of bird species it has been able to infect.

Once established in wild birds, HPAI spread via migration routes within and between continents. An outbreak began in the UK in November 2021 and during the summer of 2022 there were many reports of HPAI in seabird colonies. The distressing television images of the bodies of birds, such as gannets, washing up on beaches vividly showed the impact as the disease took its toll on thousands of birds. Sadly, many breeding colonies experienced a second summer of disease in 2023. This year the outbreak began inland in Black-headed Gull colonies, including amongst these gulls on Otmoor, where the tern raft was removed to prevent its spread to the Common Tern colony.



These recent series of bird flu outbreaks have killed tens of thousands of birds in the UK alone and has spread through more than 70 bird species. Bird flu mostly spreads from bird to bird through direct or indirect contact with infected saliva, nasal secretions or droppings, making birds that nest colonially or feed in flocks more susceptible. The virus also spreads through predation or scavenging. As well as seabirds, fatalities are obvious in larger species such





as geese and swans but other smaller wild bird species like pigeons have been found to be infected.

Some of the noticeable symptoms of HPAI in birds are:

- Unresponsiveness
- Lack of coordination and loss of balance, tremors
- Drooping wings and/or dragging legs
- Twisting head and neck.

Human infections with HPAI are rare, mostly occurring in people such as poultry workers, in close contact with infected birds. You're very unlikely to catch bird flu by feeding garden birds. Even so, it's sensible to maintain good hygiene at bird feeding stations, cleaning bird feeders every week and changing birds' drinking and bathing water regularly. There is a small risk to cats or dogs if they catch wild birds infected with bird flu. HPAI has been found in mammals such as foxes and otters so it wise to prevent your pets from having close contact with any dead or sick wild birds, as they may be infected with bird flu. Common garden birds have a lower risk of being infected with bird flu than ducks, geese, swans and gulls. So, when walking your dog, keep them under effective control so they stay away from wild birds.



There is a glimmer of hope from research carried out in June last year. Scientists studying the impact of HPAI on the largest Northern Gannet colony, on Bass Rock, found that some of the birds had black or mottled irises instead of the usual pale blue ones. The team took blood samples from 18 apparently healthy adult gannets with both normal and black irises. These were then tested for presence of bird flu antibodies – indicating recovery from infection. Eight birds tested positive, of which seven had black irises. The study, therefore, provided evidence that at least some wild birds could survive this deadly virus.



*For more information, including how to report dead birds, please visit the DEFRA website [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs).*



The structure of Government, national and local, can be confusing. When someone needs help with something it can be difficult to know just who is responsible for what, and therefore who can help when things do not go as they should. I often receive requests from people to help them with issues that are not Parliamentary matters and with which I cannot help. I appreciate that this can be frustrating and so I thought that it might be helpful if I set out who does what.

It is often thought that an MP sits at the top of a hierarchy of Government and has power to direct local councils. This is not the case. Local councils are autonomous, and MPs do not have any jurisdiction over local council decisions. Hence local councils have their own elected representatives in the form of councillors. People elected to these councils have direct access to officers at the respective councils and so are better placed to take up relevant issues. I have found that referring to local councillors is the quickest way to get action.

So, to help steer through the hierarchy let me set out who does what. Essentially as an MP I can help with issues and concerns that relate to central government departments. In Oxfordshire we have three tiers of local government, the County Council, District Councils and Parish Councils or Parish Meetings. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for local services such as education, social services, transport, roads, rights of way, libraries, the fire service, and bus subsidies. The constituency is served by two district councils, Cherwell and South Oxfordshire. They are responsible for local services, including planning, housing, rubbish collection, environmental services, leisure services, some car parks and council tax collection. Parish Councils and Parish Meetings deal with very local concerns and can influence the other councils on behalf of residents.

Whilst on the topic of what I can and cannot do it may also be helpful to comment on requests to attend specific events. When Parliament is sitting MPs are expected to be in Westminster from Monday to Thursday, unless on other parliamentary business elsewhere. During a week in Westminster there are many competing demands such as scrutinising legislation, attending debates, committees, and other meetings. These competing demands mean that it is not always possible to attend a particular debate or drop-in session that a constituent may ask me to attend. When I cannot attend something it does not reflect lack of interest, simply that I cannot be in two places at once.

I hope that setting this out is helpful and answers several questions that I have been asked of late. If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. My contact details are on my website - [www.johnhowell.org.uk](http://www.johnhowell.org.uk).

## BECKLEY

### Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

### ‘Music for a Village Organ’

The organ recital so kindly given by Dr Edward Higginbottom on 30 September was a fascinating demonstration of the organ’s range and potential, as well as a wonderful celebration of its restoration.

About 80 people attended and it was inspiring to see so many people in the church. It was a very special and enjoyable occasion and we hope to hold more concerts and recitals in the future.

The very generous donations amounted to £740.50.

### Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Monday 13 November 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](http://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk).

The Clerk’s email address is [clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk).

**Fix My Street** – please report any road or street issues to the Oxfordshire County Council website or to the Fix My Street App. A photograph of the problem is useful too.

For information on Beckley Village Hall please see [www.beckleyvillagehall.org](http://www.beckleyvillagehall.org) and to enquire about a booking please contact the Booking Secretary, Mel Green, at [booking@beckleyvillagehall.org](mailto:booking@beckleyvillagehall.org).

## BECKLEY BONFIRE & FIREWORKS NIGHT



**At Beckley Village Hall and Playing Field**

**SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER**

You are cordially invited to the Beckley Bonfire and Firework Night at Beckley Village Hall playing field, Woodperry Road. Gates open at 5.30pm. The bonfire will start at 6pm, followed by fireworks at 6.30pm

Hog roast provided by The Abingdon Arms and refreshments, including mulled wine and homemade cakes.

Car parking is available on the playing fields.

ENTRY FEE - £5 for adults and children over four years.

CASH ONLY please

### Children's Craft Workshop, 8 November

The next Children's Craft Workshop in Beckley Church is on **Wednesday 8 November, 3.30 - 4.30pm** and will focus on Remembrance. This year we will be making medals for some of the heroic animals who were employed in various ways during wartime, such as horses and donkeys who carried food, water, ammunition and medical supplies, pigeons who carried messages, and many others. The workshops are aimed at primary school children, and are run by the 'Acting the Bible' and 'Messy Church' teams – but you don't need to have attended either of those to come and join in the fun. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. There are light refreshments, and it is a great time for parents to catch up too.

For more information, contact Betty Dye [betty.dye10@gmail.com](mailto:betty.dye10@gmail.com).

## Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd

More than a Pub programme <https://bacbs.org/events>

### Cake and a Cuppa

1st Tuesday of every month, 3.30pm. Meet neighbours or other parents and their children for cake, a drink, and a chat in the The Abingdon Arms.

### Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm. Thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

### Community walks

3rd Sunday of the month, 2pm start. Dogs on leads are welcome on these gentle, approximately two-hour walks. Email [info@bacbs.org](mailto:info@bacbs.org) for details.

### Sunday evening talks

Last Sunday of the month, 6.30pm 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](mailto:info@bacbs.org) or go to [bacbs.org/events](https://bacbs.org/events).

**On 26 November at 6.30 pm** Professor Alan Allport, 'recovering academic' from the University of Oxford turned ecologist will talk on 'Creating a place for nature in north Oxford: The creation of the Trap Grounds Nature Reserve'.

There will be no talk in December, but instead on **Friday 1 December, 3.30pm – 5.30pm in The Abingdon Arms there will be:**



## *Christmas Crafts*



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

# FOREST HILL

## News from St Nicolas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

## Plant and Produce Stall

The Saturday Stall outside Lyttleton in Main Street closed on 28 October and will, hopefully, open again in April, 2024. Heartfelt thanks to all those who very kindly gave plants and vegetables to keep the Stall going, including Geoff and Christine Tagg from Beckley, who gave so many wonderful plants (hibiscus, hydrangeas, cannas etc.), John Bowler, Paul Stringer, Peter Stutfield, and all those who quietly left anonymous gifts on the day. As at 14 October, money taken over the 7 months, towards the upkeep of St Nicolas Church, was £990.78p. Thank you ALL!

*Jane Walker*

## Christmas Dates for your Diary

See [www.stnicolasforesthill.org/](http://www.stnicolasforesthill.org/) for more details.

**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

## 'Far from Home'

**Concert in St Nicolas Church, Sunday 12 November, 6pm**



Music and readings by members of our village community reflecting on the impact of war throughout the ages

For more information contact Julia Stutfield  
07766 103427

[julia.stutfield@gmail.com](mailto:julia.stutfield@gmail.com)

Retiring collection in aid of war-related charities



## 'Pop Up Coffee Shop' in Forest Hill Village Hall

10.30am -12.30pm

Friday 27 October and Friday 24 November

Tea, coffee and cake

All profits to local charities

*More information from Julia Stutfield*

*07766 103427 or [julia.stutfield@gmail.com](mailto:julia.stutfield@gmail.com)*

## St Nicolas 750th Anniversary Concert

By the time anyone reads this magazine, the concert on 24 September at St Nicolas will be a distant memory, but for everyone who took part or attended it was a very special and memorable occasion.

Benjamin Britten's 'Saint Nicolas' cantata, which was the main event of the evening, was performed by the St Nicolas Choir and Consort, accompanied by Alexandra Hewitt and Roger Simmonds playing piano duet and Peter Stutfield on the St Nicolas organ. The role of Saint Nicolas was sung by tenor Jack Harberd.



One of the things that emerged during rehearsals is that this brilliant and atmospheric piece has all but disappeared from the standard repertoire and I was surprised and in some ways delighted to realise that most of the performers had never encountered it before. This meant that they all had to work extremely hard to learn the music in time, but it also gave the performance a freshness and sparkle which left everyone, including the audience, buzzing with delight.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and talent to this 'mad' project. There will be plenty more music at St Nicolas in the coming months but it will be a while before we tackle anything quite as ambitious as this again!

*Julia Stutfield*

## Jazz on the Hill

### **Tuesday 14 November, 7.30-9.30pm, Forest Hill Village Hall**

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.

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

The Maple Tree Baby and Toddler sessions in Forest Hill Village Hall are a wonderful way for parents and carers of small children to meet and chat in a friendly and supportive environment. 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](mailto:julia.stutfield@gmail.com).

## Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 30 November at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall**. Dates of future meetings can be found on the Forest Hill website [www.parish-council.com/foresthillwithshotover](http://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.

**Fix My Street** - please report road or street problems, with a photograph, via the Oxfordshire County Council website or via the Fix My Street App.

**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](mailto:theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk) or telephone 0844 884 3328, between 9am and 5pm.





### 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](http://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>

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](mailto:julia.stutfield@gmail.com).**

## HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

### News from St Barnabas

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

7/8 October was a very special weekend at St Barnabas with three separate village events happening...

### Michaelmas Fayre

Thank you to Caroline and Colin for once again allowing us to use their roomy barn and for all the work involved in getting the barn ready for us. Thank you so much to everyone who supported the Michaelmas Fayre - for donations for stalls, for help on the day and of course for coming to the Fayre to browse and purchase. Thank you, Lisa for masterminding it all! The final amount raised looks to be about £1,000.

### The Weigh-In 2023

A beautiful Sunday afternoon saw a fantastic turnout outside the church



for the weigh-in. In short, the POTY trophy for the top pumpkin was won by Pete Saunders, 45kg exactly. The tallest sunflower cup went to Alila Tribble with a whopping 256cm flower. Rachel Hawes had a spectacular crop of potatoes in a bucket, 2,654g from one single tuber. Thanks to many donations on

the day, we raised £168 to be split equally between Parkinsons' UK and St Barnabas Church. Many thanks to everyone for their support. Hopefully everyone will have another go next year. There will be a full report in the next H-c-S Village Newsletter. Cathy Jenkins

### Animal welfare and blessing service

Once again, we were blessed with a perfect sunny October morning to celebrate the gift of animals to us and the joy they bring. We also took time to pray for the welfare of all animals. The ten dogs and Tumble, the cat, were really well behaved throughout the service in the churchyard. The birds sang overhead and two horses trotted past during the service which was joyful and fun.

**Friday 3 November, 6 - 8.30pm**  
**Pop-Up Pub in St Barnabas Church**

Families welcome. Come and meet up with fellow villagers for a beer, wine or soft drink.

**Saturday 4 November, 6.30pm**  
**Village Supper in the Millennium Village Hall**

Adults: £12, Children (12 and under): £6. Tickets from Lisa Mynheer (07786 705785 or [lisamynheer@gmail.com](mailto:lisamynheer@gmail.com)). **Deadline for ticket sales is 1 November.** Please inform of any allergies or dietary requirements when ordering tickets. To minimise the work involved on the evening, we are asking people to provide their own: **Plate; Bowl; Glass; Cutlery; Drinks.** Offers of help with food preparation gratefully received!

**Saturday 11 November, 10am-12pm**  
**Coffee and Chat in St Barnabas Church**

Everyone, including dogs, welcome.

**Sunday 12 November - Remembrance Sunday Service**  
**The service starts at 10.45am in St Barnabas churchyard** to lay the crosses for our local soldiers who gave their lives in war.

**Sunday 24 December - Crib Service, 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 help us out, to either bring up a figure, or to 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 or email: [lyndawhitaker@btinternet.com](mailto:lyndawhitaker@btinternet.com)*



Bags of Oak wood £8.  
Hanging baskets 14" with winter pansies, just starting to develop £8.  
Proceeds to St Barnabas Church  
Contact Lynn Whitaker  
07795 550851



## Millennium Village Hall

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](mailto:s.macfarlane799@btinternet.com) or 07906 216549.

The Fish & Chip Van and pop-up pub and games evening on 30 September was well attended and enjoyed by all. Thanks are due to the organising group, and for a resulting significant contribution to the playground fund.

### Hall contact details:

For bookings [hcshallbookings@gmail.com](mailto:hcshallbookings@gmail.com)

For treasurer [treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerhcsmvh@gmail.com)

## Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council News

Much attention is being paid to the effect of the 20-mph speed limit introduced earlier this year. Whilst there has been some improvement in road safety over the last few months, there are reports of less considerate drivers 'tailgating' vehicles observing the speed limit and others parking in places which could increase the risk of accidents. A recent example was a lorry at the junction of Church Lane reducing visibility for other vehicles and road users. The Parish Council has discussed with our County Councillor, how to work with delivery companies (whose drivers may be under pressure to achieve targets) to adapt to the lower speed limits in our village.

The Parish Council operates with limited income each year (mainly from the 'precept', a part of council tax) to deliver specific local services. Amongst these, we budget to spend nearly £1k each year on the provision and emptying of dog waste bins. Thus, the Parish Council would like to remind dog owners to clear up after their pets by using the dog waste bins provided, and to keep dogs on leads around livestock and crops.

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 9 November, 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall.**

## Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

We have finally enjoyed a belated blast of sunshine and temperatures are



reportedly 5 degrees higher than usual for this time of year. As a result, there is still time to scatter wildflower seeds hoping for an early showing next year. The upside of plenty of rain this summer has led to expectations of a spectacular autumn, with the head of parks and gardens at the National Trust predicting

that the UK will be bathed in a 'warm blanket of reds, ambers, butter yellows and russet browns'. Let us hope that he is right and that we are treated to a spot of New England colour in Old Blighty.

By the time you read this, we will have been treated to a talk on hedgehogs by writer and ecologist, Hugh Warwick, which promises to be entertaining and informative. We are inviting members to bring along a few plants to sell, which is always a popular additional attraction, and one we hope to incorporate more frequently. **Please join us on 21 November to learn about woodland gardens from our own Avril Hughes.**

There are plenty of plans afoot for the year ahead, which we will update you on once we have concrete plans. For now, enjoy the misty mornings and golden evenings, and we look forward to seeing everyone again soon. For more information, please contact me

*Melanie Jones Chair [mjcbt2013@gmail.com](mailto:mjcbt2013@gmail.com) 07766 708303*

## Riding Lights Theatre Company, 22 December at 2pm

### Millenium Village Hall, Horton-cum-Studley

It is so exciting to announce that St Barnabas is hosting the Riding Lights Theatre Company on behalf of the Four Parishes.

If you have seen them before, you know you are in for a big treat. For more information see page 30.

St Barnabas is delighted to host the Christmas 2023  
Riding Lights Production

Give it Back, Mak!

22 December at 2pm

Horton-cum-Studley Millenium Village Hall

*Out on the hills, under a sky full of stars, it is most bitterly cold. The twinkling lights of the town look very inviting. But no such luck for the shepherds who must keep an eye out for all kinds of unusual predators at winter lambing time...*

*The Lamb Chop Inn is full to bursting. Worst still, they've nothing to serve for Sunday roast. Mak, who runs the place, has put up a sign, 'NO VACANCIES AT ALL'. Another underneath says: ' NOT EVEN THE TEENSIEST ONE', but a young couple whose car is stranded in the snow knock on the door anyway...*

*With puppetry, hilarity and extraordinary story-telling, 'Give It Back, Mak!' is the quintessential Riding Lights Christmas Experience. The production lasts approximately one hour and is suitable for age five and up.*

**Tickets:** Adults - £5 Children - FREE

See December Four Parishes Magazine or Horton-cum-Studley Village Facebook Group for contact details re tickets.



# STANTON ST JOHN

## Stanton Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 5 - 11. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website [www.fourparishes.org.uk](http://www.fourparishes.org.uk).

## Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall

**Tea, Coffee and Cake** resumes on **15 November, 10.30am-12pm.**

Everyone is welcome! For further details, please contact Sarah Coyne 01865 358876.

## 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.



**CLASSIC CAROLS**  
**AT STANTON ST JOHN CHURCH**  
**2<sup>ND</sup> 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.

## Stanton St John Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council is on Monday **20 November at 7.30pm** in Stanton St John Village Hall.

## Film Night

Saturday 11 November 7.45pm Stanton St John Village Hall

Stanton St John Film Club presents the 2022 movie,  
starring Olivia Coleman:



# *The Empire of Light*

*A Sam Mendes drama about the power of human connection during turbulent times, set in a cinema in an English coastal town in the early 1980s. "Cinematic Nostalgia"*

Doors will be open at 7pm, with a film start at 7 pm. Before and after the film, delicious cakes and drinks are available whilst the bar will serve wines and "Empire" cocktails.

Since only 60 seats are available in the Village Hall, please reserve your seats as soon as possible for screening via Judy Nisbet ([judy@robertnisbet.com](mailto:judy@robertnisbet.com)) or in the Village Shop.

Tickets are £5 (cash only) will be sold at the door. Any profits raised will be used to enhance the Village Hall for future screenings.



Friday 9 December, Stanton Millenium Green, 6 – 8pm  
Village Celebration 'Turn on the lights'.

## Stanton Community Choir



By popular request, there will be a **Stanton Community Choir** at the 'Turn on the lights' event on **Friday 9 December**, led by David Willcocks and Sue Baker. All singers, whatever age, are welcome!

Rehearsals will be in **Stanton Village Hall on Sundays - 12, 19 and 26 November from 5.45 – 6.45pm**. All are welcome!

Any questions, email Sue Baker on [susanjbaker24@gmail.com](mailto:susanjbaker24@gmail.com).

\* \* \* \* \*

A promotional poster for 'Humble Country Christmas Fayre'. The top half features the text 'Humble Country' in a dark blue serif font, followed by a central illustration of a black wooden fence with a red and white Santa hat on top. Below the fence are several wrapped Christmas gifts in various colors (green, red, blue, white). The text 'Christmas Fayre' is written in a large, red, cursive font. The bottom half of the poster is a white box with a red border, containing the Rectory Farm logo (a red house icon) and the text 'AT RECTORY FARM OXFORDSHIRE 1-2 DECEMBER 2023'. Below this, it lists '40+ boutique stalls', 'Gifts straight out of Instagram!', 'Food, hot drinks and mulled wine', and 'Wreath-making, festive fun and lots more...'. The website 'www.humblecountry.co.uk/christmas' is at the bottom.

**Humble Country**

**Christmas Fayre**

**AT RECTORY FARM OXFORDSHIRE**  
**1-2 DECEMBER 2023**

40+ boutique stalls  
Gifts straight out of Instagram!  
Food, hot drinks and mulled wine  
Wreath-making, festive fun and lots more...

[www.humblecountry.co.uk/christmas](http://www.humblecountry.co.uk/christmas)

# CHRISTMAS AT RECTORY FARM

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CHRISTMAS FAYRE 1ST & 2ND DECEMBER

Shop & Café open Tuesdays - Sundays until Christmas Eve

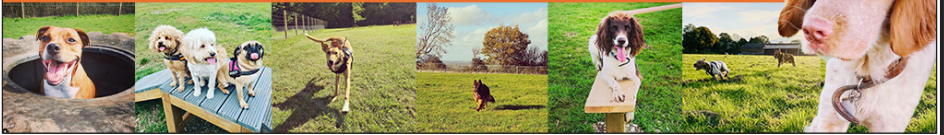


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Tel: 07786 364505



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# Remembrance Sunday 12 November 2023



## Services and Events in the Four Parishes



Time	Place	Description of Event
<b>3.30pm Wednesday 8 Nov</b>	Beckley Church	Children's Craft Workshop (see page 20)
10.45am	Stanton St John	Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial, followed by a service of Morning Prayer.
10.45am	Beckley Churchyard	Act of Remembrance in the Churchyard, followed by a service of Holy Communion.
10.45am	Horton-cum-Studley Churchyard	Act of Remembrance in the Churchyard, followed by a service of Morning Prayer.
10.45am	Forest Hill War Memorial	Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial in the Cemetery, followed by a service of Morning Prayer in Church.
6pm	Forest Hill Church	'Far from Home' Concert (see page 22)

