

# Steeple Aston *Life*

February 2022

Issue No. 582



- Snowdrop Sunday • Letter from Westminster • Magistrates' courts •
- Brown bin licence • Church Matters • Reports from local clubs • Poetry corner •



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# John Dovey

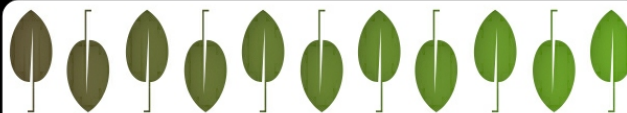
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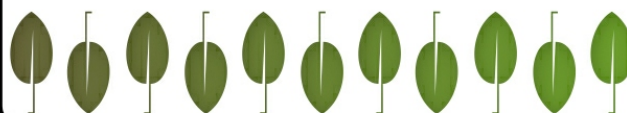
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Cover photo: Nigel Francis

## Steeple Aston *Life*

### COPY

All articles and letters to the Editors  
[editorial@steepleaston.org.uk](mailto:editorial@steepleaston.org.uk)

### COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month.

The copy deadline for the March 2022 issue is therefore 15<sup>th</sup> February.

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All adverts, and all advertising queries (availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of illustrations, etc.) to **Charlotte Bartlett**  
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# Steeple Aston Directory

Age UK		Richard Preston	340512
Allotments (Church)	SACAA Clerk	Nigel Grugeon <i>sacaacclerk@btinternet.com</i>	
Angling Club		Antony Morley	<i>tonyriver_83@hotmail.com</i>
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	347033
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	340665
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	340132
Catholic Church - St Teresa's (Charlbury)		Father Tony Joyce	01608 642703
Cherwell District Council	Bodicote House		01295 227001
Choral Society	Chair	Ann Livings	233518
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev Marcus Green	340903
Church Wardens		Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 , 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Councillors - Cherwell District Council		Cllr Mike Kerford-Byrnes	07805 665393
		Cllr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		Cllr Hugo Brown	
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Marian Trinder	340806, 07786 001641
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher	Frances Brown	340204
Football Club	Secretary	Peter Wild	07950 837773
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Chairman / Clerk	Richard MacAndrew/ Cathy Fleet	347209, 347000
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	340201
Pre-school			340863
Public House	Red Lion	Chris Gates	340225
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Scouts Group		Colin Cassford	243038
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	<i>sawgox25@gmail.com</i>
Toddler Group		Charlotte Clarke	07799 030490
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Village Website	<a href="http://www.steepleaston.org.uk">www.steepleaston.org.uk</a>	Editor: Jenny Bell	347714
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
WI	Joint Presidents	Merrill Bayley, Cathy Lawday	347802, 347209





*"...folly is not always folly."*  
Jane Austen

## Steeple Aston *Life*

February 2022  
Issue No. 582

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# Editorial

*"All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."*  
Charles M. Schulz (1922-2000), creator of the Peanuts comic strip featuring Charlie Brown and Snoopy.

What connects beekeeping, epilepsy, the plague, fainting, travelling and a chubby cherub? The answer is Valentine of Terni, who is the patron saint of all these areas. A third-century Roman priest, or perhaps a Bishop, he supposedly performed secret Christian weddings against the wishes of the authorities and was executed on 14<sup>th</sup> February, possibly in 269 AD.

Sufficient confusion about the identity of St. Valentine led the Catholic Church in 1969 to discontinue liturgical veneration of him (for example, no longer bowing or making the sign of the cross before a saint's icon, relics or statue), though his name remains on its list of recognised saints.

Valentine's Day as we know it might have originated with medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. His work 'The Parlement of Foules' refers to 14<sup>th</sup> February as the day foules (fowls or birds) come together to choose their mates for the year. No tradition of courtly love existed until after this poem was published around 1375.

The chubby cherub we call Cupid has been associated with Valentine's Day for many centuries. He was known to the ancient Greeks as Eros, the god of love. What you might not know is that he had two sets of arrows, one for love and the other for hate, playing havoc with the desires and affections of his victims.

The tradition of giving a box of chocolates to a valentine is more recent. It began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Richard Cadbury of the chocolate manufacturing company saw the day as an opportunity to sell more product.

**Robert**





## Community Development Officer

Rosie Phillips is the new Community Development Officer, working with Community First Oxfordshire and based one day a week (currently a Thursday) at the Community Centre on Heyford Park and one day a week (Wednesdays) at Graven Hill, Bicester. Her role includes assisting residents at both locations in setting up and resourcing any groups, or activities that benefit the community. She would love to hear what your dreams are and what events and groups you want to see happening.

Rosie's background is very varied. She has worked in retail, primary teaching, special needs support, customer-facing civil service roles and other community development posts. She has two grown-up sons, both of whom are on the autistic spectrum. Her passion is for people to realise their potential and for communities to be vibrant and connected.

"Everyone has skills and talents and if we pool these we can achieve so much together," says Rosie. "I am here to help you to develop your ideas, help you to create a plan, and to find the funding that will make your idea a reality. It's time we all got together again in ways that suit every section of this community, no matter which part of the development you come from. Here are some examples of projects from my previous roles: craft groups; book clubs; gardening clubs; events showcasing local voluntary organisations; photo competitions; community café; dementia café; benefits information events; social events; fun days; cycle training; health walk training; health walks; litter picks. I am connected to other local organisations that can take part in many different activities, to help to get things up and running.

"I can be reached via my email which is [rosie.phillips@communityfirstoxon.org](mailto:rosie.phillips@communityfirstoxon.org) or you can text me on 07749 321478. I am often walking or driving around so texting is best to start with, then I can call you when it is safe to do so. I am always happy to have a cuppa and a chat – so either come and see me, arrange to meet me at Spokes Café in Heyford Park, or invite me to your place! I look forward to meeting you."

## Payable garden waste collection



From 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022, Cherwell District Council will start charging for garden waste collections. From this date you will no longer be able to put food waste in your brown bin.

The annual cost of a brown bin licence is £36 if you sign up by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, or £40 from 1<sup>st</sup> March. If you have more than one brown bin, each additional subscription will cost £30 a year. You can sign up to the service at <https://forms.cherwell.gov.uk/xfp/form/534>

Blue and green bins will continue to be emptied without a charge.

From 1 March 2022, the Council will start a free separate weekly food waste collection service from your property. A food waste caddy will be delivered to you during February. Only one size of outdoor caddy will be available. You should not need an additional caddy as the food waste is collected weekly.

More information about all these changes is available at [cherwell.gov.uk/garden waste](https://cherwell.gov.uk/garden-waste)





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**Margaret Mason**

**1945 – 2022**

*Margaret in 2008 when she was Chair of the Parish Council.*

## **A tribute from the Parish Council**

It is surely the case that Margaret was one of the most, if not the most, significant members of the Parish Council during its 100+ years history. Her sudden passing has shocked and saddened the Parish Council which would like to pay tribute to Margaret for her long service on the Council.

Margaret first joined the Council in May 1986, becoming Vice-Chair in May 1990, before being elected Chair in 1994, a post she held until stepping down in May 2014. This total of 28 years must be one of the longest-ever periods of service, but even more notable is what she achieved in 20 years as Chair. I joined the council in May 1998 and am the only member remaining who served under Margaret. I will give a flavour of Margaret's work for the village.

Back in 1998 I assumed that Margaret had already been Chair for more than four years such was the smooth nature of the meetings. Margaret was the very opposite of those Chairs (not the Parish Council, but in the wider world) who aim to get through the business of any length in 30 minutes or so by racing along and not giving members of their committees time to say anything before moving on to the next item. Margaret was always very well informed about every item of business, but always gave everyone their say (however off-beam) even if this meant some tangential excursions into various village issues. 'Light touch' and 'enjoyable' come to mind.

I quickly realised that Margaret was very well informed about planning issues and rules, had lots of contacts at Highways and Cherwell DC, all of whom seemed always to be at the other end of the phone, and had a good appreciation for what architectural styles suited in rural new developments.

I am sure that Margaret would have been very active on the PC around 1990 when the village was faced with direct take-offs of planes over the village from Upper Heyford. But in my time I would pick out several developments where her guidance and acumen led to the best possible outcomes for the village. The first of these was redevelopment and extension of the football pitches. This stemmed from an inescapable requirement to provide decent changing rooms if the village football team was to continue playing in local leagues. It transpired that the only way to get funding for this was to make it part of a larger package of football enhancements. In summary, this involved flattening the Dr Radcliffe's school pitch and transferring the excess soil to the other side of road so as to extend the turfed area into land



which was at the time wooded and owned by a farmer. This involved multiple funding sources and permissions, plus taking out a loan which only now has just one remaining year to run. We were fortunate in that Richard Preston, the Vice-Chair, was a master of fundraising and that others in the village contributed various technical expertises; they were all very significant and energetic driving forces. A consequence was a big hike in the precept to pay for some of the work with the remainder being met by grants. Margaret had to co-ordinate the Parish Council's part, both in seeking permissions and making applications, as well as convincing those like me who were a bit sceptical that this was a doable, affordable and wanted project. A much larger piece of complex business than most Chairs would expect to encounter.

The second 'big' thing was the building of the houses in Lawrence Fields. It is fair to say that there was opposition to this, but Margaret played a key role in reconciling different interests, controlling the height of the houses, the layout and importantly the retention of the medieval hedge in front of the development. This was the famous occasion when Margaret lay in front of the digger which was about to remove all the hedgerow.

A third significant development was the building of the 'affordable' houses at Shepherds Hill. She and others discovered that the land, then uncultivated, was owned by Cherwell and so the Parish Council took up the cause to use the land for such housing. This I clearly recall was a complicated business, but in the end Margaret checked that the houses were of a good design and blended into the village, while also ensuring that the required pavement connecting the development to the village was rebuilt to make it more compatible with a rural environment.

I am not sure of the details, but I think that Margaret was much involved in the acquisition of leases for the Village Hall and Sport and Recreation buildings and certainly the torturous process of acquiring the lease for the allotments (how she stayed so calm in the face of repeatedly incorrect maps provided by the lawyers I will never know). One of her biggest achievements was the re-roofing of the Village Hall. A modest grant was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund for what were thought to be relatively small repairs. Once the men got on the roof and removed some of the tiles they announced that every tile needed replacing and that the tiles could not be reused to cover the parts they had already exposed. Margaret contacted the Lottery Fund and somehow persuaded them almost immediately to increase the grant substantially to £65,000, allowing the work to continue and saving the Village Hall from rainwater damage.

Apart from these illustrative big 'projects', Margaret carried the burden of all the other aspects of the Parish Council's work. She must have spent several whole days per week on this business in addition to her major involvement in other aspects of village life, notably the now defunct dramatic society, the Players. There are not many of whom it can be said "they made a big and lasting difference". Margaret was one of those who did and the Parish Council wishes to record its gratitude to her for everything. One can reflect on the fact that there have been three chairs in the seven years since she stood down!

The Parish Council sends its deepest condolences to Roger and the family, and hopes that this reflection of Margaret's contributions to the village might provide some comfort.

*Stuart Ferguson on behalf of the Parish Council*

### QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The Parish Council would like to create a committee to explore possibilities for celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. A preliminary meeting for all those who would like to suggest activities, and possibly help with their organisation, will be held in the **Village Hall** on

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 10 a.m.**

Please come along and help to make the holiday weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June a memorable village celebration.



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# Letter from *Westminster*



*SAL's bi-monthly epistle from our MP, Victoria Prentis*

I'd like to wish all of my constituents a happy and healthy 2022.

Over the Christmas holidays, my team and I worked hard to support those who have contacted my office. Lots were getting in touch with me about COVID-related concerns, including local vaccination and testing provision. It is good to hear from local public health officials that our vaccine programme has accelerated in the past few weeks with record doses being administered. We now have one of the highest vaccine coverage rates in the country and there continues to be ample capacity across the system. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for working with us on this issue.

A fair amount of my time recently has been spent supporting constituents with DVLA renewals, UK Visas and Immigration matters, and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) applications. I was pleased to speak to local residents at my constituency surgery last week. We discussed everything from planning and loan charges to parking and healthcare provision. I always enjoy speaking to constituents and if you have any problems that need resolving, please do get in touch with my office by emailing **[victoria.prentis.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:victoria.prentis.mp@parliament.uk)**. It is often quicker to resolve problems virtually or on the phone during the Parliamentary week; don't wait for a surgery.

January can be a challenging time for many businesses in hospitality and leisure as sales slow after the Christmas period. The rapid spread of the Omicron variant has caused added uncertainty for business owners. I have been signposting those who have got in touch to the additional support made available by the Chancellor last month. One-off grants of up to £6,000 per premises will be awarded to businesses in hospitality and leisure. The cost of Statutory Sick Pay for Covid-related absences for small and medium-sized employers will also be covered.

As the weather gets colder and more time is spent inside, it is important that everyone is able to keep warm and well. Vulnerable households can receive financial support through the Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payments. Additionally, most energy providers offer a Warm Home Discount to those eligible. Residents who need any energy-related advice can get in touch with Better House Better Health, a longstanding and local service in Oxfordshire, on 0800 107 0044.

The New Year can bring great optimism, but it can equally be a lonely and difficult time for some. People can reach out to the Bicester Community Support Service on 01865 897105 should they need support. They provide a range of activities and services to help people to stay healthy, independent and engaged.

For older residents, a friendly chat on the phone can make all the difference. Age UK Oxfordshire's Phone Friends telephone service is a brilliant way for those who are isolated to stay connected. 20,000 phone calls are made each year to over 400 isolated people in our community. Constituents can get in touch by ringing 0345 450 1276.

Before Christmas, I had the pleasure of calling in to David and Lesley Thompson's coffee morning in Launton. The morning was organised to raise funds and awareness for the Bicester Good Neighbour Scheme. This fantastic voluntary organisation arranges free support and friendship for older people in Bicester and nearby villages. The group are always looking for more volunteers. If you have time and are interested in volunteering, do call them on 07849 799 530.

The past 23 months have been an incredibly challenging time for us all. But it has shown us how important community really is. Thank to you all of my constituents who continue to care and support their friends and neighbours. It is wonderful to read constituents' emails when they share these positive community stories with me and I hope this spirit of kindness continues.



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### Word Builder (from Cathy Lawday)

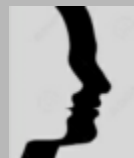
D	E	R
L	A	T
T	O	S

**Answers to the clues are: 5, 6 or 7 letters long, contain only letters from the grid, use each letter only once, include the letter in the shaded central square. Answers are at the bottom of this page.**

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. to begin (5)                     | 11. old, musty (5)           |
| 2. a pub game (5)                   | 12. guides from in front (5) |
| 3. to look hard (5)                 | 13. small British mammal (5) |
| 4. small reptiles (5)               | 14. roofing material (5)     |
| 5. milky coffee (5)                 | 15. rips (5)                 |
| 6. shared cards between players (5) | 16. clatter, jangle (6)      |
| 7. to take without permission (5)   | 17. turn, spin (6)           |
| 8. cooked slices of bread (5)       | 18. continued, survived (6)  |
| 9. to step or trample (5)           | 19. surprise, shock (7)      |
| 10. streets (5)                     | 20. cooked in the oven (7)   |

**Word Builder Answers**  
1 start, 2 darts, 3 stare, 4 toads, 5 latte, 6 dealt, 7 steal, 8 toast, 9 tread, 10 roads, 11 stale, 12 leads, 13 stoat, 14 slate, 15 tears, 16 rattle, 17 rotate, 18 lasted, 19 startle, 20 roasted.





## Nicholas Cleobury



**How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?** 17 years.

**Where did you move from?** Canterbury, Kent.

**What brought you here?** Superb location, more convenient for work.

**What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?** Beautiful village, excellent amenities, lovely people.

**Give a potted history of yourself.** Born in Bromley, school years in Birmingham and Worcester, University in Oxford, five years in cathedral music, then Glyndebourne, BBC Singers and into a mainly freelance conducting career – orchestral, operatic and choral – UK, Europe, notably Zurich, Scandinavia, Australia, Far East and South Africa.

**How do you see yourself?** Enthusiastic, friendly, funny, anxious, questing.

**How do others see you?** Friendly, enthusiastic, medium short-fused.

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?** England cricketer.

**What do you do for a living now?** Conductor (not bus), teacher and lecturer.

**What is the best job you've ever done?** Conducting the Messiah in Soweto.

**What's your favourite piece of music?** So many, but if I have to choose it will be 'The Marriage of Figaro'.

**What is your all-time favourite book?** 'War and Peace'.

**What's your favourite food?** Thai.

**If you became prime minister, what law would you pass?** For honesty in public life.

**If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?** India.

**What do you do to relax?** Cricket, film, galleries, theatre, reading.

**What's your favourite saying or piece of advice?** There's nowt so queer as folk.

**Who is your hero? Which person do you most admire, and why?** Nelson Mandela – you don't have to be perfect to be great.

**Who would you most like to have dinner with – dead or alive?** Eric Morecombe.

**If you were on a desert island, what would you miss most?** Heather and my family.

**What do you get grumpy/mad about?** Jargon (moving forward) and incorrect use of language.

**Tell us something about you that most people don't know.** Decent mimic.

# The ARTS Page



*"Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing"*  
William Byrd – 1588 – in 2022 obviously, for 'all men', read everyone!

I precis and paraphrase here a few findings from a major study by Chorus America. People who sing in choirs are: better team players, have better social skills, are strong contributors to their communities; accept criticism better; if children, they get better grades and enhanced self confidence. The list goes on! You can look at the most recent study here: <https://chorusamerica.org/resource/chorus-impact-study-singing-lifetime>

People can think they can't sing or are put off at school. Very often this is wrong. We have a welcoming, unauditioned choir in Steeple Aston (SA Choral Society). Why not give it a try? Margaret Bullement (01869 347346, [jbullement@waitrose.com](mailto:jbullement@waitrose.com)) would be delighted to chat with you. They are giving a concert on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm in Steeple Aston Church of Haydn's monumental 'Nelson Mass'. Singer or not, do support them.

Here are other dates for local choirs.

- Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March in the Sheldonian, Oxford at 5pm, the Oxford Bach Choir (I was MD for 19 years) presents Rossini's Stabat Mater.

[www.ticketsoxford.com/events/rossini-stabat-mater](http://www.ticketsoxford.com/events/rossini-stabat-mater)

- Friday and Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, the Woodstock Music Society performs Brahms' Requiem, with Soprano Cassandra Wright, who sang so beautifully for us here last year.

Tickets from [concerts@woodstockmusic.info](mailto:concerts@woodstockmusic.info)

Two upcoming plays at the Oxford Playhouse caught my eye.

- 'Private Lives' by Noel Coward, with Patricia Hodge and Nigel Havers – 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March.
- 'Private Peaceful' by Michael Morpurgo of 'Warhorse' fame – 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March.

Tickets from [oxfordplayhouse.com](http://oxfordplayhouse.com)

And two at the ever-enterprising Chipping Norton Theatre.

- 'Home I'm Darling' (Olivier Award for Best Comedy 2018) by Laura Wade, who wrote 'Posh' (the Bullingdon Club play which was a such a hit) – 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April.
- 'The Mountaintop' (Olivier Award for Best New Play 2010) by Katori Hall about Martin Luther King – 4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May.

Tickets from [chippingnortontheatre.com](http://chippingnortontheatre.com)

Since the inception of The Arts Page, the internet has transformed our access to information, and previous editions have listed many of these websites. Here I flag up two that offer a lot of variety, not just in the arts.

- [Oxinabox.co.uk](http://Oxinabox.co.uk) – packed full of goodies and well worth a visit. A new one to me.
- [OxOnArts.info](http://OxOnArts.info) – a site for arts professionals, but with an interesting 'What's On' section, taking you into some of the highways and byways of arts in our area.

Hotfoot from two fantastic events to make the print deadline.

- The Anish Kapoor – painting at [modernartoxford.org.uk](http://modernartoxford.org.uk). Tough, visceral, thought-provoking, colourful. I will try to go again before it closes on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

- Steven Spielberg's 'West Side Story' film. Wonderful, a great remake. Is this the best musical ever? Here is a clip from the making of Bernstein's own 1985 recording. We conductors sometimes have a difficult time of it!

<https://youtu.be/UoKZlciDbms>

*"The Arts tickle, sting, stroke, slap, shake and hug us. They remind us to value the beauty and strangeness in us all"* – Stephen Fry.

**Nick and Heather**



# The Gardening Spot

## **‘Be Prepared’. Not just a motto for Boy Scouts!**

Dig, dig, dig, not dob, dob, dob, could be the motto for all us gardeners, although February is maybe not the best month to be turning soil over in your garden. But it is time to make a start on preparing the garden for 2022.

This is basically the time to do all those jobs which you might have done earlier, but have been left for whatever reason. For the vegetable plot, if you haven’t already dug it over, then there is no time to lose. Add organic matter if you can as this will enhance the structure of your soil and plants will reward you later in the year. Talking of vegetables, decide which potatoes you are going to grow and place them on egg trays or similar, in a cool room to chit. This will encourage a good start when you plant them out in March or April.

Alternatively, you could put a few in black, plastic bags or large pots and place them in the greenhouse for an early crop. All you need for this is a general-purpose compost, about three potatoes buried halfway down the container and water as necessary. Seed potatoes can be purchased from any reputable garden centre or online if you wish. The beauty of going to a garden centre is you can select the potatoes yourself. Ideally, go for ones around the size of an egg, with no blemishes and firm. Just make sure they don’t get frosted. Whilst in the greenhouse, consider sowing a few salad crops such as Little Gem lettuce or Rocket and for the enthusiastic tomato grower, now is the time to think about sowing your favourite tomato variety.

On a dry day when not frosty, give the edges of your lawn a trim as that will in turn emphasise the borders and the lawn once you start to cut the grass next month. It is also time to tidy up the shrubs such as clematis, wisteria, hydrangea, buddleia and many of the evergreen shrubs. Plant some summer flowering bulbs in readiness to brighten the flower borders. We always associate spring with bulbs, daffodils, crocus, hyacinth, but there are many lovely summer bulbs, which although usually planted in the Autumn, if you missed that slot, early spring provides another opportunity. Allium makes a fabulous display and mixes so well with many popular plants. If planted in February, Alliums will flower in late spring and early summer. Alliums are easy to grow and once established return reliably each year.

As I said earlier, it is time to ‘be prepared’. Check your mower to make sure the cutting blades are sharp and the engine actually starts. Give your garden tools a good clean and wipe over with some light oil to protect them from rust. Give your pots and seed trays a good clean and wash them out with a mild solution of Jeyes Fluid or similar. If you have the skill, and it is not that difficult, make a cold frame in readiness for hardening-off the plants that come out of the greenhouse, but need some protection later this spring. Keep an eye on any outside taps and protect them from frosts. Much cheaper than calling out a plumber to repair a burst pipe!

Don’t forget the wild birds, as any seeds from last year are fast diminishing. We have a bird feeder about six metres from our kitchen window and every day we watch flocks of finches, blue tits and our resident robin.

Now just to finish, I will tell you about a misadventure I experienced the other day. My wife and I were out walking in our garden and admiring the snowdrops as they peered up through the ground. As luck would have it a bird flew over us and left his calling card on my freshly laundered coat. When I showed it to my wife, she quickly responded without blinking an eyelid, “Well you know they sing for most folk!” There must be a moral in that story, but I have yet to work it out.

Happy gardening and enjoy the longer days. Spring is just around the corner.

**Richard Preston**

*By the way, don’t forget the Spring Show on March 20<sup>th</sup>!*



# Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The last Parish Council meeting was on Zoom because the heating in the Sports and Recreation Centre wasn't working that evening and the thought of doors and windows open on a very cold night in January was unappealing to all. But by law the meeting has to be in person so the Councillors met again the following day to ratify what they agreed at the Zoom meeting the evening before. The heating was working the next night so I am unlikely to get my wish that the February meeting will be held on Zoom as well.

The meeting began with the new Parish Councillor, Angharad Lloyd-Jones, being welcomed to the Parish Council. Angharad and her husband have lived in the village for two years and they have two young children of which the oldest is at Dr Radcliffe's school. She has worked in business development in charities and the creative industries and is hoping her fundraising experience will be useful to the Parish Council.

The Councillors discussed how often hedges need cutting and the consensus was only every three years. They had looked at the hedge in front of Lawrence Fields, which was cut back substantially last year, and agreed it did not need doing again this year.

The Parish Council have had a very generous offer of a gift of the orchard at the bottom of Water Lane. A group of eight villagers have offered to look after it on our behalf and the only issue now is to check if the boundary walls and fences or trees need attention. Then, hoorah, we should all have a community orchard and I know from being offered some fruit by the generous donor many years ago that there is a memorably delicious eating apple tree there. Potentially the most expensive thing is if the wall by the pavement should need repair, but last time this was necessary it was paid for by Oxfordshire's Highways because the ground on the orchard

side of the wall is below the pavement and Highways were concerned about safety if it collapsed.

The Parish Council is setting up a public meeting to carry forward their interest in climate change and environmental matters. Everyone will be welcome and those individuals who have already expressed an interest in being involved will be individually invited. It is hoped that the group will include a Parish Councillor and will report back to the Councillors with recommendations for action (or inaction) as appropriate.

The next discussion was about how the village should celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There is unlikely to be any external financial assistance, though it is possible that we might be able to attach a party onto the back of another village activity. The Councillors are holding a public meeting on 12 February at 10.00am and hoping that villagers will come with ideas for celebrating.

Our District Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes told us that Cherwell had not suffered all the cuts they had expected with the result that Cherwell has a little spare money for next year. But the cuts expected next year will probably happen the following year instead so Cherwell has decided not to alter their expenditure next year in order to have a small cushion for when the cuts materialise.

Our Council Tax bills will increase this year. The local element (controlled by our Parish Council) will increase by about 8%, the Cherwell element will increase by £5 per Band D home and there will be an addition for extra care for the elderly. Also, it is likely Oxfordshire County Council and the police will increase their share as well. Oh dear, it doesn't look good.

*Continued on next page*

# Parish Council Meeting Notes



We were told about a meeting between our Councillors and representatives of the Hatch End developers. The idea of the meeting was to try to get the developers to amend their plans to alleviate our concerns, especially about traffic and a pavement. One Councillor described it, rather tersely as “unproductive”. The main bone of contention seemed to be the developer’s unrealistic assumptions about both traffic generation and a pavement and the effect this would have in the village. It was hoped that Highways could be encouraged to look again at the plans and their probable traffic implications.

A Councillor had noticed that the bottom of one ladder in the Play Area was a bit dodgy. This has been checked and it does need a repair, but it is not dangerous and the Councillors will see if they can mend it themselves. There has been a huge clearance of branches and litter at the lower car park at the Village Hall. This clear up was by Charlotte Clarke and some of her family and it has revealed the true size of the lower car park and enabled the footpaths around the MUGA to be used. A huge thank you to Charlotte and her team.

The gutters on the Sports and Recreation Centre and the Village Hall will be cleaned out shortly. There was a brief discussion of the effectiveness of the ‘hedgehogs’ that can be used to prevent leaves blocking gutters. Someone said “Oh, that is where the hedgehogs have gone then”.

The Councillors grumbled about the leaves on Water Lane and whether Highways sweep them up on a regular schedule. The Clerk said she thought the leaf sweeping was random. There were also grumbles about Gigaclear, which was described as “a law unto themselves”. Gigaclear has offered to install high-speed broadband in the Village Hall with it being free

for the first year. Apparently, this offer applies to one building only and the Councillors were told the signal would not reach to the Pre-School or to the Sports and Recreation Centre from the Village Hall. The Councillors decided to find out about alternative providers and Gigaclear’s charges after the first year before making any decision.

Then the Councillors got to the saddest part of the meeting with memories of Margaret Mason and her 20 years as Chair of the Parish Council. The Councillors have written separately about her elsewhere. I was Parish Clerk for two stints while the official Parish Clerk had children so I had an excellent view of her contribution. She was invariably kind, helpful and astonishingly balanced. I never saw her do or say anything self-seeking or biased. We all owe her a great debt of gratitude and her overwhelming humanity will be much missed.

Parish Council meetings are normally held on the third Monday in the month, but in April this would be on Easter Monday. An alternative date, possibly a week later, was discussed. An upside of a later date for the Parish Council would be that the May SAL would go to the printers before the meeting so could not include any contribution from me. I am waiting to see what they decide to do, and implicitly what they think of the value of my report.

## ***Steeplejack***

*This report is the personal view of the SAL reporter, and is not intended to be a complete record of the Council meeting. The official record - once approved - will be available at*

***[www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk)***

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# HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

## A Magistrates' Court?

Most people are law-abiding and accept the fact that society functions best when the Rule of Law is respected. However, we also know that it's easy to break the law and end up in court before the Beak, as magistrates used to be called somewhat cheekily.

Did you know that 95% of all criminal cases begin and end in Magistrates' Court? The other 5% are sent 'up' to higher courts – Crown Court, Court of Appeal, etc. Many of the 95% of cases are what might be seen as minor infringements of the law, but even so the outcomes of pleading guilty or being found guilty of an offence don't seem minor to the person concerned and the ramifications can cause difficulties for years ahead. Any one of us can find ourselves being summoned to court, but despite the startling number of cases which pass through magistrates' courts each year I think many people have only a hazy idea of what happens. The Courts Service – the system of how misdemeanours and disputes are dealt with in this country – is not generally something which the public spend much time thinking about or debating fiercely!

Business in a magistrates' court can be unexciting, but it can also be dramatic, amusing, tense, complex or distressing. It's nothing like the depictions of justice one sees on television. Contrary to what many think, magistrates are not legally qualified, but are ordinary members of the population who volunteer. Yes, there is a lot of training – training in how to approach cases, in keeping an open mind, in diversity, in how to listen to evidence and in how to make fair and reasoned decisions. There's also training in sentencing with a strong emphasis on consistency and sticking to sentencing guidelines. Dating from 1361 when the magistracy was first recorded as an organised adjunct to peacekeeping (the name Justices of the Peace was first used then), with numerous adaptations and changes over the 600+ years, this is the most ancient office still functioning in society today. It enshrines the principle that a person should be dealt with by his/her equals.

After 36 years as a magistrate (alongside a 'proper' job – you don't get paid to sit in court!) you won't find it surprising that I care a great deal about the enormous reduction in the number of magistrates' courts so that it's difficult and costly for people to get to court. Justice can seem remote and even unimportant – not a good message to give to young people especially. I wonder whether increases in violent crime or knife crime could be traced in part to the diminution of face-to-face, local justice? Of course, increases in technology can help to reduce the time taken to deal with, for example, dozens of speeding offences, but it does distress me that there is now only one magistrates' court serving the whole of Oxfordshire.

The erosion of magistrates' courts and the service they have provided for 600+ years is surely something which should not lightly be put to one side. It's several years since I retired from the Bench (you had to leave when you were 70), but even then we were witnessing an increase in police powers alongside reductions in, for example, the Probation Service. Is it right for the arresting agency also to be the sentencers?

Why not go and see magistrates' courts in action and give this issue some thought? Public spectators are free to observe most business in these courts – only youth courts are closed courts (so perhaps best to avoid Wednesdays as some of Oxford's five courtrooms are likely to be dealing with Youth Business).

Oxford Magistrates Court operates from Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm and in present circumstances anyone watching proceedings is required to wear a mask and observe social distancing. The court is in Speedwell Street, off St Aldates, OX1 1RZ. There is no parking, so you will need to walk from the Westgate car park or take a Park and Ride bus. I don't promise drama and sometimes the law seems to progress very slowly, but it is an interesting experience and there's much to talk about after many a court sitting.

***Eileen Baglin-Jones***



## The end of the dream

February, a month of great surprises  
nothing leaps to mind it's not that year  
winter's end is nearing as sap rises  
I won't propose, just let me make that clear  
I know you can be very unexpected  
what does it take to get it in your head  
I've seen the many messages you texted  
they weren't to you, you clearly have misread  
I get the sense that I've misunderstood you  
at last the fog is clearing from your brain  
I thought I had respect and also love due  
I flushed all that quite neatly down the drain  
so here we are a real unhappy ending  
I'm on my way our parting will come soon  
I can't believe that on my way you're sending  
In time you'll come to view it as a boon

I wake up in a sweat I'm only dreaming  
you're by my side and safe inside my arms  
the night plays tricks with reason and with meaning  
what's real is that we both retain our charms.  
The night before the fourteenth brings a  
nightmare  
unsettling as it causes such a rift  
I wonder in the day ahead how I'll fare  
... as once again I haven't bought a gift!

**Peter Wild**

## Oh, no! Snow

I know I'm getting old  
When it starts to snow  
I no longer say "Oh, wow!"  
These days I say "Oh, no!"

When there's a heavy snowfall  
Kids think it's a treat.  
They're out slipping, skating,  
Sliding down the street.

Out come their sledges,  
Snowballs bring cries of "Ow!"  
Kids just love the snow.  
And they react, "Oh wow!"

I can still remember  
The fun that snowfall brings.  
Lying down in the snow and  
Making angel wings.

A whole day off school,  
When the school bus can't get through.  
Sledging in the park  
Toes and fingers blue.



But now I'm scared of falling over  
or my car skidding on the ice.  
These days I don't think that snow  
Is really very nice.

It used to be such fun  
Those many years ago.  
When I saw the world was white  
And I didn't say "Oh, no!"

How can I enjoy it?  
What is to be done?  
Well, there's one thing I still can do,  
Build a snowman, just for fun!

**Cathy Lawday**

# Snowdrop Sunday

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February

2.30 – 4.30pm

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## End of an era as Edwina retires from SAL

The committee of Steeple Aston Life were very sorry to say farewell to Edwina Kinch, who retired at the January AGM after a long association with the magazine stretching back to the 1980s.

Members expressed their grateful thanks to Edwina for all her work over the years, commemorated in a special SAL leaving card. In their farewell comments, members paid tribute to Edwina's excellent chairmanship, her kindness, her efficiency and her charm. Her long experience and her knowledge of village life over many years have proved invaluable.

As one member said, "You must be so proud of SAL's development from humble beginnings to the amazing publication it is today – all down to you."

Steeple Aston Life started in 1973 as a Parish Council initiative under the guidance of George Ennis, the headmaster at Dr Radcliffe's Primary School, and Paul O'Sullivan, who was the first editor. The O'Sullivan family produced the magazine for its first ten years.

In 1983 responsibility for the magazine was transferred to a committee. Edwina took on responsibility for production and collation for five years before taking on the role of editor in 1988. When she finally retired in 2013 after editing more than 300 monthly issues, she became Chair of the SAL Committee.

In her final editorial on SAL's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday Edwina wrote "I find it difficult to believe that my first issue was published in January 1988, 25 and a half years ago! I have enjoyed my time as editor; contributors have become friends and many changes have come along – in particular the computer revolution. The support of the committee has been constant and SAL has developed into a real community asset, some thirty people now being involved. With a touch of sadness I hand the baton over to Cathy."



*Cathy Lawday (left) takes over as Editor of Steeple Aston Life from Edwina in 2013.*

### Edwina Kinch – the matriarch of Steeple Aston Life

Now Cathy Lawday takes up the story. She writes: "I have done a few scary things in my life: glacier climbing in New Zealand, or having brain surgery whilst awake spring to mind. But taking over the editorship of Steeple Aston Life in 2013 was possibly the most scary of all! I had only lived in the village for a couple of years and had recently joined the choral society. One evening at choir rehearsal, the pleasant woman sitting next to me asked if I would be interested in taking over from her as editor of the village magazine. Without too much thought, I said 'yes'. After all, I had editing and writing experience in my professional life, so it couldn't be that hard, could it?

"Then I discovered there was a committee that I had to answer to and that the chair of the committee was Edwina, who had lived here for many, many years, and was a stalwart of the church, a flower arranger, a farmer's wife, a most respected and loved figure in the village. In addition, she had done the job for over a quarter of a century, had edited over 300 issues of the magazine, and would be present at all the meetings. I began to get nervous. What on earth had I taken on? How could I follow that? I didn't know my way round the village institutions and traditions. I didn't even know who Richard Preston was!

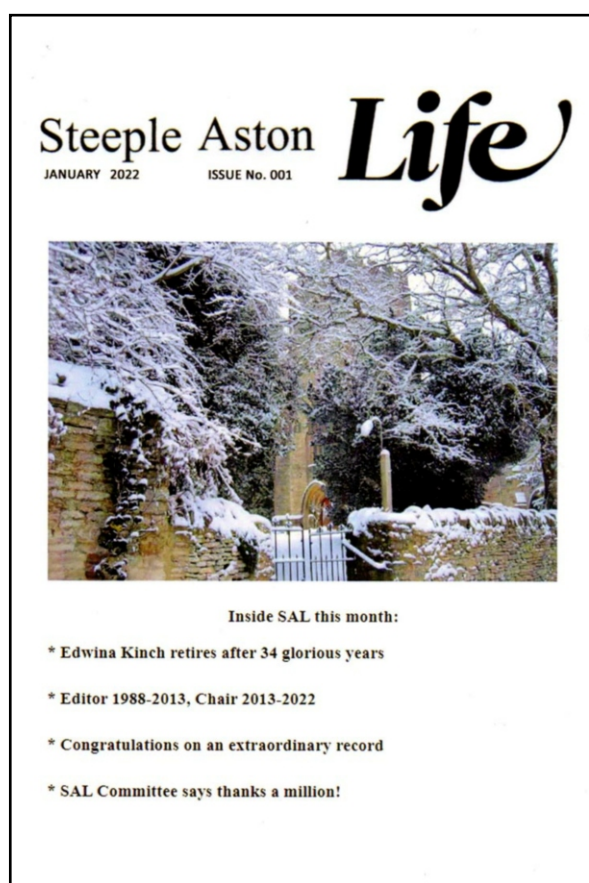
“I need not have worried. Edwina was encouraging, kindly, helpful, and above all, very supportive. Several times she quelled lively discussion at committee meetings with a quiet but authoritative “the editor must do as she sees best”. She was always appreciative of changes that I introduced, and was generous with praise and encouragement. I could not have had a more helpful mentor and she made sure that my 6½ years as editor were both enjoyable and satisfying. She was full of praise for the special 500<sup>th</sup> issue and I was particularly pleased that we were able to include on its back cover a colour photo of Edwina’s winning entry in the Horticultural Society Spring Show – a flower display based on the theme of The 500<sup>th</sup> issue of SAL.”

For many people in the village, Edwina is the matriarch of SAL. Almost since its inception in 1973 she has been at the helm, either as editor or chair, helping the magazine to facilitate and to reflect village life and making sure ‘the Life’ adds to the very real sense of community which is at the heart of Steeple Aston.

Others in the village may have good memories of working with Edwina over the years. If so, please do send them to the Editor for publication in forthcoming issues of SAL.

Meanwhile I have been elected to take over the chair from Edwina. It is a cliché, but nonetheless true, that she will be a very hard act to follow!

**Jenny Bell**



*A special card presented to Edwina to mark her retirement from SAL in 2022.*



*Edwina’s winning entry in the Horticultural Society Spring Show 2015.*

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This year has got off to a slow start. We did not have our usual monthly get-together for coffee at the Red Lion in January because Naomi is taking a well-earned rest and consequently the coffee shop was closed for the whole of January. Also, our speaker evening for January had to be postponed – partly because members felt uneasy about meeting in the Village Hall while Covid infections were running so high, and also because the speaker got a positive Covid test result and had to isolate!

However, we are not down-hearted. We have several events to look forward to: coffee and chat at the Red Lion on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and again on 3<sup>rd</sup> March; a talk about Sustainable Steeple on 8<sup>th</sup> February; and afternoon tea at Middle Aston House on 17<sup>th</sup> February. There will probably also be a walk or two and don't forget our trip to see '*Private Lives*' at the Oxford Playhouse on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. So there are things to look forward to. We are optimistic that both the weather and the Covid situation will improve. Bring on the spring!

If you are thinking about joining the WI you are welcome to come along to any of our events to see if you would like to become a member. Your first visit is free. Or you can contact me at [cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk](mailto:cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk) or phone 01869 347209.

*Cathy Lawday*

## 1st Deddington Guides Report



### 1st Deddington Guides

Last term we formed new Patrols and the Guides elected their own patrol leaders. Congratulations to Polly, Ruby and Ellen. The patrols have been working very well together, happily planning and organising their own activities.

In addition to generally having fun with a wide range of games and activities, the Guides have been taking on the challenge of learning new skills that they can use to help in any emergency situation.

Our Young Leaders are learning leadership skills and have played a big part in running activities at the meetings. They will all renew their promise at a ceremony in the near future when we welcome new Guides.

After a rather slow start, due to Covid precautions, we hope to be back in action as soon as possible!

**Maggie Rampley 07957 600755**  
**and Marian Trinder 07786 001641**



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## THE VALENTINE CLUB

On 18<sup>th</sup> January Paul Dumas came to entertain us with his unique style of comedy, song and Ventriloquism (photo below right, with “Elvis”). Paul, as always, delivered a superb show, enjoyed by all who attended and brightened the mood for so many of us who otherwise listen to politicians arguing about where the next party is to be held, and who can go and why weren’t we invited! We also welcomed Lisa Stead who is working with Community First Oxfordshire to help identify issues relating to rural isolation in our county.

This was our first meeting in 2022 and I ask myself, where does the time go? I remember the approach to the change of Millennium and the uncertainty of the ability for computers to change date on their own. Anyhow, enough of my reminiscing.

At all stages of life, we need something to look forward to and being in the midst of winter, even more important. With this in mind we have Jacqueline Maynard coming to our next meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> February to sing to us and I know we will not be disappointed. Jacqueline has performed all over and won many awards.

Looking forward to April, we are going to invade The Isle of Wight when around 40 members are taking an early seaside holiday at Norton Grange near Yarmouth. This a quite a daunting task, not just for the organisers and the coach driver, but most importantly for the inhabitants of the IOW as they will probably not know what has hit them! For the club this is a first as we have never in our 70 years managed to go away together for more than a day as a club.

If you would like more information about how to join The Valentine Club, and by the way, you only have to reach the grand old age of 60 years young, go to [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) and follow the link or visit our own website [www.valentineclub.wixsite/aston](http://www.valentineclub.wixsite/aston) or simply call me on 01869 340512.

**Richard Preston – Group organiser**  
[richard.preston5@btopenworld.com](mailto:richard.preston5@btopenworld.com)

*Photos: Richard Preston*





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# Village Hall News



As from Thursday 27th January according to a government announcement, it is not a legal requirement to wear a face mask in the village hall. We will still have 2 hand sanitisers for those that want to use them.

It is the hirer's responsibility to ensure compliance with any regulations currently in place at the time of hiring the village hall and individual groups/hirers to decide on what their own requirements might be.

Let's help keep each other safe into this New Year 2022. I sincerely hope we will not have to escalate Covid measures any further.

Provisional date of a village hall event:

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May – NGS Open Gardens 2pm to 6pm**

Please note our letting agent is Mrs. Katie Rushworth. Telephone 01869 340196.

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**Barbara Brewer – chair**

**AD&D** Photographic Society



Our first speaker in 2022 was the very entertaining Chris Floyd, who gave us an insight into 'Celebrity Portraits'. Chris's passion for photography began as a teenager at school, loving the darkroom processes, using a Pentax inherited from his father. David Bailey portraits, black-and-white shots of Michael Caine and The Beatles fuelled that desire to pursue a career in photography. Beginning as an assistant learning his craft, Chris's first solo job was in Manchester meeting a Mr Noel Gallagher. The subsequent image of the 'new band' Oasis outside Main Road was printed in 'Select' magazine.

The anecdotes behind all the images were so interesting. Chris has travelled the world photographing entertainers, actors, politicians and artists and it would be easier to list those people who have not been in front of his lens. However, preferring to photograph the world 100-metre record holder, Asafa Powell, he passed on meeting and photographing the upcoming sprinter Usain Bolt. The one that got away, I think.

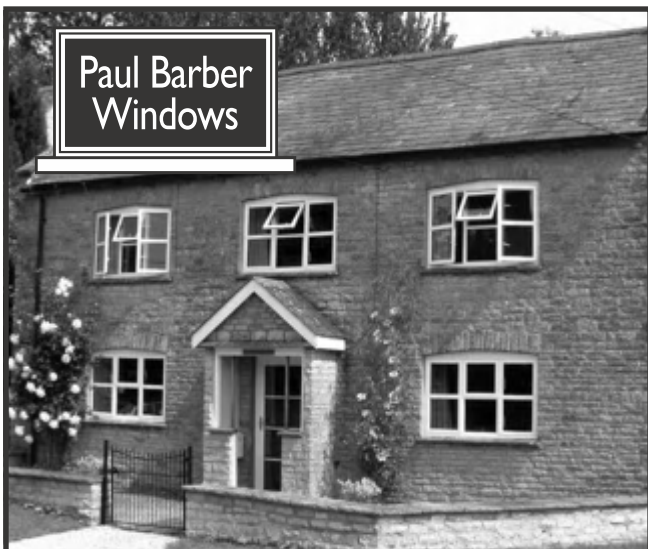
Chris is most pedantic about the light in his images and he gave us details and tips to achieve those effects. Many of his portraits have a theme of blue and red, colours that are a signature for him. Do look at Chris's website [www.chrisfloyd.com](http://www.chrisfloyd.com) to see a wealth of stunning images. My favourite images are of David Hockney and David Attenborough.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 7.30pm where Will Gray will talk about British Wildlife Adventures. We meet in the Adderbury Institute and follow Covid guidelines. You are very welcome to join us. See our website for more details.

**Anne Hunsley**

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## An update on the Chicken Sheds

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, Cherwell District Council's Planning Committee discussed the application to redevelop the Chicken Sheds (officially Hatch End Industrial Estate). I was invited to speak, as Chair of Middle Aston Parish Meeting, and Mike Kerford-Byrnes, one of our District Councillors, made an impassioned and influential contribution to the debate.

Whilst the developers have made some significant and welcome changes to the proposed appearance and configuration of the site, a very serious issue remains: the volume of additional traffic that will be generated and its risk to road safety, particularly in relation to Dr Radcliffe's Primary School. It is our contention that the Highways Team at Oxfordshire County Council has accepted at face value the developers' assumption that there will be few additional journeys to the site and failed to recognise the dangerous situation that can already be seen every school day at drop-off and pickup times.

Please excuse a short diversion into the history of the site. In 1996, an application to change its use from a chicken hatchery to a small industrial estate was refused by CDC, on grounds of highway safety. A renewed application in 1997 was granted, but with the very exceptional provision that each and every change of tenant or specific use in any unit on the site required CDC's prior permission, on grounds of highway safety. As we all know, there has been no improvement in the condition of the road in the intervening years and traffic volumes have increased.

At the Planning Meeting it was noted that the Highways Team, in its statutory consultation submissions in July and October 2021, had imposed an obligation on the developers to create a footpath along Fir Lane from the school to the entrance to the site. This looked like an acknowledgement of the safety issue and a helpful if partial remedy. However, in November 2021 a further submission removed this obligation, in exchange for the creation of a footpath wholly within the development site. No-one could explain, at the meeting or indeed subsequently, how this would increase pedestrian safety on Fir Lane.

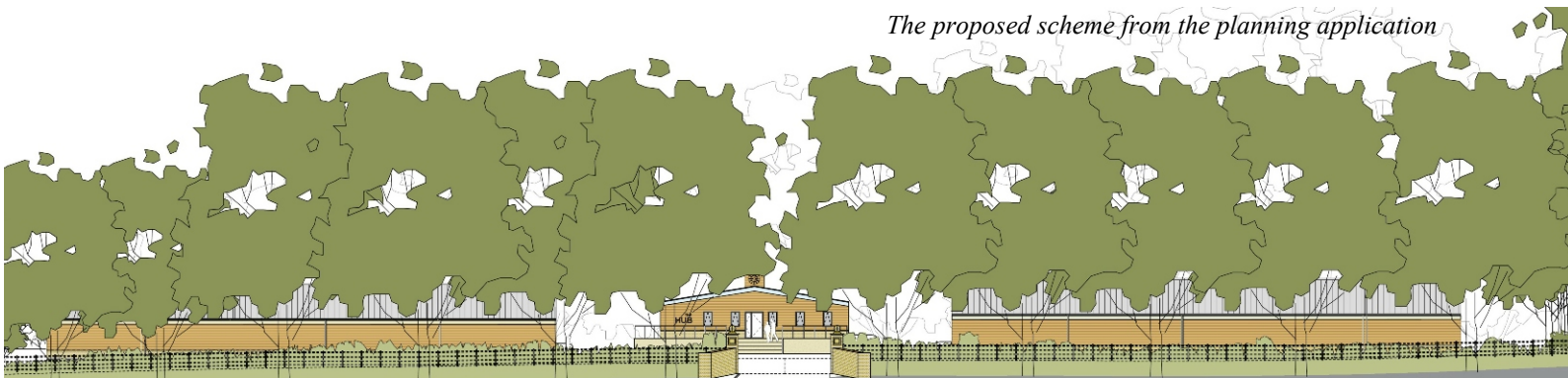
The Planning Committee resolved, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, to defer a decision on the application for three months, for further consideration. So what has happened to date?

- Richard MacAndrew, Martin Lipson and I met the developers on 23<sup>rd</sup> December to see whether there was any scope to amend their proposals to help address our concerns. Sadly, the discussions did not result in significant progress.
- We have been made aware that the OCC Highways Team has been asked to re-examine the developer's calculations on increased traffic flow.
- I have asked the Team to explain the rationale of the withdrawal of the obligation to create a footpath on Fir Lane, in exchange for an internal site footpath. So far, the only explanation offered is that the developers balked at the cost of the obligation.

The matter will next be considered by the CDC Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022. If, like me, you feel that the road safety issue remains as a grave concern, please do contact our local District and County Councillors, whose details are in the Directory on page 2, to express your view.

**Edward Dowler**

*The proposed scheme from the planning application*





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# Church Matters



Six months before her coronation, the Queen asked the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth to: “Pray that God may give me the wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life.”

As this month sees the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Queen’s accession to the throne, I think most of us are agreed that this prayer has indeed been answered.

Her Majesty has been an amazing example and role model all her life – but like all such, sometimes we need to remember one or two important things. It’s right to honour, respect and be thankful for those who shine a light in this life for us. And the Queen certainly has done that for a very long time, as do (in their way) artists, celebrities, sportspeople, teachers, parents and all sorts of others.

But all are just people. We should never place too much weight on another, too much expectation, too much demand. No one is perfect. As the Queen said in one of her Christmas broadcasts:

“Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed.”

It’s OK to be thankful for the example and life of someone who is amazing – but not perfect. We don’t have to pretend. We should just be grateful, and recognise that greatness isn’t about being perfect – it’s about being as human as anyone else, and doing good for others even though sometimes others are focusing on our faults.

Her Majesty, living in the spotlight as she does, has found her way of dealing with all that – and it’s a pretty good way. She went on to say in that same Christmas broadcast: “God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general (important though they are) but a Saviour, with the power to forgive. Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God’s love.”

There are times in all our families, friendships and communities that we need such an example, such power, such forgiving love. The Queen is quite right. It does not belong to the Church or to Christians – it is the gift of God. And as we celebrate Her Majesty’s long reign, perhaps we might also open our hearts afresh to the Lord whom she serves, and pray that we too might receive (after her example) such forgiving love for one another.

*More news and details of our Sunday worship can always be found on our website: [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)*

***Revd Marcus Green***

## **The Platinum Jubilee**

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953. So why are we celebrating her Platinum Jubilee, marking a reign of 70 years, in 2022?

It is because Elizabeth II became Queen immediately following the death of her father, King George VI, on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952. She was 25.

The 16 months between the accession and the coronation allowed for a period of mourning and the enormous amount of preparation needed to organise the ceremony.

The event was televised and more than 20 million people watched the service, outnumbering the radio audience for the first time.

## Churchwardens' Chat

Hello everyone,

We promised you news of Snowdrop Sunday. We are hoping that the snowdrops in the churchyard will be looking their best on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February, which is the day we have identified as Snowdrop Sunday 2022. You might perhaps know that this is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day when our Queen ascended to the throne, so we thought it would be a happy idea to mark the day with a little more feeling of festival than our usual quiet snowdrop event! There will still be tea and cake for you to enjoy, but the day will begin with bells to celebrate!

Our bellringers will be attempting a Quarter Peal, beginning at 10.00am. It should take about 45 minutes of continuous ringing – quite a feat of concentration, as well as being physically challenging. A Quarter Peal consists of 1,260 changes. When you hear it, you will be reminded of 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952 when King George VI died and the young Princess Elizabeth ascended to the throne – and be reminded, we hope, of morning service and the plans for the afternoon.

Our morning service will be taken by Canon Charles Chadwick from the cathedral in Oxford. He has visited us several times before. Then we will prepare for what we hope will be a pleasant and sociable afternoon. As well as strolling in the churchyard to see the snowdrops, which we hope will be in full glory, you might care to have a go at the Snowdrop Sunday Quiz to test how observant you are as you walk around the church. Check in with Dorothy to collect your quiz questions.

There will be a few stalls, including a children's book stall and one with books for adults. Nigel Francis has promised to bring some of his photographs and photograph cards – so remember to bring your purses and wallets!

Tea and cake will be served between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. In these days of Covid-19 we ask that you wear a mask (when not drinking tea!) and, if you are able, take a lateral flow test before you set out. Despite these restrictions, we hope that this Sunday afternoon will be a lovely opportunity to meet and chat with friends in our lovely church. We can't promise the snuggest of atmospheres (though we'll do our best to keep the temperature up), but there will be the warmest of welcomes!

Do come if you can.

***Graham Clifton, Eileen Baglin-Jones, Churchwardens***



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<b>Sunday 13th February</b>	<b>10.30am</b> United Benefice Holy Communion Revd Jeremy Auld		
<b>Sunday 20th February</b>	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion Revd Stephen Pix	<b>11am</b> Holy Communion Revd Richard Armitage	<b>5.30pm</b> Evensong Richard Bailey
<b>Sunday 27th February</b>	<b>9.30am</b> Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	<b>11am</b> Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion Revd Andrew Bunch
<b>Ash Wednesday 2nd March</b>			<b>7.30pm</b> Holy Communion AT WOODSTOCK CHURCH
<b>Sunday 6th March</b>	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Canon Charles Chadwick	<b>11am</b> Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Canon Charles Chadwick	<b>5.30pm</b> Evensong Revd Jeremy Auld
<a href="http://www.sntchurch.com">www.sntchurch.com</a>			

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# Steeple Aston Online

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# Local Info

## Steeple Aston Village Hall

Hiring Fee Caution

<b>Hall (meeting night)</b>		
Represented Clubs.....	£9	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£17	
<b>Hall Only (social occasion)</b>		
Represented Clubs.....	£32	
Others.....	£53	
<b>All Facilities (social occasion)</b>		
Village Residents .....	£65	£200
Represented Clubs.....	£65	£200
Others - up to 6 hours.....	£110	£300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160	£300
<b>All Facilities (off peak - 4 hours)</b>		
Village Residents .....	£30	£75
Represented Clubs.....	£30	£75
<b>Committee Room</b>		
Represented Clubs.....	£6	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£12	
Discount for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings		

Letting Agent : Katie Rushworth (340196)  
 Chairman: Barbara Brewer (340423)  
 Secretary: Margaret Bulleyment (347346)

A represented club must send a representative to the Village Hall Committee meetings.

## Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

### February 2022\*

3<sup>rd</sup> green  
 10<sup>th</sup> blue & brown  
 17<sup>th</sup> green  
 24<sup>th</sup> blue & brown



### March 2022

3<sup>rd</sup> green  
 10<sup>th</sup> blue & brown  
 17<sup>th</sup> green  
 24<sup>th</sup> blue & brown

## Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre Letting Charges

Social Function peak times (up to 6 hours)	£55
Social Function off-peak times (up to 5 hours)	£27.50
Meeting of represented club (per session)	£11
Caution money for Private Lettings	£100

Letting Agent Katie Rushworth Tel. 01869 340196  
 E-Mail to [rec.trust@googlemail.com](mailto:rec.trust@googlemail.com)

Chair – Torquil McLusky Tel. 01869 347914  
 Treasurer – Chris Cooper Tel. 01869 347173

## BUS TIMES

### STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE

This timetable is effective from 7 March 2021.

#### From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Oxford (arrival time in italics)

##### Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0624 0702 0746 0920 then hourly to 1520 1621 1721 1821 1932 2047 2217  
 0702 0800 0844 1003 1603 1702 1802 1902 2010 2125 2255

##### Saturdays

0704 0804 0919 then hourly to 1819 1932 2047 2217  
 0746 0846 1002 1902 2010 2125 2255

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0903 1033 1203 1333 1503 1633 1803  
 0944 1114 1244 1414 1544 1714 1844

#### From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Banbury (arrival time in italics)

##### Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0752 0855 0957 then hourly to 1457 1600 1700 1800 1900 1955 2107 2222 2352  
 0835 0935 1035 1535 1638 1738 1838 1929 2024 2135 2250 0020

##### Saturdays

0759 0857 0957 then hourly to 1557 1657 1757 1855 1955 2107 2222 2352  
 0835 0935 1035 1635 1731 1831 1924 2024 2135 2250 0020

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0917 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1807 1937  
 0953 1113 1243 1413 1543 1713 1843 2005

Times subject to change. Before starting your journey please check the timetables at [www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables) E&OE

### OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons has returned to their 'Pandemic Timetables'. It offers services through Steeple Aston to and from Chipping Norton (Wednesdays) and to and from Bicester (Fridays). See <http://ourbus.co/bartons/> for details and times

# Steeple Aston Calendar

Check the village website at [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) (Home > Calendar) for any changes.

<b>February</b>			
Wednesday 2nd	WI. Coffee morning	Red Lion	10:30
Wednesday 2nd	AD&D. British Wildlife Adventures, with Will Gray	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Sunday 6th	Snowdrop Sunday (p36)	SA Church	2.30 to 4.30pm
Tuesday 8th	WI. Talk by Sustainable Steeple	Village Hall	7.00pm
<b>Tuesday 15th</b>	<b>SAL March 2022 copy and advert deadline</b>		
Tuesday 15th	Valentine Club. Jackie Maynard – international singer	Village Hall	2.30
Thursday 17th	WI. Cream tea	Middle Aston House	4.00pm
Thursday 24th	WI. Pub lunch (details to be confirmed)		
Saturday 26th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
<b>March</b>			
Wednesday 2nd	WI. Trip to see 'Private Lives'	Oxford Playhouse	2.30
Thursday 3rd	WI. Coffee morning	Red Lion	10:30
Tuesday 8th	WI. Talk and demonstration of Block Printing	Village Hall	7.00pm
<b>Tuesday 15th</b>	<b>SAL April 2022 copy and advert deadline</b>		
Tuesday 15th	Valentine Club. 'Up in the clouds...', Alan Brewer	Village Hall	2.30
Sunday 20th	Spring Show	Village Hall	2.30
Wednesday 23rd	Valentine Club. Trip to Aerospace Bristol		
Saturday 26th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Sunday 27th	SA Choral Society. Haydn's Nelson Mass	SA Church	7.00pm

Due to coronavirus some clubs and societies might still be meeting online.  
Please contact the organisers for the most up to date information. Contact details  
can be found on page 2.

**Choral Society Rehearsals.** Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Bell Ringing practice.** Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Scouts.** Sport & Rec Centre - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Baby and Toddler Group.** Sport & Rec Centre - 9am -11am - Thursdays  
**Cricket Nets.** Robinson's Close - 6pm - Thursdays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays  
**Village History Centre (SAVA).** 10am - 12pm - Saturdays

**Steeple Aston Life is published by Steeple Aston Life Committee**

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