

The Four Parishes News Magazine

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



July/August 2025

The editor writes



I can't believe that we are already almost half way through 2025! The warm days and long light evenings are very precious at this time of year, but the passing of the Summer Solstice is a sad reminder that they are already on the wane.

Ironically, on one of our hottest days so far this year, I found myself working on plans for renewing the heating in the church at Forest Hill! The current electric heaters were installed in 1959 and, although they are not quite as old as I am, they are definitely in need of replacement.

This brings me neatly to my next subject. By the end of this year, I will have been editor of this magazine for 8 years and I really feel it is time to hand over to someone else. If you have the necessary skills and you want to contribute to our community, please come and talk to me about it.

As regular readers know, there is no separate magazine in August because the editorial and distribution teams take a well deserved rest. With renewed thanks to everyone who keeps this magazine going, I hope you all have a lovely summer, whatever you are doing.

Don't forget that you can use the QR code to read this magazine on your phone or tablet when you can no longer find the paper copy.



Julia

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

Our cover photo

was taken by Anthea Beresford.

If you have taken a photo which you think might be suitable for the cover of the next magazine, please email it to

4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com

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

Vicar: Reverend Anthea Beresford

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

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

The closing date for the September 2025 issue is 15 August 2025

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

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

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

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

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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, July 2025

	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
6 July <i>3rd Sunday after Trinity</i>	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Morning Prayer
	4pm Four Parishes Children's Church at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
13 July <i>4th Sunday after Trinity</i>		9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	4pm Four Parishes Crafty Church at Stanton St John Village Hall			
	6pm Four Parishes Choral Evensong at St Nicolas, Forest Hill (with St Nicolas Choir)			
20 July <i>5th Sunday after Trinity</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion		11am Morning Prayer
	6pm Iona Service Summer Celebration at Beckley Church			
27 July <i>6th Sunday after Trinity</i>	10am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at Beckley Church			
	4pm Family Church does Forest Church Summer Celebration The Green, Horton-cum-Studley			
	6pm Taizé Service via Zoom			

Family Church does Forest Church Summer Celebration

27 July 4-5pm on Horton-cum-Studley Village Green

Family Church does Forest Church warmly invites everyone to a summer celebration (with story, games and songs) on the village green. All ages welcome! With love from Anthea and Laura x PS No need to book, just come along! Bring a favourite outdoor game to play.



Church Services in the Four Parishes, August 2025

	St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	St John the Baptist, Stanton St John	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	St Barnabas, Horton-cum- Studley
3 August <i>7th Sunday after Trinity</i>	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion	
	4pm Four Parishes Children's Church at St Nicolas, Forest Hill			
10 August <i>8th Sunday after Trinity</i>		9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Four Parishes Choral Evensong at St Nicolas, Forest Hill (with St Nicolas Choir)			
17 August <i>9th Sunday after Trinity</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion	6pm 'Pimms and Praise'	
24 August <i>10th Sunday after Trinity or Bartholomew the Apostle</i>	10am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley			
	6pm Taizé Service via Zoom			
31 August <i>11th Sunday after Trinity</i>	11am Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer	

For more information about 'Pimms and Praise' in Beckley Church on Sunday 17 August at 6pm, see page 19.

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

Episcopal Visitation

On 2 June, I went with Pat Fraser, Andrew Payne, Julia Slingo, Carla Stanley and Jane Walker, to St Mary's, Wallingford, for the Episcopal Visitation Service. What is that I hear some ask! Well, as the Archdeacon and Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester, The Venerable David Tyler and The Reverend Prebendary Jane Haslam said in their 'Welcome' in the service sheet:

'This is first and foremost an active worship, in which we give thanks to God for his faithfulness to us and to our churches. It is also an important opportunity for us to give thanks to and for our Churchwardens, and to thank them for their commitment, dedication and sheer hard work in serving our parishes in a thousand and one practical ways. As we formally admit them into office for this coming year, we rejoice at all that they represent and for the life of our churches across the Dorchester Episcopal Area, for the communities we serve, and for the life, worship and witness of our churches.'

The evening was a wonderful occasion and a moving act of worship, as Pat, Andrew, Julia, Carla and Jane were admitted to the office of Churchwarden, for this coming year. For all but Carla, this was for a further year, and for Carla, her first. I would like to thank them all for their willingness to serve us in the Four Parishes, and I look forward to our working together over the coming year. Please do hold them in your prayers as they serve us in this demanding role.

Anthea

Editor's Note:

The office of Churchwarden was established in the 13th Century. Their original function was care of the church building and its contents, but they also have responsibilities in connection with the Sunday services and for keeping order in the church: in the unlikely event of a major disturbance within (or immediately outside) the church, the Churchwardens have the power to arrest anyone or escort them off the premises if necessary!

Churchwardens are the legal guardians of the church's moveable goods, and are required to keep an accurate, up-to-date inventory of these items, as well as maintaining records of all professional inspections, alterations and repairs. Churchwardens are elected annually and, despite the huge responsibility, the position is wholly voluntary.

A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,

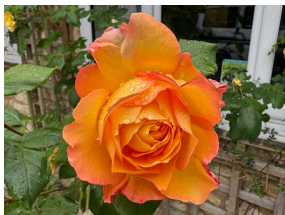


For many people, we are coming towards the time of summer holidays. As I sat thinking about this season, I remembered finishing last month's letter speaking of 'refreshment' as we were looking forward in early June to celebrating Pentecost in our churches around the Four Parishes. I reminded us that in the Christian calendar, this is the time when we especially think of being refreshed by the Holy Spirit, and I said I hoped that all of us, whether Christian or someone of another faith, or no faith, may be refreshed by whatever brings us refreshment.

The thought of the summer holiday season has kept me on the theme of refreshment, as this period should hopefully be a time of relaxation and refreshment – a break from the constant treadmill that many end up on – of rushing to get ourselves and our families up and out of the house in time for work, school, college etc.; the constant pressure of deadlines from wherever they come; the 'to-do' list, that seems to get ever longer, however much we jam into each day, whatever our situation.



Even if the holiday is adventurous and active, or involves busily rushing from one sightseeing adventure to another, we should hopefully, even if physically tired, find refreshment in the change of routine and environment.



I find a change in 'place', even if only for a short while, extremely refreshing in itself – the different surroundings, experiences, sights, smells, help to recharge my batteries and reset me, ready for the start of new challenges and experiences on my return.

Refreshment comes in many guises for both people and for nature. Different people find different things refreshing. On several occasions recently, as I have been lying in bed trying to sleep in the summer heat, I have been aware of torrential rain. To begin with I have wondered what the noise is and have leapt out of bed to check! I love the sound of heavy

rain in the summer, especially if it is at night, and not while I am trying to enjoy a summer stroll, BBQ, or sitting enjoying a drink with family and friends in the garden on a summer's evening! I love watching it pound down, waiting for the lovely smell of fresh rain on the ground to reach my nose. It also makes me think of the good it is doing for the crops, grass and gardens, all desperate for rain to bring refreshment.

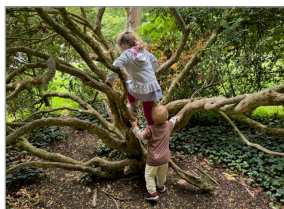
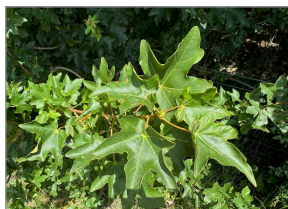
As I have said in previous years, not everyone can or chooses to go away over the summer. Not all are fortunate enough to be able to, and not all wish to. Some of us simply try to have a gentler pace of life over the period and wait to go away later when it is less busy, or go earlier in the year. For some, the thought of going away is not appealing in the least! Whatever we do, I hope we can all take a bit of time to look after ourselves and take some refreshment – sometimes it is only when we do, that we realise how much we need it.

There is a lot going on in the world that may be stressful and worrying for many. I hope you can find some distractions to these, not to pretend they are not going on, but to ensure we do not become over-wrought by them. If you are especially worried about anything, please do find someone to talk to. I am always here to listen if it would help. The troubles on our mind do not simply disappear, but, as the saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved.

Whatever is your own way of seeking refreshment, I hope you find it. And as the summer unfolds, may we all allow ourselves the grace to rest, to be renewed, refreshed, and to offer a little kindness and gentleness to ourselves and those around us.

As I say, 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

Church opening and services

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

Advent challenge and beyond

I wonder how your reading of the New Testament is coming along. At the time of writing this, I still remain slightly behind! So as with last month, I have a little catching up to do. One day I will bring you better news on my personal progress! I think it is a message of encouragement that if you are behind, please do not get dispirited but keep going, as I am. Let's encourage each other.

In July we will aim to finish our reading of the Acts of the Apostles and read up to chapter 14 of Romans. In August, we will aim to finish Romans, read all of 1 Corinthians, up to chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians. I look forward to hearing how you get on. Please do let me know.

Ongoing midweek activities on Zoom

We are continuing Morning and Evening Prayer and the Four Parishes Book Group on Zoom as detailed. Please do get in touch with me for invitations.

	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Morning Prayer at 9am		Y		Y
Evening Prayer at 6pm	Y		Y	
Four Parishes Book Group at 7.30pm			Y	

Book Group

We are now reading *Living Jesus* by John Pritchard. We are going nice and slowly so there is still plenty of time for you to join us if you have been thinking about doing so. We meet virtually by Zoom on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm for an hour. Please do get in touch with Anthea in you would like to come join us. New members are always welcome.

Home Group Study on Acts of the Apostles

The study group is taking a break over the summer and will be back on again in September. We will let you know timings of that. In the meantime, if you have been thinking about joining in, do get in touch with Annie

Payne to chat about it. Annie Payne can be initially contacted by email at anniefpayne@gmail.com.

Prayers for Peace

As the situation in the Holy Land and the Middle East continues to move further and further away from peace, with hostilities between Israel and Iran, with America joining in, with discussions for peace in Ukraine seemingly making little progress, and news of unrest from Yemen, Sudan and Myanmar continuing to come through, it is clear that God's peace is not present throughout the world, so we continue to pray for peace. We will meet for 15 minutes at 12pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays in July and August across the Four Parishes as follows:

	July	August
Beckley	9, 19	6, 16
Forest Hill	2, 12, 30	9, 27
Horton-cum-Studley	16, 26	13, 23
Stanton St John	5, 23	2, 20, 30

Children's Craft Workshops in Beckley Church

There is a Craft Workshop in Beckley Church on **Friday 11 July from 3.30-4.30pm** where we will be looking at **God the Creator** using bread! Come along and see what my plans are! I am sure we will have lots of fun.

The workshops are aimed at primary school children and are run by the 'Acting the Bible and 'Crafty Church' teams, and other helpers – 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 will be light refreshments. Please book in beforehand by emailing betty.dye10@gmail.com. Thank you.

Betty Dye

For more information about any of the items on pages 10-11 of the magazine, please contact me, Anthea Beresford.

Email: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk

Telephone: 01865 351839 Mobile: 07876 527514

GENERAL

Local Government Reorganisation: proposal for 'Greater Oxford'

Following my article in the May Four Parishes Magazine, we now have more details of the rival proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire and part of Berkshire, including Oxford City Council's proposals for a 'Greater Oxford Unitary Authority'. In his two letters and recent statement to parliament the minister stated his main criteria - that existing district council boundaries should be used as building blocks for the new unitary authorities, and that the population should be 500,000+.

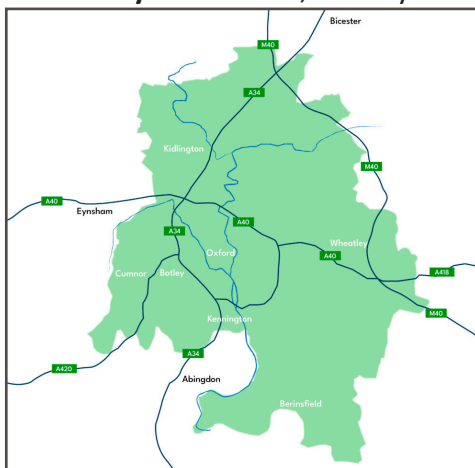
a. Oxfordshire County Council has put forward plans for a single unitary authority.

b. Five councils have a plan for two unitary authorities, namely:

- an "Oxford and Shires Council" replacing Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.
- a "Ridgeway Council" made up of West Berkshire Council's area, along with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

c. Oxford City Council proposes three unitary authorities, namely:

- a "Greater Oxford Council", made up of Oxford City and surrounding Green Belt parishes (see map).
- a "Northern Oxfordshire Council" covering most of the existing Cherwell and West Oxfordshire districts.
- a "Ridgeway Council", covering most of the existing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse



districts combined with existing West Berkshire, but with those villages within the Green Belt closest to the city becoming part of Greater Oxford.

Oxford City Council's proposal for 'Greater Oxford' involves the annexation of 48 rural parishes in the Green Belt surrounding Oxford,

including all our local parishes. It extends from Wendlebury and Weston-on-the-Green in the north to Dorchester and Shillingford in the south, Appleton and Farmoor in the west to Waterperry and Milton Common in the east. It does not meet the minister's main criteria on population or comply with the requirement to use current district council boundaries as building block.

Oxford City Council states (in blue):

"Greater Oxford would cover a region with a population of about 240,000 people today, rising to about 345,000 by 2040." Oxford's current population is 165,200 so it would maintain numerical superiority and control over the annexed parishes and Green Belt.

"A greater Oxford council would enable the creation of an additional 43,000-67,000 new homes by 2040." This is substantially higher than local demand and would see significant amounts of Green Belt countryside, especially on the edge of Oxford, given up for development. LnBB (1,450 dwellings), Northfields (3,000) and Grenoble Road (1,800) are already being developed to meet Oxford's 'unmet need' with nearly 2,000 acres of former Green Belt countryside.

"This would create between 17,900 and 29,100 new jobs in Greater Oxford, which would generate up to £2bn a year for the UK's economy." Oxford has a much lower unemployment than the national average and workers would need to be imported to fill these new jobs. However, the City Council has not solved the substantial problem of how these commuters could travel into Oxford.

All the proposals compete with one another and only the County Council's proposal meets the criterion of a population of 500,000+. The County Council currently provides 80% of services - notably social services (the largest budget) education, highways, fire and rescue etc. The competing proposals must satisfy us how they would provide these services, how much it would cost to set them up and whether they have the skills, competence and experience to provide them. The Five Councils have stated that the County Council would continue to provide social services, but if their proposals went ahead the County Council would no longer exist. Currently District Councils provide planning and rubbish collection, but not across the new boundaries they propose.

Our local parish councils and community groups have already written to the minister saying we don't want to be part of 'Greater Oxford' (see copy of letter in April Four Parishes Magazine) and Kidlington Parish Council has done the same. We are working with Kidlington Parish Council and writing to all the 48 Parish Councils which would be annexed asking them to campaign together against 'Greater Oxford'. Beckley Parish C will be organising a public meeting in September and inviting each of the proposed unitary authorities to present their plans and answer questions. Local residents will be invited.

The minister said in his letter of 16 December 2024 that he wants one proposal from each area/county. He reiterated this in his recent statement of 3 June <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2025-06-03/hcws676>.

Ginette Camps-Walsh, Beckley

More information about the 'Greater Oxford' proposal can be found at <https://greateroxford.org/>.



Photograph by Tomos Hawkins, Horton-cum-Studley

Your Own Juice

Apples and pears pressed to make your own juice with your own label. Or we can use your excess fruit so it doesn't go to waste & helps the marginalised in society.

Andrew & Mandy Myatt
07941 072071
oxfordfarmhouse@icloud.com
www.oxfordfarmhouse.org



Situations wanted

Highly professional and qualified carer who lives locally. Experienced with mild dementia and general companionship. Available daily or live in. theotmoorcarer@gmail.com.

Volunteering Opportunity: Layout Designer

The Four Parishes News Magazine is still looking to recruit a Layout Designer with experience of Adobe InDesign software.

The role of the Layout Designer will be to create specific pages of the magazine, with text and images arranged in accordance with the overall 'house style' of the publication. Currently this work is all done by the Editor, and you will be working under her supervision. You will need to own, or have access to, a current licence for Adobe InDesign. Other qualities required are:

- The ability to work to a deadline
- Good communication skills
- A good command of spelling and grammar

This position is entirely voluntary, as are all the roles associated with this magazine, but we may be able to cover the cost of the InDesign Licence. You would be joining a strong and supportive editorial team and developing your own skills as well as serving our village community. If you would like more information, please contact Julia Stutfield at 4parishesnewsletter@gmail.com.

Damselfs and Dragons

by Lyn Ebbs

This article isn't about Medieval myths but about some of our most charismatic insects. Assuming that we get more warm, sunny days over the next two months, now is a good time to look out for dragonflies and damselflies. The group of insects that includes dragonflies and damselflies is called Odonata. The name derives from the Greek word for teeth and refers to their carnivorous lifestyle. These insects have relatively large, rounded heads with well-developed, compound eyes, which provide good vision, two pairs of long, transparent wings that move independently, and elongated abdomens.

Both dragonflies and damselflies have aquatic larvae called nymphs. While the adults are almost entirely insectivorous, in their larval stage they will eat anything that they can overpower, including small fish, tadpoles, and even adult newts. The adults are superb aerial hunters, and use their legs for catching prey in flight.

There are 57 British species of Odonata. Some are very localised and require specialised habitats that we don't have in Oxfordshire, so in our neighbourhood you are unlikely to come across more than 20. With a good field guide such as Steve Brooks's 'Dragonflies and Damselflies of Great Britain and Ireland', with Richard Lewington's superb illustrations, you should be able to identify most that you find.



As their name implies, damselflies are delicate-looking insects, with long slender bodies and two pairs of wings that are the same shape. Their flight looks weak and fluttering and when they are at rest, their wings are usually held close to the abdomen.

In many species of damselfly, the males are more brightly coloured, while the females are plainer, cryptically coloured. This is true in the case of two of the most striking species you can see locally, Beautiful Demoiselle and Banded Demoiselle. These demoiselles are more sturdy than other damselflies, with broad, heavily-veined wings. If you find a stream or pool



that they favour, you can often observe lekking behaviour, where several males gather to carry out elaborate courtship displays, and compete for the attention of females.

Dragonflies are built on a larger scale than damselflies, with noticeably larger eyes – the largest among insects. The eyes surround the head and dragonflies are able to see in front, to the side and behind all at the same time. They also have excellent colour vision, which is not surprising when you note their vibrant colours and markings. The front and back wings are dissimilar in shape, the back pair being broader. Dragonflies also hold their wings outstretched when they are perched. The wings are attached directly to the thorax by a narrow flexible joint and each wing is capable of moving independently. In fact, one of the most fascinating features of dragonfly watching is to see their manoeuvrability in flight. As well as forwards, dragonflies are able to fly sideways and backwards, change direction, vary their speed and even hover. Some tropical species even undertake long migratory flights.



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Our locally-seen dragonflies all fall into the different groups that are named for their hunting styles, and they also differ in appearance. While hawkers have long slim abdomens with parallel sides, those of chasers and skimmers are broader and taper towards the tip. Darters are the reverse, being slim in the middle and broadening at the tip.



In spite of the name, Odonata, damsels and dragons are not harmful to humans and won't bite, however, humans can be harmful to both. They like clean, unpolluted water with an abundance of insect life in which to lay their eggs and over which to hunt their prey. For abundance, species variety and number of records, Otmoor is probably Oxfordshire's premier dragonfly site. Whitecross Green Wood is also a rich dragonfly site. Early in the day, before their flight muscles have warmed up is the best time to see them perched but to watch them in flight a still, sunny day is best.

Lyn Ebbs has lived in Stanton St John for 37 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.

Gina Robson

Gina Robson has stood down as Churchwarden, after more than twenty years of dedicated service. Gina has served the Church faithfully and diligently for all this time, doing many tasks that are not direct roles of a Churchwarden, but that need doing for the efficient running of the village church, as well as discharging those that form part of the responsibilities of a Churchwarden. A huge 'thank you' to her for her work over all these years.

As we might expect, Gina is continuing to help with everything she can, but this does mean we no longer have a Churchwarden in Beckley Church. We would be grateful for support from the village as we try to continue to serve the village as your Church. Watch this space for requests for help!

Anthea

Book Borrow, Exchange, Swap, in the Church

Do come in at any time to look at our 'library', which is now quite extensive, and includes some children's books too. If you borrow or swap a book please put your name in the small notebook provided so that we can see how much people are using the 'system'!

Coffee (or tea!), Cake and Chat
Saturday 26 July and Saturday 30 August
10.30am-12pm in Beckley Church



Please drop in for coffee (or tea), cake and fellowship, and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours, and meet newcomers.

Everyone welcome! Please do come and join us, and perhaps have a look at our 'library', which is now quite extensive!

‘Pimms and Praise’ in Beckley Church

On **Sunday 17 August at 6pm in Beckley Church** we are planning a ‘Pimms and Praise’ event to celebrate our Patronal Festival. In the Anglican Church, the Patronal Festival is the feast of the community’s patron or the feast to which the parish is dedicated, which for Beckley falls on 15 August.

Please do let us know beforehand if you have a favourite hymn, to ensure we have the words printed for everyone. We can enjoy a feast of singing favourite hymns, as we moisten our vocal cords with sips of Pimms in between each one. If we have too many suggested hymns, we will select at random.

Please email the name of your favourite hymn to Gina Robson at ginarobson5@gmail.com, Susy Jepson at susy.jepson@gmail.com or Anthea at anthea@fourparishes.org.uk.

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

The Good Neighbour Scheme gives lifts to those with no other transport – for example, to the doctors and village shop in Stanton as well as lifts to the Barton/Green Road roundabout, where there are regular buses into Headington and central Oxford. The scheme serves Beckley, Elsfield, Stanton, Forest Hill, Woodeaton, and Noke.

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



13 Middle Road, Stanton St. John
01865 351532 / 07795415819
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Monday to Friday 9am-2pm, Saturday 9am-1pm & Sunday 9-11am

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Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd (BACBS)

Open share offer

The share offer to support the future of The Abingdon Arms is still open. Shareholders are entitled to 10% off food and drink at the pub: for further information email theabingdonarms@gmail.com.

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. For more information email info@bacbs.org or visit <https://bacbs.org/events>.

We are taking a break in August so there will be no More than a Pub activities then.

Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm - with pizza! The next one will be on **Wednesday 2 July**. Table bookings advisable - or you can just turn up and join an existing team. We suggest that teams should comprise no more than six people. No charge to enter, and thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

Community walks

On **Sunday 27 July** Chris White will lead a gentle walk of about two hours that he has named 'Shotover – a walk through time – with ice cream': meet at 2 pm at the car park at the Old Road end of Shotover.

Sunday evening talks

Last Sunday of the month, 6.30 pm in the pub.

27 July - Anna Beer: '“Murder She Wrote” – Oxford style' will be exploring what exactly delights us in crime fiction and asking just why so many murder mysteries are set in Oxford. Anna has been thinking a lot about these matters as she has just published her first murder mystery. And it's set in Oxford (and a village nearby...).

When we resume our activities **in September**, **Mary Stuck** from Horton-cum-Studley will give a talk titled '**R D Blackmore and Cripps the Carrier**'. The Victorian author R D Blackmore is best known as the author of *Lorna Doone*, but having spent his early life in Elsfield, he set several of his historical novels around these villages, including *Cripps the Carrier*.

Beckley & Stowood Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Monday 14 July at 7pm in Beckley Village Hall.**

Meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be found on the village website www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk. The Clerk's email address is clerk@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.

Make a difference to Beckley and Stowood Parish!

- **Get involved with your community**
- **Have a say about the local issues people care about**
- **Influence local service delivery and how the parish develops**
- **Decide how local money is spent to improve your community**

A casual vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council and the PC will co-opt a new councillor.

If you have aspirations for our parish and enthusiasm in shaping how it will develop in future, please consider standing for the parish council.

We normally meet on the second Monday of the month at 7pm in the village hall. We have a Parish Clerk, Sue Cox, to support us and there is additional work between meetings.

If you are interested, please email Sue Cox: clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk. An information pack is available. To be eligible to become a Parish Councillor you must be 18 and you need to live or work in the parish or within 3 miles of it. More details are available in the pack.

If you want to create wildlife corridors in the parish, protect our countryside and fellow parishioners from threats from large developments, provide new facilities/services for residents, make the roads safer for children, shape the design of housing in the parish or keep Beckley beautiful by clearing the village pond and picking up litter, your contribution to the parish council could make all the difference.

Beckley Park's history in the time of the Feilding Family by Helen Weinstein

As we mark the sad passing of Amanda Feilding, who has died aged 82, a loving custodian of Beckley Park, I've been asked to write up some of my historical discoveries about her home, the unique hunting lodge and garden, and to give an insight into Amanda Feilding's guardianship of this heritage site and the special place that Beckley Park had in her heart.

Beckley Park is of special historical significance because the present brick edifice was built as a royal hunting lodge in Tudor times by Sir John Williams, who became Lord Williams of Thame. The house has been remarkably untouched since, partly because the descendants of Lord Williams, the Earls of Abingdon, were always absentee landlords, renting out the house and farmland on short leases to local farmers, who had no commercial interest in altering and modernising the farmhouse itself.



In 1919 the Earl of Abingdon, Viscount Bertie of Thame, put up for sale his entire estate in and around Beckley and Horton-cum-Studley dividing it into many sale lots. It was therefore from this estate sale that "Lower Park Farm" was purchased by Amanda Feilding's grandparents, Percy and Clotilde. When I met up with Amanda Feilding to show her the 1919 sale documents, she reminisced about the early days of the Feilding family stewardship of the estate, whilst we sat on an elegant bench in the late summer sunshine, haphazard hollyhocks splendidly flowering amidst the stone path bridge over the moat leading to the south front door.

Amanda told me that her grandparents purchased the property because they fell in love with it "for the romance of the place". Growing up at Beckley Park, Amanda described how the estate was a working farm because her memories from childhood were of playing out in nature in the surrounding fields but also in the farm buildings.



Amanda explained to me that Beckley Park was built on a kind of island

of 3 old moats, and because it was a working farm, these moats were left in poor repair and surrounded by lots of old stonework and sheds, and therefore there was no accompanying decorative garden surrounding the house. Clotilde and Percy had the imagination and experience, Amanda said, to mirror the architecture of the house with sculptural forms in a structured garden. They created the magical character of the gardens making a series of rooms out of yew tree hedges, which were only 18 inches high when planted in the early 1920s. This planting has made for a fairy-tale garden that Amanda has so cherished, where the tiny hedges grew speedily, nurtured by the rich clay soil of Otmoor.

It was her Grandfather Percy Feilding and her Father Basil Percy Feilding who spent hours dutifully shaping the structures for the topiary in the gardens, but it was her Grandmother Clotilde's inspirational influence that Amanda Feilding drew on to create her own landscape extensions to the property. Just over ten years ago Amanda added a new body of water, a small lake, with an island adorned with stone plinths, just visible through the reeds and bull-rushes from the parkland bench by the moat. With the spoil heap from the lake, Amanda had a viewing mound created beyond the hunting lodge, offering a fantastic new vista of the topiary gardens and the house within, the lake and mound a tribute to Amanda's spiritual connection to the place.

We can end this history feature with Amanda Feilding's own words, showing that Beckley is special because the combination of heritage and landscape and wildlife is what deeply connects us and makes us love this place we call our home. Amanda Feilding had a long and wonderful life, embracing the qualities that Beckley had to offer: "I've always felt that Beckley is part of my soul. I know every sound, every creek, every note of birdsong. I have a spiritual connection with this place and the garden is very much part of that. It nourishes and embraces me."



RIP Amanda Feilding, born 30 January 1943, died 22 May 2025

Note: Helen Weinstein is working on a community history of Beckley, therefore if you have old photos, property documents, newspapers, artefacts, please be in touch to share these for the village history project. You can contact Helen on historyworks@gmail.com or visit her at Old Manor House, corner of High Street and Otmoor Lane, Beckley.

FOREST HILL

St Nicolas 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.

Churchwardens

Jane Walker and Pat Fraser have been admitted to the Office of Churchwarden once again. A huge 'thank you' to them both for agreeing to continue in this important role. For more information see page 7.

Open Organ Morning at St Nicolas

Saturday 19 July and Saturday 16 August

This is "Play the Organ Year 2025"! Please come along if you are interested in hearing, playing or learning about our 1883 Pipe Organ in a very user friendly way. I promise this will not be scary!

Drop in any time between **10am and 12.30pm**, when I will be happy to demonstrate. Bring some keyboard music if you like. All ages are welcome, but children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Ring me on 01865 876848 or use the contact form at <https://www.stnicolasforesthill.org/contact> for more details, or if you would like to arrange a more convenient time to visit.

Peter Stutfield, Organist, St Nicolas Church

Cream Teas and Summer Music at St Nicolas

Sunday 27 July and Sunday 24 August

Cream teas will be served **from 3.30-5pm**, with tables laid out in the church garden and a gazebo available for shade or shelter if the weather is less than ideal! There may be live music in the garden during the afternoon and there will be a short **concert in the church at 5.15pm**, usually involving local musicians, with drinks in the garden afterwards. The atmosphere



is friendly and informal, and it is a delightful way to meet old and new friends, as well as supporting our beautiful ancient church.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 3 July at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall.**

Dates of future meetings can be found on the Parish Council 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 and the website. Archived agendas and minutes can be found on the website. You can contact the Clerk by email at: theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk or telephone 0844 884 3328 (premium rate), between 9am and 5pm.

Reminders from the Parish Council

The speed limit all over the village is 20 mph, including Mickle Way. Please drive carefully and observe the speed limit at all times.

Keep all dogs supervised and under control when using the Recreation Ground. Please clean up after your dog.

Forest Hill Village Hall

Our village hall provides a welcoming communal space for all to use. Regular events include weekly exercise classes and a baby and toddler group, as well as the monthly 'Jazz on the Hill'.

To hire the village hall, email Stephen Robinson: spr500@gmail.com.

The Maple Tree at Forest Hill, Thursdays 10.30am-12pm

The Thursday morning 'stay and play' sessions for babies and toddlers continue to run in Forest Hill Village Hall every week throughout the year under the supervision of Maple Tree Manager, Laura Spencer, with the help of regular volunteers from Forest Hill and Stanton St John.



There is no need to book, but please email julia.stutfield@gmail.com if you have any questions. Children must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent or carer.

For a full list of activities run by The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley, see www.mapletree.org.uk.

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

St Barnabas 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.

Churchwardens

Julia Slingo and Andrew Payne have been admitted to the Office of Churchwarden once again. A huge 'thank you' to them both for agreeing to continue in this important role. For more information see page 7.



The Dog and Collar (St Barnabas)

The Dog and Collar at St Barnabas opens its doors for the next popup social on **Friday 4 July, 6-8.30pm**.

Come and join friends and fellow villagers for a beer, wine or soft drink. Everyone is welcome!

No Dog and Collar in August; back on Friday 5 September.

Coffee and Chat

Saturday 12 July and 9 August, 10am-12pm

Everyone is welcome to pop into St Barnabas Church to spend some time with neighbours for coffee and cake. No charge, but donations always welcomed.

Summer Cream Teas in St Barnabas Churchyard

Sunday 6 July and Sunday 3 August, 2.30 – 4.30pm

Cream teas will be served in the churchyard to raise funds for the church. All welcome.

Family Church does Forest Church

Sunday 27 July, 4-5pm on Horton-cum-Studley Village Green

Family Church does Forest Church warmly invites everyone to a summer celebration (with story, games and songs) on the village green. No need to book, just come along! Bring a favourite outdoor game to play.

Dates for your diary

Michaelmas Fayre, Saturday 27 September 12–2pm, Manor Farm

We want to make it a really good Fayre this year to help raise much needed funds for the ongoing running and upkeep of St Barnabas and all villagers are invited to be involved. All offers of help please to lisamynheer@gmail.com. We will be very grateful nearer the time for donations of books (novels or paperbacks, rather than coffee table type books); good quality bric-a-brac; nearly new; raffle prizes; cakes; plants; produce; offers to make soup; offers to help run stalls. So never too early to think about what you may be able to donate/offer.

Celebrating the Organ at St Barnabas, Sunday 26 October

Forty years after the organ was installed in our village church the final piece of carved casework has been fitted. The organ, which replaced an earlier defunct instrument, was designed by Richard Vendome and built by villagers under the direction of Gordon Curtis (late of H-c-S). The new carved panel will be dedicated during the morning church service at 10am, and Richard Vendome and friends will give a concert at 3pm.

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

Our gardens look particularly beautiful at this time of year but the combination of rain (very welcome) and sun has kept gardeners busy with all the weeding, clipping and dead-heading. There is much to celebrate in June with old favourites such as roses, peonies, alliums, geraniums (cranesbills), aquilegias (granny's bonnet) and foxgloves all in bloom. Rapidly growing herbaceous plants need supporting - woven hazel looks particularly lovely. Look out for lily beetles (bright red) and the rather smart rosemary beetles (shiny metallic green, with longitudinal bronze stripes) and do destroy them before they do too much damage. Evenings are a good time for therapeutic squashing of these pests.

But don't be too tidy. Please leave some of your lawn unmown and include a patch of nettles and other plants (weeds) for caterpillars and pollinators.

Garden club members are looking forward to outings, our summer social and a great autumn programme of talks starting in October. New members are very welcome. If you are interested in learning more, please contact the chairman, Sue Burge (01865 351310).

Mailing List for Horton-cum-Studley

The Parish Council has an Email Distribution List to make it easier for residents of our village to receive information. The emails will inform and remind people about village events but will not be used to offer services commercially. We may occasionally send out important messages, e.g. from the Parish Council or on behalf of other local public services.

All details are kept in a secure database and the individual's email address will not be visible on any message sent by this distribution list. The option to unsubscribe will appear at the foot of all email communications. The distribution list will only contain addresses of people who have signed up via a form which is available from the Parish Clerk at hortoncumstudleyparishcouncil@gmail.com.

Parish Council meetings, open to all in the village, are normally held on the second Thursday of the month, 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall, although there will be no meeting in August.

Restricted Byway



Immediately after the houses on Ragnalls Lane, it then becomes a Restricted Byway.

A Restricted Byway is a type of public right of way where the public has a right to travel on foot, horseback, bicycle or horse drawn carriage. There is no access for motorised vehicles such as motorbikes or cars no matter how they are they are powered, (petrol, diesel electric vehicles are all banned as are quad bikes).

After this sign the only vehicular access to this Restricted Byway is for the owners of the land beyond that sign, and their access is to their own property and not onwards down the lane. Being a resident of the village does not mean that access is allowed.

There is a sign posted at the end of Ragnalls Lane to notify that there is a Restricted Byway ahead, with a further sign at the start of the restricted area.

Please respect this road sign.

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.

New Churchwarden

After a long vacancy, following the death of Sheila Pullen and resignation of Deirdre Young, after many years of dedicated service, Carla Stanley has been admitted to the Office of Churchwarden. A huge 'thank you' to Carla for taking on this important role. For more information see page 7.

Monthly Coffee Mornings in Stanton Village Hall, 10.30am-12pm

Friday 11 July and Wednesday 20 August. Come for tea, coffee and cake! Everyone is welcome. For further details, contact Sue Baker 01865 351449.

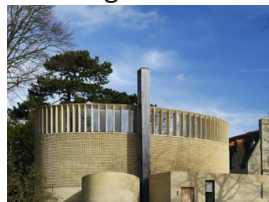
Oxybaroxy Concert, Sunday 6 July at 7pm

OxyBaroxy (Oxfordshire Youth Baroque Strings) is an Oxfordshire Music Service Chamber Group, which offers young string players the opportunity to explore 17th and 18th Century string repertoire using Baroque bows and period performance practice. This popular and talented ensemble is performing in Stanton church once again. The concert is free. There will be a retiring collection to be shared between The Oxfordshire Fund for Music and Stanton St John Church. Please come along and support these young musicians!

Stanton St John Women's Institute



We very much enjoyed our June meeting, with its talk by Mike Brook, 'Top of the Greasy Pole'. In his stories about some of the 54 individuals who have served in 10 Downing Street, we learned some interesting history along with his amusing anecdotes. In July and August we are having some rest and relaxation, and have a visit to nearby Ripon College planned. But we will be back in September with more activities, including a craft fair. If you want to see our full programme, you can pick up our leaflet in Stanton St John Village Shop.



Thank you

Flowers and a voucher were given to Elaine Warner following a collection by villagers to say ‘thank you’ for running the much-used village email for approximately 25 years with exceptional efficiency. One recent incident shows how valuable her service has been when a resident experiencing surface water flooding put out a call over “Elaine’s email” for buckets and help at 8am. Hastily circulated, within minutes 7 people (including Elaine), were at her house and what would have been a full-scale flood, was successfully avoided.



The parish council have now taken on the role and anyone who would like to receive Stanton St John news by email is encouraged to enter the following into their browser where it will ask for their email address:
<https://stanton-st-john-news.email>.

Stanton St John Film Club



Stanton St John Film Club brought you a varied programme of films over the 2024-2025 season.

- September 2024 -My Donkey, My Lover and I
- November 2024 - One Life
- December 2024 - The Holdovers
- January 2025 - The Old Oak
- February 2025 - Fly Me to the Moon
- March 2025 - Wilding
- April 2025 – Conclave
- May 2025 – I’m Still Here



As we enjoy a summer break, we would like to thank all our supporters who came to watch some or all of them. And a special thank you to the volunteers who made the delicious cakes, served the hot drinks and wine and made the evenings such a great all-round entertainment.

We look forward to welcoming you back in September with an equally interesting programme.

Stanton St John Parish Council

The Parish Council met on 19 May, where Cllr Andrew Clark and Cllr Dina Cooper were re-elected as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

A key concern raised during public participation was the inadequate external lighting at the Village Hall. The Council acknowledged the issue and confirmed it remains under active review. The matter of who will fund necessary improvements is ongoing.

Planning matters were discussed in detail. The Council approved several local planning applications, including extensions at properties on Bayswater Road, Silver Birches, and the School House on Wheatley Road. A significant development—the conversion of The Star Inn into residential units—was granted permission.

Progress was reported on various initiatives. The New Distribution News service is being successfully circulated. If you would like to receive village and Parish Council updates, then please do subscribe <https://stanton-st-john-news.email>.

The Traffic Working Party met ahead of a public meeting on 22 May to explore traffic calming measures.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 14 July at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

* * * * *





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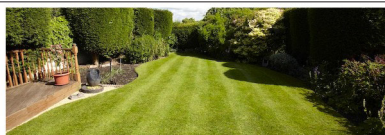
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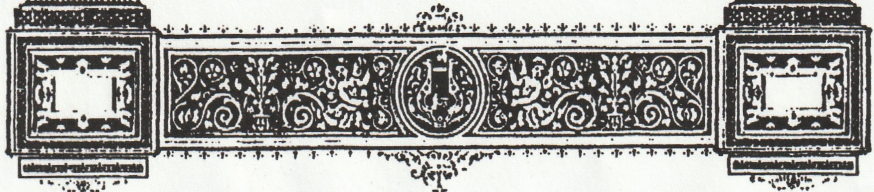
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Changes to stopping arrangements in Stanton St John

From Monday 21 July 2025, Red Rose service 108 will operate via Middle Road and Pound Lane in Stanton St John, serving the stop outside the village shop. Most journeys during opening hours will also pull into the Rectory Farm Pick Your Own site. The revised timetable is below.

MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (except Public Holidays)

Bicester Pioneer Square (Stand 1)	-	-	1120	1430	-
Langford Village, o/s Medical Practice	-	-	1130	1440	-
Blackthorn, Bus Shelter	-	-	-	1449	-
Piddington, o/s Arncott Road Bus Shelter	-	-	-	1454	-
Horton-cum-Studley, opp Forge Close	0715	0905	1145	1505	-
Beckley, opp The Abingdon Arms	0723	0913	1153	1513	-
Forest Hill, adj Powell Close	0732	0922	1202	1522	1634
Stanton St John, Village Shop	0736	0926	1206	1526	1638
Stanton St John, Rectory Farm*	-	-	1208*	1528*	1640*
Beckley, opp The Abingdon Arms	-	-	-	-	1645
Headington Shops (Stop HS2)	0754	0936	1218	1538	1655
Headington Brookes University (Stop B5)	0759	0941	1223	1543	1700
Oxford High Street (Stop L2)	0814	0955	1237	1557	1715

Oxford High Street (Stop T2)	-	1010	1310	1610	1745
Headington Brookes University (Stop B2)	-	1021	1321	1621	1801
Headington Shops (Stop HS6)	-	1025	1325	1625	1805
Forest Hill, adj Powell Close	-	-	1334	1634	1814
Stanton St John, Village Shop	-	-	1338	1638	1818
Stanton St John, Rectory Farm*	-	-	1340*	1640*	-
Beckley, o/s The Abingdon Arms	-	-	1345	1645	1823
Horton-cum-Studley, adj Forge Close	-	1035	1352	-	1830
Boarstall, adj St James's Church	-	1040	1357	-	-
Piddington, opp Arncott Road Bus Shelter	-	1046	-	-	-
Blackthorn, Bus Shelter	-	1051	-	-	-
Langford Village, o/s Medical Practice	-	1100	1412	-	-
Bicester Pioneer Square (Stand 1)	-	1110	1422	-	-

Note: * Rectory Farm, Stanton St John is closed on Mondays and throughout January and February. Rectory Farm is not served at these times.

No service on Sundays and Public Holidays.