



The Parish Magazine for

£1

STOCKBRIDGE LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD

February 2025



The Parishes of Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford in the Mid-Test Benefice

Rector : The Reverend Joe Sweetnam

All Enquiries, including enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals:

Please contact the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman
Phone No: 07900 927913 or midtestbenefice@gmail.com

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St Peter's Stockbridge	St Mary's Longstock	St Nicholas' Leckford
<i>Churchwarden</i>	<i>Churchwarden</i>	<i>Churchwarden</i>
David Williams 811072	Madeleine Hedley 810284	Vacancy
<i>Hon Secretary</i>	<i>Hon Secretary</i>	<i>Hon Secretary</i>
Micki Nadal 810567	Richard Robinson 810388	Micki Nadal 810567
<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	<i>Hon Treasurer</i>	<i>Hon Treasurer</i>
Jean Farnan 07590 532460	Madeleine Hedley 810284	David Barnes 810516
Beavers	Neighbour Care 0845 0943713	Stockbridge Music
Frances Waghorn 01962 776048	<i>Calls cost 7p/min +network charge.</i>	Rob Dewing (Chair) 07749 797005
Bell ringers (Longstock)	Pastoral Visitors	Stockbridge Parish Council
Chris Reynell 810569	Vacancy	Chair: Derek Halle
Bell ringers (Stockbridge)	RBL (Houghton branch)	Derek@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk
Micki Nadal 810567	David Williams (Chair) 811072	Clerk: Belinda Baker 07770 406607
Brownies (meet in Chilbolton)	New Secretary to be appointed	clerk@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org
Julie Shone 01962 761269	Angela McMeekin: Poppies 810236	Stockbridge Pharmacy 810624
Church Mouse Books	Scouts	Stockbridge Police Station
Micki Nadal 810567	Mark Lovell 07786 435847	(Non emergencies) 101
Cub Scouts	Scout Group Explorers	Stockbridge Primary /Pre School
Mo Collins 01256 895534	Andrea Zanchi 07747 720735	Emma Jefferies (Head) 810550
Danebury School	Louise Henderson 07436 899054	Stockbridge Rec Ground
Nicky Goodrich (Head) 810555	St Thomas More Church	Michael Porter (Chair) 810595
HCC County Councillor	Father Mark Hogan 01962 852804	Mob 07775 632632
Cllr David Drew 357024	Stockbridge Church Flowers Sec	Jill Webb(Sec) 01264 810819
mob 07738 289902	Angela McMeekin 810236	Stockbridge Surgery 810524
Kent Hill Scout Hall	Stockbridge Community Cinema	<i>Out of hours urgent treatment /advice</i>
Leigh Dance 811074	Paul Kidd 07732 580721	<i>Hants Doctors On Call freephone 111</i>
Leckford Parish Council	Stockbridge Community Market	Stockbridge Town Hall
Vacancy	Carol Preston 07925 287870	Kim Candler (Chair) 811776
Longstock Garden Club	Stockbridge Court Leet	<i>On-line bookings</i>
Peter Moore 07881 573493	Guy Boney (Lord of the Manor)	www.stockbridgetownhall.co.uk
peter.r.moore@gmail.com	810614	or phone 513299
Longstock Parish Council	Andy Soper (Bailiff) 07776 258398	Trout 'n About
Chair: Alice Foster 07846 173217	Stockbridge Dramatic Society	Bob Powell 07802 524433
Clerk: Gill Bulpitt 07763857512	Mark Frank 810562	TVBC Councillor
Longstock Village Hall	Stockbridge Football Club	Cllr Ian Jeffrey 01794 388872
Selina Musters 810459	Trevor Dance (Chair) 07780 661223	Unity Transport (Dial-a-Ride
Longstock & Leckford WI	Kieran Wilson (Hon Sec) 07883 624808	shopping bus) 356808
Selina Musters 810459	Email: stockbridgefc@hotmail.co.uk	

From the Rectory

Dear Friends,

As we step into February, the excitement of the new year has already begun to settle. By now, many of us have made—and perhaps already broken—our New Year's resolutions. The start of a new year often brings a sense of fresh beginnings, an opportunity to reset our priorities, and an invitation to reflect on how we can grow as individuals and as a community.



Traditionally, New Year's resolutions focus on self-improvement: we might try to get fitter, eat healthier, or take on new hobbies. But as we turn our attention to the life of faith, I want to encourage us to think of resolutions that enrich not only our own lives but also the lives of those around us.

One resolution we might make this year is to cultivate a spirit of kindness. In our busy world, it's easy to overlook small gestures of goodwill, but acts of kindness—whether helping a neighbour, offering a listening ear, or lending a hand when needed—are a tangible expression of God's love in action. This year, let's do our best to be the source of kindness that reflects the love we've been given.

Another resolution might be to improve our prayer life. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it's easy to forget the importance of quiet moments with God. How about trying to set aside small moments throughout the day to pause, give thanks, and seek guidance. Maybe even going into one of our churches to light a candle. Prayer is a powerful way to stay grounded in our chaotic lives, and it can bring peace to our hearts, even in the most challenging of times.

Additionally, let's resolve to build stronger relationships within our community and church. At its heart, the Christian faith is about love and fellowship. This year, let's make an intentional effort to reach out, support one another, and nurture the bonds that tie us together. Whether it's through a cup of tea and a friendly chat, volunteering to help at an event, or simply checking in on a neighbour, these small acts of connection can have a profound impact on our shared life.

As we continue through this year, I pray that each of us will make resolutions that bring us closer to one another and to God. Let's be mindful of how we live, how we love, and how we serve. In doing so, we may find that the new year holds not just resolutions, but a renewed sense of purpose and joy.

With every blessing for 2025,

Rev'd Joe Sweetnam

**Please remember subscriptions to the magazine are now due -
see page 12 for details of how to pay**

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Cover Photo: Turtle Doves by Peter Paillou (c.1720 - c.1790)

From the Editorial Team

Happy New Year and welcome to the first issue of our magazine this year, and we are looking ahead with optimism.

Christmas celebrations went well and Revd Joe played his part in both the church and community events of the season with great enthusiasm - see our articles on pages 16,17 & 25.

February brings Valentine's Day and thoughts of love. The turtle doves on our front cover are a universal symbol of faithfulness, love and, in some cultures, peace. Our footers provide a lighthearted look at love, but we were delighted to be able to balance this with something more thoughtful when Danebury School offered a choice of some of their students' work for inclusion in the magazine. We chose a serious investigation of the students' perception of relationships, which we hope readers find as interesting as we did - see page 13. Thank you Scarlett and all at Danebury School.

And the new year is a good time to remind readers that this magazine is only as good as its content. We do rely on you to send us articles, updates and information about all things local, but also do let us know what is on your mind. We would love to include your musings and enthusiasms under our 'Reflections' banner.

Frances Candler, Jennifer Kidd and Thea Taylor



Stockbridge Community Market

**Every Thursday morning
9.30 - 11.45am
in Stockbridge Town Hall**

Selling the very best local and home-made produce

Pies, cakes, breads, soups, eggs and vegetables.
Handmade crafts, toys, books, plants & bric-a-brac.

Please come along and browse

Free drop-in IT Help Desk and Wi-Fi access

And don't forget, a Parish Councillor attends regularly so if you have any queries or concerns about Stockbridge issues, please call in.

MANOR and BOROUGH OF STOCKBRIDGE in the County of Hampshire COURT BARON & COURT LEET



The annual meeting of
Stockbridge Courts Baron and Leet
has been called by

The Lord of The Manor, Guy Boney, KC,
to be held on

**Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 7.00pm in
THE TOWN HALL, STOCKBRIDGE**

During the evening, The Clerk to the Court will
appoint members to sit on the Jury for
2025/26.

The Lord of the Manor will welcome our
National Trust officer and report on issues
relating to the past year in Stockbridge and
surrounds. While the Jury retires to appoint
its Officers, Catherine Hadler, from The
National Trust, will give a short update on the
work to be undertaken in the coming year.

Any questions you may wish to present to
The Lord of the Manor should be emailed to:
The Bailiff at andysoper73@btinternet.com
or tel 07776 258398

from whence they will be placed before his
Lordship for response on the evening.

Wine and ice creams will be on sale
before the meeting.

We hope to welcome you to this annual event.

The Bailiff

Patron: Professor David Owen Norris MA (Oxon) FSA FRAM FRCO

STOCKBRIDGE MUSIC

Friday , 7th March 2025 at 7.30pm
Doors open at 6.45pm
St Peter's Church, Stockbridge



David Owen Norris

"Yes, yes, we *will* have a pianoforte!"

A 250th anniversary concert for Jane Austen, born 1775

Tickets £25 (U18s £5)

**from stockbridgemusic.uk
or on the door, if still available**



**Stockbridge
Community
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FREUD'S LAST SESSION (12A)

Friday 14 February

7.30 pm (1hr 48min)

Set on the eve of WW2 and towards the end of his life, Freud's Last Session sees Freud invite iconic author C.S. Lewis for a debate over the existence of God. Exploring Freud's unique relationship with his daughter Anna and Lewis' unconventional romance with his best friend's mother, the film interweaves past, present and fantasy, bursting from the confines of Freud's study on a dynamic journey.



THE CRITIC (15)

Wednesday 19 February

5.00 pm and 7.30 pm (1hr 35min)



Set in 1930's London, The Critic is a thrilling tale of ambition, blackmail, and desire with a dazzling anti-hero at its heart. When the most feared and vicious

theatre critic in town Jimmy Ersine (Ian McKellen), finds himself suddenly in the cross hairs of the Daily Chronicle's new owner, he strikes a Faustian pact with struggling actress Nina Land (Gemma Arteton) who is desperate to win his favour.

Tickets £6.00 (£5.50 + £0.50 booking fee) available online via our website **stockbridgecinema.org.uk** or via the TicketSource telephone booking service **0333 666 3366** (no additional fee)

Copy for Magazine

Copy date for the **March** Magazine:

15 February 2025

Please send emails to:

editorsstockmag@gmail.com

or phone Frances on 01264 811776

Jennifer on 811179 or Thea on 07730 964481

Andover Concert Series

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Thursday 27th February 2025 - 7:30pm



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Stockbridge Town Hall Events



Weekly

Mon am	Pilates with Paula
Mon am	Pilates Unlimited with Clare
Mon pm	Sing for Fun
Tues am	Iyengar Yoga with Melissa
Tues am	Michelle Buhl-Nielsen Art Class
Weds am	Yoga with Dionne
Weds am/pm	Su Joy Art Class
Thurs am	Stockbridge Community Market
Thurs pm	Jo Caley Joga

This Month

Feb 1	Antique Fair
Feb 2	Chalrotte Kantharia
Feb 4	Stockbridge Drama Society
Feb 7	Kuoni Personal Travel Expert
Feb 8	South Central Makers
Feb 8	Stockbridge Drama Society
Feb 9	House of Boêmia
Feb 10-11	Capital Cashmere
Feb 12	U3A
Feb 14	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Feb 14-17	Jules At No.43
Feb 19	Stockbridge Community Cinema
Feb 20	Stockbridge Parish Council
Feb 22-23	Hawkmoor Books
Feb 22-23	Antiques and Curios
Feb 24	Neil Holley
Feb 25	Infinito
Feb 25	Longstock and Leckford WI
Feb 26	Infinito

Wherwell History Group

**Friday 21st February
at 8.00pm**



'The Amazing Mr Dickens'

A Zoom Presentation by
David Allen

Please book in advance at
www.wherwellhistory.com
where you will also find further information
about our programme.



Houghton WI

**10am Monday 17th February
at Houghton Village Hall**

Mike Read

will show us his photos of `

Aotearoa -

Land of the Long White Cloud

Visitors welcome. Further information from
Jane Anderton 01264 810928



LONGSTOCK & LECKFORD WI

Tuesday 25th February

Stockbridge Town Hall 6.45pm for 7pm start.

Richard Suggett

presents

**'The Work of the
National Coastwatch Institution'**

Guests always welcome.

Further details from Selina Musters on 810459



**Longstock Garden Club
Tuesday February 11th**

Annual General Meeting

followed by a talk by

Ray Broughton on

'Alpines

**- ideal for small gardens and
pots on the patio'**

**We meet at 7.30pm in Longstock Village Hall
(Doors open at 7.00pm)**

Guests welcome £3 each meeting.

Don't forget the raffle tickets are still only £1
or bring a prize.

<https://longstockgardenclub.com/>

Peter Moore 07881573493



The Royal British Legion Houghton and District Branch

Contact David Williams (Chairman)
01264 811072

Social evenings are held on the first Wednesday
of most months in the Greyhound on the Test

Stockbridge Amateur Dramatic Society's

Curtain Calls . . .

Come and be entertained by readings and performances from plays, poems and novels
– and often songs

Tuesday 4th February

at 7.30pm

Stockbridge Town Hall

Our theme this month is 'Beside the Sea'

You don't have to be a member of SADS to come along, (but we'd love it if you'd join).

We're also looking for new blood to act, direct and be part of the backstage team.

No experience necessary!

stockbridgeamdrams@gmail.com
or find us on Facebook

Test Villages u3a

Thursday 6th February

at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall

'Vincent Van Gogh'

Doug Skeggs

art historian, lecturer and author
explores the life and work of Vincent Van Gogh,
his tragic story and his humanity.

Thursday 13th March

at 2pm in Chilbolton Village Hall

*(Please note change of date from 1st to 2nd
Thursday this month)*

'Eat to fit your Genes'

Dr Maninder Ahluwalia

molecular biologist, specialising in DNA, genetics
and genomics at Cardiff Met University
explains how your diet can impact your health
through your genes

Doors open at 1.40pm for the presentation,
followed by refreshments.

**Please do come along to one of our
meetings. New members are very welcome.**

u3a is a UK-wide network of groups that provides
the opportunity to socialise and learn for fun.

Find out more about our
Test Villages group at:
testvillages.u3asite.uk

u3a
learn, laugh, live

The Mysterious Origins of Valentine's Day Celebration

Coming as it does in the dull days of February when Christmas is a distant memory, friends and family are back in their daily routines, and the slightly lighter nights bring the faintest promise of Spring, Valentine's Day can offer a cheery opportunity to treat oneself and one's loved-one to a much-needed boost.

Valentine's Day has certainly become the day of love with cards, chocolates and flowers becoming the hallmarks of the annual tradition. However, the true origins of this festival day remain a mystery with details lost to time as romantics have retold history and made the day their own.



The earliest possible origin of Valentine's Day is the pagan holiday, Lupercalia, celebrated for centuries in the middle of February. To promote fertility, naked men would sacrifice a goat and a dog and young boys would then whip women with the strips of hide from the sacrificed animals.

Lupercalia remained popular for many years and was one of the few pagan holidays celebrated 150 years after Christianity was legalised in the Roman Empire. When Pope Gelasius came to power in the late fifth century, he put an end to Lupercalia and, soon after, the Catholic church declared 14th February to be a day of feasts to celebrate the martyred Saint Valentine.

Opinions vary as to how these celebrations might have been fashioned by the intervening centuries to acquire the romantic associations of today. Was Chaucer the first person to link Valentine's Day to romance in his poem 'The Parlement of Foules'? and, if so, did it randomly reflect the time of year when European birds began to mate?

Shakespeare has the deserved reputation for expressing the timeless thoughts and feelings of all of us so, if the following words from 'Hamlet' (Act 4 Scene 5) have helped, lovers everywhere may have reason to be grateful to him. Enjoy your day.

*Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.*

Editors

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Meeting President Jimmy Carter

The news that Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States had died on December 24th last year at the age of 100, has triggered some memories locally. Stockbridge resident Mo Crossman remembers visiting the Mill Arms in Dunbridge back in 1978 with

her husband Michael and finding their friend Micky Lunn having lunch with President Carter. Jimmy Carter asked to meet them and a long and friendly conversation followed.

Mick Lunn, a local lad from Houghton, was brought up beside the River Test at Houghton and joined his father as a river keeper for the Houghton Club. In 1962, he followed the tradition set by his father and grandfather, and became Head Keeper. With his unique knowledge and understanding of trout and the river, Mick fished with many famous people including President Carter.

Terry Lewis, who was landlord at the Mill Arms, told the Hampshire Chronicle that the President and his wife, the former first Lady Rosalynn Carter, visited the pub together (along with their security guards!) and endeared themselves to fellow customers by sitting down and chatting with them. He described Jimmy Carter as 'a cracking fella'.

Lainston House has confirmed that Presidents Carter and Bush Sr both stayed at Lainston House during their visits to the UK, and were both well known for their love of fly fishing on the Test.

Editors' Note

We're sure that among our readers there will be others who recall these Presidential visits and can tell us a bit more, or might have stories about other visiting dignitaries that would be interesting to our readers. If you have, please do get in touch - see page 2 for contact details.



Poppy Appeal 2024

This year's Poppy Appeal was very successful despite the usual inclement weather. Our poppy sellers are a resilient group and a total of a record £9,413.53 was raised! We were delighted by the generosity of those residents and visitors to Stockbridge who donated during the weeks leading up to Remembrance Day.

I would like to thank both collectors and residents for your wonderful support.

Angela McMeekin



Stockbridge
PRACTICE

Patient
News

Just a reminder about our website:
stockbridgesurgery.co.uk

The 'Do I need to see a GP' page is worth checking before ringing to make an appointment. Some services accept self-referrals.

Adjustments Flag

If you or someone you care for has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities, we have a responsibility to ensure they can access healthcare.

Examples of adjustments which might help with accessing healthcare are:

- Requiring good access for wheelchair users.
- Providing easy read appointment letters.
- Having a carer accompany you and/or communicate on your behalf.
- Communication by text or email instead of by telephone.

Please let us know if there is an adjustment which could help you. With your permission, we can also make this information available to other staff within the NHS.

Lost property

We have several hats/caps, a book and some jewellery which have been found at the surgery. If you think any of these may be yours, please contact us with a description of the item and we will see if it matches anything we have in the lost property box.

Does your child use a blue Reliever Inhaler?

Children who need to use a blue reliever inhaler more than 2-3 times per week are more likely to have severe asthma/wheeze attacks.

We are taking part in the 'Prescription Alerts for Reliever inhalers in Children' (PARC) Project led by University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. The aim of this project is to find out whether an enhanced nurse-led check-up will reduce the number of asthma/wheeze attacks experienced by children and young people using too many blue inhalers.

If your child is eligible to take part in the PARC Project, you may be contacted by the practice between May 2024 and October 2026.

Longterm Condition Reviews

We invite patients who have asthma, diabetes or COPD to the surgery for a yearly check-up with one of our Practice Nurses or Healthcare Assistant. You will be invited around the month of your birthday.

Ann Spooner
Practice Manager



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Stockbridge Town Hall AGM

The Stockbridge Town Hall AGM for 2023/24 took place on 21 October. Due to insufficient space in the December/January magazine we are pleased to be able to report on the event now.

The Vice Chairman (Paul Kidd) was pleased to be able to report that Stockbridge Town Hall continued to prosper, with high usage and a wide range of users and activities. He restated the objectives of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which are to:

"... run a village hall for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Stockbridge without distinction of race or political, religious or other opinions and provide facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants".

The CIO carries out this function through a board of 12 Trustees who manage the governance, finance, property and care of its customers.

In 2023/4, the Trading Company made an operating profit of £19,099 which was donated to the CIO. Expenditure by the CIO of £20,679 related mainly to the completion of the internal decoration project and the annual depreciation charge. Overall, therefore, the CIO reported a loss for the year of £1,580 which was financed from its cash reserves. As at 31 March the bank balance was £15,161.

The accounts had been examined by Rothmans LLP who confirmed that no matters had been identified which would cause them to believe that the financial records are not consistent with the recommended practice for accounting and reporting by charities and other relevant legislation.

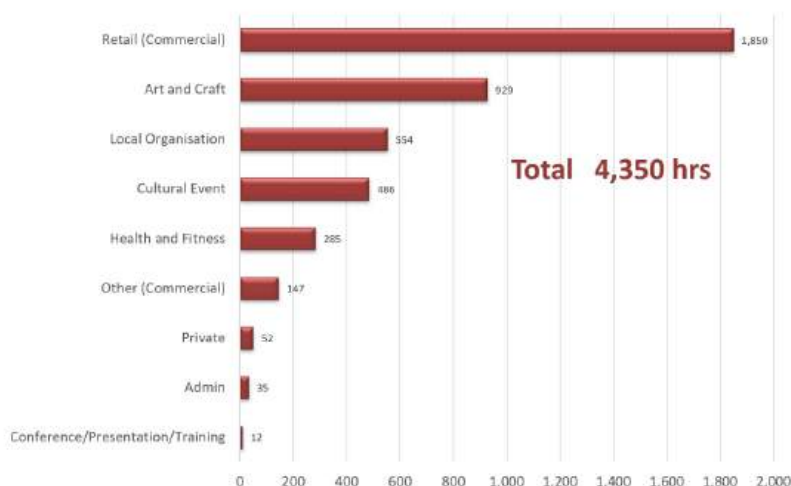
The Trustees, including those nominated by supporting organisations, were all reappointed in accordance with the constitution.

A comment from the floor was made that the financial report did not reflect the enormous amount of time and experience which the volunteer Trustees gave freely to the organisation. This was an important feature of hidden added value given to the local community and she expressed the community's thanks for this contribution.

Further details of the finances and activities of the STH Charitable Incorporated Organisation can be found on the Charity Commission website:
register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/
Charity number: 1165066

Paul Kidd

Hours booked by category of Hirer 2023/24

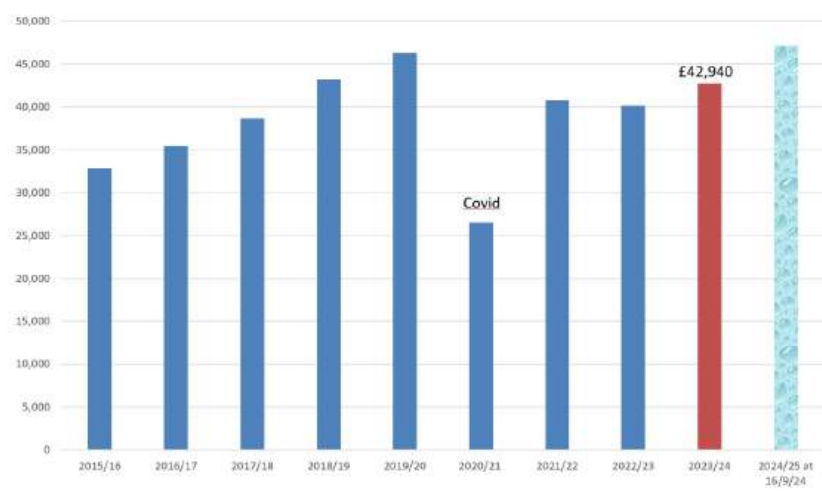


The day-to-day operation of the building is carried out through the STH Trading Company Ltd which donates its profits to the CIO. As well as being the only shareholder of the Trading Company, the CIO has responsibility for any capital works to the fabric of the building and major equipment and making grants in the furtherance of its objectives.

The AGM was informed that rental occupation for the premises continued to rise in 2023/24 with users from a wide variety of categories occupying it for approximately 60% of the time.

Income from these 2023/24 bookings amounted to £42,940 and this was expected to rise to pre-Covid levels during 2024/25.

Total Bookings Income (£)



... it's either a new car or a new wife. (Prince Philip)

New Parish Electoral Roll for 2025

This year sees the preparation of a new *church* electoral roll, for all the churches in our Benefice; the last revision was in 2019 and the roll is updated every 6 years. Those of you already on your church's electoral roll will need to reapply to be added to the new list and where addresses have changed, residents have moved in or away or sadly died, these changes can be incorporated.

You will be contacted by your PCC's Electoral Officer to remind you about this and you will also find application forms in your church and the dates by which they should be completed.

Even if you are not a regular church attendee, it makes sense to join your village church's roll – you will be able to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and have the right to vote on your church's affairs at the meeting. It also means you can become part of the church's Parochial Church Council (PCC) or, at a regional or national level, the Deanery, Diocesan or General Synod.

At a time when rural churches face increasing difficulties, it also helps our village churches to show their strength. Most residents, whether they attend church or not, see our village churches as the heart of the community; this will show commitment to that view.

Who can be included?

You must be 16 years of age or older, baptised and must sign an application form and declare yourself a member of the Church of England **and**

- a) Be a resident in your own church parish, **or**
- b) If not a parish resident you should have regularly attended the parish church for at least 6 months before enrolment, **or**
- c) If a member of an accepted church which is not part of the Church of England, you should have regularly attended the parish church for at least 6 months before enrolment.

Which Parish am I in?

The church parish boundaries are not quite the same as civil boundaries used for local and national elections – for instance, Houghton Road and Roman Road are in the civil parish of Longstock, but in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Stockbridge. The map below shows the boundaries for our three local ecclesiastical parishes..



(If you are unsure which ecclesiastical parish you are in, you can use the website <https://www.churchofengland.org> > resources > *achurchnearyou.com*. Enter your address and the search results page will show your parish, a map and your parish church(es). - Eds)

If you are currently on the electoral roll, please reapply. If you haven't applied before, please consider doing so - your help and commitment would be hugely appreciated.

If you have any questions please contact your Electoral Roll Officer –

for Stockbridge and Leckford contact Micki Nadal on 810567 or emnad@btinternet.com and for Longstock contact Maddie Hedley 810284 or mjh723@btinternet.com

Micki Nadal

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Our thanks to the many of you who have already paid

We are delighted to include the following article as the first of what we hope will be regular contributions from the staff and pupils of Danebury School. If this thoughtful and carefully researched piece is anything to go by, we think you will agree that we are in for a treat. Well done Scarlett and Danebury School.

This month's subject matter is particularly relevant as a serious and wider examination of relationships - not just of the romantic kind that we mark on Valentine's Day - Editors

We spoke to members of our school community and asked many different questions about what relationships mean to them. To begin we discussed opinions on cheating on your 'significant other' when in a relationship. Some people think cheating is not very nice because if you loved someone there wouldn't be, or shouldn't be, another person involved. Others deemed 'cheating' as something that generally always happens during a relationship; this could come down to their own past experiences or those of their parents.

Next, we asked how people believe their friends should act around their partner. Some people suggested that they would like it if their friends would stay distant from their partners because they don't trust their friends to be around them. Yet the most common opinion was that friends should be friendly. Many believe this because they trust both their friends and their partner, which we believe is the correct way to act.

A few responses suggested that friends and partners should be civil with one another; not developing their own friendship but just treating each other with respect. Overall, there is a big difference in opinions within this question.

Finally, we asked students about relationships based on attraction within school. A few claimed that they don't pay attention to those kinds of things, but, if the relationship is healthy, the majority tend to think that it is really cute.

We found that not everyone within school experiences this kind of relationship, so we adapted our questioning to talk about relationships from a broader point of view including those with families and teachers. Nearly every student we questioned believed there was one specific teacher they could always trust to talk to about anything.

Obviously, a lot of students said their relationships with staff were based around completing work in lessons. We chose to discuss how this differs from their relationship with their parents. Some students believed their relationships at home were difficult to discuss and chose not to divulge this information. Yet most students believed they have healthy and trusted relationships with those at home. It seems as if people have a wide range of extremely different relationships with their parents or carers – and this is okay! Not everyone can have the same thing!

Finally, we wanted to come up with what people thought was a 'healthy' relationship. Everyone believed that relationships are based upon trust, with the freedom to talk to whoever they choose. They thought that having an occasional argument with someone you trusted was okay, because it feeds into an ultimately healthy relationship!

If you ever feel like you need to talk to someone about your relationship – please speak to a trusted person and get advice from others.

Signs of an unhealthy relationship might be being told what you can and can't do, manipulation, physical or mental abuse, not being allowed out of the house or possibly not allowed friends that are girls/boys.

If you are in this type of relationship, it may be difficult to get out. You need to leave or tell someone about it because it is not good for your well-being. What may seem like a red flag, could turn into something worse.

Scarlett H





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Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School News

Building Resilience

Happy New Year! For us in school, January felt like September all over again as we welcomed some new staff members to our team; it felt like we were starting the school year all over again!

Miss Morris, Mrs Henderson-Jones and Miss White have settled into school life here at Stockbridge so well and the children have returned full of life and ready to learn.

We call this term 'Spring 1' but it hasn't felt much like spring so far in terms of the icy and colder weather although try telling that to the bulbs which are popping up all over the site! We have a small but perfectly-formed group called the 'Garden Gang' who help maintain the beds and borders as well as the polytunnel; they spent much of November planting over 500 bulbs and now have to learn the hard part of playing the waiting game to see what appears and what won't make it.

We've started the year in our RPSHE (Relationships, Personal, Social and Health Education) lessons talking about dreams and goals and how achieving them can often feel like a rollercoaster – an analogy the children could get behind. Many have lofty ambitions for their future self and this is laudable – we are now focusing for the rest of the term on resilience and how to overcome the hiccups we inevitably get along the way to achieving our goals. Many of our children take part in and show great commitment to sporting endeavours both in and out of school. We had our best season ever in sports, winning both the Cross Country overall trophy (as well as success in individual races) and the girls football tournament amongst our cluster schools – these are both new achievements for us, having come second in the previous two years. These successes are super and exciting to share in our school community but what children gain from these, aside from the pleasure of winning, is a greater sense of collaboration and team spirit; of rooting for someone other than themselves and for sharing the ups and downs and the collective need to do better than your best which is usually easier when urged on by your teammates.

Part of the work we will undertake this term on resilience in school, linked to learning, is learning to ignore and not create distractions and the impact these have on others. Walking your own path and staying true to what you believe in as well as accommodating others' viewpoints and input is a critical skill. Perseverance will also feature in the learning we undertake but not by blindly repeating mistakes; it takes careful and patient teaching to help children understand that perseverance requires you to often change approaches and not repeat mistakes over and over again – to 'think outside the box' and look in other directions.

Inevitably, resilience has highs and lows and normalising these for our children; the sense of desperation or frustration when something doesn't come easily or a quiet celebration when it does, is part of the learning too. In a world obsessed with mental health and well-being, it's not merely our job anymore to 'deliver' learning but to help our young children see that life is not plain-sailing and how you respond to adversity and challenge is one of the most important lessons in life. Most importantly, that they have to be active learners in this regard and take charge of their own mental health by developing strategies to help when they feel challenged.

I'm brought back to thinking of those poor bulbs we planted in November with so much hope – they have to show great adversity against our ever-changing climate! I can't wait for them to bloom – just like our children.

*Emma Jefferies
Headteacher*



National Trust Alert

We are currently having reports of people being seen poaching rabbits from areas on the Down – twice so far at the bronze age barrow area on the main open slope, with the lone juniper tree on it. Police have attended one such incident which was a group of ten people (men and children) who had spades and were found to have rabbits and ferrets in their trucks in the carpark. Not only are they illegally poaching on our land, they are also causing considerable damage to the SSSI and the Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the site. We urge people not to approach these groups, but to call 999 and report them if you see any poaching going on.

We have our own licensed team of ferreters who are currently licensed to do rabbit control on the Down under our wildlife management plan, in a bid to try and reduce the soaring population and the damage they have caused to the archaeology in many areas. Whilst this may confuse people as to whether they are looking at licensed or unlicensed ferreters, the key differences are:

Large groups - we don't have many people licensed
Children - our ferreters do not use children at work
Spades/shovels - our licensees do not dig out any animals and will have no digging equipment.

If you spot a group and are unsure as to who they are, please do not approach and if in doubt report to the police. If they are from our licensed team, they will soon be identified as such. If they are not, then it's important we catch them in the act.

Many thanks for your vigilance in this matter and in your concern for our beautiful site.

Catherine Hadler, Lead Ranger

Christmas in Stockbridge

The High Street was once again illuminated over the Christmas period by residents, businesses and the regular High Street tree and underwater lights to create a wonderful festive atmosphere. The tree lights at St Peter's were switched on by the Revd Joe Sweetnam, ably assisted by Santa, Cinderella and others on Friday 6 December with plenty of activities taking place in the streets. Here are a few pictures to remind you . . .





Born in a Barn

Stockbridge Primary School and Pre-School



By the time you read this, the festive period will be over, decorations packed away and all the pine needles hoovered up but the memories for us of the build-up to Christmas each year linger for a long time as St Peter's affords our children the opportunity to perform in front of, for some, their very first audience. The

Church and its community warmly welcome us each December as we prepare our youngest children for the retelling of the nativity story – in all its various theatrical guises. We've been known to invite aliens into the Church to retell the story but, this year, it was the turn of the animals in the stable where Jesus was born.

The mice, cows, sheep, donkeys and even a cockerel played a vital part in this year's retelling which inevitably involved a grumpy inn keeper, set of angels and Angel Gabriel as well as the three kings and their weary camels! We traipse up and down the High Street in the fortnight preceding the nativity to ensure children are well versed in where to stand, how loudly (& hopefully clearly!) they need to speak and when to join in with the joyous songs that the young nativity performers need to remember off by heart. It is a valuable opportunity for children who may otherwise never enter a Church until their RE lessons, to engage in the special time of year for the Church community as well as discover the sanctuary of this special place



and also meet the lovely Church Wardens and Reverend Joe.

Alongside this, St Peter's has also been a place of calm and peace for us in our monthly assemblies as we value the opportunity to share your special place of worship with our children. We take a theme each time and although these are only short snippets of time spent in the Church, they are valuable in making the bible stories and teachings accessible to all of our children.

We are looking forward to spending more time with the Church and its community as we get to know Revd Joe a little more in 2025 and wish to offer a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all who welcome us – David is a quite a marvel at keeping us warm and welcomed and I know there are many more behind the scenes who encourage and support also – thank you to all and we wish you a happy start to 2025!

Emma Jefferies
Headteacher



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Recipe of the Month : Chinese Chicken

The recent Chinese New Year celebrations have prompted me to offer this recipe for a delicious stir fry that has been a family favourite of ours for many years.



It originated from a fund-raising church recipe 'book' over 40 years ago and can be adapted to suit your preferred ingredients. Replace chicken with plant-based alternatives for a vegetarian version. Omit the peanuts if concerned about nut allergies.

Ingredients

4 large chicken breasts
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
8 spring onions – topped and tailed, cut into strips
3 large celery stalks – cut into chunks
1 large green pepper – cut into strips
1 garlic clove – crushed
15 oz tin of water chestnuts – drained
4 oz of roasted peanuts or cashews
Salt and pepper

For the Sauce

1 level tablespoons cornflour
¼ teaspoon of dried ginger
1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
3 tablespoons of soy sauce
3 tablespoons of water
2½ tablespoons of granulated sugar
1 tablespoon of white wine vinegar
3 fl oz (5 tablespoons) of sherry

Method

To make the sauce, blend cornflour and ginger together in a small bowl. Gradually blend in oil, soy sauce, water, sugar, vinegar and sherry.

Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces. Heat oil in a large frying pan or wok, add chicken pieces and fry for about 5 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and slightly browned.

Add the onions, celery, green pepper, garlic, and water chestnuts and cook for a further 5 minutes. Pour in the sauce, add the peanuts and stir for about a minute until slightly thickened and hot. Take off the heat and season with salt and pepper. Serve with rice.

Jennifer Kidd

The European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

We chose our cover illustration of a pair of turtle doves to introduce this month's Valentine's Day theme, and also because for many years the doves have been regular visitors to Stockbridge Down.

In many cultures, the turtle dove is a symbol of love, fidelity and peace, almost certainly because of their lifelong monogamous bonds, purring sound and docile and affectionate behaviour.

They have been featured in art, literature, and mythology for thousands of years. In Ancient Greece, turtle doves were thought to pull the chariot of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and in Roman myth the turtle dove was an emblem of Fides, the goddess of trust and good faith. In the works of Shakespeare turtle doves represent romantic love, and in many cultures today, they are a symbol of peace.

We asked Catherine Hadler from the National Trust how this now endangered species was faring locally, and she reported:

"Unfortunately, we have had no reports of turtle dove, or any hearing/sighting of them ourselves, since pre covid. I used to hear them most years but literally only one or two but nothing since 2019. The habitat is still suitable, although they do require a water source and certain seed/grain sources, which they may find on neighbouring farms. Water would be a bit further afield so they may find the Down a bit unsuitable in that respect.

However I think because they migrate to Africa the main issue is them being shot en route – it is estimated that as many as 2 - 4 million are shot and trapped as they pass through. I heard Martin Down on the Wiltshire border has fewer numbers as well each year, although they are a stronghold for the species."

Editors



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View from the Potting Shed

I always like to check out the theme chosen by the RHS for the annual Chelsea Flower Show; it tends to reflect gardening trends – whether through designers' choices, external influences such as climate change or, with my cynical hat on, plant availability at the plant nurseries. The overall theme at Chelsea will be 'Your Space, Your Story', examining the individuality of gardeners and how they garden.

This year, my interest has been piqued by the fact that Monty Don, in his first attempt at designing a 'Chelsea Garden', has chosen to build a dog-friendly garden. Those readers who know me will readily understand why this idea leapt off the page; after all, my back garden has been designed for the comfort of dogs for over 30 years. Monty intends to include water to paddle in, close-cut soft grass to play or snooze on, trees to provide essential summer relaxing shade, and plants for dog owners to avoid, as well as a sofa for their ultimate relaxation.

Dog owners reading this will know that this route means a) you will never again have a show lawn b) you may have to replant new arrivals several times over and c) a large parasol will never, ever be as good as a leafy tree. Last year I had a couple of old fruit trees long past their usefulness removed. Without their natural shade my dog simply refused to snooze away the afternoon under a parasol. So, a new semi-mature replacement (of a different species) which arrived in the autumn will be ready for her lazy summer afternoons this year.

The annual Stockbridge Open Gardens event has always illustrated the owners' personal space and story and it's this diverse take on what constitutes a bit of 'garden heaven' which makes Open Gardens such a joy. Whether your taste is for the neat and tidy or for the more natural setting, there is something for everyone – and however lazy we are in our own plots, the mild feeling of *schadenfreude* when you spot the odd weed in someone else's flower border is a comfort.

Personal taste may lead us to reject certain colours. I know of several people for whom yellow is, and always has been, anathema, a difficult path to follow if you aim to have spring flowers cheering you up after dull, dark winter days. I find chrysanthemums quite depressing, both in their colours and their attitude, with straight stems standing to stiff attention and unsatisfactory leaves, so you'll never find them gracing my autumn borders. But give me a bit of garden 'bling' with a corner of outrageously coloured and shaped dahlias, however, and I'm a happy person.

And our gardens, certainly mine, evolve continually. A badly placed plant can usually be moved to a



more comfortable spot; a badly chosen plant or garden 'thug' allowed to thrive, can blight your garden for years to come. Ground elder was plentiful in the garden when moving here and 30 plus years on, I am still fighting a war of attrition against this foul, Roman intruder. Yes, I know it can be used as a salad vegetable but my loathing of it precludes this solution; the Romans did think it cured gout so if I am ever a sufferer it may, in the end, be useful.

This year is the Chinese Year of the Snake, symbol of introspection, wisdom and growth. An ideal year, perhaps, to look at how we manage our individual spaces, large or small, and use and adapt them in ways which suit us and our changing stories.

Micki Nadal



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Stockbridge Parish Council News

Change ahead for Hampshire County Council

It is likely that Hampshire County Council will be heading for major change in 2025. The government has set out proposals to devolve power to the regions but not under the present structure.

At the moment there are 4 top-tier authorities in the County of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight – HCC, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and Isle of Wight Council (IoW). There are then 10 Borough Councils that sit below HCC. The other 3 Councils (Southampton, Portsmouth and IoW) are termed 'unitary' and they deal with the matters that HCC together with its Borough Councils deals with.

The proposal from the government is to merge HCC, Southampton, Portsmouth and IoW Councils to become one authority with an elected Mayor, which would also have the responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Mayor will have new devolved powers to make significant changes in the County of Hampshire and the IoW.

There would then be a second tier of authorities dealing with the matters HCC and its Borough Councils currently look after eg; roads and rubbish collection. These new 2nd-tier authorities will need to have a minimum of 500,000 head of population in order to be created. Therefore, there will be a merging of the present Borough Councils (in our area that may be TVBC, Winchester CC and New Forest joining together) but this is not decided. The Isle of Wight may be given special permission to operate on its own because it is quite a unique Council. It is very possible that the creation of these merged Borough Councils will not take place for three years.

The present top-tier authorities have requested the government to fast-track their application for more devolution, proposing Mayoral elections in May 2026. They have also requested that the HCC elections due to take place in May 2025 do not go ahead.

It is possible (but we don't know) that the Parish Councils will take on a more prominent local rôle because they are the only councils dealing with matters at a local level. None of this is finalised but the government did say that keeping things as they were was not an option. Updates will be provided by the PC as and when they are known.

Parking Survey

HCC has now provided Stockbridge PC with the finalised version of the parking survey they held in June 2023 (the previous version that HCC supplied was a draft). This has now been published on Stockbridge PC's website under Council Projects tab *Traffic Parking - Stockbridge Parish Council - Stockbridge Parish Council, Stockbridge*. HCC is inviting comment from the Parish Council and says it wants to work with Stockbridge PC for solutions.

Stockbridge PC will be considering the appropriate response after consulting residents and traders.

Council Tax

Local people will find out more about their Council Tax on 13 February, when HCC Councillors from across the Council's political parties meet to discuss this year's overall budget (2025/26) for the Local Authority. Proposals relating to the individual budgets for the key services such as social care for vulnerable adults and children, road maintenance, waste disposal, recycling, and education, will be considered, as well as ideas for further savings.

HCC needs to address the very significant and ongoing budget pressures due to the growing demand for vital services and reduction, in real terms, in Government funding.

Meanwhile HCC has asked the Government to allow the County Council to increase Council Tax in Hampshire from April this year, potentially by more than the referendum limit. If granted, this 'Exceptional Financial Support' request would allow HCC to increase Council Tax by a further 10% above the 5% limit to a total of 15%, raising an extra £84m to deliver vital services. Currently, Hampshire has the second lowest Council Tax of all counties nationally.

Highways Maintenance and Cold Weather Action

During the recent cold snap, HCC's Highways teams were busy night and day, salting main routes ahead of freezing temperatures. This meant diverting some of the day-to-day maintenance resources. Colder, wetter weather and freeze-thaw conditions can lead to more potholes forming so HCC's 'Find and Fix' pothole teams are out on patrol, repairing defects as they find them, often with temporary infill repairs, to make them safe until permanent repairs can be carried out.

If you spot a pothole or notice other problems, such as overhanging branches on Hampshire's roads, pavements or rights of ways, take a photo and report it to HCC at *Report | Hampshire County Council*. If you provide a photo, HCC will be able to deal with the matter quickly, if not they have to send someone out.

Village and High Street WhatsApp Group

SPC is welcoming new users to the Village and High Street WhatsApp group. This is a swift and user-friendly form of communication for emergencies, road closures, events and (dare we say it?) lost Amazon deliveries! Email the Clerk to be included.

Stockbridge Parish Council will next meet on Thursday 20th February, 7:15pm, at the Town Hall. All welcome.

Belinda Baker
Clerk to Stockbridge Parish Council
clerk@stockbridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

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A Thank You from Stockbridge Christmas Committee

Thank you to those who contacted us to say how much they enjoyed the lights and the Switch On event. This year was particularly challenging for the Committee as storm Darragh brought down a number of our trees and lights and, at one point, the primary school choir's carol singing outside the church was in danger of cancellation, but in the end it was "all right on the night".

We apologise to those whose trees did not arrive until after our Switch On. Those of you who have been part of the tree scheme from the start will know that the first tranche of trees was bought about a decade ago and that they suffer from being out in all weather and from being repeatedly put up, brought down, and stored. We update and upgrade the trees and street lights every year as our funds permit and the good news is that we did have just enough funds in reserve to make up the shortfall and trees were provided, albeit a little late.

From comments we've had, it is clear that not everyone knows who does what so I'd like to take this opportunity to explain:

The lighting for the Christmas period is organised by Stockbridge Parish Council through the Stockbridge Christmas Committee which also co-ordinates the activities of the other groups involved and includes members of those groups.

The activities on the evening of the Switch On are organised and paid for by the businesses, led by the indomitable duo from 'Prego', Dave and Mandy. To recognise their contribution to the event, the businesses involved were given certificates for display in their windows.

The very popular Treasure Trail is a joint effort between Emma Jefferies of Stockbridge Primary School and Adelle Glibbery of 'The Hub' with funding for the prizes provided by the businesses.

So much excitement on the High Street on that evening, if only we could harness it to power the lights. Instead, every year the Committee must raise the funds to pay for the lights. We apply for grants and ask for donations and cross our fingers. We are grateful to every one of our donors - whether they give us their time, let us use their electricity or give us money, they all enable us to light Stockbridge. I would like to name check them here and hope you will take an opportunity to thank them personally:

Access Care, Jean Boney,
Robin Colenso & Chrissie Quayle,
Evans & Partridge, Richard Foord,
Hampshire County Council through our councillor David Drew,

Mary Matthews, Myddleton Major, P Parker,
River Dental, Robjents, Robinsons,
St Peter's Church, Stockbridge Parish Council,
Stockbridge Community Cinema,
Stockbridge Primary School, Stockbridge Town Hall,
The Hub, The Three Cups, The White Hart,
The Little Whisky Shop, Trout'n'About
and of course all the residents and businesses who host a tree.

We know from your kind feedback that you enjoyed the Switch On as a lovely coming together of the greater Stockbridge community. In the hope that you still feel a glow of goodwill from the event and would like to contribute to next year's Stockbridge Christmas, here are the details of the bank account:

Account name : Stockbridge Parish Council

Sort code: 60-83-01

Acct: 20415785

Please give the reference 'Xmas' so that it does not disappear into the general SPC pot, and please give your name so that we can acknowledge it.

Alyson Lownie



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Eco News - Hope and Struggle

It can be a difficult time of year. Short grey, cold days and long nights. Still some way off to summer days. Christmas gone and the last treats consumed. Looking at climate change, I'm struck by the news that, despite many people's best efforts, we've just lived through the hottest year on record. Coupled with that (or maybe because of that?), Eco Church have made it more difficult to improve on St Mary's Bronze award, with increasing targets to be met to reach silver, let alone gold awards. I will admit that I have been feeling a little despondent about what I and my Eco Champion rôle, can achieve.

So an article written by Jess Hall at Christian Aid has come at just the right time for me and I wanted to share some of the key messages from it in case it helps you too – whether it's climate change you're worried about, peace in the Middle East or something closer to home.

It doesn't have to be like this . . . we can change things.

Here are a few examples of things that have been changed through a mixture of campaigning, scientific developments and political changes; removal of Apartheid in South Africa, the Civil Rights movement in the US improving rights for African Americans, women and minority groups; phasing out of coal power in the UK. Change is possible!

Being honest about how difficult it is to change things is a bit of a relief!

Campaigners and even those trying something new have, throughout history, been maligned. Martin Luther King was tracked by the FBI and ordinary citizens at protests were physically beaten. Suffragettes were imprisoned as was Nelson Mandela. In 2023 alone, 123 environmental land rights defenders around the world were killed protecting our precious planet. Today in the UK protest is more heavily policed than ever before.

The sense of struggle is not always as intense as state monitoring, prison time or physical violence, sometimes it is simply being mocked or patronised, but when we want to be part of changing an entrenched system, we should expect resistance. It will be a struggle. I'm certain that most people who have been part of a successful movement for change didn't think they were in a successful movement - until they were. Until you win, you're in the struggle.

Hope and struggle can be held together

This is real hope, gritty hope, hope found in the midst of struggle.

**"Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?"
(Romans 8.24)**

It's challenging to have hope. It is challenging to look and imagine our world restored and healed.

It's challenging to imagine what is unseen – but hope is vital.

As Christians, we are called to patient, faithful acts of hope even in the worst of situations. Acts that matter even after we are gone. Rev'd Vanessa Conant reflects on hopeful action saying:

"When we look on great and unimaginable suffering, it is difficult to imagine resolution or how we can change the situation. But we are called to hopeful action. We must ask ourselves in the face of whatever injustice we see -
'and what shall I be?'"

It's me again! So thinking about patient, faithful acts that can help with climate change, I'll go back to those Eco Award questionnaires and see what we can do next – watch this space. In the meantime, Chris R and I are looking at the management (for nature) plan for the churchyard and we've just resolved as a PCC to only buy the most energy efficient appliances. Small steps but ones that take us forward.

And if you want to read that whole article by Jess Hall, go to the Christian Aid website and read *"Why I struggle with hope"*.

Lisa Traylor

The 2025 All Saints' Winter Lecture

Thursday 13th February 2025

What Prospects for Peace in the Middle East?



**Lt Gen (Retired)
Sir Thomas Beckett KCB CBE**

Tom was born in Bahrain, and his military deployments include Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, Iraq (both in 1991 to 2003, commanding a battalion and 2007 to 2009 commanding a brigade) and in Afghanistan.

His final UK Government appointment was as the Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa and the Prime Minister's Security Envoy to Iraq including the Kurdistan Region.

Since 2018, Tom has been Executive Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Bahrain. In June 2024, he was appointed Senior Adviser at the IISS Head Office in London and Corresponding Director of the IISS–Americas office.

Venue and Time

The King Edward VII Memorial Hall, Upper Clatford. Doors open at 7pm and the Lecture starts at 8.00pm.

Booking Tickets

Tickets are £15.00 each.

Use this QR code to book ONLINE.

Tickets can also be purchased at:

- Clatford Store and Post Office
- Greenfield Farm Shop
- Abbotts Ann Community Shop
- The Crook and Shears Pub



Funds raised will be split between **The All Saints' Fabric Fund**, **Countess of Brecknock Hospice** and **Upper Clatford Parish Council Chalk Pit Redevelopment Fund**.

Church News

St Peter's and Old St Peter's Stockbridge



Before we venture too fast into 2025 there are numerous 'Church News' events to reflect on at Christmas 2024.

It was a first Christmas for our new Rector Joe Sweetnam and the main event for most villagers was the switching on of the Christmas tree on the church lawn on the evening of 6th December. The weather was reasonably kind and Revd Joe, after the usual countdown, pushed down the plunger and our High Street was a blaze of colour!



Carols from the Primary School children were a joy to all. Santa arrived and mulled wine and mince pies were distributed from the church to the waiting crowds.

Stockbridge Primary and Pre-School were warmly welcomed by Revd Joe and churchwarden David Williams for their Christmas performance of 'Born in a Barn'.

Emma Jefferies, Headteacher, emphasised to me the dedication of staff and the youngest children during the previous weeks to ensure they were word-perfect, spoke clearly and stood in the right place! I am sure you will have seen the school traipse up and down the High Street to and from St Peter's prior to Christmas. This year the animals in the stable played a significant part - mice, cows, sheep, donkeys and even a cockerel (and a grumpy innkeeper!). For a full account of 'Born in a Barn', please see page 17.



Emma Jefferies acknowledges the valuable opportunity given to the children to experience the calm and peace of our lovely church and we in turn are lucky to have a local head teacher like Emma Jefferies!

Seeing the queues of enthusiastic supportive parents and grandparents waiting to see the production, I imagine the church was overflowing.

The Carol Service took place on 22nd December as a joint celebration with the Thomas More Roman Catholic community. Revd Joe officiated and Bishop Peter Doyle preached the sermon. He is always a



welcome voice in our community and his theme centred around the many burdens we carry in life, but inspire us that God is there for us all. It was an excellent service - again a first for Joe. A well-trained choir trained by Sarah led us from the chancel including an uplifting solo. The service was well attended with lessons read by both

communities. Wine and mince pies followed.

Revd Joe welcomed families with children for the Christmas Story at St Peter's on Christmas Eve. Festive dressing-up clothes were available and much tinsel enhanced the outfits. As tension rose on Christmas Eve as to whether Santa Claus was on his way, it was so appropriate to see families with children come to church for the story of the Nativity.

Inevitably in the midst of joy of Christmas there is sadness.

On 3 December, the life of Sue Mansergh from East End Cottages came to an end. Sue was a familiar figure striding up the High Street wearing her baseball cap, stick in hand and determination on her face.



Church News

Sue Mansergh (or 'Miss Mansergh' to my daughters both of whom were taught A-level geography by her at St Swithun's in Winchester) was born in South Africa where her father was head of a boarding school. She and her siblings were early home-schooled before Sue went to school in Caversham and subsequently read Geography at St Hugh's College, Oxford. Her parents retired to Salisbury. Sue became head of department at St Swithun's and settled in Stockbridge, conveniently half way between the school and her parents.

She was close to her nephews and nieces. Her interests outside teaching included travel, SADS, the Community market and the Times crossword with which she had no daily difficulty!



Sue Mansergh loved Old St Peter's 'The churchyard is my front garden' she told Jill Goodwin. Her sitting room was on the first floor overlooking the churchyard with its snowdrops, daffodils, cornflowers and many centuries of history. She was a regular at the

monthly communion, helped with the cleaning and was an enthusiastic supporter of Stockbridge Flower Festival. Sue also loved Leckford Church, being on the PCC for many years.

A Memorial Service for the life of Sue Mansergh took place on Monday 20 January at 2pm at St Peter's.

The first Sunday after Epiphany is traditionally Plough Sunday - celebrated particularly in rural communities - when prayers are offered for farmers, the land and the seed. How relevant to the wider community in which we live.

In her recent message from the Cathedral, the Dean of Winchester the Very Reverend Catherine Ogle finished with the following prayer for 2025:

*Lord of time and eternity give us grace to step into this new year with courage
And to turn to the light of your future with confidence and hope
For whatever change the year brings
Your promises are faithful
And your love is everlasting
In Christ's name
Amen*

Chrissie Quayle

From the Rural Dean

The Churches were very well-attended over Christmas and I hope that people will come to Church on other days in 2025! Many visitors commented on our villages being welcoming. Thank you for being part of the Christmas Celebrations in our communities.

Candlemas (2nd February) is a Christian feast day commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple by Joseph and Mary (falling on the 40th Day of Christmas). It is based upon the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22-40. While it is customary for Christians in some countries to remove their Christmas decorations on Twelfth Night (Epiphany Eve), those in other Christian countries historically remove them after Candlemas. On Candlemas, many Christians also take their candles to their local church, where they are blessed and then used for the rest of the year.

February is traditionally associated with romantic love - we remember the life and witness of St Valentine (on 14th February). According to legend, he was a Roman priest, martyred for his faith in the early days of the church because he had secretly married Christian couples. In another legend, he signed his letter to a friend "from your Valentine", which may be the origin of the cards we send today. We may never know the full details of St Valentine's story but we remember him for his faithful witness to the gospel at a time when Christians were undergoing brutal persecution for their faith.

This year, Lent does not start until March (Ash Wednesday is on 5th March) so you have plenty of time to prepare. More on Lent next month ...

Your Rural Dean, James

Rev'd James Pitkin - revjamespitkin@gmail.com

Stockbridge Bells

I would like to thank our band of bell ringers who cheerfully gave up their time over the Christmas period to ring for several services and events.

Their Christmas season started with heralding Santa's arrival at the Stockbridge Christmas Lights event; they also rang for Advent and all sorts of carol and Sunday services at St Peter's, St Nick's and St Peter and St Paul in Kings Somborne. Thank you all for lovely ringing and for turning out in all weathers and at all times to make sure the bells rang out for Christmas!

*Micki Nadal
Tower Captain*

Church News

St Mary's Longstock

The Christmas Story in the Barn on Charity Farm House started the Christmas celebrations really well – a full barn, including 3 Herdwick sheep, courtesy of David and Aly Warner. We were delighted Mark Zarb-Adami joined us to play on the accordion and that we had the hand bells to add to the music.



A fun service with lots of adults and children enjoying the atmosphere and with nibbles and mulled cider to end the afternoon.

The Crib Service on Sunday 22 December at 10am was also a popular event with the usual excitement to seeing the crib filled with people and animals.



The church was wonderfully decorated. Thanks to the flower arrangers – Boo, Alison, Sue, Charlotte, Carolyn and Chris. And to Sarah and Rick for the tree – with help also from Chris. He also made sure the crib outside was in place and lit up for Christmas.



On Christmas Day, the service was for a full house – some left early to see to the Christmas lunch, with some staying for Christmas Communion.

The Epiphany service, on 5 January, was also well attended, with the magi finally finding their way to the crib, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

At the PCC meeting on 15 January, the accounts for 2024 were approved, together with the budget for 2025. We need a few fundraising activities to pay for the running costs of the church and for the fabric repairs: one being an overhaul and cleaning of the organ pipes, much needed, and some of you will have noticed that the tiles under the lych gate need attention. Together, these two items will come to around £5,000. If anyone would like to volunteer to run a fundraising event, please let me know (07884 583285/810284).

February will be a quiet month with the usual services. The Christmas season ends on 2 February and our minds turn to Lent.

Ash Wednesday on Wednesday 5 March is the beginning of Lent for Western Christian churches. It's a day of penitence to clean the soul before the Lent fast. Most of us will have used up our 'tempting food' on Shrove Tuesday, usually called Pancake Day.

Roman Catholic, Anglican, and some other churches hold special Ash Wednesday services at which worshippers are marked with ashes as a symbol of death and sorrow for sin.

In this Benefice, there will be a service at St Mary's, Longstock at 7.30pm.

It is a time to reflect and repent – the sign of this being the ashes the Priest marks on the forehead with the words:

'remember you came from dust and
to dust you shall return'

(Based on God's sentence on Adam in Genesis 3: 19).

St Mary's Service dates during February can be found on p31

The Benefice website is now operating at:
Midtestbenefice.2day.uk

If you have any queries, please contact Maddie Hedley, Churchwarden, 810284; email *mjh723@btinternet*,

or the Benefice Administrator, Lois Opperman at *midtestbenefice@gmail.com*.

Rev'd Joe can be contacted 01264 586726 until the 810810 can be restored....

Maddie Hedley

Church News

St Nicholas' Leckford

Plough Sunday Service

Leckford PCC members welcomed locals from Longstock, Stockbridge and Leckford to the annual Plough Sunday Service. After this enjoyable service, dating back hundreds of years, at which the plough, seed and soil are blessed to ensure a good harvest, the congregation enjoyed mulled cider and Tudor mince pies before heading out into the cold evening.



Rev'd Joe, Ian and Tom Smith and Chris Reynell after the blessing of the plough, seed and soil.

Micki Nadal

The Column for December and January

Baptisms and Weddings There were no baptisms or weddings in December or January

Funerals

There were no funerals in December

Friday 3 January, 12 noon at St Peter's Church, Stockbridge. The funeral for Michael Miles

Tuesday 7 January, 2pm at St Mary's Church, Longstock. The funeral for Teresa Catherine Ellis

Monday 20 January, 2pm at St Peter's Church, Stockbridge. The funeral for Sue Mansergh.

Hampshire Downs RC Parish St Thomas More

Services are held on Sundays at 9.00am



February Services for Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford

2nd February (Candlemas Presentation of Christ in Temple)

08.00 **Leckford** Holy Communion BCP

09.30 **Longstock** All Age Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

9th February (4 before Lent)

08.00 **Old St Peter** Holy Communion

09.30 **Longstock** Parish Eucharist

11.00 **Stockbridge** All Age Service

16th February (3 before Lent)

09.30 **Longstock** Morning Worship

11.00 **Stockbridge** Parish Eucharist

18.00 **Leckford** Evensong

23rd February (2 before Lent)

11.00 **Stockbridge** Morning Worship

Prayer for February

'Now let your servant depart in peace'
The words spoken by Simeon as he sees the baby Jesus, brought to the temple according to the law. He recognises the Messiah in the baby and worships God for keeping his word.

Lord, we pray we can recognise you when we encounter your presence, in church, or in the people we meet, or see you in the beauty all around.
We ask that we can be as diligent as the Magi, who travelled faithfully, following the star to where You lay.

As we begin a New Year, full of hope and expectation, we pray that peace can come to Gaza and Israel, to Ukraine and all the countries where people prefer to fight, rather than understand and learn to live with difference.

We pray for your justice to cover the earth, when resources are shared and everyone has enough – enough food, water and care.

Lord, renew our purpose in caring for your world and for each other.
Help us to really listen to each other and pay attention to needs, not always expressed.

'For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

Luke 2. 30-32



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