The Four Parishes
News Magazine

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



Stanton St John bells from inside the tower

October 2026

The editor writes



Have you noticed how the evenings have really started drawing in, while early mornings are also becoming darker? I can never get over how quickly everything changes at this time of year, so that summer becomes a distant memory!

A quick flick through the pages of this magazine will definitely reinforce the impression that summer is well and truly over. All the amazing people who organise events in our four lovely villages have been particularly eager this month to make sure that you get as many dates as possible into your diaries well ahead of time, especially when it comes to anything to do with Christmas. Please do take advantage of this chance to plan ahead and make sure that you don't miss anything during the festive season.

Aside from Christmas, there are plenty of regular events to enjoy between now and then, so do have a look through the whole magazine, and please ensure that you also check out and support the advertisers who make it possible for us to continue publishing it.

Finally, I would like to remind you again that you can read this magazine, and back numbers from February 2018 onwards, on your PC, phone or tablet at fourparishes.org.uk/magazine. Simply type the URL into your web browser or scan the QR code with your smartphone.

With thanks to everyone who has contributed to making this yet another interesting and informative issue!

Julia

Our cover photo

was taken by Karen Argyle and is of Stanton St John bells in 'up' position during Thursday night bellringing practice

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. 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.

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

The closing date for the November 2026 issue is 15 October 2026

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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Forest Hill	**Vacant at present**
Horton-cum-Studley	**Carol Welch** carol_welch20@hotmail.com 01865 358122
Stanton St John	**Sue Baker** susanjbaker24@gmail.com 01865 351449

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

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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Vacant at present

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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, October 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
4 October *18th Sunday after Trinity*	**11am Celebration of Harvest: Holy Communion**	**9.30am Holy Communion**	**9.30am Celebration of Harvest: Holy Communion**	**11am Animal Welfare and Blessing Service**
	4pm Four Parishes Children's Church at Forest Hill			
11 October *19th Sunday after Trinity*		**9.30am Morning Prayer**	**9.30am Morning Prayer**	**11am Holy Communion**
	6pm Four Parishes Choral Evensong at Forest Hill			
18 October *20th Sunday after Trinity*	**11am BCP Morning Prayer**	**9.30am Holy Communion**		**11am Morning Prayer**
	6pm Four Parishes Iona Service at Beckley			
25 October *Bible Sunday*	**10am Four Parishes Service of Holy Communion at Forest Hill**			
	6pm Four Parishes Taizé Service on Zoom			
29 October *(Thursday)*	**5pm Four Parishes Family Church does Forest Church Celebration of Light at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley**			

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,



Back in June I visited friends in Gloucestershire. Some other friends joined us, and as ever, we went for a walk with the dogs – two Labradors, Bertie and Oscar, and an old Springer Spaniel, The Snoof. The dogs know each other well so were happy to run along together, as we friends chatted away, catching up on all that had been going on for each of us, and of course, 'putting the world to rights' as we all do when friends meet up!

We started off walking in a place I know well from previous visits, but rather than taking our usual turn, we carried straight on and wandered up a hill. Fortunately, it was a fairly gradual incline rather than a really steep hill, although we climbed to a pretty good height, with fantastic views across the River Severn towards Wales and the Forest of Dean. The views were wonderful, even though the day was rather overcast and extremely windy!

Hidden from sight for a lot of the walk, but coming into sight as we continued, was a tall monument. It took me quite a while to register that



this was the monument I had often seen over the years as I have travelled up and down the M5. It was indeed the Tyndale Monument, which I had never been to before. It was great to walk around it and see it 'up close' having seen it so many times from a distance. I decided to give a miss the opportunity to climb it! It was a jolly good excuse to sit with the dogs at the foot of it, and wander around it, admiring the view from ground level – maybe another day I thought to myself! Apparently, there were a lot of birds to move out of the way as you walked up so I was even more pleased with my decision when I heard that!

What I did not realise when we were there, and only found out afterwards, was that this year is the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale's *'masterpiece: the first English New Testament, published in 1526. This was the first time that the whole New Testament had been translated from*

Greek into English and the first time that it had been published'. Sadly, Tyndale was martyred 10 years later.



We rather take for granted that we have the Bible in our own language. Indeed, there are multiple different translations of the Bible in English now, and it is hard to imagine a time when there was not even one. Those of us who read the Bible regularly, often have a favourite 'go to' version: perhaps one that we are so familiar with that it fits us like a glove, or a version where we find the language easier to understand, more inclusive, or simply more modern English. There are Bibles for children, where the stories are written in language easier for them to understand, or with the better-known stories, so they can begin to become familiar with characters of the Old and New Testaments.

It is quite amazing that Tyndale was the very first to give us the New Testament in English, and it seems rather special that I happened to walk to his monument in this particular year. There is much I could learn about his life.

There are still people who do not have the Bible in their own language today, but there are also amazing people like friends from Cinderford who continue this pioneering work, helping those who do not yet have this. Fortunately, people are unlikely to lose their lives as they do this work, although there are places in the world where it may cost a person their life simply for having a copy of the Bible – and there is me with multiple copies on my bookshelves! How fortunate am I!

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 and Forest Hill 10am-6pm; Horton-cum-Studley and Stanton St John 10am-4pm.

Harvest in the Four Parishes

We celebrated harvest in Horton and Stanton in September but will be celebrating in the other parishes in October as detailed below. You may like to be involved in decorating the churches or providing harvest gifts. Please see the individual Church pages for more information about this.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley	**9.30am, 4 October** Harvest Holy Communion
St Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover	**11am, 4 October** Harvest Holy Communion

Children's autumn craft workshops

It is wonderful that we can once again start the Children's craft workshops in **Beckley Church this autumn on Fridays from 3.30-4.30pm**. These are primarily aimed at primary school children but younger siblings are welcome. Do come and join in the fun. Children must be accompanied by an adult please. There will be light refreshments. Please hold the dates:

Friday 9 October: Harvest Workshop
Friday 13 November: Remembrance Workshop

Advent challenge and beyond

I hope you are still journeying with me as we have got to the three-quarter-way stage of the year. I confess that at the time of preparing this I am still a little behind but still determined to keep going and with achieving the goal, and hope you are too. I am determined to get there! If you are on track, then a huge well done. If, like me you are a little behind, please do not give up. We can do this!

For October, for the Old Testament, we need to aim to finish Jeremiah and read the whole of Habakkuk, Lamentations and Obadiah, and continue Psalms up to chapter 119:136 and Proverbs up to chapter 26:22. For the New Testament, we need to aim to finish Philippians, read the whole of Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon, and Hebrews to chapter 2.

I look forward to hearing how you get on. Please do let me know. It is great journeying 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 have just started reading *Held in God's Gaze: Keeping company with the Saints and Mystics* by Jill Duff and Nicholas Haile so if you would like to join us, please do get in touch with Anthea. New members are always welcome. We meet virtually by Zoom on a **Thursday evening at 7.30pm** for an hour.

Home Study Group

The study group meets on **Monday afternoons at 2.30pm at Studley Farm House**, **Horton-cum-Studley**. New members are always welcome. 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.

Prayers for Peace

As the hope for peace in Ukraine and the Holy Land and all its surrounding areas continues to look far off, the war in Iran and the wider Middle East continues, and news of atrocities in Sudan, Myanmar, Yemen and other places around the world 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 October** across the Four Parishes as follows:

Beckley	10 and 28
Forest Hill	3, 21 and 31
Horton-cum-Studley	7 and 17
Stanton	14 and 24

Family Church

Forest Church Celebration of Light: Thursday 29 October 5-6pm at Bernwood Forest, Horton-cum-Studley (meeting in the main car park)

If you have been before, you know what fun we have at this. If you haven't been before, why not come along and see what it's like? It would be great if you can bring a torch as it will be getting dark towards the end, which will be part of the fun. We're planning on having party games, a torch treasure hunt, fun conversations and scrumptious hot chocolate and nibbles. All are welcome.

Children need to be accompanied by an adult please. If you need to know any more or have any questions, please do get in touch. RSVP to Laura mamancoton@gmail.com or Anthea anthea@fourparishes.org.uk.

Hold the Date

All Souls: St John the Baptist, Stanton St John, Sunday 1 November at 6pm

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

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

Many of us have lost loved ones recently who we would like remembered. Others have lost loved ones some time ago, and still their loss is painful to bear. This is an opportunity to remember before God, by name, loved ones we have loved, but no longer see, whether that is recently or longer ago. Please do think about joining us.

For more information about any of the items on pages 8-10 of the magazine, please contact me, Anthea Beresford. **Email: anthea@fourparishes.org.uk Tel: 01865 351839 Mob: 07876 527514.**

GENERAL

Islip Bridge Closure

A reminder that **Islip Bridge will be fully closed to all vehicles from 28 September to 20 November 2026**.

There will be a signed diversion route in place. Pedestrian and cyclist access will be maintained at all times.

Order your Real Advent Calendars by 2 November

The Real Advent Calendar is the UK's only Fairtrade calendar which comes with a free 24-page Christmas story-activity book and which supports charitable causes. Behind each door there is a Fairtrade chocolate and a line of the Christmas story; each door has a corresponding page in the story-activity book which explains the story and sometimes sets an Advent challenge. Money raised from the sale of this calendar will help Fairtrade farmers receive a fair price for their goods and a Fairtrade premium to spend on the priorities of their communities ranging from solar panels and fresh water to teaching resources.

Calendars cost £4.95 each. Please place your orders with the Revd Hugh Lee (hugh.lee@btinternet.com or 01865 316245) by **Monday 2 November** and we will deliver them to you when we have received them.



May Contain Nuts

by Lyn Ebbs

Because of increased awareness of allergies, there are frequent reminders on food labels that some items 'may contain nuts'. While this statement might be true in a culinary sense, a lot of the time, the warning refers to an ingredient that a botanist would call by quite a different name.

To a botanist, lots of plant seeds that we call nuts are not actually nuts, for example, cashews, almonds and walnuts. To a cook, a lot of true nuts wouldn't make it into any cake toppings: acorns and horse-chestnuts, definitely not. To add to the confusion, those autumns where trees produce a profusion of nuts are called 'mast years' as many tree seeds are referred to as 'mast'. (Peanuts won't come into this discussion at all, as they are the fruit of a plant from the pea family and grow underground.)

Nuts are seeds but, unlike most seeds, they don't release themselves from their shells when they leave the parent plant. They rely on some assistance to escape from their hard shell walls, a property called indehiscence. In everyday language, we refer to anything with an edible kernel and a hard outer wall as 'nuts'.

You might be surprised at the long list of 'not-really-a-nut' nuts that you could find in a supermarket selection: almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and walnuts. These are really the seed-bearing, hard, inner layer of a fruit called a drupe.

It's easier to picture what is going on botanically when you realise that



the closest relatives of almonds are apricots, cherries, peaches and plums. If you are a jam-maker, you may recall that some recipes for plum jam recommend cracking the stones open to extract the kernels which, when added to the fruit, helps the jam to set. Walnuts complicate the definition further by being a pseudo-drupe, with a green, semi-fleshy husk and a brown, corrugated nut. The husk breaks open when the whole fruit falls, revealing a seed within a hard shell.

In this country true nuts are produced by trees that belong to two main plant

families: *Fagaceae*, the one to which beech, chestnut and oak belong, and *Betulaceae*, the one to which hazel and hornbeam belong. Because nuts don't open of their own accord, they rely on external vectors for seed dispersal. In Britain, these would be mammals and birds. Squirrels are well-known for caching nuts as a winter store to help them survive cold weather; as I'm writing this, I can see a squirrel raiding a nearby Horse Chestnut tree. If the weather is mild enough so that its secret supply isn't needed, or so harsh that the squirrel doesn't survive to recover it, the squirrel's store will eventually germinate to produce seedlings of the parent tree. Our other great tree planters are jays, whose favoured food in autumn is the acorn – also a true nut. Although their memories are good, inevitably some acorns are forgotten. I've found seedling horse chestnut, oak and walnut trees growing in our garden.


Horse Chestnuts


Squirrel with hazelnut

We may not think of squirrels and jays as being predators, but from the trees' viewpoint taking and eating their seeds is predation. It is thought that this is the reason why trees periodically produce a bumper crop of seeds. The behaviour is called 'predator satiation'. There seems to be some form of coordination between trees of the same species, though we don't yet know how they communicate. Scientists are also not able to predict when these abundant crops, known as 'mast years' will occur but 2025's was an exceptionally large acorn crop, making that a mast year for oaks. Judging by our own trees, 2026 will produce a similar result for beech. During a mast year, the trees produce more food than the animals can possibly eat which guarantees that some seeds will be left over to survive and grow into new trees.


Squirrel with beechnut

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.

Focus on Beckley Primary School

New September, New Start at Beckley School

September has arrived, and with it comes a brand-new school year at Beckley School!

We have been so excited to welcome our new Reception children and families into the school, as well as welcoming back all of our pupils after the summer break. It has been a wonderful start to the new term, with the children settling in brilliantly and enjoying being back together again.



Our extracurricular activities are also getting back into full swing, with lots for the children to get involved in, including drama, baking, sports, mindfulness and much more. It has been lovely to see the children enjoying all the different opportunities available to them alongside their learning.

You may also have spotted us at the **Forest Hill Village Fête** over the summer! Despite the rather unpredictable weather, we had a fantastic day and managed to raise **over £250 for the school**.

A huge thank you to everyone who stopped by our stall, bought something, donated, helped on the day or simply came over for a chat. A huge thank you to Imogen Hobbins an Alumna of Beckley School who volunteered her time to offer face painting to the children. It was wonderful to meet so many members of our local community and we are incredibly grateful for your support.



Can you help Beckley School?

One of the things that makes Beckley so special is its strong sense of community, and we would love to build even closer relationships with the villages and local businesses around us.

If you have an idea for supporting the school, could offer an experience or opportunity for our pupils, would like to collaborate with us, volunteer your time, or simply have an idea you think we should hear about, **we would love to hear from you**. Please get in touch with the school office.

You can also support the school through **Friends of Beckley School**. Even

a small regular donation of £1 or £5 can make a difference. Money raised goes directly towards supporting our children, helping with equipment and resources and contributing towards the wonderful trips, experiences and extracurricular opportunities that make school life so memorable. Its very easy to donate: either message us directly on beckleyfobs@gmail.com or follow this link https://donorbox.org/fobs.

The autumn term is often a time when families are looking for Reception places for the next academic year. At Beckley, we offer individual tours of the school and a chance to chat with the head teacher. Get in touch with the school on 01865 351416 or office@beckleyschool.org to organise your visit. We are very proud of our school and have a lot to show off. Come and see! We also have plenty of exciting things planned for the months ahead, including Halloween and Christmas events.



Thank you again to everyone across our local community who continues to support Beckley School. We are incredibly grateful and are looking forward to another exciting year ahead!

Myfanwy Campbell, Parent Governor, Beckley School

A message from Freddie Van Mierlo



In August, following a short and much needed break from politics for a family holiday to Austria, I returned to work refreshed and full of energy to start my Summer Tour. The tour was a chance to get out to villages in Henley & Thame constituency that I hadn't managed to visit during the year.

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the beautiful villages of Stanton St John and Forest Hill during the tour, and am hugely grateful to everyone who came to meet with me there (as well as my surgeries in Warborough, Little Milton, Stoke Row, Checkendon, Kingston Blount, Sydenham, South Stoke and Whitchurch-on-Thames). I met with over sixty constituents and had very informative meetings with parish, district and county councillors in each location too.

I'm keen to continue listening and engaging - solving local issues where I can, and weighing in on national and international concerns on your behalf. I'm already planning where to go next year! In the meantime if you have any issues or concerns you wish to raise with me, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk.

On my return to Westminster I flagged the concerns many residents and parish councils shared with me locally about Local Government Reorganisation by asking Louise Haigh, First Secretary of State to reconsider the new Greater Oxford unitary authority, flagging that the Government had shown a real disregard for rural Oxfordshire by incorporating villages like Warborough, Dorchester-on-Thames, and Shillingford into a Greater Oxford authority.

I welcomed the Government's decision last week to review plans for Local Government Reorganisation. There is a need for clarity on how long the review will take and reassurance that it will be a proper rethink, to that end I am currently writing to Angela Raynor (the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) to ensure that residents' specific concerns about inclusion in the Greater Oxford Authority are on record if the proposals for a three unitary model return in future.

Freddie van Mierlo MP
Member of Parliament for Henley & Thame

BECKLEY

Beckley Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk. The church is open every day. All are welcome, including well-behaved dogs!

Coffee, Cake and Chat

The last Saturday of the month in the church, 10.30-12 noon

The next one will be on **31 October.** All welcome! Do come to catch up with friends and neighbours, and perhaps meet new people and borrow books from our enormous collection.

Ride and Stride

Six people visited Beckley Church for 'Ride and Stride' on 12 September and it was so good to see them! The 'event' takes place every year, and is a good way of raising funds for historic churches.

Harvest Festival

We are once again timing our Harvest Service so we can link with Beckley School Harvest Service during the following week. It is wonderful for the Church and the School to have their celebrations in the beautiful parish church. We shall therefore be **decorating the church on the morning of Saturday 3 October, starting at 9.30am**. Anyone who can spare a little time will be warmly welcomed, and if you have suitable flowers, greenery or fruit that you could bring, that would be wonderful!

Harvest gifts from the **Church Service on Sunday 4 October at 9.30am** and from the Beckley School Harvest Service will be taken to the Food Bank in Kidlington, who request non-perishable donations (e.g. tins of meat, fish, vegetables, puddings, ready meals, treats, pasta, soap powder, toilet rolls, toothpaste, cleaning materials etc).

Children's Craft Workshops

These will be on **Friday 9 October** (Harvest Workshop) and **Friday 13 November** (Remembrance Workshop), **3.30-4.30pm in the church**. They are aimed primarily at primary school children, but younger siblings are welcome! All children must be accompanied by an adult. There will be light refreshments too! Do come along!

Dates for your diaries

Wednesday 11 November: Commemorating Armistice Day through poetry over the centuries: 7.30pm in the Church

We will be having our usual **Remembrance Sunday service** starting in the churchyard **at 10.45am on 8 Novembe**r, but on **Armistice Day** itself, **11 November at 7.30pm** we are planning an evening of reading of war poetry in Church. Please hold the date, and more information will follow in the November magazine.

Sunday 20 December: Carols and Claret: 6pm in the Church

Beckley and Stowood Parish Council

Beckley Bonfire and Fireworks

Saturday 7 November, gates open 5.30 pm, Bonfire 6pm



You and your family are cordially invited to the famous Beckley Fireworks and Bonfire at Beckley Village Hall Playing Fields. The entrance fee remains at the same level as it has been for many years - £5 per person (children 5 and under free) and free parking Volunteers are needed to help with car parking and entrance gates please. If you are able to help please contact our clerk at the email below or Paige Newmark on WhatsApp.

Local Government Reorganisation Response

The Rt. Hon. Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced in a statement to Parliament on 7 September that she has withdrawn the decisions made

on LGR for 8 regions including Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk "in order to consider them afresh". This followed legal advice after 8 judicial reviews had been launched against these decisions. A further 14 decisions are being paused, including Oxfordshire "while Ministers consider the next stages of the local government reorganisation programme".We have just received a response from MHCLG to our 'post-consultation collective representation' that we sent to Angela Rayner. It was signed and supported by the parish councils of 21 parishes (now risen to 27), representing over 66% of the population of the 48 parishes (including all the Four Parishes). The response echoes the statement made to the House. Our parishes need to continue to work together to inform Angela Rayner and MHCLG that we wish to retain our democratic rights, be involved in the decisions and what we would like to see for our parishes in the future.

New Website

We are very pleased that Alsandair Holt is helping us to develop our new website. Please do assist him with information and respond to his requests using the email address beckleywebsite@gmail.com.

New Parish email and communications

If you wish to be included in the Parish Council email system and receive news, please subscribe by sending an email to the clerk: clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk.

Encouraging Sport: facilities at the village hall and playing fields

The playing fields at Beckley Village Hall have excellent facilities for football, cricket, outdoor table tennis, tennis and practising basketball. There are changing rooms with showers etc. that have yet to be used.

We would like to encourage local teams and sports enthusiasts to use the facilities and to set up a tennis club. There will be a booking form for each on the new Beckley website. Changing rooms can be booked through the Village Hall booking manager: booking@beckleyvillagehall.org. We ask that all facilities are treated with respect so others can enjoy them too. Appropriate footwear must be worn to avoid damage.

Next Parish Council Meeting

Monday 12 October, 7pm, Beckley Village Hall

Beckley website: https://www.beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk/
PC contact: clerk@beckley-and-stowood-pc.gov.uk

Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society Ltd (BACBS)

Save the Date!

There will be a 10-year anniversary dinner in The Abingdon Arms on the evening of **Friday 27 November** to celebrate the community purchase of the pub. Further details to follow.

Open share offer

The share offer to support the future of The Abingdon Arms is still open. For more information please visit https://bacbs.org/openshareoffer. Shareholders are now entitled to 10% off food and drink at the pub. For further information email theabingdonarms@gmail.com.

More than a Pub programme

The Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society (BACBS) continues its popular activities at our community-owned pub The Abingdon Arms, 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.

Pub quiz

First Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm in The Abingdon Arms, with pizza

The next one is on **Wednesday 7 October**. Table bookings essential, through the pub. Tables sell out every month, days before the quiz happens. Teams should comprise no more than six people. It's free to enter and, thanks to The Abingdon Arms, there's a free round of drinks for the winning team.

Community walks

Third Sunday of each month at 2pm

The next walk will be on **Sunday 18 October**. The walk leader and starting point will be posted on our website (above) nearer the time. Come along and meet your neighbours for a gentle walk and a friendly chat.

Sunday evening talks

Last Sunday of the month at 6.30pm in The Abingdon Arms

On **25 October** David Warrell, Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Oxford, will give a talk: "*Searching for Venomous Snakes and Snakebites in Four Tropical Continents.*"

David's interest in the treatment of snakebite victims (estimated to be 5 million each year) has taken him to Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin

America. The main aim of his research has been to improve the clinical management of snakebite victims in small hospitals in the rural areas of tropical countries where most of these accidents occur, especially the use of antivenoms, the only available antidotes. Integral to this work has been discovering which species of snakes were responsible and how they might be avoided.

Please support your local pub by ordering a drink from the bar before the talk starts.

BACBS Good Neighbour Scheme

The Good Neighbour Scheme gives lifts to those with no other transport – for example, to the doctors 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, either ring 07514 791910 (if no answer, leave a message) or email BACBSgoodneighbour@gmail.com. If you know of anyone who might need help, and perhaps does not know this service exists, please do let them know. If you would like to volunteer, please email the above address.

Kate Howles, for the BACBS committee

Beckley Art Group's annual exhibition



Beckley Art Group are having their usual art exhibition in our village hall on **24 and 25 October, 10am-4pm**. There will be about 100 paintings of great variety, and the excellent café. For nearly 10 years we have been exhibiting in our amazing hall that could have been an art gallery! We are very lucky to be able to use this magical space.

Christmas 2026 at Stanton House

Stanton House, Pound Lane, Stanton St John, OX33 1HF

Saturday 5th December 2026

Christmas Fair - fundraiser for our roof fund

Free Entry from 10am to 3.30pm
Flower arrangement workshop (£30, please contact the office to book on)
To buy on the day:
Festive food
Bake sale
Festive decor, cards & gifts

Saturday 19th December 2026

Stanton House Christmas Tea

Free entry from 4pm to 5.30pm
Children's activities, Christmas Carols, Light Trail, Refreshments & Cakes

Grant Applications Open

Dame Elizabeth Holford's Charity offers **grants towards education, social and physical training for children and young people up to 25** who live in:

Stanton St John • Forest Hill • Beckley • Horton-cum-Studley • Elsfield

New applicants welcome!

Website coming soon. For an application form, email Holfordtrustchair@gmail.com.

FOREST HILL

St Nicolas Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Harvest Festival

We will be decorating the church on the morning of **Saturday 3 October** in preparation for our **Harvest Service on Sunday 4 October at 11am.** Anyone who can spare a little time will be warmly welcomed, with or without a contribution of flowers, greenery, fruit or vegetables! Fresh harvest produce will be taken to the Oxford Community Soup Kitchen in Cowley Road after the service, and non-perishable donations will be passed to the Food Bank in Kidlington.

Children's Church at St Nicolas

Four Parishes Children's Church takes place in St Nicolas on the first Sunday of every month at 4pm. The service lasts less than 30 minutes and features singing (led by members of St Nicolas Choir), story-telling, and simple prayers. Percussion instruments are handed out so that even the youngest children can join in the music and the atmosphere is friendly and informal. For more information, go to www.stnicolasforesthill.org/childrens-church or contact Julia Stutfield on julia.stutfield@gmail.com.

Remembrance Sunday

'Far from Home' Concert, Sunday 8 November 6pm

A free concert of music and readings reflecting on war and the impact of war. Please let Julia Stutfield know if you would like to read, sing or play. There will be a collection for war charities (cash or card donations).

Friday Pop-Up Coffee Shop

Forest Hill Village Hall, Friday 23 October, 10.30am-12pm

The monthly Pop-Up Coffee Shop is an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make some new ones, while contributing to a good cause. You can choose to have a simple mug of tea or instant coffee or treat yourself to a cafetiere or a speciality tea (decaf is also available). There is usually a selection of delicious cakes to choose from and we can take payments by card as well as cash. More information from Julia Stutfield 07766 103427 or julia.stutfield@gmail.com.

Jazz on the Hill



Julie and Will Blyth ran Jazz on the Hill brilliantly from its foundation until they moved away this summer. It's too good a treat to just end, so it re-opens under new management on **Thursday 15 October at 7.30pm in Forest Hill Village Hall** and on the third Thursday of each month thereafter except for July and August 2027.

Come along to play with the house band or to just relax and listen. If you love jazz you'll love Jazz on the Hill!

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. Parents and carers from the Four Parishes and beyond are welcome to drop in any time between 10.30am and 12pm. Sessions are free of charge, but we ask for a recommended donation to the Maple Tree of £3 per family, which can be made by card or cash.

Please email julia.stutfield@gmail.com or message Julia on 07766 103427 if you have any questions. For a full list of activities run by The Maple Tree Children's Centre in Wheatley, see www.mapletree.org.uk.

Dates for your Diary!

Village Hall Christmas Quiz Night

Following the resounding success of the Summer Quiz in August there will be a Christmas Quiz on **Friday 11 December.**

'Christmas Cheer' in the Village Hall

Friday 18 December, 5-7pm

A fun Christmas event organised by Caroline Fraser and Julia Stutfield with community carol singing, hot drinks and mince pies, and maybe even a surprise visitor!

Village Carol Singing

Wednesday 23 December, 6-7pm

Meet outside the village hall with torch and warm clothing for carol singing round the village, with door to door collection for the Children's Society.

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council

News from the Meeting on 10 September 2026

1. Track the bus before you leave the house

The 108 service can now be tracked live at oxentime.co.uk – so instead of guessing, you can see exactly where the bus is and time your walk to the stop. The next Public Transport Representatives' meeting is on Tuesday 17 November at 1.30pm, held online.

2. Shepherd's Pit Lane becomes a Quiet Lane from 28 September

Oxfordshire County Council's Quiet Lanes scheme comes into effect on Shepherd's Pit Lane from 28th September, following a consultation opening on 21st September. A gate will close the lane to through vehicle traffic at one end, making it a dead end for cars, while walkers and cyclists will still be able to pass through. The closure order runs for up to 18 months.

3. Please clear up after your dog

Dog fouling remains a problem around the recreation ground and along the allotment path. A reminder that any of the village's litter bins can take dog waste – not just the dedicated dog bins – so there's no need to leave a bagged deposit on a fence or tree. It's an offence that can carry a fine of up to £100.

4. Parish Council: one seat to fill

Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council currently has one vacant seat, following a councillor's recent resignation. We would especially welcome interest from residents of Bayswater and Shotover, an area the Council currently has nobody representing. If you're interested in standing, or just want to find out what's involved, contact the Clerk at theclerk@foresthillwithshotover-pc.gov.uk.

The **next meeting of the Parish Council** will be held on **Thursday 8 October at 7pm in Forest Hill Village Hall**. All are welcome to attend.

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

HORTON-cum-STUDLEY

St Barnabas Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

Michaelmas Fayre 2026



Thank you to Colin and Caroline Badger for kindly hosting the Michaelmas Fayre, at Manor Farm, once again. Thank you to all the stall holders, everyone who came to support and who donated goods, plants, cooked, moved tables back and forth, made badges, spent money, baked and thank you to Lisa for organising us all. It was a very happy afternoon and we made £1,336 towards the upkeep of our church which is really good. Great village effort all coming together.

The Dog and Collar



Open on **Friday 2 October, 6-8.30pm in the village church**. Do come along and meet up with fellow villagers, neighbours and friends.

Coffee and Chat

Saturday 10 October, 10.00-12.00 noon Everyone is welcome to pop in. No charge but donations always welcomed.

Animal Welfare and Blessing Service

Sunday 4 October, 11.00am

Always a lovely service. We will be in St Barnabas churchyard if weather permits. All creatures, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, sheep are welcome at our annual animal welfare and blessing service. Please join in with or without the furry members of your family.

Horton-cum-Studley Parish Council

Thames Water Sewage works

Keir Contractors are working on behalf of Thames Water as part of a capital investment programme to upgrade the sewage treatment works (STW) on Oakley Road. This will improve its ability to treat the volumes of incoming sewage, reducing the need for untreated discharges into local rivers in wet weather. The work is due to complete in March 2027. The Parish Council has been invited to visit the site.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government decision to create three unitary authorities across Oxfordshire (including West Berkshire) has been 'paused', pending a legal review. Across England, 13 other areas have also been paused, following challenges to the decisions taken by the government in July. This also means that local elections will go ahead in May 2027 based on the existing boundaries.

Asylum Centre proposal

The proposal to accommodate up to 1,250 single male asylum seekers at Site A (MOD) near Piddington, is now the subject of an 'Urgent Crown Development application', with supporting plans, assessments and technical documents available on the Home Office website. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) conducted a short 10-day period of public consultation which closed on 17 September.

Parish Council Meetings

Second Wednesday each month at 7.30pm in the Millennium Village Hall

The next meeting is on **Wednesday 14 October 2026**.

David Slingo, Chair

Village Night at Studley Wood

Studley Wood Golf Club continue to welcome local villagers for a 2/3 course meal on the **last Friday evening of the month**. If you are interested in joining a regular group who attend contact lindadingle49@gmail.com or ruth.david@live.com for further information.

Spud in a Bucket, Pumpkin Weigh-In and Sunflower Measure

Sunday 4 October, 3-4pm at St Barnabas Church

Keep your spuds undisturbed in their buckets for the big reveal!

Bring all your pumpkins and sunflowers along so we can admire them. All shapes and sizes welcome.

Refreshments available. All donations to Parkinsons UK / St Barnabas Church. *Cathy Jenkins*

Poppy Appeal

The Annual Poppy Appeal on behalf of The Royal British Legion is fast approaching. Volunteers will be knocking on doors through the village collecting for this very worthy cause at the end of October and beginning of November should you want to donate. *Ruth David*

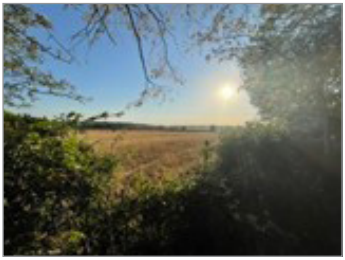
Horton-cum-Studley Gardening Club

A huge thank you once again to our wonderful hosts, Leonard Lee and Chris Turnbull, who so generously opened their beautiful Church Lane garden for our Summer Social (12 August). Behind the scenes, our volunteers were arranging tables and providing some very welcome shade for all fifty of us, as we were treated to some superb home cooking, made wherever possible with ingredients that had been locally sourced. Thank you!





Water, or rather, the lack of it, has been the recurring topic of conversation for most of us gardeners this summer, so the garden's dry garden section was a particular treat and provided plenty of interest. We also enjoyed exploring the two ponds, one wild and one more carefully tended, as well as the espaliered fruit garden and a rather intriguing 'secret' garden which had a very grand view of the moor.



The highlight of the evening however was the well-publicised eclipse of the sun, which reached a maximum of 92% at 7.14pm. Leonard and Chris helped make it all flow very easily from the moment we arrived. Each of us was greeted with a gift – a visor for safe viewing of the eclipse – which some of us used to take photographs, this being a relatively rare event. It was a magical way to end the evening, with the sun slowly disappearing behind Otmoor's distant horizon.

Looking Ahead

Our final visit of the year will take place on **6 October,** after which our remaining meetings, complete with refreshments and a plant sale, will be held at The Millennium Hall as follows:

6 October: Visit to Ardleigh Recycling Centre (now fully booked)

20 October: Gardening in a Changing Climate – Helen Tronc

17 November: Restoration: Christ Church Water Meadow – John James

19 January 2027: AGM

If you're thinking about becoming a member in 2027, why not come on in and meet us? We'll be very happy see you. Doors open at 7.15.

Lyn Senior, Club Secretary

STANTON ST JOHN

St John the Baptist Church

Details of all church services and general church news can be found on pages 4 - 10. Any changes to the published schedule of services will be on our website www.fourparishes.org.uk.

David Nutt 100!

As some of you will know, David who has lived in Stanton St John for over 60 years, will be 100 in October. Those of you who know him are invited to celebrate this event on **Saturday 24 October, 2-5pm, in Stanton Village Hall**. Do drop in for light refreshments with him.

For any further information, please email: caroline.west@talktalk.net.

Coffee Mornings

Stanton Village Hall, Wednesday 21 October, 10.30-12noon

The following mornings will be:

Monday 23 November
Monday 14 December
Monday 4 January
Wednesday 20 January
Monday 8 February
Wednesday 24 February

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

Stanton Community Choir

There will be a Stanton Community Choir at the 'Christmas Lights' event led by David Willcock. All singers, whatever age, are welcome!

Rehearsals will be in **Stanton Church on Sundays, 5-5.45pm on 8 November, 15 November, and 29 November**. All are welcome! Please could you email me if you are planning to come: susanjbaker24@gmail.com.

Stanton St John Charities

Parishioners within Stanton St John are eligible to apply for help with winter fuel and heating costs for 2026/2027. With the probability again of high fuel bills this winter applicants should ensure that any statutory

financial support is accessed. The Trustees of the charity don't have the expertise to advise on these matters but will provide a list of benefits that may be available and the contact details.

Persons of any age may apply but funds are limited and priority will normally be given to households which have no regular wage earner or are state pensioners.

If relatives or neighbours are aware of anyone who may benefit from the grant, but is unlikely to see this notice, the Trustees would be pleased to receive the information. See contact below.

Application forms will be available from 1 October in the white box underneath the village shop window overhang. Previous applicants still resident in the parish will be personally sent a form.

The form should be completed in full and returned in the envelope provided by **Friday 31 October 2026** to Caroline Clark, The Stable House, Mill Street (into the letter box just inside the gate), or if more convenient to Rowan's letterbox (the door on the left hand side of the shop), by kind permission of Rowan Reavley. Information on the form will be treated in strictest confidence by the charity trustees.

Further information from Caroline Clark, 01865 351615 or caroline.clark@hotmail.co.uk Charity Number 202853.

Stanton St John Film Club

Saturday 10 October 2026, 7.45pm Stanton St John Village Hall

H is for Hawk



Our first film of the autumn is *H is for Hawk*, in which Claire Foy plays Cambridge don, Helen Macdonald. Distraught at the death of her father, she seeks consolation by buying and training a Goshawk which she names Mabel. The film explores the deepening relationship between Helen and Mabel, and how it helps Helen deal with her grief. See the official trailer here: H is for Hawk 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).

Stanton St John Women's Institute

Last month's meeting, with the talk by Chris Churchman: "*Losing England's Landscape. Climate Change, fact, truth and complete myths",* was one of our best-attended of the year. If it was the first time you've been to one of our meetings, we hope you now realise that we are not just 'Jam* and Jerusalem' but have a programme that's both interesting and entertaining.



Our next meeting on **Tuesday 13 October at 7.30pm** looks to fill both briefs. The talk by Eddy Smythe is "*The Life of John Smythe QC, MBE, OBE*". Find out how the son of a civil servant in Sierra Leone became a decorated WWII pilot in the RAF, then took up a law career and became one of Britain's first black barristers. His story didn't end there, and you can hear the full account from his son, Eddy, at this meeting. It's open to all, so please come along and enjoy our friendly atmosphere. SSJ WI members free; guests £4 (includes light refreshments).

*But if you do like jam, please see the back cover for details of our Coffee, Cake and a Little Craft event on **10 October**. There will be jam.

Ninebarrow

Stanton St John Church – Friday 20 November 2026

Doors open 6.30pm. Concert starts 7pm

A return to Stanton St John of Ninebarrow, the Dorset folk duo, performing songs inspired by the landscape and history of the British Isles.



Tickets (£17) are now on sale at www.ninebarrow.co.uk/gigs or via **Julian Money** (07483 010864 or julianmoney@hotmail.co.uk)

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