

The Four Parishes News Magazine

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



Rainbow over Stanton St John Church, October 2025

February 2026

The editor writes



I want to start by wishing a belated 'Happy New Year' to everyone! I know it will probably be February by the time most people read this, but it seems a shame to miss out on the possibility of delivering an optimistic and upbeat greeting, just because we don't produce a January edition of the magazine.

When I first took over as editor, I had ideas of changing this, mainly because it does seem rather strange to be reading about what we did at Christmas when thoughts are already turning towards the promise of Spring. The alternative of ignoring Christmas altogether doesn't really work either, but having now been editor for more than 8 years, I very much appreciate the break, so we have made the usual compromise with mention of a few Christmas 'highlights' alongside all the forward-looking content.

We have lots of interesting articles this month, so do be sure to read through the 'General' section as well as the pages for your own particular village. Don't forget to check out our advertisers, whose loyal support for our publication in a changing world is very much appreciated.

Finally, as I have said many times before, remember 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. Or simply type fourparishes.org.uk/magazine into your web browser.

Julia



All contributions to and advertisements in 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 Dina Cooper from Stanton St John

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

The Four Parishes News Magazine

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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 March 2026 issue is 15 February 2026

**To advertise in the magazine please email [JULIA
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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

Layout Designer: Catherine Matthews

Assistant Editors: Jonathan Barker, Anthea Beresford

Church Services in the Four Parishes, February 2026

	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
1 February <i>Presentation of Christ</i> <i>Candlemas</i>	11am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion		11am Morning Prayer
	4pm Four Parishes Children's Church at Forest Hill			
	6pm Four Parishes Candlemas Service of Holy Communion at Beckley			
	6pm Four Parishes Church Without Walls at Stanton St John Village Hall			
8 February <i>2nd Sunday of Lent</i>		9.30am Morning Prayer	9.30am Morning Prayer	11am Holy Communion
	6pm Four Parishes Choral Evensong at Forest Hill			
15 February <i>Sunday next before Lent</i>	11am BCP Morning Prayer	9.30am Holy Communion		11am Morning Prayer
	6pm Four Parishes Iona Service at Beckley			
18 February <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	7.30pm Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at Stanton St John			
22 February <i>1st Sunday of Lent</i>	10am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at Forest Hill			
	3pm Four Parishes Family Church does Forest Church at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley			
	6pm Four Parishes Taizé Service on Zoom			

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

A letter from Anthea

Hi everyone,



I wonder how you have coped with January. I think it is generally seen as a rather tough month to get through. All the Christmas festivities are behind us, and even if they were hugely enjoyable, we might have been pretty exhausted by the end of them. The initial enjoyment of the peace and quiet soon evaporates, and we have this long, dark month ahead of us. It often seems a bit of an endurance to get through, doesn't it. Daylight hours are minimum, and if the weather is not good, we need our lights on most of the time. And some of us have not even got fond memories of family and friends gathering for the festivities to keep us going for a while.

Some may have been struggling to keep warm, as fuel is expensive and this is obviously the time of year that our boilers fail!

But January is over by the time you read this! And I do not sense it has been quite as bad as it might sometimes be. I have not been squelching up to my ankles, if not knees, in mud, as I have walked Bertie – let's hope I'm not speaking too soon! He has been delighted not having had to be hosed down too often after a walk, so he is a happy chap. There was even half a day when I got really excited because it snowed – I think that was just a ploy to have happy children as they returned to school after the Christmas holiday. I was just saddened that it did not last longer!



What I have loved about this last month has been watching and hearing nature wake up from its winters rest. I appreciate we are still in winter, but already there are signs of spring life. I recall a couple of walks in particular when the sun shone brightly, and the ground was crisp with frost under my feet. The sky was a beautiful bright blue, with barely a cloud in the sky.

As I have been walking this last month, I have heard the beautiful sounds of the songbirds. I love searching for who is making the noise, looking into the trees or the hedgerows. The proud robins and blackbirds singing

away. At the time of writing I had already spotted many snowdrops, a few crocuses, catkins, leaf buds on the tress and in the hedgerows just beginning to burst open, and even primroses in flower. I've loved seeing the red kites 'floating' in the sky. And interestingly, even on misty days, enjoyed seeing the view shrouded from sight, making the surroundings even more atmospheric.



I feel so fortunate being able to be out and about and to see these things, as I know from the news that many are suffering in different parts of the world at the moment, and indeed there are people nearer to home who cannot afford to heat their homes, stock their larders, dress in warm clothes, or have family and friends to care for them, or who have other burdens. I know of many in our communities who are ill or waiting for diagnoses, and staff who are working flat out, and still waiting lists grow. I know of people who have lost loved ones recently, and others who continue to feel the pain and emptiness of losses in time past.

Church may not be a place where you have previously gone for company or comfort, but please be assured there will always be a warm welcome – maybe not from the building, but definitely from the people! There are also activities online that may appeal, as well as coffee mornings, and even a monthly pub. Do think about coming along to any of these.

I hope you can enjoy these lengthening days, and the springing of spring, and the coming to life of all that is beautiful about the spring.

And as ever, 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 Four Parishes are open daily. Beckley 10am-6pm; Forest Hill, Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John: 10am-4pm.

Christmas in the Four Parishes

Christmas already seems quite a time ago, but I wanted to thank everyone who contributed in any way across the Four Parishes to help us celebrate Christmas in our churches and communities – from cleaning the churches and decorating them, to singing carols and encouraging people to get involved in a huge variety of different ways. I had a wonderful time and hope you did too. I will not attempt to remember the many different contributions, as I will miss something critical, but I give my heartfelt thanks to everyone.

Candlemas: 1 February

If you love seeing our churches in candlelight, please do come and join us for this special service of **Holy Communion at 6pm on 1 February in Beckley Church.**

All are welcome. If you want to know more about this service, please do contact Anthea.

Advent challenge and beyond

Finishing the ‘beyond’ challenge from Advent 2024: if you were still journeying with me, I hope you got to the end of your reading of the New Testament in the year, and I hope you have found the whole challenge fruitful and enriching. It is quite some commitment to keep going throughout the whole year. Well done for keeping on keeping going.

Advent challenge 2025: I wonder if you took part in my challenge to read the Gospel of Matthew during Advent. If you did, I hope it was enriching to have read the whole of the gospel narrative as part of your preparations for Christmas when we once again celebrated the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us.

The ‘beyond’ challenge for Advent 2025: I hope some of you have decided to take up my challenge along with me to read the whole Bible this year. If you have, I wonder if you are on track. I am surprising myself that at the time of writing this, I am on track! Quite amazing! I wonder if this is the

only month I can report this! Let's hope not! If you are behind, please do not get dispirited but keep going. We can do this!

For February, for the Old Testament, we need to aim to finish the Book of Job, read the whole of Exodus, Leviticus up to chapter 5:13, Psalms up to chapter 27 and Proverbs up to chapter 6:11. For the New Testament, we need to aim to finish the Gospel of Matthew and read the Gospel of Mark up to chapter 10:31. I look forward to hearing how you get on. Please do let me know. It will be great to journey together.

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 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	
Four Parishes Book Group at 7.30pm			Y	

Book Group

We are continuing our reading of *The Wrong Messiah* by Nick Page. We meet virtually by **Zoom on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm** for an hour. We will shortly be choosing a book to read for Lent.

Please do get in touch with Anthea if you would like to come along virtually. All are welcome.

Home Group Study

The study group is looking at the book called *Practising the Way* by John Mark Comer. The group meets on **Monday afternoons at 2.30pm at Studley Farm House, Horton-cum-Studley.**

New members are always welcome, and 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.

Dates for your diary and preparation for Lent and Easter

Ash Wednesday: 18 February

There is a Service of **Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at 7.30pm on Ash Wednesday, 18 February, in Stanton St John**. All are welcome. If you want to know more on what this is about, please do get in touch with Anthea.

Come and See: Lent 2026



What it is: the Diocese of Oxford 'Come and See' initiative takes place each Lent. It is part of their (and hence the Four Parishes, being part of the Diocese of Oxford) common vision to become a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world. It invites new people to discover Christ and helps the whole church to be formed as more confident disciples, living out our everyday faith.

I am hoping that many of us in the Four Parishes will join in this Lent. Those who have partaken in previous years, in person, online or by reading the resources at home, have found it a fruitful experience.

The theme for 2026: this year's course – the Bishop of Oxford, Bishop Steven's last before his retirement – looks at one of the core celebrations of the church, the Eucharist, (which is also known as Holy Communion, Communion, Mass, the Jesus Meal). Bishop Steven will be examining it from a Biblical and theological perspective as a means of building our faith and growing our relationship with Jesus. The course is for enquirers, and new and established Christians alike, and offers a new perspective on the Eucharist and its place within the Christian faith.

How to be involved:

- in person: we will meet in **Stanton Village Hall on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9pm during Lent (with the exception of Holy Week), and one week afterwards, so six sessions on 25 February, 4, 11, 18 and 25 March, and 8 April.** We will watch a short film from Bishop Steven, Bishop of Oxford, on the topic for the week, and then have a chat about the film in a friendly informal space, with refreshments to keep us going.
- through emails for individuals: you can register online for ‘Come and See’ at: oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see. Everyone who signs up will receive a daily email with a short, written reflection that they can also listen to if they wish. Each Sunday, they will receive a link to a short film from Bishop Steven. You may wish to sign up for these in addition to coming in person on a Wednesday evening.

I look forward to us journeying together through Lent using the ‘Come and See’ resources as we seek to further understand the Eucharist. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Passion Play in Beckley for the Four Parishes: 4 April

It is very exciting that Beckley plans to host their Passion Play once more this year on Holy Saturday. This is being led by Beckley Church which is keen for this to be a Four Parishes event, so participants are being sought from across the Four Parishes. See page 23 for more information, and please do think about taking part, or coming along to watch. It should once again be a powerful experience.

Prayers for Peace

As the ceasefire in the Holy Land continues to look fragile, hope for peace in Ukraine continues to look far off, and news of atrocities in Sudan, Myanmar, Mozambique and Iran continue 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 February across the Four Parishes as follows:

Beckley	18 and 28
Forest Hill	11 and 21
Horton-cum-Studley	7 and 25
Stanton	4 and 14

Revision of electoral rolls

Each year a formal process is undertaken by every Parochial Church Council (PCC), as preparation for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), to ensure the electoral roll's accuracy. Most years this involves a simple update to the existing roll and involves no action from people already on their church's electoral roll. This is the situation this year. Action is only required if you wish to join an electoral roll or leave one. If you wish to do so, please talk to your Church's Electoral Roll Officer or Anthea:

Beckley:	Gina Robson	(01865 351637)
Forest Hill:	Pat Fraser	(01865 875679)
Horton-cum-Studley:	Carol Welch	carol_welch20@hotmail.com
Stanton St John:	Sue Baker	(01865 351449)

Private devotions during Lent

There is a vast array of books available to us to help us engage with the season of Lent. Here are some suggestions from me:

Cries from the Homeland: Reflections of Jesus' Sayings from the Cross
by Guli Francis-Dehqani

Wardrobes and Rings: Through Lenten Lands with the Inklings
by Julia Golding, Malcolm Guite and Simon Horobin

Dancing to the Heartbeat of God
by the Anglican Communion (around 30 authors from around the globe)

Meeting God in John: a companion for Lent, Holy Week and beyond
by David F Ford

Lent with the beloved disciple
by Malcolm Marshall

Walking with God: 40 daily reflections
by J John

If you decide to read any of these, I would love to hear how you get on. If you read something else that you think others might be interested to hear about for the future, please do let me know.

For more information about any of the items on pages 8-12 of the magazine, please contact me, Anthea Beresford. Email: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk Tel: 01865 351839 Mob: 07876 527514.

GENERAL

Situations Wanted

Marta Pieprzak - carer

Experienced carer seeks private work. Highly regarded, compassionate, kind, and dedicated, with 10 years experience in patient's homes as live-in carer. Mature lady with local references and extended DBS, own transport. Can undertake personal care, administer medication, meal preparation and shopping.

Email: marta.pieprzak@gmail.com.

Four Parishes Community Shop

The committee is working hard on putting together a business plan. However, they do need more responses to the survey (see ad on back page) to ensure funding. If you are interested in a community hub where we can buy basics and have a cup of coffee please fill it in! Thank you.

Sara Strong BEM

Beckley resident Sara Strong has been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Oxfordshire in the New Year's Honours List.

The BEM was revived in 2012 to recognise those making a difference to their local communities. Sara is the founder and lead organiser of the Oxford Christmas Lunch, which has grown to become the largest Christmas Day event of its kind in the country, with over 500 guests, including the elderly, refugee families, the homeless, people in food poverty and those who'd simply rather not be alone at Christmas. An unusual feature of the lunch is that over 150 volunteers pick up guests, transport them to the venue and eat alongside them, thus providing company as well as food.



The citation also references her work for Oxford Samaritans and the Oxfordshire-based charity Dogs for Good.

Don't be Scared of the Dark

by Lyn Ebbs

Although February is clearly a winter month, it feels transitional; by the 28th you may be leaving work in daylight. While that is welcome, don't be too quick to bid farewell to dark evenings, they have their compensations too.

The full moon on 3 January 2026 was a Supermoon, so called because it was both full, and at the closest point in its orbit to Earth. January's full moon is also called the Wolf Moon, a traditional Native American name as the cold, quiet nights of January were when wolves could be heard howling. Our next full moon is on 1 February but if you are interested at looking at the moon's craters it's better to wait until later in the month, as the flat surface of the full moon doesn't show the shadows of the craters' edges.



In the days (or nights) before widespread artificial lighting, the full moon was welcomed as making night-time travel less hazardous. A group of 18th Century intellectuals even called themselves The Lunar Society of Birmingham as this was how they scheduled their meetings. The members included Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles, Josiah Wedgwood, pottery manufacturer, and Joseph Priestly, who discovered oxygen.

Humble folk also benefitted from the light of the full moon. As a farm labourer you had to work for your boss throughout daylight hours, so tending your own garden could only be done by the light of the Parish Lantern, a nickname for the moon.

Another celestial object showing well currently is Jupiter, the largest gas giant of our solar system. On 10 January, Jupiter was at its closest point to Earth, called opposition, when it is on the opposite side of the Earth to the Sun. You can still see Jupiter in the southeastern sky right after sunset, where it will outshine every star in the sky. To the naked eye it will be a bright white spot. If you use binoculars you might just be able to see some of its Galilean moons as tiny points of light. The



Jupiter and its moons

four largest moons of Jupiter – Callisto, Ganymede, Europa and Io – are named after the lovers of the god Zeus, Roman Jupiter’s equivalent in Greek mythology.

Before the evenings become lighter, your eye may be caught by much smaller objects if you are driving after dark. Have you thought then: “Did I just see a moth?” You may well have been right. The Winter Moth is a



broad, pale brown moth and is one of the few species that can be seen on the wing in winter.

These are the moths you’re likely to see fluttering in car headlights at this time of year. They fly at night and are attracted to lights, though you can also find them resting on tree trunks. Female Winter Moths have stubby wings and cannot fly.

They clamber up a tree trunk and give off pheromones to attract flying males. The males of the more imaginatively named Pale Brindled Beauty also fly from January to March, searching for their completely wingless females, which similarly have climbed up tree-trunks.

If star-gazing or moth hunting don’t appeal, you could still step outside and listen. Loud barks may not be neighbourhood dogs or even foxes; Muntjacs are known as the ‘barking deer’, and the bark is repeated and loud for its size. They vocalise in many different situations but as they breed all year round and are fairly solitary, barking is a key way for bucks and does to communicate.

And of course, it couldn’t be a dark winter’s evening without the classic, nocturnal ‘twit twoo’ call of the Tawny Owl. Young Tawnies typically establish a territory by late autumn which they defend, and are most unlikely to leave, for the rest of their lives. Nocturnal vocalisations are common throughout the year but particularly in autumn, late winter and early spring. So, embrace the dark side.



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.

Local Government Reorganisation Update, February 2026

A public consultation on Local Government reorganisation in Oxfordshire will be launched this month. It is the opportunity for us to inform the Secretary of State, Steve Reed and Minister, Alison McGovern, of our preferred option for unitary authority (ies) for Oxfordshire. However, the Secretary of State and Minister will make the decision.

Looking at planning and development, which is probably the main area of concern for our Four Parishes in the Green Belt around Oxford, which option would be preferred?

Three Councils Option – Greater Oxford

As discussed previously Oxford City Council's proposal plans to annex the 48 Green Belt parishes around Oxford to build 40,000-67,000 houses on the edge of Oxford. This would destroy 2,250 acres of our Green Belt countryside and create urban sprawl to expand Oxford, without improving access for commuters.

Two Councils Option – Ridgeway (SODC, Vale and West Berks) and Shires (Cherwell, Oxford and West Oxon)

Would this two council option be any better as far as development in the Green Belt is concerned?

We have already seen a Local Plan that concentrates on building in the Green Belt countryside on the edge of Oxford. The outline planning permission for Land north of Bayswater Brook for 1,570 dwellings, was approved in October. There are further Green Belt sites at Northfields and Grenoble Road etc. yet to be approved. The emerging Joint Local Plan, which was thrown out by Inspectors in the summer is due to be restarted as the Government has removed the 'Duty to Co-operate' (mainly taking Oxford's 'unmet housing need'). The emerging Local Plan seeks to confirm development on the former Green Belt sites around Oxford, and remove the only non-Green Belt brown field site, Chalgrove. These plans will see the destruction of 1,903 acres of former Green Belt countryside and building of approximately 12,070 dwellings. Overall it will deliver 5-8,000 above local need.

The new 'grey belt' legislation is proving a new opportunity for developers resulting in yet more Green Belt development, and more immediate destruction of the Green Belt outside any approved and adopted Plan,

with little input from elected councillors. The decisions are being made by non-elected Officers on a case by case basis and have already resulted in 'grey belt' sites in the middle of Beckley village and other local Green Belt villages. The 'Grey Belt' will not be officially designated in a Local Plan with public consultation until an entirely new Local Plan is developed (years after the emerging one is determined). How many sites will have been deemed 'grey belt' before then and how much more Green Belt given up for many more houses?

One Council Option - One Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council is not currently responsible for planning. This lies with district councils, although they are responsible for some planning such as highways etc.

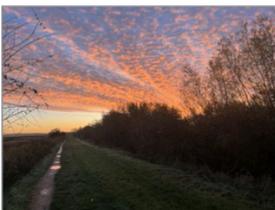
“One Oxfordshire will create a single local planning authority, streamlining decision making, resources and governance.” Their submission to the Minister includes delivering approved Local Plan developments.

They will – “Develop a single local plan for Oxfordshire adopted on accelerated timescales by the end of 2028/29”

It is likely that junior Planning Officers will be recruited from Districts, with a new senior planning team. New development will be across the whole county rather than concentrated in the Green Belt around Oxford.

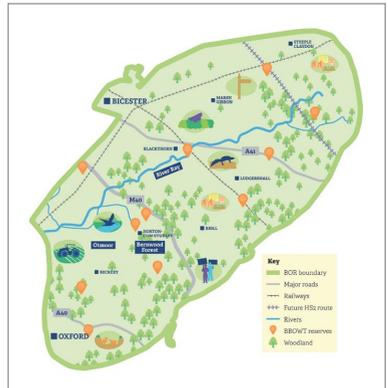
Please do join in and submit your responses to the Government consultation. It is important to make your views known, as the result will affect: how much council tax you pay, the quality of local services and how they are delivered, and how much Green Belt countryside is given up for development.

Ginette Camps-Walsh Beckley



Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and the Ray (RBOR)

Reconnecting Bernwood, Otmoor and the Ray (RBOR) is an exciting landscape-scale nature restoration, communities, and heritage programme sitting across the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border between Bicester, Oxford, and Aylesbury. This unique landscape is made up of a mosaic of various habitats, including wetlands, woodlands, farmland, rivers and brooks, meadows, urban centres and rural communities. It is home to many species, including the rare and endangered curlew, black and brown hairstreak butterfly and Bechstein's bat to name just a few – as well as just under 106,000 people and a fascinating cultural heritage dating back centuries.



However, the landscape is massively threatened and is being increasingly degraded and fragmented. It is under enormous development pressure from housing, particularly around Bicester and Oxford, and national infrastructure projects such as HS2 and East-West rail. The land is also marked by historic intensive agricultural practices, and the River Ray is one of the most ecologically devastated tributaries of the Thames due to high levels of modification and pollution.

Organisational structure and projects

The RBOR Partnership, made up of eleven organisations and led by the Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), has been awarded £500,000 of initial funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop this programme in collaboration with local communities, landowners, organisations, and councils. In October 2026, we will reapply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to hopefully unlock five years of funding for our project delivery.

We are exploring and developing eleven projects that fall within three themes of work: connecting nature to nature, connecting people and nature and connecting people to each other. The activities within these strands include habitat creation and surveys, citizen science, environmental activism, archaeology, nature and wellbeing, supporting the development

of local greenspaces, storytelling and art, and working with young people and communities living in urban areas.

Achievements so far

We have worked with our partners and other community groups and organisations to deliver a variety of exciting events in the first seven months of the programme. In May, we worked with Butterfly Conservation to teach an amazing team of volunteers how to use UV torches to survey for black and brown hairstreak larvae – which glow in the dark! We found 38 larvae at BBOWT's Finemere Wood nature reserve during the training session, and 139 across the private sites surveyed by our volunteers through April and May. This effort was even picked up by local media, who featured us on BBC South Today and BBC Radio Oxford.

In September, Earthwatch Europe led our first water quality testing event as part of their nationwide Great UK Waterblitz. We held it in Harvest@Home's Garth Garden in Bicester and found that the water samples we gathered from a litter strewn stream were actually much better quality than tap water from the team's bottles and had far fewer nitrates and phosphates! Lots of passersby popped in to see us and we managed to give away all our water quality kits for people to use in their own time.

In October, we delivered a workshop in Oxford with Dr Helena Chance exploring the history of environmental activism in the Bernwood-Otmoor-Ray landscape. This ranged from the anti-enclosure Otmoor Riots of the 1830s, to a protest against the extension of the M40 through Otmoor in the 1970s, and, more recently, to successful protests against sewage pollution in rivers during the early 2020s. We had great turnout, and lots of interesting discussions.

Finally, we ran an event in Grendon Underwood to encourage people to support nature in their back gardens by making bug hotels, bucket ponds, and log piles. We were delighted to see so many people there and hope a variety of critters will enjoy their new homes!

We've loved working with local communities to run these events and to start co-designing project ideas for the next phase of RBOR. If you would be interested in getting involved or would like to find out more about opportunities through the RBOR programme, please get in touch at rbor@bbowt.org.uk.

Update from the 108 Bus Users Support Group

On behalf of the 108 Bus Users Support Group we would like to express our condolences to the Leeding family on the death of Malcolm Leeding, a much-loved member of our group. Malcolm's great contribution to transport and the Council has been substantial and tireless. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his devotion towards 'his people' in Forest Hill as the transport representative on the Otmoor Flyer Organisers Group which transformed itself into the 108 group in November 2023. Malcolm's gentle sense of humour and his public service to the Four Parishes via the Parish Council in Forest Hill was quiet yet dedicated to improving the well-being of local people. He is sorely missed by the 108 Bus Users Support Group. We are grateful to Wendy Walker for stepping into Malcolm's shoes to serve as our representative in Forest Hill.

Tim Darch and Dave Harrison at Oxfordshire County Council have had their meeting with the Managing Director plus another Manager at Red Rose with whom they had a lengthy discussion and put across their concerns. They discussed the Turl Street stop but concluded there was little to be done apart from earlier suggestions for passengers to ensure that the driver can see they are waiting at the stop. It is just the Oxford traffic which requires awareness and a degree of patience.

The 108 Bus Users Support Group is in regular contact with Tim Darch at Oxfordshire County Council. Please do get in touch with any of our members to report back on your experiences or difficulties in any aspect of using the 108 Bus Service. Your feedback is vital.

Jill Meyjes and Kate MacFarlane - 108 Bus Users Support Group

Beckley: Anne Purse - anne.purse@gmail.com

Horton-cum-Studley: Jill Meyjes - jill.meyjes@gmail.com

Kate MacFarlane - katemacson@hotmail.co.uk

Stanton St John: David Polgreen - david@hillviewers.net

Dee Hazell - d.hazell84@btinternet.com

Forest Hill: Wendy Walker - wendybmi@hotmail.com

The Maple Tree Children's Centre, Wheatley

This term we have had a few tweaks to our schedule!

Mondays: Messy Monday (back by popular demand) at 10-11.30am and **Twins' Club** at 2-4pm

Tuesdays: Smart Start at 9.30-11.30am

Wednesdays: Maple Babies at 9.30am-12pm

Thursdays: Time to Rhyme at 9.30-11.30am and **The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall** from 10.30am-12pm

Fridays: Little Learners at 10-11.30am

Saturdays: Family Fun at 10-11.30am on 21 February, 14 March and 18 April.

We will be open every morning during the February half-term and most days during the Easter holiday – please check our website or social media for details.

We are here to help if you need advice or support:

Telephone: 01865 236700 Email: info@mapletree.org.uk

Website: www.mapletree.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley



Laura Spencer, The Maple Tree Centre Manager

'Real Easter Eggs'

Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter eggs sold each year in the UK, The Real Easter Egg from the Meaningful Chocolate Company <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/> is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter egg to share the Easter story. The Real Easter Egg campaign has been running since 2010 and involves thousands of churches, schools and groups. It crosses all denominations and offers individuals a simple way to share the Easter Story while supporting Fairtrade and charitable projects.

Every 150g egg comes with a large 24-page story and activity book about Easter together with a prize competition. Milk chocolate eggs are £5.50 each and dark chocolate eggs cost £6.50 each. **Please order them through Hugh Lee (hugh.lee@btinternet.com or 01865 316245) before Sunday 8 March.** Hugh will arrange delivery to you and tell you how you can pay.

Birdwatching for Beginners



Do you find corvids confusing? Does birdsong leave you baffled? If so, RSPB Oxford Local Group has the course for you.



In three sessions – two in the classroom, plus a longer birdwatching walk – with friendly and knowledgeable local birders, you can learn what many common birds look and sound like, plus bird behaviour, their habitats, distribution and migration.

Talks:
The Village Hall
Middle Road, Stanton St John
OX33 1HD
11 and 18 April 2026
9.00 to 11.00
(light refreshments provided)
Plus a weekend walk later in the spring (date and venue will depend on weather conditions).



The course costs £30.00 for all three sessions. You don't need to be a member of the Local Group. The course is aimed at over 16s but keen 12-16s can enrol if accompanied by a responsible adult. Places are limited to ensure that everyone has a good experience, so please book early. For more details or to book, email info.rspbxford@gmail.com. (Profits are donated to RSPB Otmoor.)

Beckley Bells: an invitation

Beckley Bells meet in Beckley Village Hall on Tuesday afternoons during school term to ring a set of 25 handbells, mostly for fun, but occasionally for public performance.

Handbells have been around for thousands of years, yet the handbells used today are sophisticated and beautiful precision instruments. Handbell ringing is gaining in popularity and you can find out a bit more about it from the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain website <https://handbells.org.uk/>. It is very much a team effort, requiring good co-ordination and a level of musical aptitude, as well as a basic ability to read music. Our Beckley group has no conductor and ringers take turns in giving directions such as setting a suitable tempo for a piece.

We currently have space for a few more ringers and would love to welcome some new members. If you want to find out more about us, please contact Sue Cloke sue.cloke@outlook.com and arrange to drop into one of our afternoon sessions.

BECKLEY

Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 12. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Carols and Claret

Always a wonderful start to Christmas celebrations in the church, 60-70 people attended this year. With many thanks to Felicity Leeson, the organist at St Mary's, Barton, who played the organ; the Beckley Bells, who played a selection of carols; Tony Strong for his help before the service, Paige Newmark for the mulled wine, and everyone who brought mince pies and helped clear up afterwards. Special thanks to Liz Bixby for repairing and repainting the Crib figures, which has given them a new lease of life!

Candlemas: Sunday 1 February

If you love seeing our churches in candlelight, please do come and join us in Beckley Church for this special service of **Holy Communion on Sunday 1 February at 6pm**. All are welcome. If you want to know more about this service, please do contact Anthea (details on page 4).

Coffee and Chat, Saturday 28 February, 10.30am-12pm

All welcome! Do come for coffee, tea, juice, cake, and a chance to meet friends and neighbours, and perhaps to also have a look at our large selection of books. There are books for all tastes, and for children too. All are welcome to borrow, or swap for a similar book.

Beckley Passion Play

Performers wanted from across the Four Parishes!

Beckley is once again hosting its Passion Play. The play will be performed principally in Beckley High Street on **Holy Saturday, 4 April, starting at 2pm in Beckley Church**. All we need now are willing participants from across the Four Parishes, young and old alike, no matter where you live! There are no scripts to learn and costumes are optional. Come and help us continue this village tradition and mark Easter in a special way. If you'd like to take part, please contact Susy Jepson on susy.jepson@gmail.com or Anthea on anthea@fourparishes.org.uk as soon as possible.

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>

The Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society (BACBS) continues its popular activities 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.

Pub quiz

1st Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm in The Abingdon Arms – with pizza! The next one will be on **Wednesday 4 February**. 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 walk

There will be no walks until Spring – watch this space!

Sunday evening talks

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

On **Sunday 22 February**, Andrew Wheale from the Bodleian Library will tell us about *Wilfred Owen's Last Battle*.

On **Sunday 29 March**, our talk will be given by Sally Bayley - writer of fiction and non-fiction, and poetry, podcaster, and Oxford University English literature tutor who lives on a narrow-boat and swims in the river almost every day.

And on **Sunday 26 April**, Elena Seiradake from Beckley and Oxford University will explain how the brain works, by describing the amazing molecular structures of the nervous system.

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

Lifts for those with no other transport to (e.g.) doctors or the Barton/Green Road roundabout. The scheme serves Beckley, Elsfield, Stanton, Forest Hill, Woodeaton, and Noke. *(continued on next page)*

To request a lift, ring 07514 791910 or email BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com. If you know of anyone who needs help but might not be aware of this service, please let them know.

Beckley and Stowood Parish Council

New app for 108 Bus

The MyTrip App is no longer in use - see the Red Group Buses website <https://www.redgroupbuses.com/service-updates> for more information.

For timetables and live information about the 108 bus, you can now download the **Red Group - Travel App** from the App Store or Google Play Store.

New Beckley Website - Help Required

We are developing a new website for Beckley and Stowood and the new templates are now ready. We need some help in pulling together content for the new website; liaising with local group for contents for their pages; researching local facilities and useful contacts; editing existing content etc.

Payment would be made on a project basis. This may suit a student, or someone interested in local history, the environment, and the local community. If you are interested, please email Ginette Camps-Walsh Chairman of Beckley and Stowood Parish Council, g.camps-walsh@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

Repairs to the Playground

Repairs will start to the playground soon. It may be necessary to close it while work is being carried out. We will keep everyone informed via WhatsApp, e-mail and the website: <https://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk/>.

Parish Council Meetings

These are normally held on the second Monday of each month at 7pm at Beckley Village Hall. The next meeting is **Monday 9 February**.

The provisional date for the Open Annual Parish Meeting is **11 May at 7pm** at Beckley Village Hall followed by the Village Hall AGM. All local groups will be invited to attend and give a report of their activity during the year. Please see the website <https://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk/> for updates.

FOREST HILL

St Nicolas Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 12. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Village Carol Singing

Thank you to everyone who braved the cold a few days before Christmas to sing carols around the village, accompanied by the Hinks family brass band! Special thanks to Wendy Walker, who knocked on doors all around the village with the help of her grandchildren, and collected over £240 for The Children's Society.

Saturday Coffee Shop

Forest Hill Village Hall, Saturday 28 February, 10.30am-12pm

The Pop-Up Coffee Shop has moved to Saturday this month. Bring a friend, make some new ones! Proceeds are shared between St Nicolas Church and Forest Hill Baby and Toddler Group, which facilitates The Maple Tree at Forest Hill (see below). Donations of cakes are appreciated. Contact Julia Stutfield 07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com.

Jazz on the Hill at Forest Hill Village Hall

Tuesday 10 February, 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! 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.

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



The Thursday morning 'stay and play' sessions for babies and toddlers continues to run in Forest Hill Village Hall throughout the year.

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

Daffodil Day at Shotover House

Sunday 22 March, 2-4.30pm

Daffodil Day returns to Shotover House on **22 March** offering a much-anticipated celebration of spring and a rare chance for residents of Forest Hill, Wheatley, and the surrounding area to enjoy these beautiful private gardens. Visitors will be welcomed into a stunning landscape filled with extensive displays of daffodils and a rich variety of other spring bulbs, all providing a spectacular burst of colour at this most uplifting time of year.



Run by St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill, the event combines natural beauty with community spirit. Proceeds are shared equally between the church and The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley (who also run the Thursday morning sessions in Forest Hill Village Hall), ensuring that every visit helps support valuable local work.

Booking opens on Saturday 7 February: www.stnicolasforesthill.org/. See the website for more information and ticket prices or look out for posters.

Daffodil Day is run entirely by volunteers and we need people for all sorts of roles during the event. You could be **checking and selling tickets, serving refreshments, directing pedestrians and traffic, or providing a special welcome to Blue Badge holders** and anyone else in need of a bit of extra help. During the weeks and days beforehand, we need lots of **bakers to produce delicious cakes** to serve on the day. Nearer the time, there is a small team who **put up traffic signs** both in and around the area (and take them down again afterwards!) and early on the day we need muscles to **set up gazebos, tables and chairs** and more muscles to take them down again at the end of an exhausting day. Volunteers who commit to being on site on the day are entitled to free cake and free on-site parking. It is a lot of fun in a beautiful setting, and it is satisfying to help raise much-needed money for these two worthy charities.

Do consider joining us as a volunteer (contact Julia Stutfield julia.stutfield@gmail.com) or simply come to enjoy the ambiance, the stunning setting, and of course the daffodils!

Malcolm Leeding, 1940-2025



My father Malcolm Leeding, who died in December, moved to Forest Hill with my mother Prue in 1988 and throughout their long association with the village he took great pride in the many contributions he made to village life.

Malcolm was a mainstay of the Forest Hill & Shotover Parish Council, serving for over 30 years, and his experience and knowledge were called upon frequently to address a range of challenges. Among the most visible parish council initiatives during his tenure were the children's playground on the rec, and the rejuvenated village hall, in both of which Malcolm took a great interest, making significant contributions to each project, in collaboration with Andrew and their colleagues.

In recent years, Malcolm was a driving force behind the campaign to maintain a bus service to the village in the face of corporate and bureaucratic indifference, resulting first in the Otmoor Flyer service and ultimately in the restoration of a scheduled service which continues to thrive, to the great benefit of many residents of the villages.

In addition, Malcolm involved himself in other local organisations, including acting as a trustee of the Holford Trust and an active contributor to the Forest Hill Gardening Club, and also acting as an unofficial guru to many other residents in their encounters with officialdom in various guises. In a creative writing exercise to write your own epitaph he described himself as "a wordsmith for every occasion, an activator of conclusions to any discussion, and an injector of humour where it would further the objective", which nicely captures his approach.

He was awarded an MBE in 2015 for services to the community. Travelling to Windsor Castle to receive the honour from the Queen was a very special day. Whilst the day involved a lot of fuss and formality, not something Malcolm was keen on, he was delighted to meet the late Queen and share a few private words with her.

He is survived by Prue, myself and my brother Nick, two devoted

daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren who all testify to his gentle influence on their formative years. As a family we are proud of his life and achievements in the village, and hugely grateful to the community for the many kindnesses extended to Malcolm and to us, particularly when his medical condition made it impossible for him to contribute in the way he would have wanted, and in the difficult weeks since his death. We have received many kind messages from friends and neighbours in Forest Hill and beyond, and Malcolm would have been touched and surprised to know the affection in which he was held by so many people.

Chris Leeding

Forest Hill Litter Pick

Saturday 7 March, 2-4pm

Join us in making a positive impact on our beloved village.

Meeting Point: Forest Hill Village Hall



We will provide all the essentials: picks, bin bags, high-visibility vests, and light refreshments. Please bring along your sturdy gloves.

Kids welcome! No registration required.

Every small action counts!

Be a part of the change and let's keep Forest Hill tidy, vibrant, and full of community pride. See you there!

For more information contact Susann: susanfh@gmx.net.

Forest Hill Village Hall

Our village hall, situated on Main Street in the heart of the village, 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 'Pop-Up Coffee Shop and 'Jazz on the Hill'.

For more information, email Stephen Robinson spr500@gmail.com or go to <https://communityfirstoxon.org/community-action/hubs-halls-shops/community-halls-directory/forest-hill-village-hall/>.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 12 February at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall. All residents welcome.

Dates of meetings, agendas and minutes can be found on the Forest Hill website: www.parish-council/foresthillwithshotover and on the Village Hall noticeboard. You can contact Sue Cox, the clerk, by email at: theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.org.uk or telephone 0844 884 3328 (premium rate), between 9am and 5pm and leave a message.

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is free to join. It helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs. It helps them tailor services to support households who need extra help with everyday energy matters like bills, and also in the event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption. Go to <https://www.thepsr.co.uk/> for more information.

Village Update: January Parish Council Meeting

Community Shop: We heard an exciting proposal for a new community shop in Stanton St John. The Council has requested a full business plan to consider how we can best support this project.

Village Improvements: Great news for Church Hill. We've approved the repair of all 11 solar streetlights. We're also working to get the village entrance speed signs cleared of overgrown vegetation to keep our roads safe.

Recreation and Maintenance: The aerial runway (zip line) cable is scheduled for repair in late January. A big thank you to David Waters for trimming the hedge at the Holton layby.

Finance: The budget for 2026/27 has been set with a precept of £23,500. We are also exploring a 50/50 cost-sharing deal with the Village Hall Committee to finally bring Wi-Fi to the hall.

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

St Barnabas Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 12. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

St Barnabas News

A message of thanks from Lyn and Nick

A huge thank you to all who helped out at the Crib service, those who read or said prayers, and those who brought up figures to the Crib. The service wouldn't be the same without your help, you were all fantastic.

Priory Reception

We are very grateful to all those who made donations to St Barnabas Church following a splendid reception at the Priory for the 'Friends of St Barnabas', kindly hosted by Robert Venables and Gary Morris.

The Dog and Collar (St Barnabas)

Friday 6 February, 6-8.30pm.



This is a really nice opportunity to meet neighbours and fellow villagers for a drink and informal chat. We look forward to seeing you there.

Coffee and Chat, Saturday 14 February, 10am to 12pm

A lovely start to the weekend for a mug of coffee (or tea) and a piece of cake and catch up with neighbours or meet neighbours if you have recently moved to the village. In St Barnabas. Everyone is welcome to drop in. No charge but donations and dogs welcome.

Friends of St. Barnabas talk, Sunday 1 March, 6pm

'**The Unkindest Cut**' The Castrati, pop stars of 17th and 18th century Baroque Italy, were young men castrated before puberty to preserve their high voices. The renowned countertenor **Nicholas Clapton** will shed light on what may well have been Classical music's darkest moment.

We invite everyone to come along to St Barnabas Church for what is sure to be a fascinating and entertaining evening. There is no admission charge and refreshments will be served.

Nick Mynheer

St Barnabas Electoral Roll

If you have been thinking about joining the electoral roll of St Barnabas, this is a good time to do it. See page 12 for more information.

Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital

We are an animal friendly church and have an on-going collection box in the Church porch to help Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital in Haddenham. If you find a sick, injured or orphaned wild animal you can ring Tiggywinkles on 01844 292292 for advice and help. A volunteer may come to attend to the animal. Smaller animals can be taken to the Tigglewinkles hospital. They are grateful for towels, newspapers, tinned cat or dog food and kitten biscuits (meat-based, no fish flavours). They are also glad of cotton wool balls, unscented baby wipes and A4 printing paper all of which can be left in the box in the Church porch. Thank you. *Carol Welch*

Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

The weather has suddenly got a lot colder but most of my plants are either safely tucked up under a thick layer of mulch or are protected with straw. Snowdrops do not mind freezing weather, but they will not be pushing their way up quite so quickly in this cold spell. Early irises, crocuses and daffodils are already flowering and I am looking forward to seeing my spring bulb bed awaken over the next few months. Bulbs, especially the small daffodils and tulips, are so rewarding to grow.

Last month I was surprised to hear a lot of buzzing by our back door and, when I went to track down the source, I saw at least a dozen fat bumble bees on my wonderfully scented *Lonicera fragrantissima* (Winter-flowering Honeysuckle). It was a particularly warm, sunny day and the ladies (they would all be queens) had obviously decided to nip out for a quick feed. It is so important to include winter-flowering plants in your garden as a source of food for insects.

Visitors are always welcome to attend our meetings on the third Tuesday of the month in the Millennium (Village) Hall at 7.30pm, but why not join the club? **The 2026 programme kicks off on 17 February with a talk on Harcourt Arboretum.** You are also most welcome to come and look at our snowdrops, just email me to fix a time (sue.burge@ndm.ox.ac.uk) and may your gardens flourish in 2026!

Sue Burge, out-going Chairman

Village Night at Studley Wood Golf Club

Villagers and friends continue to meet for a meal at The Golf Club on the last Friday of each month.

If you haven't been before but are interested in attending and would like further details, please contact Linda Dingle on lindadingle49@gmail.com or Ruth David on ruth.david@live.com for more details and we can then put you on a regular mailing list about menu choices and timings.

Parish Council News

Road conditions throughout the village

The Parish Council has been tracking and reporting the poor state of the roads throughout the village. Our lead Councillor Kim Brown is in regular contact with Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department and is due to meet their representative in February when they will 'walk the course' to highlight again the many issues we have. These include Brill Road, Oakley Road, Horton Hill and Church Lane where 'Fix My Street' reports have been submitted repeatedly. We have also escalated the matter to our County Councillor, Laura Gordon.

Thank you to those parishioners who have supplied additional information and we would encourage anyone to continue reporting issues as they are identified to <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

The other area of poor road conditions leaving the village on the Brill Road towards Boarstall at Panshill should be reported to <https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/> as this is over the county border.

It is important that reports have been submitted if any vehicle owner wishes to claim damages from either county council.

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings, open to all in the village, are normally held each month at 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall. The next meeting is on **Wednesday 11 February** and thereafter on the second Wednesday of each month (except August when no meeting is held).

David Slings

STANTON ST JOHN

St John the Baptist Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 12. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Stanton Christmas Lights Event

A huge thank you to all those who helped at and attended our Christmas lights evening on 5 December. We raised £450 which was shared between the WI, the Village Hall and Stanton church. It was a lovely get together once again, hopefully enjoyed by all, despite the weather!

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

Monday 9 February, Wednesday 25 February, Monday 16 March

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

Olive's Little Library



We are a book group in Stanton St John and have been thinking for a while that a public book exchange would be a lovely addition to the village. You may remember Rowan kindly hosting a basket of books in the shop, but with the shop now closed for the moment, we decided it was the perfect moment to fully bring our idea to life.

While searching for an old bookcase or cupboard to upcycle, one of our members spotted the ideal piece at the garage sale at the late Olive Lees' house. It was just the right size and, with a kind contribution from the Parish Council, we were able to buy materials for some doors. I painted it using tester pots—hence the cheerful patchwork of colours!

We've named it *Olive's Little Library* in her memory, and you'll find it by the main entrance to the village hall. Please feel free to borrow or donate books—just try not to leave too many at once. Our group will look after it, so do get in touch if anything needs attention. Happy reading!

Catherine Rye on behalf of the Mill St Book Group
catherine@hillviewers.net

Stanton St John Women's Institute



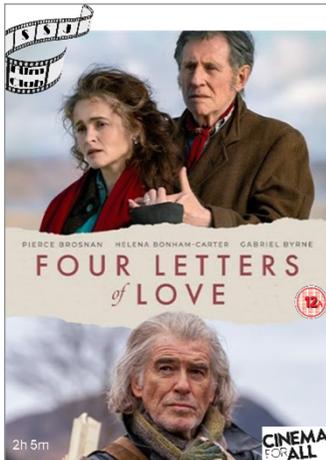
On 13 January Robin Stafford Allen gave a most interesting presentation addressing the question: 'Can we live on Renewable Energy?'. We had a lovely mixed audience who clearly showed that there was a demand to find out more about sustainable energy solutions to the climate crisis.

As a reminder to SSJ WI members, our **next meeting on Tuesday 10 February is a members-only event** when we are having a much more indulgent evening. We are having a talk and demonstration by the first **Argentinian Chocolaterie** in the UK, SUR. We will learn the basics of chocolate, the differences of terroirs and origin, and taste Latin American chocolate. We look forward to welcoming our members but, unfortunately, can't offer open-house this time.

We're planning a more **social event on the morning of Saturday 14 March from 10.30am-12.30pm**. The aim is to share crafting skills, encourage repairing and repurposing and just generally chatting over coffee and cake. Please save the date.

Stanton St John Film Club

Saturday 14 February, 7.45pm Stanton St John Village Hall



A romantic film for Valentine's Day with this top-notch cast, 'Four Letters of Love' is based on Niall Williams' best-selling novel. Nicholas and Isabel were made for each other but how will they ever know it? As ghosts, fate and the sheer power of true love pull them together, so too does life threaten to tear them apart.

Watch the trailer here: [Four Letters of Love | Official Trailer](#).

Doors open at 7pm for delicious cakes and hot drinks before the film; the bar will be serving wines.

Only 60 seats available, please reserve yours beforehand with Sue Baker: susanjbaker24@gmail.com. Tickets at the door, £5 (cash only).

Spring Quiz 18 March 2026



We are putting together a quiz to be held on **Wednesday 18 March** in Stanton St John Village Hall as we anticipate the arrival of spring. Make a note of the date in your diaries and we will let you know the details in next month's newsletter.

Stanton St John Parish Council

Stanton St John News: stay in the loop

Would you like to receive village and Parish Council updates, including events and important local information? If so, please sign up using the QR code below.

Stanton St John News is administered by the Parish Council. Unless explicitly stated, information shared does not necessarily represent the views of the Parish Council.



Defibrillator Awareness Group Training

The Parish Council has been awarded a grant from Oxfordshire County Council to run a group defibrillator awareness and CPR training session.

The training will be delivered by St John Ambulance and will last approximately three hours. It will cover basic life-saving skills, including how to use a defibrillator and how to carry out CPR.

We are hoping to hold the session on a weekday (Friday) during February or March in the Village Hall. Once the date is confirmed, details will be shared via SSJ News, so please make sure you are signed up if you are interested in attending.

Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 16 February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Agendas are published in advance and can be viewed on the Parish Council website: <https://stantonstjohnparishcouncil.gov.uk>. All residents are very welcome to attend.

*Anita James
Clerk to Stanton St John Parish Council*



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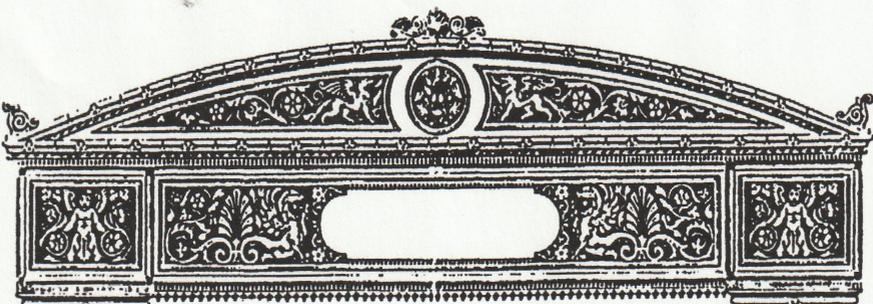
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