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Steeple and Middle Aston Magazine



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Contributions are welcome. Please email [editorialife@gmail.com](mailto:editorialife@gmail.com)

Cover: Birthday celebrations at Middle Aston Pet Supplies. Photo by Keet Odell

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# Steeple Aston Directory

Allotments (Church) SACAA		Amanda Rodgers	07793 553150
Angling Club		Antony Morley	tonyriver_83@hotmail.com
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Stuart Cummins	01869 349155
Baby and toddler group		Katy, Martha, Hilary and Lisa	steepleastontoddlergrp@gmail.com
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	01869 340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	01869 347033
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	01869 340665, 07512 224700
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	01869 347273
Handbell ringers		Victoria Clifton	07817 025948
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	01869 340132
Catholic Church - St Teresa's	Charlbury	Father Clive Dytor	07484 158642
Cherwell District Council	Castle Quay, Banbury		01295 227001
Cherwell District Councillor (Deddington Ward)		Cllr David Rogers	<a href="mailto:david.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">david.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>
Oxfordshire County Councillor (Deddington Ward)		Cllr Gareth Epps	<a href="mailto:gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk">gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Choral Society	Chair	Bev Davies	01869 347684
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev'd Harriet Orridge	01869 932224
	Churchwardens	Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	01869 340099/347273
Church (Methodist) – Tackley		Rev'd Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	01869 347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Maggie Rampley	07957 600755
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments	Patient Triage	01869 338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	<b><i>Deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk</i></b>	
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Headteacher		01869 340204
Environment and Sustainability Committee	Chair	Chris Nevile	<a href="mailto:chrisnevile@gmail.com">chrisnevile@gmail.com</a>
	Secretary	Martin Dale	<a href="mailto:martindale865@gmail.com">martindale865@gmail.com</a>
Fix My Street		Graham Porcas - <a href="mailto:grahamporcas@btconnect.com">grahamporcas@btconnect.com</a>	01869 347240
Football Club	Secretary	Stuart Baillie	07809 629666
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	01869 340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	01869 340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Clerk	Cathy Fleet	07989 398838
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non-emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	01869 340201
Pre-school			01869 340863
Public House	Red Lion		01869 389174
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	<a href="mailto:sawgox25@gmail.com">sawgox25@gmail.com</a>
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	01869 340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Village Emergency Telephone System			01869 690691
Village Website	Editor	Jenny Bell - <a href="mailto:steepleastonwebeditor@gmail.com">steepleastonwebeditor@gmail.com</a>	01869 943573
Volunteer Driver Service (North Oxfordshire)		<a href="http://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Services/2561">livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Services/2561</a>	0300 303 0125
Walking Netball	Wed. - 10.15am	Merrill Bayley	01869 347802
WI	President	Julie Hillier	01869 349185



# Editorial



“...folly is not always folly.”  
Jane Austen

## Steeple Aston *Life*

May 2026

Issue No.633

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We are currently experiencing a mini blast of sparkling sunshine with temperatures up to 22 degrees, and of course it won't last, but we can enjoy it while we can, and it will help the seedlings to germinate. A word of warning – the dreaded Blandford Fly is upon us already with reported bites inflicted as early as March! Congratulations to all who took part in the Spring Horticultural Show and well done to all the winners – listed on page 21 of this issue. Next month, the show judges will be offering their top tips for your summer show entries, so do look out for it.

This month, we are pleased to introduce a new feature supporting our local, much-valued small businesses, kicking off with Middle Aston Pet Supplies who recently celebrated their first birthday and are featured on the front cover. If you're a small business and would like to be featured, please email the editor with your details.

Sadly, the Red Lion is now on the lookout for new tenants with Renee and Bryan leaving on 11<sup>th</sup> May. There are plans looking into the possibility of a community pub, so do read the update here.

There was news that the possible plans for a 'new town' at Heyford have been shelved, which brought a sigh of relief to many, although more houses and developments remain in the mix. We are planning to include bi-monthly updates on planning issues shortly, but for more immediate information would suggest you refer to social media and local websites.

Hope you enjoy the historic photos of May Days past, and make some new memories this year!

**Carol**

## Steeple Aston *Life*

### COPY

All articles and letters to  
the Editor

[editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

### COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for the June 2026 issue is  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May



READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE  
[www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine)

### ADVERTISING

All adverts, and all advertising queries  
(availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of  
illustrations, etc.) to **Zazi Barrell**

[Salife.advertising@gmail.com](mailto:Salife.advertising@gmail.com)

### ADVERTISING DEADLINES

The deadline for adverts for the June 2026 issue is  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May

### ADVERTISING RATES

¼ page - £10

½ page - £18

Full page (village events only) - £20.00

# Steeple Aston Noticeboard



## Church fete volunteers

The Steeple Aston Church Fete will take place on Sunday 12th July, 2.00pm until 4.30pm. Please do save the date! We'll have all the normal favourites, such as vintage cars, children's games, jams, bees, Brass Band, cream teas, BBQ, train rides, etc. New for this year will include a visit from the local Police, Bouncy Castle & Morris Dancing. And there's more in the pipeline, yet to be confirmed - phew!

As ever, we need volunteers to help run this fun-packed event and will happily accept donations of toys, clothes and gifts for the various stalls (we can collect, or can be dropped off at The Rectory on Fir Lane). If you would like to help in any way, or have any queries relating to donations, please do contact John Orridge (Organising Chair) at [john.g.orridge@gmail.com](mailto:john.g.orridge@gmail.com) Many thanks in advance!

## CHRISTIAN AID WEEK: 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026

'7 days to make a difference'. This is how Christian Aid introduce their annual fundraising week. It would be wonderful if we could help them make a difference. Christian Aid works tirelessly throughout the world to improve the lives of those in need. If you would like to donate, the easiest way is online at [caw.christianaid.org.uk](http://caw.christianaid.org.uk). Alternatively, there will be envelopes at the back of the church or I can deliver one to you. Thank you.

Caroline Parsons - 07811 820536

[carolineinmaston@gmail.com](mailto:carolineinmaston@gmail.com)

## Local Elections - No parish elections in May, just one district council vote

Nominations have closed for the local elections on Thursday, 7th May. As there were only three nominations for the seven vacancies on the parish council, there won't be an election.

The three nominations were for Greg Elphick, Andrew Gibson and Martin Lipson. They will be looking to co-opt a further four councillors after 11th May when the new term starts. If you're interested in being co-opted onto the new parish council, please contact the Parish Clerk, Cathy Fleet, on [parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com](mailto:parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com) for more information.

Villagers will, however, be able to vote for a Cherwell District councillor for the Deddington ward. The current Conservative councillor, Eddie Reeves, is standing again and has four candidates running against him. The candidates are:

Aaron Bliss – Green Party

Ann Collingwood-Turner – Reform Uk

Eddie Reeves – Conservative

Dean Hartley – Liberal Democrats

Annette Murphy – Labour

Election Day is Thursday, 7th May and the polling station at Steeple Aston Village Hall will be open from 7.00am until 10.00pm. REMEMBER you must bring photographic identification with you to be able to vote.



Oxfordshire Artweeks is the UK's oldest and largest artist open studios and pop-up exhibition event. The 44<sup>th</sup> Oxfordshire Artweeks festival takes place from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026, offering artists' open studios and exhibitions, all available to visit free of charge. The North & West Oxfordshire festival runs from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026, go to [artweeks.org](http://artweeks.org) to download the free festival guide and artist directory and plan your creative visits. From the traditional to the contemporary and multidisciplinary, there's something to delight, intrigue and inspire everyone. Explore painting, sculpture, ceramics and printmaking; look out for fashion and furniture; discover glass art, mosaics and other marvels, and perhaps choose a treasure or two to take home with you. There's a variety of exhibition types, so scan the festival guide for opening hours. Some artists team up to host group shows, whilst others open their studios, but all are happy to welcome you and chat about their methods, materials and ideas.



## **Red Lion update**

Following the news that Renee & Bryan, our current pub landlord & landlady, are leaving us on the 11th May, we thought we would test the water to see if, like us, you wanted more consistency and control over such an important village asset as we go forward. We have only lived in Steeple Aston a short time, but in that time have seen three tenants pass through the pub. Seeing what a valuable asset the Red Lion is to the village, we took it upon ourselves to conduct a community survey to gauge opinion as to whether you would support a community run pub. QR code posters were put up in the pub, Harris Stores and the Village Hall area and the questionnaire was put on the village Facebook page and website with the closing date of the 15th April. We received a total of 126 responses to the survey that were overwhelmingly supportive of the idea. This has been a great response and we wanted to thank you for this. What a fabulous community we have. Your answers to the questions have clearly shown the way forward with many offering to volunteer and contribute money to make this idea happen. Thanks also for your additional helpful comments. They are much appreciated.

We met with Edwin Pope from the brewery last week to understand what was needed to present the case, and as a result, we shall be submitting a business plan to the brewery on 17th April. We have also made contact and are enlisting help from the Plunkett Foundation, based in Woodstock, who help community-run businesses in rural areas. By the time this is published, you will know the outcome of the Red Lion's immediate future. The brewery is also considering other interested parties, so we may or may not be successful on this occasion. We will keep you updated every step of the way, but for now we just wanted to say thank you for your input so far. Whether we are successful or not in our application, we have gained valuable information and knowledge, and have put in the groundwork to stand us in good stead going forward to protect the Red Lion's future. Once again, many thanks to all those who have contributed so far.

**Rob & Nicky Boobyer**



## *Editor's Letterbox*



Dear Editor

I read Mrs Miggins' report in SAL 632 which says we removed our windpump 'without any notice'. This is not correct. Out of courtesy, we informed those directly affected prior to starting the work. I've never been made aware that any other notice was required. On the subject of notice, and indeed courtesy, the Parish Council made no effort to involve or consult us prior to the windpump's appearance on the register in 2015.

**Carl Tomlinson**

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## Flitch Pottery is open for Oxfordshire Artweeks

**Local potter Deborah invites you to her open studio in Middle Aston**

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@flitchpottery  
deborah.nind@gmail.com



### Group explores Food, Farming and Life in North Aston

*Group exhibition at North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub celebrates local agriculture through art and craft.*

Artists and makers from North Aston will come together this May for a group exhibition, exploring food, farming, and everyday life in the village. Part of Oxfordshire Artweeks, *Making & Farming in North Aston* will be held at the North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub and will be open from 9th–10th and 14th–17th May, 10.00am–6.00pm.

In recent years, the name North Aston has become synonymous with local organic food. The beef and arable farm went organic in 1992, and today hosts several small-scale food and farming enterprises, including North Aston Organics, North Aston Dairy and the North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub. These independent yet interconnected projects share a common mission: producing food in ways that care for both land and people, whilst strengthening the local economy and food security. Inspired by this rich farming heritage, the exhibition brings together a range of practices including painting, basketry, textiles, photography and illustration. The group includes people who work on North Aston's farms, alongside residents and regular customers, offering a wide range of perspectives on the landscape and community. Works on display will include baskets woven from gleaned crop residues, ceremonial clothing marking key moments in the agricultural calendar, mixed media prints exploring hedgerows, dry point intaglio prints of vegetables, and textiles and sculptures made from plant and animal fibres, among other pieces.

"The exhibition reflects the diversity of making that happen here in North Aston, as well as the breadth of materials, stories, and voices. As our first exhibition together, it's a real celebration of the creativity that emerges in response to this landscape," said Fred Branson, who works at North Aston Organics and has been involved in organising the exhibition. The exhibition is free to attend, and visitors are welcome to drop in during opening hours.

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Exhibition:** Farmers & Makers in North Aston

**Location:** North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub, The Peach Barns, Somerton Rd, North Aston, Bicester OX25 6HX

**Dates:** 9th–10th and 14th–17th May

**Time:** 10.00am–6.00pm daily

**Admission:** Free

# CELEBRATING DR RADCLIFFE:

**A Steeple Talk: 'Why we should remember Dr Radcliffe'**

**by Charlotte Harris**

*(Steeple Aston resident, Dr Radcliffe's School parent, and alumna of Brasenose College)*

**7.30pm, Thursday 14 May at Steeple Aston Church**

(Wine and nibbles from 7.15... Free entry – donations welcome!)

  
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# CELEBRATING DR RADCLIFFE:

A fundraising concert for the primary school and church in Steeple Aston



Featuring the *choir of Brasenose College, Oxford, and pupils from Dr Radcliffe's primary school, in a programme curated by acclaimed conductor Nicholas Cleobury*

**6.30pm, Saturday 16 May at Steeple Aston Church**

Tickets £15 (concert only) or £30 (concert and **supper afterwards**: a two-course supper with a bar in the Village Hall)

More information and tickets here:



On TicketSource, via QR code, or from Margaret Bulleyment (Tel 01869 347346 or email [mtheb749@gmail.com](mailto:mtheb749@gmail.com))

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LORI BEERS, MAHM, Dipl. OM, M.AAC

## Letter from *Westminster*



*SAL's regular epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock*

Much of my time has been spent on the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, doing pre-legislative scrutiny of commonhold and leasehold legislation, feeding in constituents' thoughts and experiences. At a meeting with the Maternity APPG, I learned that OUHT has been included in the national enquiry into maternity care, with over £100,000 of extra funding into improving maternity provision at the Horton Hospital. I know how important this is to local people, and will continue to advocate for better outcomes. I hosted a Parliamentary event on behalf of charity Peeps, who support families that have experienced Hypoxic Ischaemic Encephalopathy before, during or after birth. After hearing from constituents about this charity and complications during birth, it was great to meet with volunteers and encourage other MPs and Parliamentarians to speak and connect with them.

In the constituency, I visited Dogs for Good about the work they do supporting people with wellbeing and independence. I also visited the Banbury Young Homelessness Project alongside Homelessness Minister, Alison McGovern, to speak about the National Plan to End Homelessness. The work they do supporting young people and their families in Banbury and the local area is invaluable, and I am grateful for all their hard work. I met with representatives from the RNIB, where I walked around Banbury Town Centre wearing simulation glasses that demonstrated eye conditions and the challenges this poses in terms of accessibility. As a result, I have written to the Council about street furniture, and improving accessibility in Banbury Town Centre. A massive thank you to all the constituents, groups and businesses who have engaged with me over the past month. As always, any issues – please contact [sean.woodcock.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sean.woodcock.mp@parliament.uk)

Sean



## *THE VALENTINE CLUB*

For our April meeting, held a week early, we welcomed Mel Harvey to the club to tell us all about 'My Life as a Member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star'. Having appeared on numerous television programmes over his career and toured the world on cruise ships, he eventually found The Valentine Club which must be at the top of anyone's list! A magnificent story told by someone who has many tricks up his sleeve!

As I write this, we are in the process of packing for a five-day break in South Somerset with club members, so fingers crossed for the weather but more about that next month. Also, before the end of April, we are off to Sudeley Castle for a visit to this historic venue and, of course, a meal included. This month, we have Lucy from Bicester Village to tell us all about the retail outlet although I guess she might not have any free samples to dish out! The day after, we are taking a full 58-seater coach to The Great Western Railway for a ride on a steam engine from Toddington and back after enjoying a meal at a local village pub. To find out more about The Valentine Club, then simply visit our website on [valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston](http://valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston) (easiest way is log onto the village website, go to 'clubs and societies' and click on the link to the Valentine Club), keep up-to-date by looking on the village website [stepleaston.org.uk](http://stepleaston.org.uk) or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512. We are also, I hope, now on Instagram and Facebook but, knowing my IT skills, who knows? Address, I have been told, is **The Valentine Club SA**.

Richard Preston – Group organiser (for lack of a better description) [richard.preston5@btopenworld.com](mailto:richard.preston5@btopenworld.com) –  
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## Local business spotlight

*We have some wonderful local businesses operating in and around our village, and we thought it would be a great idea to introduce a regular feature that gets to know the people behind them, exploring why and how they set up locally and what goes into running a small independent retailer or service. If any local business is interested in being featured, please contact the editor. We are delighted that James, who runs Middle Aston Pet supplies, agreed to be our first 'spotlight' business.*

**Introducing Middle Aston Pet Supplies:** James Cother & Katie Marshall set up the pet shop at The Hatchery in March 2025. James explains what led to them setting up the business. 'I've lived in and around Banbury my whole life, and my kids currently go to school there. I have a dog called Oakley, a cat called Ruby, and two ducks – Patty and Duck Norris. Before opening Middle Aston Pet Supplies, I worked as a timber merchant in Deddington. I've always had pets, but when I adopted an 18-month-old German Shepherd, I couldn't find exactly what I wanted in a training lead, so decided to create my own. This led to making more pet accessories to sell including bespoke leads, collars and equine products, and setting up an online business. Whilst still at the timber yard, I was looking to expand the pet business, and contacted shops to stock my products with no luck. I then spotted the beautiful location of The Hatchery, which sparked the idea of opening a pet shop. We started planning and opened the doors on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025, so we've just celebrated our first birthday! For the past year, we've been learning what products people want and now have a great range of food and accessories for dogs, cats, small animals, horses & livestock.

The building was originally just an empty metal shed, and coming up with a design to create a welcoming space whilst maximising shelf capacity was a challenge. With limited carpentry knowledge and still working full-time, most free time was spent building what was to become the shop. I had some great ideas on paper, but transferring them to building it was quite a challenge. Our individual service is something I'm really proud of. We've done a lot of research and training to support pets in the best way, and we do try to remember our regular customer's names – I do better with animals than humans! Our handmade bespoke leads and collars are a great addition. My favourite part of the day is meeting new pets and their owners, advising on different types of food and how best to meet each individual animal's needs. Otherwise, you might find me stocking shelves, delivering to local customers or filming videos for our socials. Our pet wall is a real highlight, where we showcase photos of all our animal visitors, and it's great watching the collection grow. So far, we have over 700 dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs, and ferrets - we're still waiting for our first bird to come in! I thought I'd have so much free time in between serving customers, but didn't realise how much admin is involved, plus there's a lot more to learn than I first thought.



Supporting the community, working locally, and getting to know all the animals personally, is very important to me. I feel grateful to be in the village and enjoy attending the local flower show. We are a real community at The Hatchery, where everyone joins in with each other's events and there's always something going on, from social gatherings, sports days, workshops and wellness. We would love to be able to employ someone in the near future, enabling us to not only provide a job opportunity, but also offer a proper local delivery service. Mostly, I'm looking forward to the odd day off! Do come and visit us! Bring your animals along, bonus points for 'new species' on the Pet Wall. If you have a dog, we'd love to see you on one of our fortnightly group dog walks, where we enjoy the beautiful surrounding countryside. From the friendliest pooch to the very bouncy puppy and the extremely shouty doggo, everyone is welcome'.



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This was our AGM so we had the opportunity to vote for our next President, and the count revealed that Julie Hillier was voted in for another term to continue to steer us ever onwards and upwards. Julie duly accepted her re-election and quickly got on with business, outlining the upcoming events - a lunch at Adderbury on the 17<sup>th</sup> and a recruitment drive on 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Sports & Rec with coffee & cakes. The new Programme will be with us all shortly. Hildy briefed us on the aims of the new Wellness Garden at the allotments. The flower of the month trophy was handed to two winners – Linda Needle and Merrill Bayley.

Hildy Frenken gave the Secretary's Report, outlining all the speakers and numerous events we have had during the year, and many outings including a summer BBQ, theatre trips, lunches and dinners, craft workshops, regular walks and the walking netball group. Julie Hillier gave her report highlighting some special events such as the 'Bystanders can be Lifesavers' demonstration when we were shown how to perform CPR and how to operate a defibrillator. Julie also outlined the various ways the WI had contributed to our village – a cherry tree to the Community Orchard to commemorate the 110<sup>th</sup> birthday of the WI and a bird box for the churchyard.

Our speaker for the night was our own WI member, Alyson Jaycock, a Celebrant who explained the procedures and rules for cremations. She also included some most unusual family requests she had managed to deal with – coffins made of recycled wood from old pallets and using rope handles; coffins painted with sunflowers, or draped with the chosen football team colours; and a request for pink with glitter and sequins! One man with seemingly no relatives or friends left to witness his funeral, had Alyson researching into his past and discovered he had been in the navy as a submariner – the navy veterans came to the rescue and attended together with appropriate flag to drape over the coffin. Her final words to us, after reading a poem by Joyce Grenfell, was to ask us all to write and make clear to family and friends what we would like said and done at our own funeral! Music??



**Merrill Bayley**

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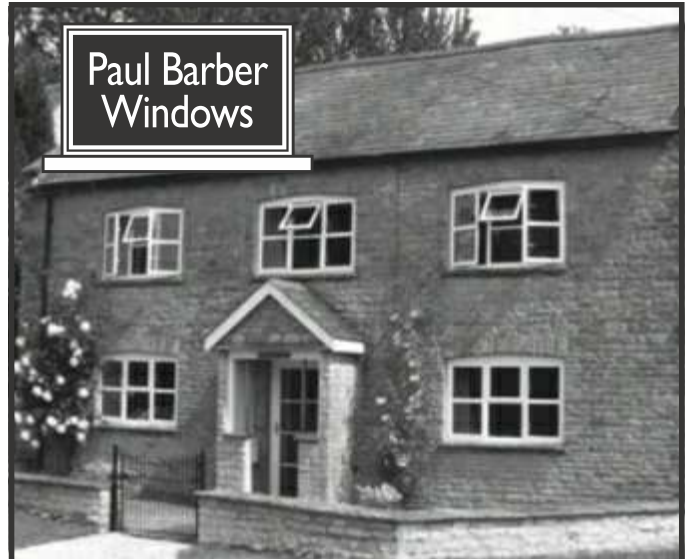
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# Woodstock Bookshop Festival

The Early May Bank Holiday weekend celebrates the second year of the Woodstock Bookshop Festival. Run by bookshop staff and volunteers, the festival is a vibrant mix of fiction, poetry, science, the arts, family-friendly events and superb music. Events take place in a variety of town-centre venues, including our splendid Town Hall, the Oxfordshire Museum, Hampers Delicatessen, St Mary Magdalene Church and St Hugh's Centre. The Woodstock Bookshop team is grateful to all these neighbours and the local community for their help and support with planning, organising and taking part. In hosting a literary festival, The Woodstock Bookshop is proud to join a vigorous tradition dating back to the first Cheltenham Literature Festival in 1949. Literary festivals throughout the UK have proliferated in intervening decades and now run from Faversham in February to Folkestone in November. Their popularity owes much to the lively atmosphere generated by creative energy and a shared love of books, knowledge and reading – plus, of course, the stimulating and entertaining experience of listening to authors, researchers and illustrators talk live about their work.



The poster for the Woodstock Bookshop Festival 2026 is a vertical yellow-green design. At the top, the title 'WOODSTOCK BOOKSHOP FESTIVAL' is written in large, bold, green capital letters. Below this, the festival is broken down into daily events from Friday 1st May to Sunday 3rd May. Each day's event is listed with a date, a title, the names of the speakers or performers, and the venue. At the bottom of the poster, there is a QR code, the website 'www.woodstockbookshop.co.uk', and the year '2026' in a large, stylized font. The Woodstock Bookshop logo is also present in the bottom left corner.

Date	Event	Venue
Fri 01 MAY	POETRY IN THE CAFÉ HOSTED BY ESTHER LAY	HAMPERS DELICATESSEN 21-23 OXFORD STREET WOODSTOCK OX20 1TH
Sat 02 MAY	CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL ANNA KEMP · DENISE BEAUMONT GERARD LEWIS AND LIZZIE SHANNON-LITTLE	ST HUGH'S CENTRE WINDINGTON ROAD WOODSTOCK OX20 1EA
Sat 02 MAY	SCIENCE FESTIVAL PROF JAN ROYE · DR ILLA LEITOLD PROF PULIA ZHANG & SPEAKER TBC	WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL MARKET PLACE WOODSTOCK OX20 1SL
Sat 02 MAY	A WOODSTOCK EVENING OF CRIME AND WINE SARA HUNTER · SIMON MASON · ANNA BEER	WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL MARKET PLACE WOODSTOCK OX20 1SL
Sun 03 MAY	OXFORD SCHOOL OF DRAMA AND LITERARY DISCUSSIONS WITH MELANIE AND ROSS KING	THE OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM PAK STREET WOODSTOCK OX20 1EA
Sun 03 MAY	MUSIC IN ST MARY MAGDALENE MARIA RAZUMOVSKAYA PERFORMS SCHUBERT	ST MARY MAGDALENE PAK STREET WOODSTOCK OX20 1EA

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2026

This year's Woodstock Bookshop Festival begins on Friday 1st May with an evening of poetry featuring local poet Esther Lay and typewriter poet Jen Feroze. On Saturday 2nd May, there will be a bonanza of children's and family events, including readings by best-selling children's author Anna Kemp, craft activities led by Denise Beaumont of *Alice the Palace Postwoman* fame, and a chance for older children to hear exciting *Propellor Man* tales with authors Gerard Lewis and Lizzie Shannon-Little. Saturday afternoon offers a deep dive into science with field-leading speakers on topics including proteins, plant genomes and medical advances in heart and brain conditions. Take your seat in the Town Hall to hear more! For fans of crime fiction, Saturday evening has a treat in store, as celebrated local authors, Cara Hunter and Simon Mason, join forces with new crime writer, Anna Beer. On the afternoon of Sunday 3rd May, a performance by Oxford School of Drama is followed by interviews with distinguished local authors, Melanie and Ross King. To round off the festival with a dose of beautiful classical music, on Sunday evening Maria Razumovskaya will perform piano pieces by Franz Schubert. All at The Woodstock Bookshop are excited to be offering a packed programme of cultural and intellectual events to share with festival-goers from near and far. Tickets are available from [ticketsource.co.uk](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk) via our website [woodstockbookshop.co.uk](https://www.woodstockbookshop.co.uk) or on the door (subject to availability). We look forward to welcoming you!



## Something for all at the Spring Show

Steeple & Middle Aston Horticultural Spring Show 2026 didn't disappoint. Lots of lovely spring exhibits to bring hope that warmer days are on the way. New exhibitors and even more new people winning prizes. It always fills me with hope when new people find joy in putting themselves out there by having a go. As a society, we are delighted to say we have exhibitors taking part (and winning prizes) ranging from almost 100 years of age down to 18 months, so there really is no excuse not to have a go. The day had something for everyone - a raffle, homemade teas and 'just one more plant' from the garden plant stall. Please do have a look through the results, and if you are tempted to enter our summer show, the schedule of classes is already on the village website, and paper copies will be available from the village shop from July.

Summer show - following the last summer show, we conducted a survey for feedback. Overwhelmingly, people said they wanted to see more 'games', the old-fashioned ones that are just FUN! However, we don't have a big enough committee to deliver these as well as put on a great show. If you could offer a few hours on Bank Holiday Monday to help, or have a 'bat a rat', for example, in the garage, please do get in touch - we NEED you!

Please contact me on [vmcstedman@btinternet.com](mailto:vmcstedman@btinternet.com) Thank you.

**Vicky Clifton**

*Photos: by Paul Honigmann*



**STEEPLE ASTON SPRING SHOW RESULTS – 2026**

Duncan Cup	Mary White	WI Cup	Victoria Clifton
Flower Club	Rebecca Lewin	Handicraft Cup	Claire Coysh
Bedding Family Trophy	Henry Monroe	Mead Vase	Victoria Clifton
Under 5s	Edward Coysh	8 to 11 years	Jacob Lewin
5 to 7 years	James Monroe	12 to 15 years	Megan Walker/ Henry Monroe
	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
Tulips grown in a container	Victoria Clifton	John Coley	Mary White
Daffodils - long or short trumpet	Mary White	John Coley	
Multi headed daffodils in a pot	Mary White	John Coley	
Miniature Daffodils grown in a pot	Mary White		
Hyacinths in a bowl	Caroline Parsons		
Other pot grown bulb	Victoria Clifton	Dorothy Clifton	Ben Wade-Martins
3 Eggs	Caroline Edwards	Helen Wright	
Cactus or succulent	Charlotte Powell	Kathryn Coysh	
Pot Plant - flowering	Edwina Kinch	Barbara Brewer	
Pot Plant - foliage	Barbara Brewer	Vaughan Billings	Edwina Kinch
Vase of cut garden blooms	Mary White	Ellen Wade-Martins	Mark Utting
Vase of cut Buds or Blossom	Mary White	Vaughan Billings	Mark Utting
5 Long Trumpet Daffodils - cut	Mary White	Mark Utting	Richard Wade-Martins
5 Short Trumpet Daffodils - cut	Mary White	Richard Preston	Richard Wade-Martins
5 miniature Daffodils - cut	Victoria Clifton	Mary White	Richard Wade-Martins
5 stems of multi-headed daffodils cut	Mary White	Richard Wade-Martins	John Coley
3 stems of rhubarb	Stephen Latchford	Richard Preston	Rachel Marsden
Scented spring flowers - cut	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton	Richard Preston
Single cut Daffodil	Mark Utting	Claire Coysh	Mary White
Fresh vegetable (excluding rhubarb)	Graham Clifton	Richard Preston	Rachel Marsden
Savoury Flan	Alice Monroe	Charlie Utting	Kathy Madden
A Babka	Alice Monroe	Julia Whybrew	Mike Malliagh
Fidget Pie	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton	Dorothy Clifton
3 Chocolate eclairs	Victoria Clifton	Alice Monroe	Julia Whybrew
3 Egg Victoria sandwich	Ben Wade-Martins	Alice Monroe	Joyce Bedding
3 Shrewsbury biscuits	Victoria Clifton	Taissa Csaky	Ellen Wade-Martins
Fat free cake	Alice Monroe	Rachel Marsden	Julia Whybrew
5 Filled Chocolates	Victoria Clifton	Julia Whybrew	Alice Monroe
Marmalade	Mark Bayley	Peter Sage	Sally Cooper
Fruit curd	Victoria Clifton	Helen Wright	Ellen Wade-Martins
Homemade Lemonade	Victoria Clifton	Hattie Wright	Dan Wright
Homemade Alcoholic drink	Caroline Edwards	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton
Posy for visually impaired	Rebecca Lewin	Rachel Marsden	Charlotte Powell
Flower arrangmt - 'Shakespeare play'	Charlotte Powell	Rebecca Lewin	John Coley
Flower arrangement - Foliage	Charlotte Powell	Rebecca Lewin	
Flower arrangement in a teapot	Rebecca Lewin	Charlotte Powell	
Knitted or crocheted item	Judith Lane	Diane Dale	Joyce Bedding
A pin cushion	Claire Coysh	Janet Coley	Miggy Wild
Limerick	Douglas McCreadie	Charles Monroe	Alan Stubbersfield
Painting or drawing	Janet Coley	Claire Coysh	Helen Lauder
Decorated plant pot	Rebecca Lewin	Claire Coysh	Janet Coley
Any other handicraft	Claire Coysh	John Coley	Helen Lauder
Photo - White	Victoria Clifton	Jon Gascoyne	Claire Coysh
Photo - Recycled	Miggy Wild	Claire Coysh	Helen Lauder
Photo - Aged	Jon Gascoyne	Dennis Lauder	Miggy Wild
Photo - Texture (Black + white)	Janet Coley	Helen Wright	Victoria Clifton
Under 5s - Painting or drawing	Edward Coysh	Lily Trienekens	Ruby Trienekens
- Decorated plant pot	Edward Coysh		
- Decorated mini rolls	Edward Coysh	Evelyn Utting	
Age 5-7 - Decorated plant pot	Douglas Buckingham	Jacob Lewin	Ailta Chesson
- Banana bread	Jacob Lewin	Elodie Smith	Douglas Buckingham
- Sock puppet	Jacob Lewin	James Smith	Joey Stokes
Age 8-11 - Decorated plant pot	James Monroe	Isobel Coysh	Rupert Chesson
- A pop-up card	Megan Walker	Isobel Coysh	James Monroe
- 3 iced fingers	James Monroe	Isobel Coysh	Douglas Buckingham
Age 12-15 - A dec. birthday cake	Henry Monroe	James Walker	Megan Walker
- Decorated plant pot	Megan Walker	Henry Monroe	
- Photo - Food	James Monroe	Megan Walker	Henry Monroe



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# Village Hall News



Big changes this month. We have now **updated our hiring costs**, a copy of which can be found on page 44 of this issue, or on the village hall website [savh.org.uk/](http://savh.org.uk/) If you would rather talk to a person, please contact Angela, our letting agent, whose details are below, or by all means drop me a message by email [vmcstedman@btinternet.com](mailto:vmcstedman@btinternet.com) and I will try to help.

The changes – both increases and decreases - are designed to ensure fairness to all, and to emphasise this, a group I'm heavily involved with have had the biggest increase in hiring fees! We have also taken a considerable amount of time to scrutinise the **hiring agreement**, the terms and conditions of which I guess many never read, so I urge you to do so. They explain what you are responsible for and what we promise to offer.

**AGM – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00pm.** Venue: Village Hall meeting room.

The village hall is provided as a facility to be accessible to all. It exists and thrives because of good-hearted locals who act as trustees, but new members are always warmly welcomed. Meetings are held once a month (and if you can't attend all, that's ok), and all we ask is that you do your bit to help us fundraise/maintain the building/offer admin support, if that is your skillset. If you would like to get involved, please contact me or come along to the AGM and find out more.

Our letting agent is Angela Smith – 07734 112967.

Please do not call this number between 6.00pm and 8.00pm unless urgent.

Email [steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com](mailto:steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com) Collect keys from 'Mijas' South Side, Steeple Aston OX25 4RU.

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# Parish Council Meeting Notes



On my evening stroll up to the SRC, I felt that spring was truly here. We had some public participation to kick things off (note that's 'p-u-b-l-i-c', not 'p-u-b-i-c' as the minutes suggested, which was something of a relief)! A community-minded gentleman has volunteered to help re-establish the Speedwatch initiative. Please do contact the PC if you'd like to get involved – this really does make a difference, as cars visibly slow down, making our roads safer for everyone. You go out in groups of three and get issued high-viz vests, plus some speed guns now come with a tuning fork to ensure correct calibration, so there really is something for everyone. During this discussion, one councillor thanked the County Council for changing our speed sign down to the correct 20mph. He said he'd been working on getting this fixed since he joined two years ago, so was delighted with the progress! Our County Councillor and District Councillor were both in attendance, and one even offered to put some of his 'priority fund' towards some new tuning forks for our Speedwatch team. The topic of '.gov.uk' emails was up next. To comply with new rules and regs, this change has to happen, but they're going to shop around for competitive offers. However, the issue which took up quite a bit of chat was Housing. As the Government is no longer considering Heyford Park one of their 'new towns', the proposed 9,000 new houses will just be considered as a regular 'planning application'. This may not be a good thing, as it might mean that some infrastructure issues will lag behind. Planning applications in the Bicester/Banbury area are unprecedented, and there was talk of a £500k government grant to Cherwell Council to help work on these. Our District Councillor hoped that "we don't simply parrot problems and use some of this money to actually address them", namely

issues around water, sewage and contamination. He dearly hopes that our villages "aren't destroyed". There was also a suggestion that this £500k grant was because of Cherwell's poor planning results recently – they've had a lot of decisions appealed in the last two years, with over 11% failure rate. The example of Baynard's Green was raised (CDC has refused major warehouse developments there, which are now being appealed – 16 days of hearings expected, which won't be cheap!). So, the question was asked, whether the half million pounds was to ensure various planning applications were not rejected (and then appealed and simply overturned) - some kind of blood money? Was beginning to feel like I was in a John Grisham novel!

Chris Nevile from Steeple Aston Environment Committee gave a report, saying how much they wanted to improve engagement and communication with our village, so look out for regular updates here in SAL and over on the website. He said they wanted us to be a village "buzzing and excited about green issues".

They're organising lots of events – one to look out for is a screening of the 'People's Emergency Briefing' in the Village Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> May, complete with panel discussion.

There was a very long discussion on 'Assertion 10', focusing on digital, data protection, and IT security compliance for councils, where the guidance was so long that not even our hardest councillor had read every word. Our Clerk described it as "nonsense" and our Chair declared that she intended to re-write it.

The Community Orchard has a tree to be felled and a tree that is apparently showing signs of life so won't be felled. I got the impression there'll be logs available soon.

*Continued on p.25*

# Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



*Continued from p.24*

There was more planning talk next with an update on the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP). All MCNP parishes are opposed to a strategic rail freight interchange project at Ardley which has Government support. It's expected that 9,500 people will be employed once the project is complete, but where will they live and how will they travel to work? In order to make an effective opposition, we need to provide a report with 'expert knowledge' which isn't cheap. Therefore, all the Parish Councils are clubbing together to raise funds to pay for a consultant to do their thing. But what happens if the research simply shows we need those 9,500 homes at Heyford Park after all!? One councillor started blowing raspberries (not sure how to spell that – but you get the picture!). There was more MCNP talk, as various house sales in the village mean that we might no longer have one of the sites to meet our pledged number of new houses. In fact, only one viable site might now remain, which could have big implications for the village and for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Next on the agenda was the 'Emergency Plan', which was carried over to the next meeting. Let's hope there's no emergency in the meantime! The Village Hall and SRC have become charities, and as such, would benefit from new longer leases from the Parish Council, to demonstrate security and help with grant applications etc. Some important documents were signed and there was a long chat about "serving notice" and "statutory declaration".

It was now 9.20pm and nearing my bedtime, so I may have started dozing during some of the final items, for which I apologise. Something about a "suspicious large piece of wood" in the playground and the fact the "water pump is loose again". Correspondence involved chat on TPOs (Tree Preservation Orders) and how burning things on fields needs several people to be present, including a first-aider - one of our councillors said they were in fact a 'first-aider' which seemed to help the conversation along. It's a big meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May, so until then!

***Mrs Miggins***

## **Steeple Aston Parish Councillors**

Angharad Lloyd-Jones (Chair)

Martin Lipson (Vice Chair), Planning, Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum

Peter Dammermann

Greg Elphick

Charlotte Powell, Sports & Recreation Centre, Environment

Mathew Watson

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Steeple Aston Village Hall

27 May 2026 7.30 - 9pm

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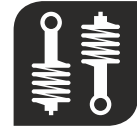
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## The Glories of Spring

'SACS on Tour' was how Paul Herrington described Steeple Aston Choral Society's Spring concert, *Gloria! Gloria!* performed in Tackley Church. The move to Tackley was prompted by Tackley's new organ, a programme of concerts by visiting groups, and that a quarter of the SACS choristers live in the village. The concert highlighted music across the centuries, inspired by the words of the *Gloria*, taken from the Latin Mass. Paul Herrington's own composition was one of the two settings performed and the other was eighteenth century Italian composer, Antonio Vivaldi's most popular *Gloria*. The concert began with Vivaldi's German contemporary, G.P. Telemann's, *Air for Three Trumpets and Organ*. Astute members of the audience were confused at this point, as Paul Herrington was seated at the organ. There were two trumpets visible behind the choir, so where was...? Then Paul Badley, the SACS choral director strode from his podium, to join the trumpets, picked up his own instrument and the trio broke into a glorious fanfare-like welcome, whose resonance filled the church.

Some 300 unknown Vivaldi manuscripts were discovered in the 1930s, and in 1939 a festival was held in Siena to highlight these wonderful finds. Since then, Vivaldi's *KV 589 Gloria* (he wrote three, one has been lost, and the other performed occasionally) has been his most popular choral work, and the choir, relishing the church acoustics, gave an excellent performance, responding well to the contrasts between the exuberant movements and those of quiet reflection. The choir, organ and trumpets were all in close proximity in the choir stalls and their combined sound burst out into the nave. Special highlights included the delightful *Laudamus Te* sung by Norma Ramli-Davies and her daughter, Talia; the plangent *Domine Deus*, sung by soprano, Angela Kazimierczuk and the dramatic *Qui sedes ad dextram*, sung by contralto, Rebecca Lewin.

Paul Herrington says of his *Gloria* – 'This setting of the *Gloria* began its life with music for just the first movement... The inspiration came from my having previously conducted the Vivaldi, *Gloria in D*. and on listening to it again, I decided to extend my first movement into a full setting for orchestra. The work was first performed in Witney Methodist Church in November 2021 by Steeple Aston Choral Society, for whom I had written it. I am their accompanist and arranger. Tonight is the second performance of the work, now with a reduced accompaniment of two trumpets and organ.'

Paul's *Gloria* follows the Vivaldi model, with a soprano, *Laudamus*; an alto, *Qui sedes* and a dance-like movement for the *Domine Fili unigenite*, but the *Domine Deus* is a tenor solo, sung by the multi-talented, Paul Badley (he's a Morris dancer too!). The choir gave an exuberant performance, with the two trumpeters, Brian Thomas and Harry Kent, adding a layer of shine to the whole proceedings. There was a definite feeling that 'this was written for us, we love singing and playing it and we are going to give it all we've got.' They did just that and as Paul wrote a beautifully accessible work, this meant the audience enjoyed it as much as the choir. It was a glorious evening of music for all.

**Margaret Bulleyment**

## Deddington Guides Report

It was a very busy half term! We welcomed new guide, Olivia, at her promise ceremony, and also Amelia B as a Young Leader and Amelia M as an Adult Leader - very special. We celebrated Mothering Sunday by making peppermint creams for Mums, although the number of mints arriving home may have been less than those made! Well done to the trusty band who attended the Sunday church service. We provided two colour parties, helped with the collection and distribution of posies plus gave some readings. We were so proud of them all.

Most of our time was taken up with preparing for our annual entertainment. We performed our own mini panto, 'Aladdin finds a friend' to family and friends, raising nearly £80 for the guides own choice of charities - BARKS and the Firefighters charity. Thank you so much for all your support and well done again to the guides.

We meet after Easter for our favourite term, when we get outside for almost every evening. All girls aged 10 years or over are very welcome.

**Maggie Rampley 07957 600755**

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## Hedgehog Awareness Week – 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026



This important week highlights the problems hedgehogs face in the UK, and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) invite you to take **The Hedgehog Pledge** with seven practical steps to inspire everyone to act with hedgehogs in mind. Pick just one, or do one every day of the week.

- Add more Hedgehog Highways: 13cm x 13cm square gaps in boundary walls and fences ensure access to vital habitats (talk to neighbours first). Then log them at [bighedgehogmap.org](http://bighedgehogmap.org)
- Create, improve or protect a wild space: Log piles, leaf heaps and wild edges attract natural food and offer shelter.
- Always check for hedgehogs before strimming, mowing or hedge cutting: Many are harmed or killed by garden machinery each year – simple checks before you start can save lives.
- Go totally organic: Pesticides and chemicals can harm wildlife and destroy the food chain.
- Be net savvy: Netting can become tangled in hedgehog spines: ensure sports nets are put away and garden netting is raised 30cm off the ground, so hedgehogs can pass underneath.
- Provide water all year round: Check, clean and refill water sources in your garden. Add a few pebbles so that bees and butterflies can perch and drink safely too.
- Become an NHMP volunteer spotter: The National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme surveys hedgehogs across the UK. Help classify images from specialist trail cameras from the comfort of your own home. Visit [nhmp.co.uk](http://nhmp.co.uk) to apply to be a 'spotter'.

*The British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) is dedicated to helping & protecting hedgehogs native to the UK (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Further details from [britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://britishhedgehogs.org.uk)*

## Steeple Aston Golf Society



Our first meeting of the season is on Friday 15th May, being held at the Coventry Hearsall Golf Club, Beechwood Av. CV5 6DF. This is parkland with fairly easy walking. A brook provides an interesting hazard. We meet at 10.00am for an 11.00am tee off.

If you would like to play, please call Alan or Chris on 01869 340423/347173.

If you could choose between a romantic trip away with the Mrs, or a round of golf followed by a few beers & a curry with the lads, what would you go for?

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Happy golfing!

**Alan**



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# The Cricket Report



Steeple Aston Cricket Club

## Fixtures for 2026 Season

Here are the fixtures for the 2026 season. Please remember that our Home Matches are at Great Tew Cricket Club. Full address: Great Tew CC, Ledwell Road, Great Tew, Oxon OX7 4AG.

| Date                                           | Opponent                | Venue |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2.00pm                    | Minster Lovell          | Away  |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> June 6.00pm                   | King's Head, Bledington | Away  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2.00pm                    | Moo Cow Club            | Home  |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> /26 <sup>th</sup> July 2.00pm | TBC                     | Home  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2.00pm                  | Blenheim Park           | Away  |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> August 2.00pm                 | Oxford Downs            | Away  |

## Cricketing Trivia

I am a Judge for the Sunday Times 'Cricket Book of the Year Awards', which is also sponsored by Charles Tyrwhitt Shirts. How else would I have got the job! I have to read six nominated books each year and there were two cracking stories, both related to cricketers in the Second World War, that I thought were worth passing on:

- 1) Don Bradman, the greatest batter of all time bar none, applied to join the Australian Air Force as a pilot in 1940, but was turned down because he had 'poor eyesight'!
- 2) Len Hutton, one of England's greatest batters and a fine England captain, had a Test batting average of just over 57 before the Second World War. Preparing for a Commando raid in 1943, he injured his elbow and, following an operation, his left arm was left two inches shorter. He changed his batting style and still had a Test Average of 56.67 when he retired.

Please do come and watch us this summer – we serve tea & cakes around 3.30-4.00pm, so very much hope to see you on the boundary.

With best wishes to all,

**Peter Higgins, Chairman SACC**



## Football Focus

*Match Report by Alex Wessels: Steeple Aston vs. FC Kayi*

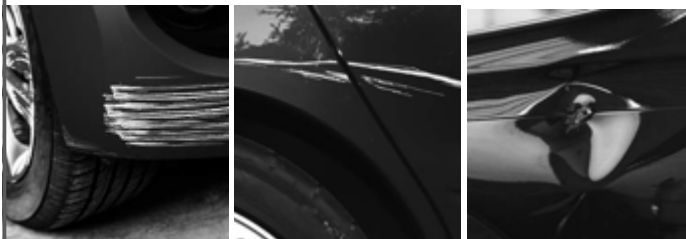
*Result: Steeple Aston 4 - 0 FC Kayi*

Steeple Aston finished their season in emphatic style, securing a dominant victory over FC Kayi thanks to a second-half scoring blitz. Despite controlling much of the play and creating several clear-cut opportunities, Steeple Aston struggled to find the finishing touch in the first half, leaving the game balanced at 0-0 going into the break. The home side eventually broke through to turn a stalemate into a rout. After weathering heavy pressure for the opening 20 minutes from the visitors, a defensive lapse from FC Kayi gifted a chance to Steeple's leading marksman, Adrian Voinea, who made no mistake in slotting home the opener. With the deadlock broken, he then took total control of the final third, finding the net twice more to complete a stunning second-half hat-trick, topped off with a fine penalty by Alex Damm to make it 4-0. Attacking flair was balanced with defensive grit: keeping a clean sheet was no mean feat when one player suffered several broke ribs and another a fractured ankle!

With the season barely over, we are already turning our attention to next year. First, our AGM will take place at the Sports and Rec on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00pm if you wish to find out more about the club or simply have a say. We really do want this to be Steeple's team. Second, we will be putting together a series of friendlies over the course of the summer months, so please get in touch if you wish to play and flaunt your skills before 2026-27 kicks in. Contact: Spyro Markesinis at [s\\_markesinis@hotmail.com](mailto:s_markesinis@hotmail.com)

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## Model Railway displays & Morris Day at the museum

On the first May Bank Holiday weekend, there will be a display of model railways at the museum (Sunday 3rd and Monday 4<sup>th</sup>) provided by the Oxford & District Model Railway Club and other enthusiasts. There will be regular bus rides from the museum each day. A great day out for all the family and quite inexpensive! Morris Day is on Bank Holiday Monday 25th May, when our newly restored 1948 Morris 10 Series M will emerge from the workshop. We are also expecting a lot of visiting Morris's cars, so the museum car park and yard will be full. As a result, there will be no free car parking in the museum grounds.



On the outbreak of the First World War, the War Office took over direction of the manufacture of all motor vehicles. From March 1915 until 1917, Daimler Y type chassis were built to be used as army lorries, which usually had an open, canvas covered cab and a fixed side timber body, typical of military cargo vehicles of the period. The contemporary photo shows one. The

chassis was actually built for Daimler by the Associated Equipment Company (AEC) at its Walthamstow factory using Daimler's famous sleeve-valve engine. AEC had built 8,821 by the Armistice in 1918. But suddenly, the War Office no longer needed so many lorries! Many returned from France to a huge dump in Slough. Demobbed soldiers came back without jobs to go to. A number used their severance pay to buy one of the lorries and convert it, by removing the military body and replacing it with a bus body. Some became single-deckers, some double-deckers and some charabancs. They were also bought to form the basis of many UK bus fleets. Oxford bought 43, and several of these vehicles remained in service until 1935; however, the majority were sold again during the early 1930s to be converted back into lorries. We have a number of Y type chassis in the museum. The Y type had a high ground clearance so bus passengers had to 'climb' aboard. The pictured one is in the area where we show how manufacturers reduced the height of double-deckers over the decades so that the buses could get under the low Oxford railway bridges.



Other examples in the collection are under our open top 1916 double-decker and our unrestored country bus from the 1920s. Each chassis has six solid tyres and each one cost £1,000 in 2000. Bus Restoration is an expensive business.

**Frank Collingwood – Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museums**

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We have a fleet of four buses. Two 17-seater diesel buses, and two electric 11-seater buses that we purchased two years ago, after getting a £170,000 grant from the National Lottery, which are driven by a team of volunteer drivers. All of the buses are fitted with tail-lifts for wheelchair access and have space to transport one chair. Please ring 01869-699699 and enquire how to book onto a route if you wish to use this facility.

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We have routes through Steeple Aston on Wednesdays to Chipping Norton, and Fridays to Bicester. Check out our advert in the magazine, and to see our above and beyond service, scan the QR Code which will take you to a short movie.



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If you are interested in joining our team, please contact us.

**John Chisnall – Our Bus Bartons**

## Steeple Aston Garden Club



On a very warm evening in early April, the Garden Club held their Annual General Meeting, which was followed by a quiz with a very close result! This may have been helped by the wine and nibbles which we all enjoyed. We also held a successful plant sale to boost club funds.

Our first summer visit is to Waterperry Gardens, near Wheatley on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 2.00pm, where we hope to see lots of early summer flowers and possibly enjoy a visit to their café and shop. The entrance fee is £11.50 pp. If anyone is interested in going to Waterperry Gardens or any other Garden Club visits this summer, please contact either myself (Alison) or Richard Preston using the email addresses below.

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

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



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# Blast from *the Past*

## May Day celebrations

May Day has long been an occasion to celebrate spring and look forward to the lazy summer days to come. Traditions include gathering green branches and wildflowers to make wreaths or decorate buildings; adorning the 'Green Man' or 'Jack in the Green'; crowning a 'May Queen'; and setting up a Maypole, May Tree or May Bush, around which people (often children) dance and sing, as well as feasting, parades and processions.

These charming photos show Steeple Aston schoolchildren on May Day 1913, and enjoying the spring festivities including dancing around the Maypole – a tradition still enjoyed by many.



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# Church Matters



The Easter Service on the morning of Easter Sunday was a joyful occasion with enthusiastic singing of favourite hymns. As the Paschal candle brought light into the church, there was a warm atmosphere of friendship and fellowship – and, of course, Easter eggs for all! In spite of creeping commercialism, Christmas and Easter are two moments of celebration in the church calendar which are remembered by most people, whether they call themselves Christian or not. They are both part of the rhythm of the year. It was interesting to read the SAL Easter quiz and to note that, not until question 15, was there mention that Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's easy to think that Easter is more about rabbits and chocolate than it is about the church's most important festival. It also marks a new beginning for we need to ask – after the resurrection – what then? That's important too! It started with just eleven pretty unsophisticated men who began to broadcast Christ's message of hope and to pass on the teaching he had given them about how people should behave to one another. People who believed in and accepted the teaching gradually spread Christianity throughout the world. The idea that everyone should live in peace, demonstrating tolerance, kindness, humility and love for one's neighbours is as fresh today as it was 2,000 years ago. That's the heart of the Easter story. The resurrection made us free from wrongdoing and able to live full, positive and creative lives.

Yes, there have been wrong motives and terrible things in the name of Christianity over the years and it is difficult to make amends for the wrongdoing of our forbears, although attempts are being made to at least acknowledge wrongdoing. Apologies do not seem adequate. However, in spite of such scandalous activities, it is heartwarming to realise that those values referred to above are subscribed to by the majority of UK people, even if they do not accept that they derive from the teaching in the New Testament. If only humanity could live ethical lives by following the guidance of Christ in the Gospels, how transformative that would be! Try reading the Beatitudes [Matthew chapter 5 verses 1-11] and see if you can rise to the challenge. Oh... and I forgot patience and compassion.... what a world it would be!

**Eileen Baglin-Jones, Churchwarden**

## Church Services May 2026

| Date                                  | North Aston                                           | Steeple Aston                                                             | Tackley                    |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Sunday<br/>3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>  | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion BCP                          | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion BCP                                             | 5.30pm<br>Evensong         |
| <b>Sunday<br/>10<sup>th</sup> May</b> | 9.30am<br>Rogation Sunday –<br>meet at the allotments | 11.00am<br>Family Service                                                 | 5.30pm<br>Holy Communion   |
| <b>Sunday<br/>17<sup>th</sup> May</b> | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion                              | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion                                                 | 5.30pm<br>Evensong         |
| <b>Sunday<br/>24<sup>th</sup> May</b> | 9.30am<br>Morning Prayer                              | 11.00am<br>Morning Prayer                                                 | 9.30am<br>Family Communion |
| <b>Sunday<br/>31<sup>st</sup> May</b> |                                                       | 10.30am<br>United Benefice<br>Holy Communion<br>11.00am Morning<br>Prayer |                            |

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

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



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## 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 tranquillity. 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.

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## BUS TIMES

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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)



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or call 07734 112967

SCHEDULE OF HIRE CHARGES from May 2026

| Steeple & Middle Aston Village Residents / Voluntary Groups                                                                        |                                                              |                                                               |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                    | Monday to Friday                                             | Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays<br>Before 6pm                         | Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays<br>6pm to Midnight                    |
| All Facilities (Main Hall, Kitchen and Meeting Room )<br>(including full/exclusive use of kitchen for cooking/meal<br>preparation) | £10 per hour<br>(£70 minimum charge)<br>£75 Security Deposit | £10 per hour<br>(£40 minimum charge)<br>£75 Security Deposit  | £15 per hour<br>(£80 minimum charge)<br>£200 Security Deposit |
| Main Hall (with shared access to kitchen)                                                                                          | £8 per hour<br>(£10 minimum charge)<br>£75 Security Deposit  | Not available to book separately                              |                                                               |
| Meeting Room (with shared access to kitchen)                                                                                       | £5 per hour<br>(£10 minimum charge)                          | Check availability with Letting Agent                         |                                                               |
| Non-Residents/Commercial Organisations                                                                                             |                                                              |                                                               |                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                    | Monday to Friday                                             | Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays<br>Before 6pm                         | Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays<br>6pm to Midnight                    |
| All Facilities (Main Hall, Kitchen and Meeting Room )<br>(including full/exclusive use of kitchen for cooking/meal<br>preparation) | £10 per hour<br>(£20 minimum charge)<br>£75 Security Deposit | £12 per hour<br>(£40 minimum charge)<br>£200 Security Deposit | £20 per hour<br>(£80 minimum charge)<br>£200 Security Deposit |
| Main Hall (with shared access to kitchen)                                                                                          | £8 per hour<br>(£10 minimum charge)<br>£75 Security Deposit  | Not available to book separately                              |                                                               |
| Meeting Room (with shared access to kitchen)                                                                                       | £5 per hour<br>(£10 minimum charge)                          | Check availability with Letting Agent                         |                                                               |

- Hire charges and refundable security deposit are due IN FULL at least two weeks before your event. Keys will be not released to the hirer if this payment has not been received.
- All booking periods will be rounded UP to the nearest half hour for invoicing purposes.
- For bookings that overlap between peak day and evening rates, each full or part hour BEFORE 6pm is charged at the Daytime Rate. Each FULL hour AFTER 6pm is charged at the Evening Rate. If a booking ends after 6pm, but before 7pm then it will be charged entirely at the daytime rate.
- For bookings that overlap different price bands, only the higher minimum charge will apply.
- Special rates for longer hire periods are available. Please contact the Lettings Agent for further details.

## Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre and Field

| Letting charges                                                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 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<br>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
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- Need more space? Hire the Sport & Rec and Village Hall together
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- Regular events include Home Education, Babies & Toddlers, Brownies, After School Club, Bridge and of course the Football Club (it's been going since 1898!)

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keep village  
activities going.

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

#### May 2026:

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> Green

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

#### June 2026:

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown



#### Food caddy is collected weekly

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

Glass bottles and jars can now be placed in blue recycling bin or approved recycling sacks – please rinse items first to remove any residues. No need to remove labels/lids.

Please consult the Cherwell District Council website for further details of collections:  
**[cherwell.gov.uk/recycling](http://cherwell.gov.uk/recycling)**

### Rail travel:

Our nearest local train station is at Lower Heyford, but for more frequent service, villagers often use Oxford Parkway, Bicester Village and Bicester North.

Oxford Parkway, Bicester Village and Bicester North: The trains at these stations are operated by Chiltern Railways. There are frequent services to London Marylebone via High Wycombe, to Oxford and to Birmingham via Banbury. Go to [chilternrailways.co.uk](http://chilternrailways.co.uk) for times, fares, and real-time running information. There is a minibus service between the two Bicester stations, but no bus service to Steeple Aston. There is a taxi rank at both stations: 001 Alpha Cars 01869 252 525; Bicester Cars Ltd 01869 908 908; Arora Cars Bicester Taxis 01869 247 247. The S4 bus from Oxford Parkway Station comes to Steeple Aston, but there is no taxi rank. Taxis can be booked in advance from: Kidlington Cars 07766 207 260; 001 Cars 01865 240 000; London Oxford Taxis (Oxford) 01865 406 070; Oxford Cars (Oxford) Taxis 01865 406 070.

Heyford: Heyford station is unmanned and is about a twenty-minute walk down the hill from Steeple Aston. The trains are operated by First Great Western. This service runs between Banbury and London Paddington, often requiring changes at Oxford, Didcot Parkway or Reading. Go to [firstgreatwestern.co.uk](http://firstgreatwestern.co.uk) for times, fares and real-time running information (N.B. key in Heyford, not Lower Heyford).

More information on rail services from [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk) or [thetrainline.com](http://thetrainline.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 June and July to [editorialife@gmail.com](mailto:editorialife@gmail.com)

| Month                           | Event                                                                               | Venue          | Time              |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>May</b>                      |                                                                                     |                |                   |
| Friday 1st May - Sunday 3rd May | Woodstock Bookshop Festival                                                         | Woodstock      | Various           |
| Sunday 3rd - Monday 4th May     | Oxford & District Model Railway Club display at Bus Museum, Long Hanborough         | L/Hanborough   |                   |
| Sunday 3rd - Saturday 9th May   | Hedgehog Awareness Week - do your bit to help local wildlife                        |                |                   |
| Thursday 7th May                | Local Elections for Cherwell District Councillor - cast your vote (REMEMBER ID)     | Village Hall   | 7.00am - 10.00pm  |
| Saturday 9th - Sunday 17th May  | North Oxfordshire Artweeks - various exhibitions & events                           | Various        |                   |
| Sunday 10th - Saturday 16th May | Christian Aid Week - 7 days to make a difference                                    |                |                   |
| Monday 11th May                 | Village Hall AGM                                                                    | Committee Room | 8.00pm            |
| Tuesday 12th May                | Garden Club - Trip to Waterperry Gardens, near Wheatley                             |                | 2.00pm            |
| Tuesday 12th May                | WI: Talk by Graham Porcas - 'Driving to Ukraine' charity trip                       | Village Hall   | 7.00pm            |
| Wed 13th May - Sat 16th May     | Calendar Girls - Adderbury Theatre Workshop (Adderbury Institute)                   | Adderbury      | Various           |
| Thursday 14th May               | Steeple Talk by Charlotte Harris: 'Why we should remember Dr Radcliffe'             | SA Church      | 7.15pm for 7.30pm |
| <b>Thursday 14th May</b>        | <b>SAL June copy and advert deadlines</b>                                           |                |                   |
| Friday 15th May                 | Golf Society meet - Hearsall Golf Club, Coventry                                    | Hearsall GC    | 10.00am           |
| Saturday 16th May               | Celebrating Dr Radcliffe' concert - Brasenose College choir & primary school pupils | SA Church      | 6.30pm            |
| Sunday 17th May                 | Deddington Four Farms Challenge 2026 - 5k/10k/20k routes                            | Deddington     | From 8.30am       |
| Sunday 17th May                 | SA Cricket match at Minster Lovell                                                  | Minster Lovell | 2.00pm            |
| Monday 18th May                 | Parish Council Meeting                                                              | S & R Building | 7.30pm            |
| Tuesday 19th May                | Valentines: All About Bicester Village with Lucy Busby                              | Village Hall   | 2.30pm            |
| Wednesday 20th May              | Valentines: Coach Trip - GWR Steam Train and meal                                   |                |                   |
| Wednesday 20th May              | Football Club AGM                                                                   | S & R Building | 8.00pm            |
| Saturday 23rd May               | Farmers' Market                                                                     | Deddington     | 9.00am - 12.30pm  |
| Monday 25th May                 | Morris Day at the Bus Museum, Long Hanborough                                       | L/Hanborough   |                   |
| Wednesday 27th May              | People's Emergency Briefing' film screening and panel discussion                    | Village Hall   | 7.30pm - 9.00pm   |
| <b>June</b>                     |                                                                                     |                |                   |
| Thursday 4th June               | Guided Tour of Rousham House (organised by Anne Haymes)                             | Rousham        | 2.00pm            |
| Tuesday 9th June                | WI: Sue Smith - Sue's visit to Australia - textile artists demonstration            | Village Hall   | 7.00pm            |
| Wednesday 10th June             | Garden Club visit                                                                   | Rousham        | 6.30pm            |
| Thursday 11th June              | Golf Society meet - Olton GC, Solihull                                              | Solihull       | 11.30am           |
| <b>Sunday 14th June</b>         | <b>SAL July copy and advert deadlines</b>                                           |                |                   |
| Monday 15th June                | Parish Council meeting                                                              | S & R Building | 7.30pm            |
| Tuesday 16th June               | Valentines: Music from the 50s & 60s                                                | Village Hall   | 2.30pm            |
| Thursday 18th June              | SA Cricket at King's Head, Bledington                                               | Bledington     | 6.00pm            |
| Wednesday 24th June             | Valentines: Boat trip Hobbs of Henley including meal onboard                        | Henley         |                   |
| Saturday 27th June              | Farmers' Market                                                                     | Deddington     | 9.00am - 12.30pm  |
| Saturday 27th June              | SACS Summer Party                                                                   | Village Hall   | 6.30pm for 7.00pm |

**Pilates.** Village Hall. 2.00pm - 3.00pm & 3.15pm - 4.15pm - Mondays  
**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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