

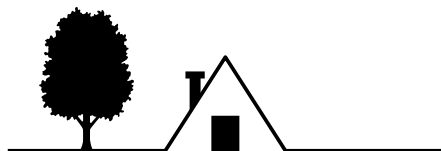
Steeple Aston

January 2026

Issue No. 629

Life





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steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine

Previous issues of SAL are also available on this site

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Contributions are welcome. Please email editorsalife@gmail.com

Cover: Misty Moos at Rousham, Photo by Nigel Francis

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

All articles and letters to
the Editor
editorsalife@gmail.com

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for the February 2026 issue is
Wednesday 14th January

READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE

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WI	President	Julie Hillier	01869 349185



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

Steeple Aston *Life*

January 2026
Issue No.629

Editor: Carol Neville

editorsalife@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vaughan Billings
01869 340857

Secretary: Tina Ferguson
tina.merlins@gmail.com

Advertising:
Zazi Barrell
salife.advertising@gmail.com

Deliveries:
Greg Elphick
07891 760176
greggles1262@gmail.com

Layout design:
Edward Dowler, Martin Lipson

Committee:
Jenny Bell, Nigel Francis,
Jenny Taylor

Editorial



As we welcome another year, the weather is relatively mild but wet, the hosepipe ban has just been lifted, and Water Lane continues to live up to its name with both the road and footpath flooded once again! The occasional appearance of some low winter sunshine is most welcome to break up the grey days, casting long shadows across the landscape.

As you may know, The Grain Store is now under new management with exciting plans for development, and we wish them well as they take on this popular refreshment hub. Further changes are coming with the recycling of glass that will now be taken as part of the kerbside collection; plus read about the recently introduced Oxford Congestion Charge. The Parish Council is running a workshop for villagers to look at possible mitigations to some of the concerning potential developments afoot in our locality, so this is your opportunity to have an input on these important issues.

Why not test your knowledge on all that's gone on during 2025 in and around our local community in our New Year Quiz – a good practice run for the unmissable Annual Village Quiz Night on Saturday 17th January.

Looking ahead to some spring warmth, take a look at the schedule for the Spring Show in March, and start planning your entries now. There's something for everyone.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Carol

*The low winter sun shining through the trees at Raspberry Brake.
Photo: Carol Neville.*



Steeple Aston Noticeboard



WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD WE HAVE FOR STEEPLE?

Parish councillors held an informal meeting in November to consider what community benefits might be required by us if permission were to be granted by Cherwell DC or the Government for one or more of the major development schemes in the area currently under consideration – namely Heyford Park (and its potential New Town); the Oxfordshire Strategic Railfreight Interchange at Ardley; Puy Du Fou near Bucknell and Baynards Green warehousing. The planning system permits authorities to ask developers to pay for 'mitigation' to be provided where a community is likely to be adversely affected by the development. In the case of Steeple Aston, it is the impact of increased traffic in the area that is the greatest concern, although there could also be other negative impacts. This does not mean that approvals are inevitable, and, indeed, your Parish Council is playing its part in opposing these huge schemes. But we want to hear what **you** think about improvements to the village and the parish that might be desirable and possible. So, we're holding a public workshop on:

Friday 30th January in the Village Hall at 7.30pm. Free refreshments will be provided.

You can also email the Parish Clerk with your thoughts – parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com

Here are some of the ideas discussed so far:

- Increase safety for more cycling and walking; improving bus services; increase funding to the Bartons bus service; every other S4 bus to service Middle Aston and Fir Lane; add cycle paths; add new pavements where feasible; explore E-bike and car charge points.
- Improve walking surfaces e.g. Fir Lane verge from Dr Radcliffe's school to the Grain Store; improve footpaths; add street lighting; re-surface path down Heyford Road to Rousham Bridge; weight restrictions and enforcement to reduce HGVs.
- Financial subsidies for the school and pre-school to protect their local service; and to Deddington Health Centre and/or for locum village health services.
- Ensure our playground amenities are safe and suitable with funding for the playground toilet, and upgrading of playground equipment.
- Improve and protect our environment by increased tree planting; a car park for South Side.
- Protect utility supplies by increasing our autonomy: village ground source heat supply (like North Aston).

Can you help with the layout of SAL?

Between them, Martin Lipson and Edward Dowler have been working on the SAL layout for well over ten years! We are very grateful to them for all their hard work and dedication. The desktop publishing software they've been using is now very old and no longer supported. Therefore, it seems like a good time to find someone new to take over the role using the successor software, Affinity by Canva. We have one volunteer already, but are looking for at least one more to share the burden. Edward and Martin have divided the year into three-month blocks, but the new team could operate differently, for example, by covering alternate months.

The way it works is that each month the Editor decides on the material to be included in SAL and plans the pages. She sends everything to the designers who lay out all the articles, photographs and adverts to fit the space available, and sends the final approved copy to the printers and for the website. There are rules to follow and a template with the house style. The time commitment is usually no more than 14 hours per issue, which includes around 8-10 hours for initial layout, plus a few hours for additions and corrections, around the third week of the month (14th-21st). Training and support will be available to the new postholder to familiarise them with the role. If you would like to find out more, please email the SAL Editor at editorsalife@gmail.com



Editor's Letterbox



Dear Editor

If the objective of OCC Highways is to have a pothole repair programme which is as inefficient and expensive as possible, then one would be obliged to say to them: "Well done! You have achieved that objective!".

The potholes at the bottom of Paines Hill are a paradigmatic example: 'repaired' time and again in a slipshod manner, with crumbling material that falls apart and gets washed away after just one winter, and needs to be 'repaired' again and again at huge cost to the taxpayer. Maybe they find this approach amusing, but it's a very expensive hobby for the people of Oxfordshire.

Yoni Kinory

Dear Editor

Compliments on SAL which has become a must-read, particularly following through with the Upper Heyford Development. It is a huge brownfield site, which is better to be put to use rather than left idle. However, the thought of three huge windmills in sight of Rousham is cultural vandalism on an epic scale.

Watching a BBC South report from Somerton, I learnt that there is no legal requirement for those involved with this major Application; The Ardley Warehouse Hub and Lower Heyford Station. The thought of the traffic disruption at the traffic lights at Rousham Bridge, which we use almost daily, fills me with dread.

Colin Woodhead

Contributions welcome

SAL welcomes contributions of articles, photos, letters, poems and reviews, or anything else that may be of interest to your local community.

Do you have some fascinating stories to tell us about yourself? What are your likes, dislikes, what is important to you, how do you view the world? Nominate yourself for the subject of Steeple People and introduce yourself to the village.

Do you share your life with the perfect pooch, characterful kitty or special small furry? Tell us all about your furry, feathered or finned friend, together with a picture of their best side, to feature in Pet Pawtrait.

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The Grain Store Café welcomes new owners

The popular Grain Store Café in Middle Aston has new owners – the delightfully named Totally Delicious Limited. Let's hope they're as good as their word! The café was founded by Helen Taylor, long time resident of Middle Aston, two years ago and it has proved a great success, supported by villagers and attracting many visitors from further afield. In a message on Facebook announcing the sale of the business, Helen and her son, Freddie, wrote: "We'd like to thank all our customers for supporting our family business, you are the ones that have made it worth all the hard work, especially our regulars who have been with us from the beginning. We'd also like to thank our staff, old and new, for their hard work and commitment to making the café a success and a welcoming place to visit. Also, thank you to the other Hatchery business owners and staff, for their friendship and support. You shouldn't see a change as everything will remain the same for now, but expect some exciting developments early next year. Finally, the long-awaited bigger kitchen, etc... Lastly, a big welcome to the Totally Delicious team. We hope you continue to support them as you have us."



Photo of festive Grain Store by: Anya Robey

Totally Delicious is also an owner-managed business, although rather larger with responsibility for 12 sites in total currently. The owner, Dominic Bowers, explained that they started in 2010 with a small tearoom on the Trentham Gardens Estate in Staffordshire, which has now grown to a staff of 70 over four different hospitality sites. Over the years, they have diversified, taking on event catering at weddings and concerts and much more. But Dominic stresses that they're an independent company and not part of a big chain. They don't have ambitions to expand onto the high street, as their preferred model is a pretty tearoom in a lovely location.

They have also provided consultancy services to other similar businesses. When she was looking for some business advice, Helen contacted Dominic on Facebook to see if he could help. He called into the café when he was passing by, and was immediately impressed. He said: "It was like a mini version of what we do – a pretty café selling local produce in a beautiful location." When it became clear that Helen would like to retire, and that the Hatchery owners were keen on the expansion of the business, Totally Delicious decided to take it on. They have signed a five-year lease and hope to be here for much longer, working in concert with The Hatchery owners to make the site more open and accessible. They're taking it slowly, so nothing will change for several months. The kitchen will indeed be expanded, allowing them to extend the menu. They will also apply for a licence so they can offer more evening events, maybe al fresco in the summer.

Dominic is clear that he doesn't want to spoil the café, but to improve it. There will be work on a structured plan for more events and community-based activities in 2026. He says all of this will be carried out in consultation with customers, and he will take some time to get to know the villages, and the local culture. Meanwhile, in such a people-based business, the quality of the staff is very important. They will need more people and are currently looking to recruit a local manager to replace Helen as well as more kitchen staff. If you're interested, please email thegrainstore@totally-delicious.co.uk

For details of menus, opening hours etc, go to totally-delicious.co.uk/the-grain-store

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Steeple Aston 2025 – test your knowledge of the last 12 months

- 1) In January, a new Trust was formed to look at housing issues and help enable more affordable homes for local people. What is the name of this organisation?
- 2) Which village stalwart left the position of Village Hall Chair this year? Who replaced her?
- 3) Who is our local pothole expert?
- 4) On what date did the Spring horticultural show take place?
- 5) Who was elected as new Oxfordshire County Councillor (Deddington Ward) in May? Which political party does he represent?
- 6) Who was elected as new Cherwell District Councillor (Deddington Ward) and for which party?
- 7) Which main road saw lower speed limits introduced this year?
- 8) Why have there been so many vehicles including ambulances parked on land behind The Hatchery lately?
- 9) What is the name of the historical theme park being proposed by a French company, for Bucknell, near Bicester?
- 10) How many new homes are being proposed in the development plans for Upper Heyford?

(Answers on page 41)

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Letter from *Westminster*

SAL's regular epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock



Our Local MP

Strengthening SEND Support: My first job outside of university was in special education, and speaking to local people, I know there are big concerns in this area. Therefore, this month I hosted a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Round Table with parents from across the constituency. We discussed the real challenges families are facing - from delays to assessments, to gaps in specialist provision, to pressures on schools struggling to meet rising need. I also spoke about these issues on BBC Politics South, highlighting the need for reform. SEND reform is crucial if we are to meet our mission to break down the barriers to opportunity for every child at every stage. We must get these reforms right, so that the system works in the long term. I will continue pushing for a system that is inclusive, properly funded, and responsive to local families' needs.

Parliamentary Work: I have continued to contribute actively to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, pushing for better protections for renters, stronger community planning, and fairer local government funding. I've also spoken to the Farm Retail Association, as part of the Rural Services APPG, and attended a Round Table on Chiltern Railways, ensuring their services deliver for local people. I took part in AFPS (Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme) training, ensuring I'm equipped to advocate effectively for service personnel and veterans.

Budget: It was good to see new investments into apprenticeships, allowing SMEs to recruit apprentices aged under 25 without the co-investment fee (the typical 5% employer contribution), as well as the end of the two-child benefit cap, which will help lift 2,050 children in Banbury out of poverty. I was proud to be mentioned by the Chancellor in relation to pre-1997 pensions, and am glad that compensation payments from the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) and Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) on eligible pensions built up before April 1997 will from now on be linked to CPI-inflation (capped at 2.5%).

During winter, my focus remains on supporting families through rising living costs, backing local businesses, and ensuring our public services have the resources they need. Thank you to everyone who has written, emailed, or spoken to me at events this month - your views shape everything I do. If you'd like to share an issue, attend a surgery, or invite me to visit your organisation, please do get in touch.

I would like to wish all readers a happy and healthy New Year!

Sean Woodcock
Member of Parliament for Banbury

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Steeple People



Matt Glass

Which village do you live in? How long have you lived here? Bodicote - 9 years, Business owner of Beat Gym at The Hatchery a year since February 2025.

Where did you move from, and what brought you here? The Middle East, my partner's job brought us this way.

What do you like best about living here? The countryside.

A potted history of yourself in 40 words or less: I grew up in Cambridge, a keen sportsperson, moved to the Middle East, met my wife and had three children. Returning home, I opened Beat Fitness and Base at Beat to build a thriving community.

How do others see you in five words? Driven, friendly, committed, energetic, supportive.

What do others find most annoying about you? My business partner would say the early morning onslaught of messages, business ideas and anything else I can throw at him. Others may say something different.

Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog? Early bird. Dog.

Optimist or pessimist? Fast-paced or relaxed? Optimist. Fast-paced.

What was the best thing about your childhood? Playing sports every single day with the support of my grandfather.

What is the best aspect of being an adult? Playing with my 3 children and seeing them grow.

What did you want to be when you grew up? A footballer.

What was your first job? And your current job? First job was a Gym Fitness Instructor. I'm now a business owner of Beat Fitness (gym and recovery space) at the Hatchery.

Tell us about your hobbies: Anything my 3 children like to do – looking after myself, keeping fit and football.

What is your best loved book & your favourite author? Book – 'Extreme ownership' as it changed the way I look at business, leadership and life in general.

Who would you most like to have dinner with? My Grandad, we have so much to catch up on in 17 years.

Who do you most admire and why? My wife - her drive, her commitment and her way with our children.

What law would you pass if you could? A law that encourages healthier lifestyles, making fitness, nutrition and mental well-being more accessible to all.

If you could ban one thing, what would it be? Smoking completely.

What makes you feel grumpy/angry? Mess and lack of order.

What makes you happiest in the world? My children.

Something surprising that you excel at? The 1% club TV quiz show.

What is your favourite saying or piece of advice? You don't have to have it all figured out, but take that first step and work on it daily.



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December was a busy month for Steeple Aston WI. The Christmas wreath-making workshop was as usual a great success and those who took part were very pleased with their creations.

At the village Wassail, a group of WI members performed a poem about a disastrous school nativity play, which was well received by the audience. The Christmas lunch at Middle Aston House was attended by over 30 members. It was a relaxed and friendly event, and we were made very welcome by the staff there. The competition to make a star-shaped Christmas tree decoration from any material was won by Janet Coley's beautifully-constructed folded paper creation.



The Oxford Federation has been discussing how to spend their Denman grant funding. Proposed workshops include mending, sewing machine confidence, repurposing fabrics, creative dyeing, quilt design and more. The aim is to provide courses and workshops which combine sustainability, skill-building, creativity and social impact. Watch out for details of courses in the New Year. There are two half-day découpage workshops on 5th February; a trip to the orchid festival at Kew Gardens on 24th February; also talks, and the OFWI Annual Meeting. Details of events will be circulated to members. The first meeting of the New Year for Steeple Aston branch takes place on 13th January with a talk by Sue Smith, the climate ambassador for Oxford WI.

We wish all our members a happy and healthy 2026!

Cathy Lawday

1st Deddington Guides *Report*

We packed in lots of activities this half term - one favourite was Film Night, a great way to relax, when the Guides wore their onesies or PJs, and with the inevitable snacks, settled down for a cosy evening. We've tended to get 'crafty' since then, starting scrapbooks and learning how to make friendship bracelets, by Daisy, following her recent trip to Cambodia!

We've also been working hard at our Food Critic badge, with four girls reaching their goal by the end of term - well done! Christmas then took over and we made various decorations and then ended the term with our party. Lots of things being planned for next term already.

All girls over 10 years welcome. Come along and give us a try.

Happy New Year to everyone!

Maggie Rampley 07957 600755



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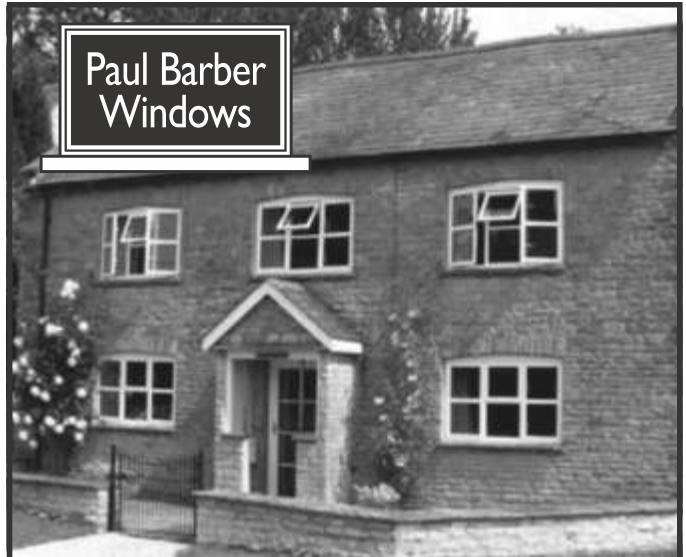
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Poetry Corner



And so that was Christmas....

Poet: Peter Wild

extracted from my wallet
my savings spent on trash
awareness went myopic
as I ran out of cash
I'm not sure what it bought me
apart from half a stone
that settled on my stomach
that's pointing like a cone
the trouble is with Christmas
it's not just in December
it used to be a twelve-day gig
but now starts in September
four months of the year now
how did it get quite so?
I've no idea where advent went
that ship sailed long ago
through autumn now and winter
two seasons does it span
hello to spring and summer
enjoy them while you can!

Post Christmas ditties

Poet: Cathy Lawday

As usual, the Christmas elf
Put my gifts upon the shelf
But I kid you not
The best present I got
Was the one that I bought for myself

Well, Christmas is over at last
2025 into history is cast
2026 is finally here
but I suspect this new year
will be no different than the last

Back to work, back to school
That's the end of another yule
It's time to start another diet
Time to face the bank's disquiet
The new year can be really cruel!

Inspirational New Year's quotes of timeless wisdom

"The best way to predict the future is to create it" – Peter Drucker

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning"
- Albert Einstein

"Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step of your life. Tiptoe if you must, but take a step" – Naeem Callaway

"Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it" – Charles R Swindoll

"Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk" – Mark Twain

"Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting" – Joyce Meyer

"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity" – Albert Einstein

"The only way to achieve personal peace is to view challenges as opportunities for growth" – Roy T Bennett

"Wisdom is not about knowing everything. It's about understanding the depth of your ignorance" – Confucius

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall" – Nelson Mandela

"Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions" – Dalai Lama

"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated" – Confucius





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THE VALENTINE CLUB

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!

Here we are in a new year and maybe it is an age thing, but I remember moving into the new millennium and it seemed like time was moving at a pace then. Even faster these days, 26 years later! I am writing this a little before our Christmas dinner on the 16th December, so I can only tell you what is planned and, hopefully, what actually happened. We had 86 members join us in the village hall for yet another sumptuous meal supplied by Sally and Jasmine and their friends (S & J Cuisine) along with a giant raffle, bottles of wine and some soft drinks, a few songs from members of the pre-school and Glyn with his songs from the 50s, 60s and 70s which, I am pleased to tell you all, most of our members will remember. The week before, 50 of us travelled to Stratford-on-Avon for a 70s Juke Box celebration accompanied by a three-course meal and great company.

Now into 2026, we welcome to the village hall an old favourite that most of you will know, Elvis! Yes, you thought he had moved on to different pastures but how wrong one can be. This will be our first meeting of the year and time for members to pay their annual fee of just £15. Held for yet another year. Just had a thought! Maybe The Valentine Club should take over the country's affairs as we have not increased taxes, sorry, membership fees, for many years, but continue to provide even more services!

So, what is ahead for the coming 12 months? Six day trips by coach to include travel by road, steam and water, three holidays, top class entertainers and as much information relating to this band of late developing teenagers as we can find. Most importantly, a chance to meet up with friends, both old and new, and enjoy life to our best ability.

If you would like to support our club, the best way is probably to subscribe to The Cherwell Lottery where 50% comes directly to the club and you have a much better chance of winning than most lottery schemes. This last year, we have had two winners of £250 and numerous smaller prizes and all this for £1 per week. Google Cherwell Lottery and make sure you support The Valentine Club.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, then simply visit our own website on **valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston** (easiest way to log on is go to the village website, go to 'clubs and societies', find The Valentine Club and click on the link); or keep up to date by looking on the village website **steepleaston.org.uk** or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past 12 months.

Richard Preston – Group organiser (for lack of a better description)
Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com – Tel 01869 340512

Road Closure

Advance warning that the dual carriageway section of the A4260 will be closed for a couple of nights this month. The temporary measure will extend from the 14th to 16th January, between 8.00 pm and 6.00am, to allow for re-dressing the road surface.



New Year. New opportunities. As we step confidently into 2026 we would like to thank the fantastic Steeple Aston community for putting your trust in AR Property Partners throughout the year.

We hope your Christmas has delivered calm, laughter and quality time with the important people in your life. The year ahead is ready for action. Here's to good health progress and opportunities worth grabbing.

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Village Hall News



Happy New Year!

Are you one of the many people who pledges to make changes to their lives with a New Year's resolution? Well, perhaps the village hall activities could be the key. Our next big event is the Annual Quiz night. Put the little grey cells to work. I am writing this in mid-December, so hopefully you have already booked your table. If not, please see the details below.

Saturday 17th January 2026: Annual Quiz Night – 7.00pm for prompt 7.30pm start.

Many tables have already been booked, and with a max capacity of 12, you'd better be quick! Please book your teams (max 8 per team) with Barbara Brewer (01869 340423) early to avoid disappointment. £2.50 pp, Entrance fee at time of booking. You don't need to be part of a team already. Please contact Barbara and she'll be able to assist individuals or couples to make up tables. There is a licensed bar, so please do not bring your own drinks to the event, but bring money. But what else happens in the village hall.....

Monday: Pilates Classes: 2.15pm to 3.15pm. £8.00 per class. For more details contact Julia on 01869 347850.

Choral Society: Rehearsals from 7.45pm to 9.30pm. No auditions necessary. If you're interested, contact SACS Secretary, Margaret Bulleyment, on 01869 347346 or mtheb749@gmail.com

Tuesday: Badminton: from 10.00am to 12 noon. £2 per session. This is a mixed group with all ages and abilities. For more details, contact the organiser, Barbara Brewer, on 01869 340423.

WI (Women's Institute): Meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Julie Hillier (President) on 01869 349185 j.hillier3@hotmail.co.uk

Valentine Club: The must join club for the over 60's. Held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday. For more details, contact the organiser, Richard Preston, on 01869340512 / Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com

Garden club: For anyone with an interest in horticulture. Venues, days & times can vary, so contact Richard Preston on 01869 340512 or Alison Llewellyn alisonllew.home@gmail.com

Wednesday: Walking Netball: 10.15am. This is a fun group, as well as a way to get gentle exercise. Either just turn up or contact Merrill on 01869 347802 / Merrill.bayley@gmail.com

Thursday: Badminton. Meeting from 8.00pm to 10.00pm, and just £2 per session. Sessions are informal, played as doubles and pairings are mixed during an evening. This seems a bargain compared to driving to a big sports centre! This is for over 18's. If you are interested, just turn up and play, wearing sensible clothing and footwear, and bring a racquet, if you have one. Or contact Alison Moran on 01869 347033.

Saturday: Steeple Aston Village Archive. The village history centre is a room accessed next to the hall main entrance. Open every Saturday morning from 10.00am to 12 noon. Anyone interested to learn more about village history or browse the many artefacts, photos and reports is welcome to drop in. Alternatively, contact Stuart Cummins on 01869 349155 or email steepleastonarchive@gmail.com

Have an idea for a regular class or group? Why not ask us about our rates.

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Drama and Fun – Steeple Aston Sings



With the church roof surrounded by scaffolding, *SACS* took to the village hall to stage their dramatic autumn concert – *A Joyful Evening with Rossini*. The last major work Rossini wrote, *Petite Messe Solennelle*, was a fitting ending to a life during which he had written over forty operas – most of them comic – and, in spite of its setting of the words of the mass, is structured in much the same way as his operas. The work was written for a large ‘chamber,’ not a church, which was perfect for the acoustics of the hall. The scene was set, as the audience were greeted by the piano and the keyboard/harmonium dramatically positioned up on the stage, with the choir and soloists on the floor below. The illustrious soloists assembled by conductor, Paul Badley, had amongst others, sung at royal weddings; the opening of the Olympics; in the Forbidden City, Beijing; won major singing awards and accompanied other international singers. Their arias and duets sparkled with colour, drama and wit.

The chorus responded enthusiastically to the considerable challenges of the glorious contrapuntal choruses – this is not a work for the faint-hearted. Rossini’s humour ran throughout, from the work’s ridiculous title – it is anything but *small* or *solemn* – and on through choruses which, signalling they are about to end, re-launch with full fanfare, into another massive fugal section. An interesting feature was the contrast between the piano part – brighter and used for the soloist’s movements – and the harmonium part, which supported the lower harmonies, before breaking out into a wonderful solo, *Preludio*, when its true mellow sound could be appreciated. *SACS* would like to thank all involved in this performance and especially the audience, for the appreciation they showed for this dramatic behemoth. At the end of the manuscript, Rossini writes to God – *Praise be to you and grant me entry into Paradise*. If he made it, further rehearsal may be needed from the rest of us.



A fortnight later and once again, the hall is alive with the sound of singing, for the traditional *Wassail Evening*. A power cut had cancelled last year's event, but as the audience poured into the hall, aged from 0-90 years, it looked like this year would make up for it. The evening began with the Wassailers processing in to the *Wassail Song*, led as usual, by village violinist, Holly Viner and her brother Daniel, with his jester bells. But this year there was a twist, as Daniel read the first of some limericks he had written for the occasion, with a little help from AI. No-one knew if they were the subject of a limerick or not, and speaking as the only person who did know, it was very amusing watching them wait to see who Daniel would name next. By now, the audience had sampled the mulled wine and was getting into the spirit of the evening, singing *Deck the Hall*, and *We Three Kings*, with its impressive volunteer soloists.



Eileen Baglin-Jones read a lovely Wendy Cope poem, expressing that, without a real tree in your house, you have not taken in the spirit of Christmas and then, by contrast, a distinguished guest – Mr George Bernard Shaw – delivered his thoughts on Christmas, with *An Atrocious Institution* (was that Vaughan Billings lurking under that enormous beard?).

One of Paul Herrington's (last seen playing the harmonium) clever arrangements followed. *Angels Carol Medley* gave everyone the unique opportunity to sing several carols at once and also the end of the *Hallelujah Chorus*.

By contrast, Holly and Paul gave us a beautiful performance of Paul's setting of *In the Bleak Midwinter*. As the wistful sounds faded, it was time for the pre-interval marathon of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. I can honestly say every table gave their all to this (I am still recovering), and it is no coincidence that the mulled wine ran out at the end of the interval (stocks are being laid on for next year.) Many thanks to Barbara, Vicky and Anne for managing all of this. Suitably fortified, *Winter Wonderland* and *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*, again specially arranged, were sung with gusto. Then came Adam's, *O Holy Night* sung by the Wandering Wassailers, with anyone now confident enough to join them, singing along.



The ethereal atmosphere was broken by Cathy Lawday's, hilarious *A Christmas Drama*, performed with her fellow Wlssailers, featuring a school nativity play that went wrong and then right (for some). The atmosphere changed again, as Holly performed *Walking in the Air*. It was a very pleasant surprise for many people, to find that Holly can sing as well as she can play the violin. Then it was the Handbell Ringers turn and they gave us a wonderful medley of festive favourites, before heading for the doors in the hope that the Village Wassailers would then be generous in their response to this year's charity, the *Alzheimer's Society*. Thanks to everyone (of all ages) who helped make this such a successful evening. Next year, it will take place on *Sunday 6th December at 6.00pm*. Put the date in your diary now. Waes-hael!

Margaret Bulleyment

Photos by Nigel Francis

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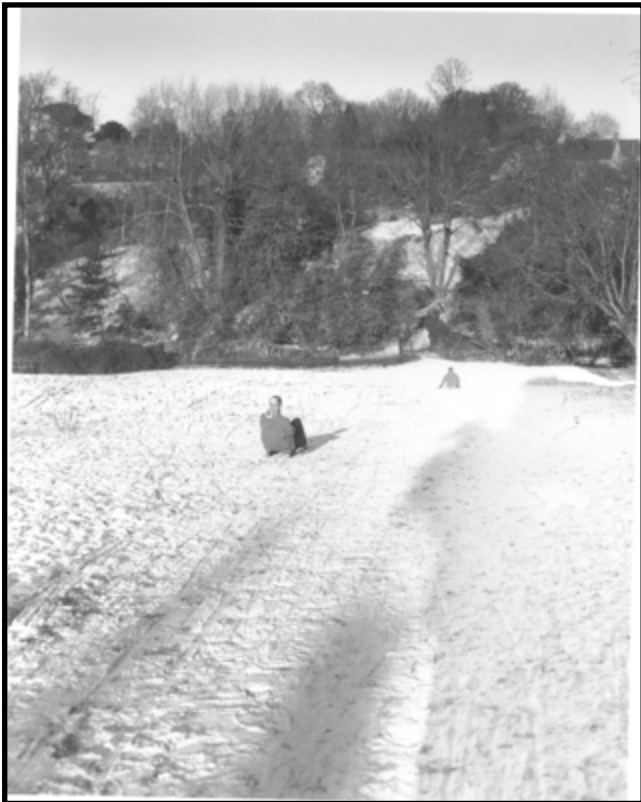
BLAST from the past

A Snowy Blast from the Past

Some of our readers will recall Paul Hotston, who catalogued the village in a series of fantastic photographs in 2000 for the new millennium, which he kindly donated to SAVA. Amongst these are a series of snowy shots – these show the children's play park after a downfall, plus villagers making the most of the chance for some fun-filled sledging down the Tchure!

The bottom left photo depicts schoolchildren being collected by Charabanc at Church Corner/Cow Lane in the 1930s.

Photographs courtesy of Steeple Aston Village Archive (SAVA).



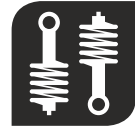
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Football *Focus*



The club has built on the heroics of the now legendary Wroxton 10 men game (see November SA Life), and has managed to put two wins on the board out of the four matches played over the last month. A 4-0 loss to a resurgent Middleton Cheney followed by a 2-1 home defeat to Bearley in the mid Oxon Cup had threatened to suck some of the life out of the squad, but back-to-back wins have ensured that the momentum for the season remains.

A 2-1 revenge win over Bearley United in the league being a season high point for the SAFC; the fixture gods had made it rather challenging with consecutive matches against the same team. It took a lot of guts to put that narrow cup exit to one side, and goals from Rhys Allen and Adrian Voinea (6th goal of season) saw the lads pick up an important three points to move towards a steady mid table position. A professional 3-0 win over Shipston Excelsior Colts then followed with goals coming from the ageless Adam Peckham, Seth Lovell (5th goal of the season - all outside of the box!), and Mircea Coltor finding the net on his debut. The team enter the busy festive period in good spirits, having seemingly sorted out some early season teething problems and look forward to playing back at home in the new year, where we could always do with any extra support from the local community!

Alex Keal

Steeple Aston footpaths guide

- Are you new to the village, or interested in exploring our beautiful countryside?
- Why not pick up 'A Guide to the Footpaths in & around the parish of Steeple Aston' from the village shop, priced at just £2.00, to discover seven local routes. As the last Cotswold village, with the River Cherwell marking the end of the Cotswolds, the surrounding hills and valleys bring a pleasant air of tranquility. Footpaths vary in length from 2km to 5.2km with different routes available. This informative guide is produced by Steeple Aston Life, therefore, all sales help with product costs of the magazine. Thank you.

Steeple Aston Parish Councillors

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# 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## Happy Diamond Wedding Anniversary!

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January, Brian and Judy Batchelor celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Brian moved to Middle Aston in the late 1950s, when his father took over the running of the poultry buildings, now known as The Hatchery. Judy (nee Critchley) was born and raised at Cuttle Mill, where her parents and grandparents were tenant farmers on the Rousham Estate. Both went to Senior school at Steeple Aston, Young Farmers in the village hall and married in St Peter and Paul. Although they moved away soon after marrying, and raised a family in Herefordshire, the links to the village have stayed strong, most recently visiting to sadly say goodbye to Stuart Walton, lifelong friends since school days. Weirdly, their connection to Steeple doesn't end, as their son married a local girl called Yta Nicholson of Kralingen, Fenway, also married in the village church, but that's a story for another day.



*Brian and Judy Batchelor on their wedding day, in Arthur Wadham's horse and cart.*





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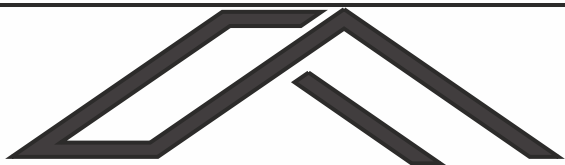
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**t: 01869 932250**  
**e: [info@uksolargeneration.co.uk](mailto:info@uksolargeneration.co.uk)**

# Steeple Aston *Garden Club*



Our final event of the gardening year was to visit The Holt for a festive Christmas lunch. The food was excellent and was served very professionally, while we all enjoyed chatting and catching up. It was so good, we have already booked for next Christmas!



Overall, this has been another very good year for the Steeple Aston Garden Club with some excellent speakers during the winter months, and visits to several very different gardens in the summer. We have also welcomed a few new members, so why not come and join us?

After a break in January, the Garden Club's first monthly talk will be on Tuesday 3rd February 2026 in the village hall, when Caroline Landless from Rousham is coming to give us a talk about the history and development of the gardens and the famous landscaping of the grounds at Rousham. For any non-members, please come along and join us. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start, so there is time to collect a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. We are also working on a list of gardens for our monthly visits next summer, including a follow up visit to Rousham. The calendar of events will be updated on the website soon, or in the meantime, please contact Richard or Alison for more information.

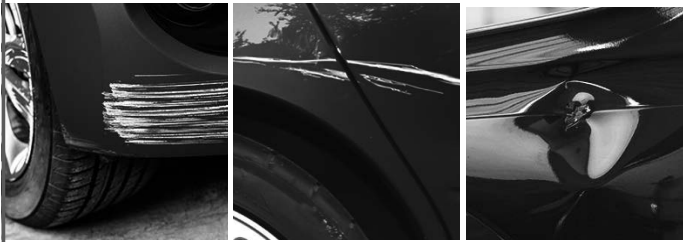
Enjoy the festive season and we will look forward to seeing you in the spring, when the snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils are emerging to signal the start of a new gardening season!

**Alison Llewellyn** [alisonllew.home@gmail.com](mailto:alisonllew.home@gmail.com)

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

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**OXFORD BUS MUSEUM**



Our 1881 horse-drawn tram was restored in our workshop. We know it is accurate because we had the original design drawings. Note the paraffin lamp and red chimney on the left of the tram under the canopy. As well as being a warning to oncoming traffic, it lit the inside of the tram.

Next to Hanborough Station OX29 8LA  
01296 925797

[info@oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk)

Café / Children's area / Shop

For events information:

[www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk](http://www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk)



# OXFORD BUS MUSEUM

A new vehicle acquired with a view to restoration.



*Photo credit: the Post Office Vehicle Club. A 1945 Y type postal van, GYW 973, photographed on Dulwich Common, which worked for the Post Office from May 1946 to August 1960.*

After the excitement of the New Year's Day running event with the Christmas Jumper Competition, January is a quiet month for visitors. However, the workshop volunteers are busy. Restorations continue and our South Midland minibus is having a new engine fitted in preparation for the 2026 season. Our 1948 Morris 10 Series M's full restoration is nearing completion and it should emerge from the workshop in 2026.

Some museum volunteers have clubbed together to buy, and therefore save, a 1944 Morris Post Office series Y van, GXK 685.

It arrived at the museum on 8th October to be stored until restoration starts, and the first task is to fit four new tyres so it can be moved more easily. The Morris series Y 100 cubic foot vans were first used for postal work in 1939, when two were purchased. They had a 11.9hp side-valve engine and a 10cwt semi-forward-control with an all-steel construction. Interestingly, the engine was positioned to one side, allowing the driver to sit beside it with no room for a passenger. GXK 685 is a Cowley-built Series Y van and



one of a batch of 350 supplied in 1944 to Royal Mail. We understand that it spent its early years in rural Cumbria before being sold to a carpenter in Nottinghamshire where, it is believed, it was used in his business for the transportation of coffins! It was last used in 1964.

About twenty years ago, GXK685 was purchased by a local collector with the desire to save it, because it is thought that only two other Royal Mail versions of this type have survived. On learning that it was still awaiting restoration, a syndicate of seven museum members have joined together with the aim of restoring it to its original condition for the Museum.

Watch this space!

**Frank Collingwood**

The Spring Flower Show will be held in the Village Hall on Sunday 22nd March from 2.30pm - 4.30 pm. Entries are open to everyone and new exhibitors are welcome. The entry fee includes the Society's membership fee. Rules for exhibitors are as laid down by the secretary in the Annual Show Schedule except (a) entries must be in by 7.00pm on Thursday 19th March. **NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE.** (b) exhibits must be staged between 9.00am - 10.30am on the morning of the show after which the hall will be closed. Multiple entries in the same class will not be allowed in Divisions 1, 2 and 3. Cups will be awarded to the winner of most points in each open Division and the Mead Vase will be awarded to the person having entered in at least three of the five divisions and gaining the most points in the show. Easter eggs will be awarded to the winner of the most points in each of the children's age groups and the Bedding Cup for the best children's exhibit.

1. Tulips growing in a container
2. Daffodils (long or short trumpets) growing in container
3. Daffodils (multi-headed) growing in container
4. Miniature Daffodils growing in container
5. Hyacinths growing in container
6. Any other container grown bulb
7. Any other container grown spring flower/s of one or more variety, excluding bulbs
8. Cactus or succulent) *must be in your*
9. Pot plant flowering/ *possession for at least*
10. Pot plant foliage ) *8 weeks*
11. Vase of Cut Garden Blooms
12. Vase of Garden Shrubs/Hedgerow/Trees, Buds or Blossom, judged on variety and quality
13. 5 cut stems of Daffodils (long trumpets) any varieties
14. 5 cut stems of Daffodil (short trumpets) any varieties
15. 5 cut stems of miniature Daffodils
16. 5 cut stems of multi-headed Daffodils
17. 3 stems of Rhubarb (tops on)
18. Vase of cut scented Spring flowers
19. A single cut Daffodil with solitary bloom
20. Any fresh vegetable (excluding Rhubarb)

21. A Savoury flan (state flavour)
22. A Babka
23. Fidget pie
24. 3 Chocolate eclairs
25. 3 egg Victoria Sandwich
26. 3 Shrewsbury biscuits
27. 'Fat free' cake – list ingredients
28. 5 Filled chocolates (Praline/Bonbon type). State filling
29. Marmalade
30. Fruit curd (lemon, orange, lime etc)
31. 3 home produced eggs of domestic fowl (with saucer)
32. Homemade lemonade in a clear bottle with a glass
33. Homemade alcoholic drink in a clear glass bottle with a glass (No home distilled spirits. Shop purchased gins/ vodkas to flavour are allowed)

**SECTION 4 - FOR HANDICRAFT POT**

38. A knitted/crocheted item
39. A pin cushion
40. A limerick - 'There once was a poet called Will'  
(With 8 syllables in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> lines, and 5 syllables in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines)
41. A painting or drawing
42. A decorated plant pot
43. Any other handicraft
44. Photo - 'White'
45. Photo - 'Recycled'
46. Photo - 'Aged'
47. Photo 'Textures' Must be black and white photo

Photos - may be in colour or black and white for classes 44 to 46 and all photos are not to exceed 7" by 5". No mounts allowed

48. A painting or drawing  
49. A decorated plant pot  
50. 3 decorated mini rolls (mini roll can be shop purchased, judged on appearance only)  
**UNDER 8 – for all children up to age 7 inclusive**  
51. A decorated plant pot  
52. Banana bread – to be judged on taste & appearance  
53. A sock puppet  
**UNDER 12 – for all children up to age 11 inclusive**  
54. A decorated plant pot  
55. A pop up card  
56. 3 iced fingers to be judged on taste & appearance  
**UNDER 16 – for all children up to age 15 inclusive**  
57. Decorated birthday cake. Judged on taste and appearance.  
58. A decorated plant pot  
59. Photo – ‘Food’ no larger than 7”x 5”

Please circle the classes you wish to enter and return the entry form to: Claire Coyth, Walton House, South Side, Steeple Aston OX25 4RT (07799 065482) or Victoria Clifton, Bluebell Cottage, Middle Aston, OX25 5PZ (07817 025948) with full entry fee by 7.00 pm on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Extra forms are available from Vicky or Claire, or the village shop or village website. Classes 1-47 entry fee 30p. Classes 48-59 entry fee 10p. Prizes first £2, second £1, third 50p  
For our privacy policy see: [steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/Whorlicultural](http://steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/Whorlicultural)

[illegible]

## **Can I still drive to Oxford now there's a congestion charge in Oxford?**

### **Yes, you can!**

We know the new Oxford Congestion Charge can be a bit confusing, but the good news is that it's still easy to get to Oxford without going through a charging point, depending on your route. The charging points are currently located on Hythe Bridge Street, Marston Ferry Road, St Cross Road, Thames Street, St Clement's and Hollow Way. You will only be charged if you pass directly through one of these locations.

### **COMING BY CAR**

If you're driving from outside Oxford, you can usually reach the city centre and nearby parking without passing through a charging point, if you travel via Woodstock Road or Banbury Road (neither of these routes has a charge point).

For parking, we recommend:

Gloucester Green Car Park

St Giles Car Park (on-street parking)

Or one of the Park & Ride sites – buses stop in the city centre. The bus journeys are free until the end of January 2026. Up to two adults and three children can claim free travel to and from one of the sites with a valid parking ticket (£2.50 for 16 hours).

### **OTHER WAYS TO TRAVEL**

Oxford is easy to reach by bus, train, cycle, taxi or on foot. The train station is about a 10-minute walk away from the city centre, and there are plenty of bus routes.

### **FREE DAY PERMITS**

If you live in Oxfordshire, you can apply for 25 free day permits per car. Oxford city residents can apply for 100 free permits.

### **WHEN THE CHARGE IS ACTIVE**

The Congestion Charge operates from 7.00am to 7.00pm. If you're coming to an evening event, you'll be able to drive through the charging points after 7.00pm without paying the £5.00 charge or using a permit.

### **RUSH HOUR EXCEPTIONS**

The charge points on Marston Ferry Road and Hollow Way only operate during rush hours (7.00am – 9.00am and 3.00pm – 6.00pm), so you can drive through those freely outside those times. Outside the charging hours, there's no charge for any vehicle.

### **IF YOU NEED TO PAY THE £5 CHARGE**

You can pay the Congestion Charge easily online: [oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfords-temporary-congestion-charge-cars/pay-congestion-charge](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfords-temporary-congestion-charge-cars/pay-congestion-charge)





# SWIFT

**numbers are plummeting**

Sadly, they're now on the UK's Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. For every ten Swifts zooming across our skies in 1995, there were only about three by 2022. **Swift populations in Britain slumped by 66% between 1995 and 2022** and have continued a rapid downward trend.

**What can we do?**  
**Come and find out at a lecture by**

**Chris Mason - Swift expert**

(not the BBC political editor!)

**on**

**Wednesday February 11th**

**at 7.30pm**

**in**

**Steeple Aston Village Hall**

Please contact [martindale865@gmail.com](mailto:martindale865@gmail.com) to reserve a seat.

Steeple Aston Environment Committee

Sponsored by Sustainable Steeple

## Street names evoke nature as the real thing vanishes

A study of Ordnance Survey data has revealed a huge increase in the number of new road names inspired by bird species that have undergone shocking declines and continue to be pushed closer to the brink. In our analysis of OS Open Names data for Great Britain covering 2004 to 2024, we have found steep increases in the number of streets in new developments named after birds that are declining in the wild.

**Named for missing nature?** Streets named for Skylarks, for example, have gone up 350%. Meanwhile the UK's breeding population has dropped by a shocking 53% in recent years. Other species that are on the rise in terms of street names are: Starling (up 156%), Lapwing (104%), Swift (58%), Puffin (54%) and Nightingale (37%). Yet, all of these species are on the Red List of conservation concern, with all suffering declines in recent decades.

The UK has lost 53% of its breeding Skylarks, 62% of its Lapwings, 82% of its Starlings and 89% of its Nightingale populations between 1970 and 2022, along with 68% of its Swifts between 1995 and 2023, and nearly a quarter (23%) of its Puffins since 2000. OS data also shows that the presence of 'meadow' in road names increased by 34% between 2004 and 2024. This is despite the UK having lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s.



Skylark (left) & Nightingale (right) – courtesy of RSPB

**Huge public support for nature:** The increase in bird or nature-related street names would seem to speak to our innate love for wildlife. Yet conversely, the UK is now one of the most nature depleted countries on earth, with the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill threatening to drive further declines. Separate research published by More in Common found that [people don't want new homes to be built at nature's expense](#). Only 20% of Britons think environmental standards should be weakened to build more houses, while 72% of the public think more positively of politicians who say, "New housing and infrastructure should integrate with the natural world, not destroy it". Two-thirds (67%) say politicians are out of touch with the public's values on nature.

Beccy Speight, RSPB Chief Executive, explains: "This analysis shows councils and developers are happy to name streets after the nature we love while efforts to prevent these birds disappearing from our skies remain woefully inadequate. If we carry on down this road and fail to halt nature's decline, rusting street signs may be one of the few perverse reminders of everything we've lost. We deserve to enjoy the sounds of a Nightingale in full song or Swifts screaming overhead, rather than living in silent streets with ironic names. Our future resilience depends on it".

"The UK Government appears oblivious not only to how much people care about nature in this country, but to how critical a thriving natural world is to our economy. We know that thoughtful planning from the beginning could help balance the many competing demands, and that development and growth can go hand in hand with nature's recovery".

**RSPB [rspb.org.uk/](https://rspb.org.uk/)**

### Join the world's largest wildlife survey!

The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch takes place from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026, and the charity is asking everyone to get outdoors and start counting. Simply spend one hour noting the different types of wild birds that visit your garden, local park or nearby open space, and submit your results online to [rspb.org.uk/birdwatch](https://rspb.org.uk/birdwatch). The results will provide a unique snapshot of birdlife in the UK. Schoolchildren can also take part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch from 6<sup>th</sup> January – 14<sup>th</sup> February – a great opportunity to get out in the school grounds and learn about local wildlife. For details: visit [rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch](https://rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch)

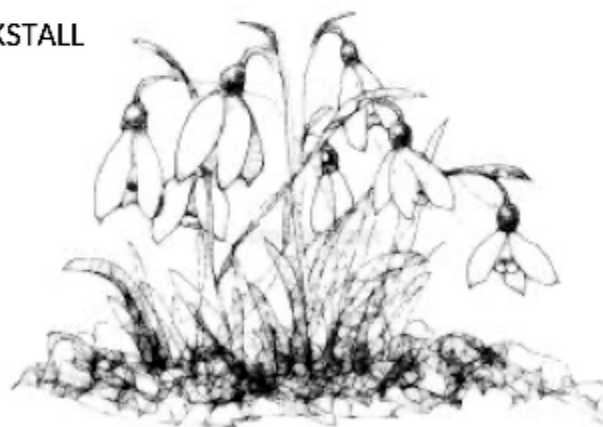
# Snowdrop Sunday

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February

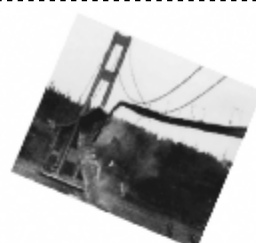
2.30 – 4.30pm

Snowdrops in the churchyard  
Homemade cake and tea £2.50  
in the church

PLUS BOOKSTALL



**Steeple Talks 15<sup>th</sup> January**  
**In the Church – 7.15pm for 7.30pm**



**When Design Goes Wrong –**  
**Lessons from History**

**Stuart Cummins**  
Retired Engineer



**Why are things so complicated? Why do things take so long to build? Why didn't the designers think of this...?**

Refreshments from 7.15pm  
Donations are welcomed for church funds.  
All Welcome





Happy New Year!

I pray that you have all had a wonderful Christmas holiday full of Love, Joy, Hope and Peace. One of the things I love most about the holidays is gathering together as a family, particularly over a meal. Gathering around a table to eat is a wonderful social occasion, especially when celebrating. I love the conversations, be they comical or debates about serious topics, all wrapped in silly anecdotes, and tied together with stories, creating a perfect present of new memories. Even scientists tell us about the enormous benefits of eating together, beyond the increase in social skills. Eating together generally means we eat better food due to a preference for home cooking over fast food, with increased protein and fibre and less sugar, although this doesn't perhaps apply to the traditional Christmas dinner. Also, when we eat together, we generally eat more slowly which in turn improves our digestion. Apparently, if we eat whilst multitasking, such as working or watching TV, we are more likely to swallow air, which is not beneficial. Eating together also provides enormous benefits for our mental health, reducing our stress levels and combating loneliness and depression.

Virtually every religion and culture has special celebratory meals, which both help tell their faith story and help build community. The Bible both begins and ends with meals. God's first words to humans is an invitation to eat and ending with the wonderful image of a heavenly banquet. Jesus regularly ate with people, from his first miracle at a wedding celebration or providing a picnic lunch for 5,000, through to his last meal when he celebrated the Passover with his disciples. Jesus gathered with people, eating with them whilst sharing stories and exploring the issues of the day and building community.

We'd be delighted if you'd like to gather with us each Tuesday evening at the Red Lion for *The Gathering*, an informal discussion group exploring the relevance of biblical stories for our lives in 2026. Starting on 13th January, we will look at the meals Jesus shared: it's an opportunity this new year to connect in new ways with our community, with ourselves and with God!

God Bless



Please join us for

## The Gathering

an informal discussion group in

**The Snug at The Red Lion**  
Every Tuesday evening 7:30-9pm  
Starting 13th January

As we gather Cliff and Jenny Royal will lead us in our exploration of the meals Jesus shared and their relevance to us in 2026.

Come and join us and connect with others - open to everyone.

Further details from:  
Jenny [jennysroyal@gmail.com](mailto:jennysroyal@gmail.com) or  
Harriet [harriet.antchurch@gmail.com](mailto:harriet.antchurch@gmail.com)

## ***Steeple Aston Quiz 2025 answers:***

- 1) The Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Community Land Trust.
- 2) Barbara Brewer; Vicky Clifton.
- 3) Graham Porcas.
- 4) Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- 5) Gareth Epps; Liberal Democrats.
- 6) Zoe McLernon; Conservatives.
- 7) A4260.
- 8) They are waiting to be driven to Ukraine as a charitable donation by the organisation 'Driving Ukraine'.
- 9) Puy du Fou.
- 10) 9,000.

# Recycle glass at home with kerbside collections

**From 1 January 2026**, residents across Cherwell will be able to recycle glass bottles and jars using their **blue recycling bin or approved recycling sacks**.

This new service makes it even easier to recycle and helps to reduce waste, save energy, and protect the environment. Glass can be recycled again and again without losing quality. By collecting it at kerbside:

It makes recycling easier for households.

It reduces the amount of waste going to general waste.

It cuts carbon emissions and reduces the use of raw materials.

## Glass you can put in your blue recycling bin:

You can recycle:

Glass bottles (all colours)

Glass jars (e.g. jam jars, sauce jars)



Please rinse items before placing them in your recycling bin to remove food or drink residues. There is no need to remove labels or lids.

If your bin is full, please place extra glass bottles and jars safely in a cardboard box next to it. **DO NOT** leave any loose or broken glass as it's unsafe and will not be collected.

If you have recycling sacks instead of a bin, please ensure all bottles and jars are placed inside the sack and that there is **NO** loose or broken glass left out.

## Glass you must not put in your blue recycling bin:

Do **NOT** recycle:

Pyrex or heatproof glass (such as oven dishes)

Drinking glasses, tumblers or wine glasses

Ceramics or crockery

Light bulbs or fluorescent tubes

Window panes or mirrors

Broken glass (wrap securely and place in general waste bin)



Not sure? Then check the [Waste Wizard](#) to find out the best option for your item.

## Bottle banks:

Bottle banks will be removed gradually as kerbside glass collections are rolled out. We recognise there may still be some need for 'on-the-go' recycling, so a small number may remain temporarily while the changes are reviewed.

**Cherwell District Council**

## Local *Information*

### Church Services January 2026

| Date                                      | North Aston                        | Steeple Aston                 | Tackley                                                |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday<br/>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>  | 9.30am<br>Epiphany Crib<br>Service | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion BCP | 5.30pm<br>Evensong                                     |
|                                           |                                    |                               |                                                        |
| <b>Tuesday<br/>6<sup>th</sup> January</b> | 6.00pm<br>Taize Service            |                               |                                                        |
|                                           |                                    |                               |                                                        |
| <b>Sunday<br/>11<sup>th</sup> January</b> | 9.30am<br>Morning Prayer           | 11.00am<br>Family Service     | 10.30am<br>Covenant Service at the<br>Methodist Church |
|                                           |                                    |                               |                                                        |
| <b>Sunday<br/>18<sup>th</sup> January</b> | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion           | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion     | 5.30pm<br>Evensong                                     |
|                                           |                                    |                               |                                                        |
| <b>Sunday<br/>25<sup>th</sup> January</b> | 9.30am<br>Morning Prayer           | 11.00 am<br>Morning Prayer    | 5.30pm<br>Holy Communion                               |
|                                           |                                    |                               |                                                        |

[www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)

Our church buildings are also open every day. Do feel free to visit at any time.



## STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL

[www.savh.org.uk](http://www.savh.org.uk)

**Our hall is  
available to hire:**



- Ideal site for parties, receptions, seminars, exhibitions and workshops
- Full width raised stage and well-equipped kitchen
- Main hall can seat around 100
- HD projector and retractable screen
- Meeting Room to seat 20, with separate access
- Off-Road Car parking
- **For more details and photos** see our website

[savh.org.uk/contact-us](http://savh.org.uk/contact-us) or  
call 07734 112967

| <b>All Facilities</b>                                          |                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Peak Times – involving hire after 6pm</b>                   |                                               |
| Village Residents (up to 6hrs)<br>(Additional hours at £10/hr) | £65 (Plus Refundable Deposit £200)            |
| Non-Village (up to 6hrs)                                       | £110 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300)           |
| Non-Village (over 6hrs)                                        | £160 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300)           |
| <b>Off-Peak – all hire before 6pm</b>                          |                                               |
| Hourly Rate Plus Refundable Deposit £200                       | £10/hr (or £30 for 4 hours)                   |
| <b>Hall Only</b>                                               |                                               |
| Represented Clubs                                              | £9 (up to 3hrs)                               |
| Others                                                         | £17 (up to 3hrs plus Refundable Deposit £200) |
| <b>Committee Room</b>                                          |                                               |
| Represented Clubs                                              | £6 (up to 3hrs)                               |
| Others                                                         | £12 (up to 3hrs)                              |

## Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre and Field

| <b>Letting charges</b>                                                                                 |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Social Function peak times<br>(Daily up to 6 hours from 6pm)                                           | £55          |
| Social Function off-peak times<br>(Daily up to 5 hours before 6pm)                                     | £27.50       |
| Meeting of represented clubs<br>(Daily per session up to 2 hours)                                      | £11          |
| Caution money for private lettings                                                                     | £100         |
| Block bookings for social events<br>15% discount for 6 or more bookings in advance                     |              |
| Contact us if you wish to hire the field or use the changing facilities                                |              |
| Letting Agent – Angela Smith<br><a href="mailto:rec.trust@googlemail.com">rec.trust@googlemail.com</a> | 07734 112967 |
| Chair – Torquil McLusky                                                                                | 01869 347914 |
| Treasurer – Chris Cooper                                                                               | 01869 347173 |

- The Sport & Rec is available to hire
- The "Friendly" space - the ideal venue for smaller parties, children's parties and get togethers
- Need more space? Hire the Sport & Rec and Village Hall together
- Fantastic playground just outside
- Internet
- Full disabled access, toilets, showers and changing rooms
- High quality grass playing field with power supply for football, marquees, events etc. (contact us for details and availability)
- Small kitchen and separate bar
- Room for around 50 seated
- Brand-new projector with retractable screen
- Car Parking
- Regular events include Home Education, Babies & Toddlers, Brownies, After School Club, Bridge and of course the Football Club (it's been going since 1898!)

Get involved!  
Join the  
committee & help  
keep village  
activities going!

# HARRIS'S STORES & POST OFFICE

Opening hours:

7.30am - 7.30pm (Mon-Fri)

8.00am - 7.30pm (Sat)

8.00am - 6.00pm (Sun)

## PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

*Fresh bread from Nash's Bakery.*

*Fresh meat and poultry.*

*Quality frozen fish and sea-food.*

*Organic free-range eggs.*

*Bread rolls and baguettes baked daily on the premises.*

*Cakes: a taste of home-made.*

*Off-licence with a wide range of beers, wines and spirits.*

*Fresh fruit and vegetables.*

*Top-up for mobiles, gas and electric.*

*Fax and photocopying services.*

*Dry cleaning agent.*

*National Lottery tickets and much more.*

*Thank you all for your continued support.*

*Please let us know of any ideas or suggestions of ways in which we can extend our services to you.*

**Tel: 01869 340201**

**e-mail: [raj4878@hotmail.com](mailto:raj4878@hotmail.com)**

## Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Rubbish bin collection day is THURSDAY.



### January 2026

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Green          |
| Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Blue and brown |
| Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> | Green          |
| Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Blue and brown |
| Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> | Green          |

**Garden waste collections:** There will be no garden waste collections between Monday 22 December 2025 and Saturday 3 January 2026 inclusive. **Real Christmas tree collections:** trees will be collected from Tuesday 6th January until and including Friday 16th January. Any tree that is over 5ft tall must be cut in half. Christmas trees will only be collected on your recycling week, therefore please only leave your tree next to your blue recycling bin.

Please consult the Cherwell District Council website for further details

of collections during the festive period:  
**[cherwell.gov.uk/recycling](http://cherwell.gov.uk/recycling)**

### Food caddy is collected weekly

Batteries and small electrical items packed in clear plastic bags and placed on the top of any bin lid are collected weekly.

## BUS TIMES

### STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE (timetable effective from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025)

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

**Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)**

0619 0721 0831 0931 then hourly to 1531 1645 1754 1849 1937 2037 2216  
0703 0817 0920 1020 1620 1737 1840 1932 2022 2122 2253

**Saturday**

0721 0821 0931 then hourly to 1531 1641 1746 1849 1937 2037 2216  
0809 0909 1019 1619 1729 1834 1932 2022 2122 2253

**Sunday (and most Public Holidays)**

0907 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1806  
0953 1123 1253 1423 1553 1723 1852

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

**Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)**

0758 0910 1008 then hourly to 1508 1624 1732 1835 1933 2025 2113 2213 2341  
0837 0947 1045 1545 1703 1809 1909 2006 2055 2142 2242 0009

**Saturday**

0758 0908 1008 then hourly to 1508 1608 1718 1828 1927 2025 2113 2213 2341  
0737 0837 0945 1545 1645 1755 1905 1958 2053 2142 2242 0009

**Sunday (and most Public Holidays)**

0917 1044 1214 1344 1514 1644 1814 1944  
0956 1122 1252 1422 1552 1722 1852 2022

*Times subject to change. Before starting your journey, please check the timetables at: [Stagecoachbus.com/timetables](http://Stagecoachbus.com/timetables)*

### OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons offers services through Steeple Aston to and from Lower Heyford Station (Mon-Fri), to and from Chipping Norton (Wed), and to and from Bicester (Fri). See the website for details: [ourbusbartons-org-uk.stackstaging.com](http://ourbusbartons-org-uk.stackstaging.com)

# Steeple Aston *Calendar*

Check the village website at [steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar](http://steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar) for any changes.

Please send details of events for February and March to [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

| Month                               | Event                                                                     | Venue                 | Time              |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>January</b>                      |                                                                           |                       |                   |
| Thursday 1st January                | Christmas Jumper Day and New Year Bus Rides, Long Hanborough              | Bus Museum            | 11.00am - 3.00pm  |
| Tuesday 13th January                | WI: Climate Ambassador                                                    | Village Hall          | 7.00pm            |
| <b>Wednesday 14th January</b>       | <b>SAL February copy and advert deadlines</b>                             |                       |                   |
| Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> January   | Church Talk: When Design Goes Wrong - Stuart Cummins                      | SA Church             | 7.15pm for 7.30pm |
| Saturday 17th January               | Annual Quiz Night                                                         | Village Hall          | 7.00pm for 7.30pm |
| Monday 19th January                 | Parish Council Meeting                                                    | S & R Building        | 7.30pm            |
| Tuesday 20th January                | Valentines: The Elvis Presley Show                                        | Village Hall          | 2.30pm            |
| Saturday 24th January               | Deddington Farmers' Market                                                | Deddington            | 9.00am - 12.30pm  |
| Friday 30th January                 | Parish Council/Public Workshop on 'Mitigation' to proposed developments   | Village Hall          | 7.30pm            |
| Friday 30th January                 | Race Night                                                                | Dr Radcliffe's School | 6.30pm            |
|                                     |                                                                           |                       |                   |
| <b>February</b>                     |                                                                           |                       |                   |
| Tuesday 3rd February                | Garden Club: History of Rousham - Caroline Landless                       | Village Hall          | 7.00pm for 7.30pm |
| Saturday 7th February               | Consensio - choral concert for Epiphany and Candlemas                     | Duns Tew church       | 3.00pm            |
| Sunday 8th February                 | Snowdrop Sunday at Steeple Aston churchyard                               | SA churchyard         | 2.30pm - 4.30pm   |
| Tuesday 10th February               | WI: Walking the Camino de Santiago                                        | Village Hall          | 7.00pm            |
| Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February | Lecture on Swifts - Chris Mason                                           | Village Hall          | 7.30pm            |
| <b>Saturday 14th February</b>       | <b>SAL March copy and advert deadlines</b>                                |                       |                   |
| Monday 16th February                | Parish Council Meeting                                                    | S & R Building        | 7.30pm            |
| Tuesday 17th February               | Messy Church Pancake Party                                                | S & R Building        | 2.00pm            |
| Tuesday 17th February               | Valentines: A day in the life of a Met Police Crime Scene Investigator    | Village Hall          | 2.30pm            |
| Wed 18th - Sat 21st February        | Launton Village Players 'Treasure Island' Panto - Cooper School, Bicester | Bicester              | Various           |
| Saturday 28th February              | Deddington Farmers' Market                                                | Deddington            | 9.00am - 12.30pm  |

**Choral Society Rehearsals.** Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Bell Ringing practice.** Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Walking Netball.** Village Hall - 10.15am - Wednesdays  
**Brownies.** Sport & Rec Centre - 6pm - 7.30pm - Wednesdays  
**Toddler Group.** Sport & Rec Centre - 9.30am -11.30am - Thursdays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays  
**Village History Centre (SAVA).** 10am - 12 noon - Saturdays

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

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Unit 2 Glenmore Business Centre, Range Road, Witney, OX29 0AA Tel: 01865 246762

e-mail: [print@joshuahorgan.co.uk](mailto:print@joshuahorgan.co.uk)

*The views expressed are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Committee.  
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# Home-made food

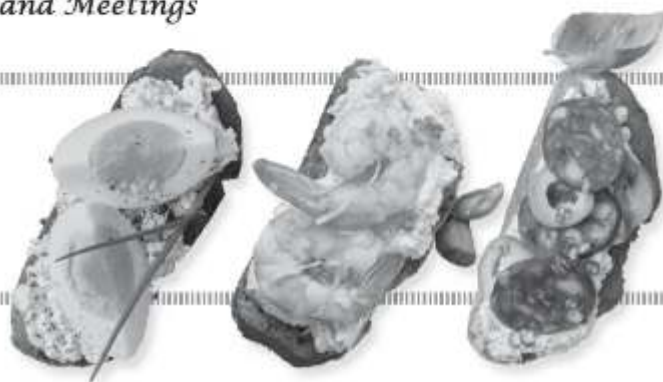
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