

The Four Parishes News Magazine

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



Baby Alpaca at Field House, Forest Hill

April 2024

The editor writes



I still find it quite disconcerting that Easter was so early this year, with the result that this magazine is likely to arrive on people's doorsteps at around the time when many of us are having a well-deserved Easter break.

Along with the confusing weather - 17 degrees one moment and near freezing with hail and a biting north wind the next - it is perhaps no wonder that some of us are feeling quite unsettled at the moment. However, if you browse through the pages of this magazine, you will be reminded that the regular rhythm of rural (or semi-rural) life in our villages still continues and there is plenty to enjoy, from Open Gardens in Beckley to the excitement of the Otmoor Challenge as well as all the regular monthly gatherings for refreshments, or cinema or music that take place in our churches and village halls.

If you did manage to get a break at Easter I hope you return refreshed and, if you didn't, I hope you will be able to take one soon!

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

is by Chris and Linda Goffey from Forest Hill:

"We had alpacas in Forest Hill for 15 years or so from early 2000s. We had started a small herd as part of a national push to expand what was then an unusual addition to the fleece industry. From an initial purchase of just six females we ended up with our own stud males and selling over 30 babies - all of whom were taught to walk happily around at shows on a head collar and lead rope! We even achieved a "First in Class" at the Royal Show! We only gave up when advancing years made things a bit too much to handle. But as a hobby - great fun!"

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

anthea@fourparishes.org.uk

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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 May 2024 issue is 15 April 2024

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

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

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Horton-cum-Studley	Carol Welch 01865 358122 carol_welch20@hotmail.com
Stanton St John	Sue Baker 01865 351449 susanjbaker24@gmail.com

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, April 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 April <i>2nd Sunday of Easter</i>	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer
	4pm Children's Church at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
	6pm Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall			
14 April <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i>		9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	4pm Messy Church in Beckley Church			
	6pm BCP Choral Evensong at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
21 April <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am BCP Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Iona Service at Beckley			
28 April <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am Benefice Service of Holy Communion at Beckley			
	4pm Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley			
	6pm Taizé Service via Zoom			

Please check the website www.fourparishes.org.uk for any updates. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please email Anthea: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk.

The Children's Service at St Nicolas has changed its name to Children's Church but the format remains the same. Leaflets are available in all our churches with more information about regular activities for younger children and families in the Four Parishes, including Children's Church, Messy Church, Family Church and Children's Craft Workshops, or see www.fourparishes.org.uk/children-and-families.

A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



As always, I am writing this to you, looking forward to the following month, but it is rather unusual to have such a significant Christian festival as Easter to celebrate between my writing, and you receiving and reading the letter. We are entering Holy Week as I write, and yet, as you read, we are celebrating in our churches around the Four Parishes – Alleluia Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

As I write, the churches are all looking sombre, yet as you read, they will be resplendent in their decoration for Easter. There will be beautiful



flower arrangements, an Easter Garden; colour will be returned for our eyes to feast upon. We will continue with our celebration of light coming out of darkness – the good news of the empty tomb and the risen Christ, from the darkness of the crucifixion and the emptiness and desolation of

Holy Saturday, when the hopes and dreams of the disciples seemingly lay in tatters.

I hope you all had a wonderful Easter weekend, perhaps spending time with family and friends, relaxing and enjoying precious time together. Children are on their school holidays, bringing a mix of time to spend together, and the juggling of childcare responsibilities and work commitments for many. Perhaps some have managed to get away for a break. Whatever you have done, I hope it has been a special time for you. And I hope nobody missed an Easter Day service because of the clocks changing an hour! There is often someone coming in just as we are finishing the service with the spring change! Let's hope that by the time you read this the news is not that the Vicar forgot!!

I now look forward to some sunshine and the ever-lengthening days as we journey through spring towards the summer. It is no secret that I do not like the short days of winter! I'm looking forward to evening walks with Bertie, and preferably the ground being less sodden! As we journey, we have the Church festivals of Jesus' ascension, and of Pentecost to look forward to.

But let's not race through the year too quickly. Let's take our time and savour each moment, not always rushing forward to the next thing and the next thing. Interestingly I heard some wit announce how many shopping days it was until Christmas a few weeks ago. Please!

As we journey through the year, hoping for some nicer weather so we can enjoy the beautiful surroundings we live in, I am very aware of many people having a hard time at the moment – maybe being ill yourself, watching a loved one suffering, or trying to get used to life having lost a loved one; maybe simply struggling with the pressures and routines of day to day life; maybe struggling with the ever depressing news from around the world. It can be hard as others celebrate, but it can also be helpful to hear good news – of weddings, of births, or good things going on, and of acts of kindness, when most of what we hear looks to the negative. Please do get in touch if you need to talk, or just need a cuppa with someone outside the everyday situation.

Like I'm sure others of you will have been, I have been hugely saddened, and indeed angered, as lurid speculation about the Prince and Princess of Wales has grown. It is shameful that the Princess has effectively been made to make a statement about her health, which I believe she should be able to keep private, to stop the rumour mongering.

As we think about all who are suffering at this time, may we all in the Four Parishes community, as we are so well known for doing, continue to offer loving, kind, and generous support to all those amongst us who are struggling in whatever way at this time. And here's to some lovely longer warmer dry days to cheer us all!

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.

Advent challenge and beyond

I wonder how your reading is coming along. I confess once more that at the time of writing, I am still slightly behind! But I am still in touch so keeping going and determined. So, if you too are a little behind, don't worry, just keep going. Let's chat about the challenges of this.

For April, for the Old Testament, we need to finish Judges, read the whole of Ruth and 1 and 2 Samuel, and up to chapter 9 of 1 Kings. For the New Testament we need to get up to chapter 21 of the Gospel of Luke. It would be a great achievement if we can manage to do this, so let's have a go and encourage one another. We can do this! Please do let me know how you get on.

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		Y		Y
Evening Prayer at 6pm	Y		Y	
Benefice Book Group at 7.30pm			Y	

Book Group

After our break to read a book for Lent, we are back reading *Kingdom of Fools: The Unlikely Rise of the Early Church* by Nick Page. If anyone would like to join us, please do get in touch with Anthea. All are welcome.

Come and See: The Way of Love: Lent 2024

Our final evening in Stanton Village Hall at 7.30pm for this is on 3 April. All are welcome.

I would be really interested to hear what you have thought about following the Diocese of Oxford booklet or engaging with their daily emails if you have used either of these and not been involved in the Wednesday evening discussions.

Anthea

Children's craft workshop: hold the date!

We had a wonderful time in The Abingdon Arms in March for our craft workshop as we looked towards Easter. The **next workshop is being held in Beckley Church on Friday 10 May from 3.30-4.30pm**. Watch out for next month's magazine for more information on what we will be doing. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. There will be light refreshments. Please do book in by emailing Betty Dye beforehand at betty.dye10@gmail.com if possible, to ensure we have sufficient resources to go round.

Annual Meetings of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meetings

It is that time of year again! The Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM) have to be completed by 31 May this year, and so dates have been set for these. The related Annual Meeting of Parishioners is on the same day, immediately before the APCM.

Here is advanced notice of the meetings:

Beckley:	29 May at 7.30pm in Church
Forest Hill:	28 May at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall
Horton-cum-Studley:	10 April at 7.30pm in Church
Stanton St John:	8 May at 7pm in Stanton Village Hall

Revisions of Electoral Rolls

Electoral rolls need updating in readiness for the Annual Parochial Church Meetings in the Benefice.

If you are on the current roll of your Church, you do NOT need to complete a new form this year. If your name is not currently on the roll, but you would like to be included on the roll, then you must complete a form. Forms are available in each of the Churches in the Benefice. If you cannot locate them, please do contact the Electoral Roll Officer of the related Church (see details on next page).

To qualify for inclusion on the electoral roll of a Parish Church, you must be living in the Parish, or be a regular worshipper in that Parish. If you have any questions about this, please do contact the Electoral Roll Officer of the related Church (see details on next page)

After the revision of each of the electoral rolls, an updated copy will be exhibited for inspection at each Church.

Here is the timetable for these reviews:

Beckley:	1 May – 14 May
Forest Hill:	30 April – 13 May
Horton-cum-Studley:	Completed
Stanton St John:	10 - 23 April

For further information, please do contact the Electoral Roll Officer of your Parish Church:

Beckley:	Gina Robson (01865 351637)
Forest Hill:	Pat Fraser (01865 875679)
Horton-cum-Studley:	David Slingo (stbarnabaspcchcs@gmail.com or 07850 004700)
Stanton St John:	Sue Baker (01865 351449)

Home Group Study on the Gospel of John

The study group is continuing its look at the Gospel of John on a Monday afternoon at 2.30pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley, reconvening on 15 April, after the Easter break.

Anyone from around the Four Parishes is welcome to join in. If you are interested in being involved, please contact Annie Payne by email at anniefpayne@gmail.com. All are welcome.

Prayers for Peace

As the war continues in Ukraine, with the awful situation in the Middle East, trouble in the Red Sea and surrounding areas, 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 April across the Four Parishes as follows:

Beckley	6 and 24
Forest Hill	17 and 27
Horton-cum-Studley	3 and 13
Stanton	10 and 20

‘Acting the Bible’

The Four Parishes ‘Acting the Bible’ team (previously known as ‘Open the Book’) has just completed a second term of leading collective worship (assembly) once a fortnight in Beckley School.

The team members take stories fresh from the pages of the Bible, and make them into mini dramas, to be acted out by themselves, together with Beckley schoolchildren. Through this, it is hoped that the Bible stories are brought alive, and remembered by the children, especially as they too are involved in the acting.

The team is led by Licensed Lay Reader Betty Dye, and consists of two members from Forest Hill and two from Beckley. They meet for an hour once a fortnight to write the script for the following week, with the aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original Bible texts. This often involves comparing different Bible translations and even reading the New Testament in the original Greek! The challenge is always to find a way of presenting the story that will engage several different age groups at the same time, and discussions during the meetings are often very lively!

On the morning of the school assembly, the ‘Acting the Bible’ team arrives in the school hall at 8.30am with the final version of the script, together with costumes and specially made props provided by Betty, or occasionally by other members of the team. The school usually sends out a reminder to parents earlier in the week to invite some of the older children to join in the drama and they start to arrive one by one as the rehearsal progresses! There is usually just enough time to run through the script twice before all the rest of the school arrives to watch. The children who volunteer to take part in the drama have to read the script and work out what they need to do in an amazingly short time and we are constantly amazed by how quickly they pick up the story and start acting it out.

The ‘Acting the Bible’ team also creates scripts for the Children’s Church at St Nicolas, Forest Hill (1st Sunday of the month. 4-4.30pm) and Messy Church at Stanton St John Village Hall (2nd Sunday of the month, 4-5pm). Leaflets are available in all our churches with more information about regular activities for younger children and families in the Four Parishes, or see www.fourparishes.org.uk/children-and-families.

GENERAL

Happy Spring from The Maple Tree!

Have you visited our lovely Children's Centre in Wheatley recently? All sessions are drop-in, except our popular Maple Chefs, which is bookable via Eventbrite.



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

Tuesdays: Once Upon a Rhyme-Time at 10-11.30am

Wednesdays: Little Explorers at 10-11.30am and Maple Chefs at 1-3pm
(Spaces are limited, so book in advance – bit.ly/mapletreeeb)

Thursdays: Baby and Bump Cafe at 9.30-11.30am and **The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall at 11am-12pm.**

Fridays: Little Chatterboxes at 10-11.30am

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

Check out our Website and Facebook page for more details and look out for our next Paediatric First Aid training.

As we start our new financial year on April the first, we have the challenge of raising nearly £100,000.00 to keep The Maple Tree running for the next year. One of the ways to support our charity is to become A Friend of the Maple Tree, offering monthly financial support. Another way is to volunteer at one of the sessions above. We need support on Mondays and Wednesday, both mornings and afternoons. Are you able to help? (Charity number:1174117)

We are here to help if you need advice or support: 01865 236700 or 07849 466249.

Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley

Instagram: [@themapletreecentre](https://www.instagram.com/themapletreecentre)

Laura Spencer, The Maple Tree Centre Manager

Originally part of the national network of Children's Centres the Maple Tree, based in Littleworth Road, Wheatley, was saved from permanent closure by a group of committed and enthusiastic parents, supporters and the local community. It opened the doors again in August 2017 and is now funded entirely by donations, grants and a busy fundraising programme.

Wanted

GREEN DEFENDERS!

DO YOU CARE ABOUT:

Our countryside & landscape
Affordable housing
Nature & wildlife
Our rivers and water
Dark skies
Food & farming
Footpaths
Renewable energy?

CPRE Oxfordshire (the countryside charity) is urgently looking for planning volunteers to help us make sure new development respects and supports our amazing local countryside.
We can provide all the info and training.

YOU NEED TO BE:

Over 18
A good researcher and writer
Able to offer a few hours a month
Passionate about our countryside.

Whether it's to boost your CV, or look after your countryside, meet like-minded people or just to give something back to the community, we'd love to hear from you:

E: campaign@cpreoxon.org.uk T: 01491 612079
Find out more at www.cpreoxon.org.uk



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY

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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.

This month we have two reports, both from people who live in Forest Hill.

"Back in April 2019, the Holford Trust gave me a grant which enabled me to attend a rowing camp in France. I spent a week there, over the school Easter holidays. We rowed for many hours a day, did yoga in the mornings, raced against each other, rowed at sunrise and sunset, and had a lot of fun!

The intensity of the course meant we all greatly improved our rowing skills. Not only did the trip improve my rowing, it also allowed me to embrace my love for sport, build on my relationships with my crew mates, and further develop my independence and my confidence. It was the first overseas trip I had been on without my parents. When I was younger, I struggled a lot with the anxiety of being away from my parents. Even sleepovers at other peoples houses were a struggle when I was very young. I slowly built up the confidence to go on this rowing trip. It has really stuck with me since then and now I love adventures with friends. I'm currently on a gap year and in a year I'll have visited 16 countries all around the world, all without my parents!



Although I don't row anymore, I still carry with me many life skills that rowing taught me. Organisation, resilience, determination and most of all, confidence.

The Holford Trust gave me the opportunity to experience such an incredible week. Due to the generosity of the trust, I was able to do something that has hugely impacted my life in so many ways."

Abigail Hobbins, Forest Hill

Below is a report from another young person who has received a bursary from the Charity.

“Hi, I’m Annabel and I have been playing piano since I was 6 and I really enjoy it. So my mum could pay for piano lessons the Holford Trust kindly donated money every year for about 5 years. This helps with stuff like books, exams, and concerts which I need regularly to progress my music skills. I am now at Grade 6 which is equivalent to music GCSE.

My piano teacher lives in Wheatley so I can walk to hers after school which is super convenient (except when it rains!). Mostly I play classical but I also enjoy playing other Genres like pop, rock and hip hop. At my school I play in a band with my friends, it’s so much fun to be part of a musical environment at School as well as at my lessons. I listen to music a lot as well as playing, one of my favourites is Taylor Swift. On Saturdays I take part in a club called Sands where we do singing, dancing and drama where I work hard but also enjoy time with friends. I’m so glad to have this opportunity. Playing piano is a real credit so thank you Holford Trust for enabling it.”

Annabel Radford, aged 12, Forest Hill

Dame Elizabeth Holford’s Charity invites applications for grants from 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 Elsfield.

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 where you can obtain an application form. You can also apply in writing to Alison Finch, 14 Mickle Way, Forest Hill, Oxford, OX33 1DX

Wagtails

by Lyn Ebbs

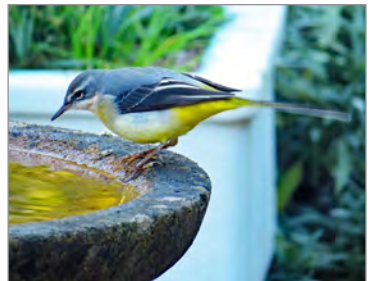
My guess is that you won't have any problem working out the key feature of the wagtail family. I'm going to tell you a bit more on the three species that breed in Britain, where and when you might be able to see them locally, and some of the theories of why they wag their tails. They belong to a genus of elegant small birds that are rarely motionless. When perched their stance is almost horizontal to counter-balance their long tails. They don't hop or walk, they run in short dashes and their flight is characteristically bouncy, accompanied by chirruping calls.



Pied wagtail - Alison Garwood (rsfb-images.com)

Of our three native species the commonest and most familiar is the Pied Wagtail. It's particularly easy to spot in winter as they often form roosts in town centre trees. I frequently see them on the roof of the church and other buildings in Stanton St John at any time of the year. They have a white face with a black bib and crown. The undersides are white, and the back and sides dark grey. Young birds sometimes cause confusion in identification as the black areas are greyer and the white areas yellowish cream. It likes wetlands but is adaptable to a broad range of habitats and is happy to take advantage of human association. Like robins they can be found nesting in some odd locations (usually at ground level) like old tyres or abandoned agricultural machinery.

The Grey Wagtail was previously associated more with upland streams but is now widespread in the south of England. It still has a liking for fast-flowing water but is happy with man-made structures such as weirs and mill streams. It has the longest tail of our three species and is a particularly slim, lithe bird. It's not a full migrant but will move to



lower altitudes and latitudes in the winter, so you may have more chance of seeing them in winter or while on the move in spring and autumn. And I have seen them with young on the River Thames at nearby Waterstock

Mill, so they are local breeders. The word 'grey' doesn't do them justice as the eye-catching colour in their plumage is the bright yellow rump and chest.



The Yellow Wagtail, however, is unapologetically yellow, softening to olive green on the back. With the shortest tail of the three, it also wags it the least. It is a true summer migrant so is more noticeable on passage, feeding at the feet of grazing livestock. This is when and where you can find them on Otmoor. They nest on the

ground in clumps of grass, further away from human contact than their cousins. It's a bird of wet meadows and damp pastures so a combination of habitat loss and the perils of migration means that it is now listed 'red' among birds of conservation concern.

All three are insectivorous, darting to pick up prey, or fly-catching, taking insects in the air. Yellow Wagtails will also take blood sucking insects from the backs of their cattle companions, while Grey Wagtails will wade into shallow water to take insects and even small tadpoles.

So back to the question, why do wagtails wag their tails? There is a totally different Australian bird with a similar name, the Willie Wagtail, which belongs to a family called fantails, and which wags its tail from side-to-side. Close observation at different light levels and times of day has shown that this is a feeding strategy that helps to flush out insects. But ours wag their tails even when preening, so a feeding technique seems unlikely. Also, a mating signal can be ruled out as males, females and juveniles all wag. A third theory is it's a signal to potential predators: "I'm alert, you can't catch me!" Next time you watch a wagtail, see if the wagging rate increases as you get nearer and you could have the answer.



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.

BECKLEY

Beckley 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.

Beckley Survey: Our Village Church

Five years ago the village came together to raise the funds we needed for our church. It worked brilliantly. Thanks to everyone who donated, our church should survive financially.

Now we want it to flourish!

Please go to www.bit.ly/BeckleySurvey and fill in a short online survey, which will take less than five minutes of your time. Regardless of your faith or beliefs, we want to hear your views about our church and its role in our community. The closing date for the survey is 30 April and all results will be anonymised.



Beckley residents will also receive a paper copy of the survey for use in case they are unable to complete it online.

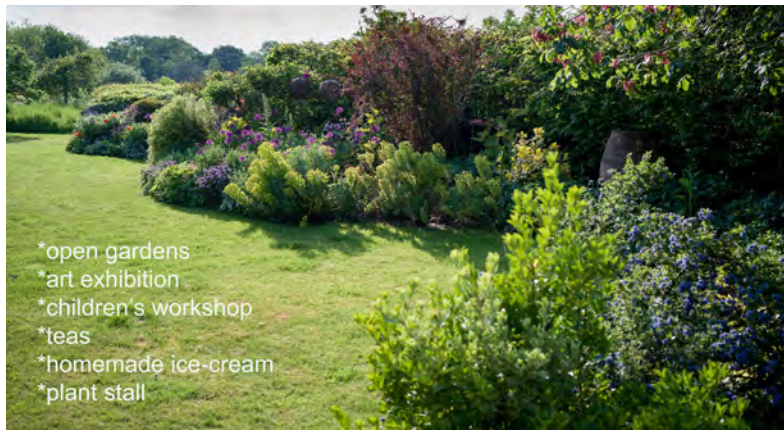
Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Monday 8 April 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. Information about the Parish Council 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 Open Day



Our Biennial Beckley Open Day (often called Beckley Open Gardens), organised by the Parochial Church Council to raise funds for the fabric of our ancient church, will take place this year on Sunday 23 June.

For those new to the village, it's a lovely event that brings us all together. A number of people – the more the merrier – open their gardens for visitors, and this is the main attraction. There are teas in the school hall, a plant stall, a cake stall, home-made ice creams, an art show in the church, and a raffle. Last time we also had some marvellous buskers. We advertise it widely, and some people come back every time, sometimes from quite a distance.

This all requires a lot of organisation and helpers. Nearer the time we shall need plants for the plant stall and on the day, cakes for the cake stall and teas. We also need raffle prizes with a few substantial top prizes (perhaps something like a garden token or a bottle of champagne).

Gina Robson ginarobson5@gmail.com tel: 01865 351637

Susy Jepson susy.jepson@gmail.com tel: 07920 758484

Marion Weinstein 1935 - 2024

Marion Weinstein, who died at the age of 89 on 18 January 2024, lived 40 years of her long and interesting life in Beckley, and contributed hugely to it. She was loved for the twinkle in her eye and her slightly wicked sense of humour.



Marion was born in 1935 in Lisbon, Portugal, because her father was working in British Intelligence, where he was setting up lines of communication in a neutral country in the event of war. When war broke out in 1939, Marion moved to Brussels where she was in the care of a French governess. When she arrived in London without the governess, age 5 or 6, she remembers having little or NO English!

In her own words (taken from her account in a Newsletter of the 90's), her childhood in London was frightening at times: "It was noisy at night: air raids, bombs, ack-ack guns going off in the Park. During the day we picked up shrapnel, sailed boats in the Round Pond and fed the ducks under the shadow of a large barrage balloon. But we lost our home in Kensington to a doodle-bug bomb one lunch time, and my father was caught by another walking back from work ten days later and he died."

Marion's spinal injury, which became more pronounced with old age, was caused by that lunch-time doodle bug, when she had sheltered under a table beneath a doorway, which nevertheless did not withstand the weight of the masonry of the collapsing house.

Her widowed mother went to work as a civil servant in Holborn and Marion seems to have been left to her own devices as a 9 year-old, in charge of doing the shopping if she could find food, and playing with other feral children in the parks and streets, visiting museums and galleries too. Having from a young age navigated her way around her neighbourhood, striking up her own friendships with children and grown-ups without adult supervision, and making her own happiness, perhaps accounts for Marion's straight-talking communication and open nature.

To go back to her account, "Schooling was on and off. I was 12 before going regularly. Teaching infants or nursing was the choice offered to me at 16. I did help in a junior school but chose nursing. I trained at the

Whittington Hospital. We had many chronically ill patients: ex-service men and women, and the civilian population which had lack of care and little health education. The assumption was that in a few years the newly founded NHS would eradicate many of these problems. A lot has been achieved over the past 50 years or so, yet it seems to have taken a long time....”

After working in Edinburgh and Galashiels, Marion moved to Oxford for a Staff Nurse job at 24 as a fully qualified Midwife. While she was travelling on a train with her mother, she met Bill. They all chatted briefly – and as she and her mother left the train, Bill felt a little piece of paper pushed into his hands. It was Marion’s phone number – and the rest is history!

Until Marion met Bill, she had never known real stability in a home life or had unconditional love, and the security he gave her made it possible for her to be anchored for her subsequent activities and activism.

Marion was an activist and fundraiser. Midwifery had led her to campaign for better housing and housing rights, working for the charity Shelter and then doing casework at the Housing Aid Centre in Oxford. She also fundraised with Oxfam for 25 years, campaigned with the National Council of Women, and worked with the Red Cross as a ‘good companion’. With the WI there were many fundraising campaigns too including for the installation of benches that you can still see in Beckley today.

Aptly at Marion’s funeral on 22 February, the family asked for donations for benches for the playing fields at Beckley Village School where Marion hugely enjoyed her involvement and clearly was valued and respected as her School Governorship kept on being extended.

Marion appreciated the joy you get from small things in daily life, magnified after her difficult early years. Her warmth was punctuated by her humour and keen sense of mischief!

Above all she valued loving friendships with her friends and neighbours. As she wrote in the Newsletter after ten years or so here: “Beckley is basically a friendly community, in spite of the busy lives led by most who live here. Neighbourliness is important and it would be sad if this were lost”.

Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd

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

BACBS continues its popular events at our community-owned pub The Abingdon Arms, Beckley, to which all are welcome. Do come, enjoy, and support your local pub.

Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of every month: the next quiz will be on **3 April at 7.30pm** – with pizza! Table bookings advisable - or you can just turn up and join an existing team. Thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

Community walks

Come for a gentle stroll for a couple of hours and meet your neighbours. Our next walk will be on **21 April, 2pm start**.

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 or go to bacbs.org/events.

On **Sunday 28 April, Beckley's own Adrian Pennink** will be talking about, and showing excerpts from, a film he has made for Sky in Gabon, West Africa. It's about a biologist from Macclesfield who in a series of extraordinary circumstances became the Minister of the Environment in Gabon. A white man called White in a French-speaking country, attempting to protect Gabon's vast and incredibly beautiful rain forest. And just as they were finishing the film there was a military coup and both the President and minister were arrested.....

On **Sunday 19 May** (exceptionally not the last Sunday of the month, to avoid the bank holiday), **Professor Peter Heather of Horton-cum-Studley** will be talking about his book *Why empires fall*.

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

To request a lift, ring either 07514 791910 (if no answer, leave a message) or email BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com.

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.

Save the Dates!

The dates for Cream Teas and Summer Music at St Nicolas in 2024 are:

Saturday 22 June

Sunday 28 July

Sunday 25 August

Saturday 21 September

Local musicians of all ages and abilities (including children) are invited to perform in the garden during the afternoon or to take part in an early evening concert in the church. Please contact Julia Stutfield (07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com) for more information. Music in a variety of styles is welcome, especially jazz, folk and classical.

Afternoon Tea at Forest Hill Village Hall

Bring & Share

Saturday

To

20th April

Meet & Greet

3pm-5pm

Whether you have been in the village for weeks, months or years, everyone is welcome - bring some food to share and we'll provide ground coffee and a selection of teas.

Come and meet new faces and familiar faces.

*For further information, please contact Dawn Dunbar
email: dunbardawn@ymail.com tel: 07527 732050*

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 25 April at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall**. This will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the monthly meeting. 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.

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

Forest Hill Litter Pick

Thank you to all the volunteers who turned out to support our Litter Pick in March. We collected around 18 bags plus a number of bulky items.



New 'Content Co-ordinator' for Forest Hill

As many of you will know, Linda Goffey has supported the Four Parishes Magazine for many years as the 'Content Co-ordinator' for Forest Hill, reminding regular contributors about the deadline each month and fielding enquiries from people who are interested in contributing to the magazine. Having decided that she would like to step down this year, Linda has kindly arranged for a replacement, and we are delighted that Stephanie Kitchen has volunteered to take over from her. We would like to thank Linda for all the work she has done over the past years and to welcome Stephanie, whose contact details appear on page 3.



Jazz on the Hill at Forest Hill Village Hall Tuesday 9 April, 7.30-9.30pm

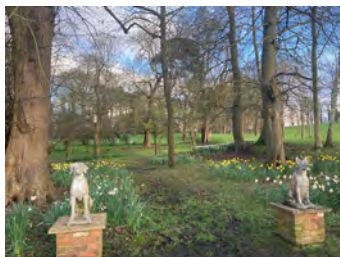


Join Julie, Will and their musician friends to celebrate jazz with plenty of opportunity for instrumentalists and vocalists to make music with a house band, and to take the seat in the rhythm section as well if wished. Or just come to listen and soak up the atmosphere! All welcome. No need to book, just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

Daffodil Day 2024

Preparations for Daffodil Day in March were made considerably more stressful by constant downpours during the preceding weeks but, against all expectations, the sun shone for the whole afternoon and the event was a great success. The organising team, led by Wendy Walker from Forest Hill, worked even harder this year to ensure that all the arrangements for ticketing, parking and refreshments ran as smoothly as possible.



One welcome new feature was a refreshments gazebo on the upper level in front of Shotover House, which aimed to cater particularly for visitors with limited mobility who couldn't get down to the main arcade at the back.

The event raised a total of £3,805 (after deducting expenses for toilet hire and insurance), to be shared equally between St Nicolas Church and The Maple Tree. Both organisations are extremely grateful to the 40 or so volunteers who contributed so much on the day and in the weeks leading up to the event, and to the Shotover Trust and the Stanier family for hosting us.

If you would like to volunteer for Daffodil Day next year, please get in touch with Laura Spencer info@mapletree.org.uk or Julia Stutfield julia.stutfield@gmail.com to find out more about what is involved.

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

Friday 26 April, 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, 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 Village Hall



Do you realise that Forest Hill Village Hall is available for hire at a very reasonable rate?

These pictures were taken at two of the regular events that occur there - the baby and toddler 'stay and play' sessions described above, and the Jazz Night which happens on the second Tuesday of every month. Hire includes use of the kitchen (with fridge, oven, microwave, urn and a selection of crockery and cutlery) as well as several tables and plenty of chairs.



For very young children's parties, there is also an option to use the toys pictured above in return for a small donation.

Email Dawn Dunbar on dunbardawn@ymail.com for more information.

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.

Pop-Up Pub & Social, Friday 5 April, 6-8.30pm

The 'Dog & Collar' is open in St Barnabas Church on the first Friday of each month. All are welcome.

Coffee and Chat, Saturday 11 April, 10am-12pm

Everyone is welcome to pop in to spend some time with neighbours. No charge but donations welcome. Dogs welcome.

Flower arrangers needed

Is there anyone who enjoys arranging flowers who would like to help decorate the Church?

We take on one month each through the year. If anyone would like a go at this creative opportunity please be in touch with Annie Payne: anniefpayne@gmail.com.



Please join us for a
Fundraising Chilli Night

In Aid of the New Village Playground

Saturday 27th April 5.30 for 6pm

The Millennium Village Hall, H-C-S

Raffle, games and quiz

2 course meal

Purchase tickets by 20/4

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07825 190 835 (Claire)

***Please bring your own drink,**

playgroundsubcommittee@gmail.com

plates, glasses and cutlery*

Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council News

The village spring clean will take place over the week-end of 20-21 April, later than normal to avoid the Easter holiday period. This is a great opportunity to help maintain our lovely village by giving a little of your time at any time over that week-end. This year, bags, Hi-Viz jackets, gloves and litter picks will be available from the porch at St Barnabas Church to give greater visibility to and safer access for residents. Filled bags should be returned and will be collected by Cherwell District Council from the church.

The Parish Council met with OCC and SSE in February to discuss how best to minimise the effect on our community of a proposed road closure to install a new electricity supply to The Brambles in Church Lane. With the involvement of some local residents, it was agreed that the 'road closure' part of the work, involving excavating a trench across the road, would take place overnight on two consecutive nights, although SSE expected to be in Church Lane for up to 5 days. It was also agreed that access would continue although there could be delays if vehicles needed to cross (via steel plates) the trench work.

In our efforts to support the 20mph speed limit in the village, we have been changing the 'vehicle approach speed' (VAS) signs, with the support of the various suppliers of these. One has taken much longer to change as it required a special permit from Oxfordshire County Council to use certain machinery at the roadside. The changeover is currently planned for mid-April.

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 11 April, 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall.

David Slingo, Chair

Potato, Sunflower, and Pumpkin Competition 2024

A reminder that you can collect your seed potato(s) from April and pumpkin and sunflower plants from late May/early June. Plants will be left outside 3 Mill Lane. If you would like the full potato competition instructions, would prefer to choose your spud, or have any questions please contact Cathy Jenkins: 07941 245726.

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

The club has enjoyed a lively start to 2024, with new and existing members enjoying a fascinating talk in February by Steve Head: 'A Potted History of Gardens in Britain'. There were plants for sale and, as the weather improves, this regular feature of Club meetings will undoubtedly become an even greater attraction with an expanding variety of offerings available to bring and share.

Unprecedented levels of rainfall in February and March have left many of us wondering how we can adapt our gardens to cope with the 'new normal' of wetter, warmer winters. I have a lot of faith in Nature finding its own ways to develop resilience, but for anyone wanting to help it along and wondering where to start, the RHS website is a rich resource, with guidance on choices to make for wet soils: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/for-places/wet-soils> and information about planting that will thrive in extremes of wet and dry weather: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/for-places/wet-dry-soils>. There is also information about improving clay soils to protect new plantings and also on aerating lawns to avoid unwelcome species from taking over.

On 16 April Katherine Shock will be talking about Sculpture in the Garden – inspired by the Turrill Sculpture Garden in Summertown. We very much look forward to welcoming all comers to join us for a friendly evening and the opportunity to give your garden a head start as the growing season gets underway.

For more information, do get in touch. Meanwhile, may better weather be with us all.



Melanie Jones: Chair
07766 708303
mjcbt2013@gmail.com



We are delighted to announce that this year the Otmoor Challenge will consist of both the traditional half marathon race and a new 10k race. All information on these races (including a GPX course download) can be found on our brand new website www.otmoorchallenge.com. On-line registration is now OPEN via this website and pre-entry is offered at a reduced rate compared to the on-day cost. Prices for event are: 10k = £20/22 UKA/non-UKA or £25 on day, Half = £25/27 UKA/non-UKA or £30 on the day.

For those who enjoy a more relaxed pace, we will continue to provide the walks. There is no pre-registration for the walks; on the day entry only. All details can be found on our website.

We're always looking for volunteers on the day to help with the water stations and field marshalls. If this is something you could commit to then please reach out to us using the "get involved" section of the website or contact us directly. A big thanks to the WI who have again stepped up to serve cakes, tea and coffee on the day. All cake donations on the day would be very welcome too.

We're looking forward to another great event and hope to see you all there either running, walking or cheering friends across the finish line.

With your support, we hope to make the Otmoor Challenge event a success for many years to come.

*Nick Tribble, Chairman, Otmoor Challenge Association
ntribbs@hotmail.com*

Horton-cum-Studley Tennis Club

With spring fast approaching, it is time to dust off your rackets and join us on the courts!



Annual membership runs from 1 April 2024, so now is the time to renew or join us as new members. We are retaining our very competitive prices from last year:

Family Membership: £80

Adult Membership: £47

Junior Membership: £20

If your tennis skills are a bit rusty or you have a child who is eager to learn to play, then please check out our coaching. We are very lucky to have Bart Wisniewski as our head coach. Bart is an LTA Level 4 Senior Club Coach with extensive experience coaching junior players, at club and county level. The Spring coaching programme includes:



Rusty Rackets For adults returning to the game

Red balls For children aged 5-8

Orange Balls For children aged 8-9

Green ball For children aged 9-10

Yellow balls For children aged 10-18



For more information and booking please visit: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/HortonCumStudleyTennisClubOxford>.

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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.

How our Village Church can Thrive



Thank you to everyone who came along on 2 March to take part in the opening discussions. It was wonderful to have 30 people there, and apologies from a further 12 who would have liked to be present.

We look forward to developing the conversation over the coming months and years, as we continue

together to try to ensure that our church in this place thrives on into the future for the community.

Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall

Come for tea, coffee and cake on **Monday 22 April and Wednesday 15 May, 10.30am-12pm.**

Everyone is welcome. For further details, please contact Sue Baker 01865 351449.

Stanton St John Litter Pick

Thank you to all who helped with the Spring cleaning. Every corner of our beautiful parish of Stanton St John was made clean.



BEFORE



AFTER



RESULT

Fariba

Stanton St John Women's Institute (WI)



Stanton St John WI is embarking on its new season with a new President, Wendy Walker. We are extremely grateful to retiring President, Dawn Taylor, for the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication she always brought to the role and aim to continue to live up to her example.

With that in mind we are presenting an interesting and entertaining programme of talks, on the second Tuesday of each month, which should certainly destroy the myth that we are pre-occupied with cakes and jam.

The first talk is definitely not a 'cosy' topic:



"The Forensic Experience"

by

Hayley Scott

7.30pm Tuesday 9 April 2024

Stanton St John Village Hall

Hayley Scott, who has worked for the Metropolitan Police for 14 years as a Crime Scene Investigator, will share her experiences with us. As she takes us into the world of forensic science, we will find out what actually happens behind the crime scene tape.

This meeting is open to everyone, free-of-charge to SSJ WI members, £4 for guests (refreshments included).

Stanton St John Parish Council

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Monday 22 April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.**

Please come along and find out what the Parish Council does, as well as other organisations in the village. The Parish Council wants to hear your views on what services and facilities you would like in the village.

Anita James

Clerk & RFO to Stanton St John Parish Council

Film Night in Stanton St John Village Hall

Saturday 27 April, 7pm

The Stanton St John Film Club presents the Oscar-studded 2023 movie:



OPPENHEIMER

Christopher Nolan's complex, vivid portrait of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," is a brilliant achievement in formal and conceptual terms.

Due to its three-hour length, the film will start earlier than usual at 7pm and there will be a short interval in the middle of the film. The doors will be open at 6.30pm and before the film and in the interval delicious cakes and drinks will be available, whilst the bar will serve wines and "Oppenheim" cocktails.

Since only 60 seats are available in the Village Hall, please reserve your seats for the screenings as soon as possible 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.



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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 Turt 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

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.

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