

# Steeple Aston

June 2026

Issue No. 634

# *Life*



• Murder Mystery • Summer Show Top Tips • New Headteacher •

**Steeple & Middle Aston magazine**



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# JUNE 2026: CONTENTS

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Previous issues of SAL are also available on this site

<b>JUNE FEATURES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>REPORTS FROM CLUBS &amp; SOCIETIES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Heyford watercourse - MP asks questions	37	Cricket Club	35
Introducing our new Headteacher	11	Deddington Guides	11
Launch of the Morris 10 Series M	31	Football Focus	39
SACAA Allotments update	13	Garden Club	27
SAVA remembers 'Jack & the Steeple Ars'n Beanstalk'	21	Golf Society	35
Top Tips for Summer Show entries	29	Valentine Club	19
		Village Hall News	23
		WI Report	17

<b>REGULAR FEATURES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>INFORMATION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Arts - Murder Mystery Mayhem in Steeple Bottom	15	Calendar	46
Blast from the Past - Pram Race 1973	27	Church Services	41
Church Matters	41	Directory	4
Editorial	5	Footpath guide	42
Nature Notes	33	Noticeboard	6-7
Our Local MP	13	Parish Councillors list	25
Parish Council Report	24-25	Refuse & Recycling collections	45
Steeple People	9	Travel: Bus times	43
		Travel: Train services	45

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

Cover photo: Blooming June by Nigel Francis

## ADVERTISEMENTS

<b>HOME</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Alistair Redhouse Property Partners	22	Back Pain & Sports Injury Clinic	12	Amanda Rodgers restor8iv courses	10
APS Heating and Plumbing Ltd	42	Beat Fitness/Base at Beat Fitness Gym	14	Biology/Science Tutoring	8
Atlas Pest Control	18	David Cuts Hair	10	Chips Away vehicle repair	34
Cridland & Co Estate Agents	48	Ease Massage Therapies	12	Computer Pro	2
Guy Roberts Architect	16	Eldon Friends care & support	28	C S Boswell funeral services	30
Iron and Wood Ltd	16	Lisa Boote Reiki	12	D L Hancock funeral services	30
JLDA building design	18	Nourish Pilates	42	Egg Box Storage	14
Kirtlington Property Maintenance	2	Polka Dots hair	34	Hart vets	48
Mallams auctioneers and valuers	22	YouFusion Therapy	40	Indian Block Printing Company	47
Noah's Ark Painting company	40			Joshua Horgan print and design	34
Paul Barber windows	18	<b>FOOD/DINING</b>		Our Bus Bartons	43
SafeClean	18	Grain Store café Middle Aston	36	Oxford Bus Museum	34
Shaun Guard TV aerial/Wifi services	40	Harris Stores & Post Office	45	PTA garage services	28
		Holt Hotel Steeple Aston	36	Steeple Aston Sports & Rec Centre	44
<b>GARDEN</b>		Horse and Groom pub, Caulcott	8	Steeple Aston Village Hall	44
Arbor Vitae trees & gardens	32	Middle Aston House	23	The Hatchery Middle Aston	2
Garden Electric	40	North Aston Farms and Dairy	8	The Windmill centre, Deddington	30
KP Tree Care	26	S & J Cuisine homemade food	47	UK Solar Generation	32
Rosara at Nicholsons	26				
		<b>EVENTS</b>			
		Allotment Open Days	16		
		Circus comes to Steeple	16		
		Deddington Open Gardens	12		
		Middle Aston Music Festival	38		
		Moonrakers concert	42		
		SACS Summer Concert	20		
		Steeple Aston Church Fete	32		
		Steeple Church Talk - King Charles II	39		

# 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	<a href="mailto:steepleastontoddlergrp@gmail.com">steepleastontoddlergrp@gmail.com</a>
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><a href="http://Deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk">Deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk</a></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

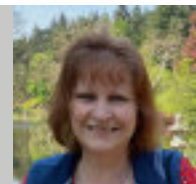


“...folly is not always folly.”  
Jane Austen

## Steeple Aston *Life*

June 2026  
Issue No.634

# Editorial



Over the last few weeks, the sun’s warmth has brought on the plants and seedlings, keeping gardeners and allotmenters on their toes. To get some top tips for your entries to the summer show, the judges have put together some handy hints to help you prepare for the big day. Whether you’re into growing fruit & veg, flowers, arts & crafts, photography, cooking or poetry, do take a look.

The hugely entertaining Murder Mystery evening was such fun, and hopefully the first of more to come. Read all about it and see if anyone managed to identify the perpetrators, or are they still at large?! It brought back fond memories of the former Steeple Aston Players who put on regular shows for the village, which were always well received.

Some great news to share is the appointment of a new Headteacher at Dr Radcliffe’s CE Primary School. Lorraine Wood, who has been working as Interim Headteacher for the last few months, will be starting her new role from September and we wish her all the best.

Concerning news reports relate to possible contaminated watercourses at Heyford, and local MP Calum Miller is seeking answers to many questions on behalf of the local community. Hopefully we will learn more before long.

Enjoy the start of summertime – let’s hope it’s a good one, with no more hosepipe bans!

**Carol**

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## 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 July 2026 issue is  
Sunday 14th June



READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE

<https://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

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Sunday 14th June

### ADVERTISING RATES

¼ page- £10

½ page- £18

Full page(village events only) - £20.00

# SAL Noticeboard



## Celebrating the life of Beth Walton

There will be an informal celebration for the life of Beth Walton at Steeple Aston Village Hall on Friday, August 7th from 3.00pm to 5.30pm. Anyone in and around the village of Steeple Aston who knew Beth is most welcome to join us - we would love to see you.

**Tim and Clare Walton**



## Local Election Results



***Congratulations to Eddie Reeves, who retained his seat on Cherwell District Council after a close contest in the Deddington ward on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May.***

Candidate	Party	Number of votes
BLISS, Aaron	Green	333
COLLINGWOOD-TURNER, Ann	Reform UK	885
HARTLEY, Dean	Lib Dem	1,173
MURPHY, Annette	Labour	300
REEVES, Eddie	Conservative	1,294 Elected

## Thanks to SAL Layout Designer, Edward, & welcome to Chris

Edward Dowler has been doing the layout on SAL for 12 years, and last month's edition was his final one. The SAL Committee would like to thank him for all his hard work and especially for sticking with us even after he moved to Woodstock. We are grateful for his many contributions in other ways too and especially for liaising with the printers. We wish him all the best for a very happy retirement.

We are very lucky that Chris Neville has kindly volunteered to take over Edward's role. This is his first month, although he's been practising for some time. He is using new up-to-date software, which we hope will serve us well for a long time to come. We welcome Chris to his new role and wish him the best of luck. Chris will be sharing his layout duties with Martin Lipson, who has been doing the job in partnership with Edward. He is happy to continue for a while, but will also want to retire in due course. So, we're still looking for someone to take on his role as Layout Designer. The time commitment each month is usually no more than 14 hours in total per issue, which includes around 8-10 hours for initial layout, plus a few hours for additions and corrections, normally around the third week of the month. For more information and a full job description please email [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)



## Golden Celebrations

The bells will be ringing on the morning of 20<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate our Golden Wedding. We were married at Steeple Aston church on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1976 - the last day it rained for two months! I remember the delight of hearing the (6) bells as I picked my posy of wild roses. It is doubtful I will pick wild roses this year – global warming has meant they come earlier each year. Our anniversary will not fall on the same day of the week as the day we married – the Millennium did not have 29<sup>th</sup> February. In the intervening years we have both been regular ringers here – and now there will be 8 bells! Please listen out for them and enjoy.

**Dorothy and Graham Clifton**

*Congratulations to you both – Ed.*

## Steeple Aston Community Speedwatch is being re-formed

For the nearly two years I've been a parish councillor (and in my previous life as a local neighbourhood police inspector), the subject of excess speed along narrow village roads has been a hot topic. With our 20mph limit, a school and being adjacent to the much faster Banbury Road, the parish council has received numerous speeding complaints. The Speedwatch group will work to assess the actual scale of the problem at key spots around the village. I'm pretty sure the concept is familiar.



I have registered our village with the nationwide Community Speedwatch scheme. Their website [communityspeedwatch.org](http://communityspeedwatch.org) has all the information you might need on how it all works and, if you're interested, to guide you through the process of becoming a village volunteer. I'm the lead co-ordinator on behalf of the parish council, so a call or email to me is also a good place to start. The village still has all the requisite kit from a few years ago and a handful of people already keen to be involved. Ideally a handful more will create a viable and active group. Volunteers should contact me in the first

instance and I will guide them through their registration as a volunteer and set them up for about 20-30 minutes of online training.

**Greg Elphick**

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# Steeple People

## Wanda Stewart-Lee



*Where do you live & how long have you lived there?* I have lived in Upper Heyford since 2012.

*What do you like best about living there?* The fact that I can walk down my drive and see the beauty of Steeple Aston across the valley.

*A potted history of yourself:* School in Oxford; University studying HR; HR job in Wales; back to Oxford - Senior HR role in NHS; HR Manager, Blackwell Retail Ltd; Head of HR for precision engineering company, Banbury for 27 years and Director of Engineering Trust for 20 years; chose not to work anymore in January 25; no regrets.

*How do others see you in five words?* Workaholic, supportive, detailed (good for proofreading SAL), creative, pessimist.

*How would you describe yourself in five words?* Listaholic! Emotionally astute, cautious and loving.

*What was the best thing about your childhood?* Kind, supportive parents who spent time with me despite their own busy careers.

*What is the best aspect of being an adult?* Not having to live with my parents (or my partner who has his own house).

*What did you want to be when you grew up?* I had a childhood dream of being a gymnast - wrecked by injury, but surprisingly I can still do the splits! This led me to an amazing, fulfilling but stressful career in Human Resources.

*What is the best/worst job you have had?* Enjoying work is down to the people. I have loved working with people throughout my career. I haven't loved all my bosses (except the last one!).

*What's your guilty pleasure?* Covert return shopping trips to buy things I've been told I don't need!

*Who is your favourite musician and track?* Ooh difficult. I have several - Keane, Sting, Mike and the Mechanics, Genesis, 10cc. From a young age I've loved 'Without You' by Harry Nilsson – don't ask me why.

*What food do you most enjoy eating?* Probably fresh fish or Neill's pheasant in whisky cream sauce followed by warmed pastel de nata – heaven.

*Who would you most like to have dinner with?* Romantically, Anthony Andrews (Brideshead/Danger UXB days), Roger Federer (gorgeous and a gentleman), Alison Hammond (lively and so positive), Bob Mortimer (because he's bonkers) and, of course, Julian Clary (for the saucy side of life).

*Who do you most admire and why?* Our emergency services - fire, police, ambulance etc - totally underestimated.

*What is your favourite sport?* Tennis, tennis, tennis - played for the school, but now fortunate to be a spectator at major tournaments in person - I'm so lucky.

*What was your favourite holiday destination & why?* Countries like France and Italy; Cities - Marrakesh and Budapest - a must and lots to see with lovely food and wine.

*If you were marooned on a desert island, what would you miss the most?* Wine and music.

*What makes you feel grumpy/angry?* People who don't comply.

*What makes you happiest in the world?* Being with Neill and knowing he is there.

*What is your favourite saying or piece of advice?* Live for every day. Life is too short.



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# School News



## **New Headteacher for Dr Radcliffe's School**

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs Lorraine Wood as the new Headteacher of Dr Radcliffe's School. She will take up the role from 1<sup>st</sup> September. Lorraine is currently a Headteacher within the ODST Academy and therefore has a strong working knowledge and experience as a leader within the Trust of which we are a part.

Lorraine is currently our Interim Headteacher and enjoyed her time at Dr Radcliffe's so much that she applied for the position. During a rigorous interview process, Lorraine stood out as the strongest candidate. As an experienced Headteacher she brings a huge wealth of experience, knowledge and skills, a real passion for education and an aspirational strategic vision for our school. She showed a clear understanding of the context of Dr Radcliffe's, our vision and values and the priorities for the future. We are confident that she will maintain and further develop standards, whilst fostering a nurturing and high-quality learning environment. The Governors and school team are hugely looking forward to supporting and working with Lorraine as our full-time Headteacher and as the Interim Headteacher up to the end of this academic year.

## **Lisa Boote – Chair of the Local Governing Body**



### ***A message of welcome from Lorraine***

I am absolutely delighted to be joining Dr Radcliffe's School on a permanent basis as Headteacher from September. Having had the privilege of serving as Interim Headteacher, I have been so impressed by the warmth of our school community, the dedication of our staff and the enthusiasm of our wonderful pupils. The school's strong values and commitment to providing an excellent education in a caring and inclusive environment truly resonate with me.

I am excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to working closely with our children, families, staff and governors to build on the school's many strengths and ensure every child thrives to reach their true potential. I feel very fortunate to be part of this community and can't wait to continue this journey together.

***Lorraine Wood***

## **Deddington Guides *Report***

Firstly, we'd like to thank everyone who supported our fundraising efforts last term. Our show and raffle raised £80, so both BARKS and the Firefighters Charity were very pleased to receive £40 each. Well done, Guides!

We're enjoying this summer term and the light evenings. So far, we have been challenged with a quiz around the Market Place following various clues. We have also enjoyed our first cook out, thanks to the Fenemore family's kind hospitality. We have learnt how to erect a tent, and had a lovely evening for our hike. We've been very pleased to welcome Lilia at her promise ceremony too. We're off to camp at half-term, so are hoping for good weather.

**Maggie Rampley 07957 600755**



## Deddington Open Gardens

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# Letter from *Westminster*



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

I am proud of our achievements this session which include passing legislation to improve renters' rights and employment rights; ending the two-child benefit cap to lift children out of poverty; investing in social housing, the NHS and defence; increasing the minimum wage and taking back control of public transport. Alongside voting on important legislation, as a member of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, I participated in inquiries into modernising elections and housing conditions in England, on which we recently published a report.

I visited brilliant local businesses like Wine Vaults in Banbury and Plastic Parts Direct, as well as speaking to various local business leaders at the Banbury Chamber of Commerce. I attended Banbury Parkinson's Coffee Morning, where I chatted with attendees about the support on offer for people in the area living with the condition; met the brilliant Emma Radley, CEO of Katharine House Hospice to talk about the charity's vital work; visited Banbury Larder, who provide sustainable food, life skills, lunch clubs, wellbeing support and employability support to those in the community and visited Morrisons Banbury to hear about their free breakfast initiative in partnership with Kellogg's. Thank you to all the constituents, groups and businesses who have engaged with me over the past month.

As always, I am contactable at [sean.woodcock.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sean.woodcock.mp@parliament.uk)

**Sean**



## *Steeple Aston Church Allotments Association*

### **Steeple Aston allotments – a new year**



Spring is here, well every other day or so anyway. The Church allotments are getting busier as more crops are planted with the usual optimism that frosts are behind us. What isn't unusual these days is that all these new plants and indeed established fruit bushes, rhubarb, asparagus and so on need watering so soon in the season. It is great to be out in the allotment again getting stuck in after the relative dormancy of winter. I have no doubt it does help your wellbeing. The enthusiasm bodes well and it is always good to see new and established allotmenters enjoying their time here. That is what is important. Harvesting produce is a bonus!

The Association held its AGM in April. The Committee were able to report that finances are solid and whilst the 5 yearly rent review with the Diocese this year will increase our costs, as will increases in water rates, plot rents will be held for the 26/27 year. The Committee also reported on the magnificent efforts made to successfully run the National Allotments Day back in August. A repeat is planned this year so keep Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August free!

We welcomed 'Flourish' to the allotments, and they gave a presentation on their plans for the future. It is a truly worthwhile enterprise, and we look forward to working and supporting them as they develop. For more information search 'Flourish Steeple Aston Wellness Garden' on Facebook. We do have a couple of plots available and whilst all will need work to take on, it can be rewarding, so please contact Amanda Rodgers on [sacaclerk@gmail.com](mailto:sacaclerk@gmail.com) for more information.

**Stuart Cummins – Chair, SACAA**

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# Murder Mystery in Steeple Bottom

One Saturday evening in April, eighty amateur sleuths waited with excitement in the village hall, to help the TV team of 'Crimes from Bygone Times' solve a cold case: 'the brutal murder of Penny Black', the village postmistress in Steeple Bottom. This crime took place in 1985, the day of the Live Aid concert. The supersleuths listened attentively and took case notes as the two TV presenters described the events of that fateful day. The broadcast then paused for a short commercial break, allowing sleuths time to compare notes and discuss their thoughts. Next came a careful reconstruction of the crime with the sleuths spellbound as events unfolded before them. It was a torrid tale of infidelity, jealousy, rejection and greed which ended when Penny was restrained by having an empty post sack thrust over her head before being fatally stabbed with a letter opener! Through the detailed re-enactment, viewers learned of Penny Black's affair with the postman; the postman's rejection by both his wife and his lover; his wife's lack of artistic commissions and resulting need for money; a village pensioner with a confrontational style and short temper; and the machinations of a stamp collector who was attempting to track down some uniquely faulty, highly valuable first editions. The sleuths witnessed Inspector Dart's questioning of the five suspects and drew their own conclusions as to who (if anyone!) was telling the truth.



The whole venture was thought up, devised and organised by Tina Ferguson, with help from a raft of people: John White was responsible for lighting, background music and sound; supper was cooked and served by Vicky Clifton, helped by Chris Clarke and Debbie Morris; Torquil McLusky manned the bar; and the play was acted by Tina Ferguson, Nigel Francis, David Stewart, Paul Rodgers, Greg Elphick, Helen Wright and Marie O'Connor. The script was very clever, peppered liberally with phrases from songs featured in the 1985 Live Aid concert, with a generous helping of truly groan-worthy puns. The show featured background music from the time, with references to phenomena such as CEEFAX, Maxwell House coffee, Ford Sierra cars and other items of everyday life from that era which have since disappeared. A thoroughly enjoyable evening and one hopes that it is the first of many such events, when members of the public put on entertainment that bring the village together in such a successful manner.



## Cathy Lawday

In the final part of the show, Inspector Dart revealed the identity of the killer and their accomplice, explaining which clues had led him to his conclusion. The supersleuth audience had earlier submitted their solutions to the crime, giving the names of the two culprits and how the clues had led them to this result: was it the keys/the missing concert ticket/the missing jacket/the bloodstained clothing? It was announced that none of the supersleuths had solved the crime totally successfully. Several sleuths had used the clues to identify one culprit, but failed to get the second person or use all the relevant clues correctly.





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Steeple Aston Church Allotment Association

A new 'shuffle the members' as they arrive system is in place! No more sitting in rows next to someone you already know well. As our members arrived, they received a coloured square and headed for the table bearing that colour - red, blue yellow etc. This ensured we all mixed in, new members with the more 'established' members. Each table had a 'name the person' on a page of photos, some dead easy, others absolute brain teasers and a 'dingbat' page. All this with a cuppa in hand and a slice of cake of course. Good fun!

Now for the meeting. The new programme is out, and the upcoming events were flagged. Sally's latest venture will be a local walk on the 19<sup>th</sup> June; the Summer Tea Party sign-up list for 14<sup>th</sup> July was available along with lunch at The Turnpike on 29<sup>th</sup> May. There will be a special 'Invitation to join the WI' event with Pimms and Scones on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Julie asked us to vote for one of the two resolutions chosen by NFWI: (1) Accessible public toilets for women; or (2) Action for women's homelessness – the show of hands won for the toilets issue!

Julie introduced our speaker for the evening, Graham Porcas, who came to tell us about his trip in a convoy to Ukraine taking much needed trucks and an ambulance, all loaded with supplies. He started off with the fundraising in Steeple Aston and the gruelling three-day drive to get there. The precautions on entering Ukraine – even a gizmo for detecting drone attacks! There were problems and delays faced when crossing the border into Ukraine. However, when they arrived and were met by the Ukrainians, Graham was touched by their heartfelt gratitude – one veteran was especially grateful, as one such vehicle had saved his life – bringing him back to a hospital from the war front.

Graham said he had experienced some very serious and emotional moments especially the Field of Mars (the war cemetery). We felt we had shared Graham's feeling of achievement at having completed the tough journey out there and such a worthwhile one. Thank you Graham.



Photo of Graham with a number plate made by the Ukrainians – it says 'Graham'.

The answers to the two quizzes were given to us by Tina – no prizes but we all felt rather pleased that we had managed to get most of them right, I think! If you would like to know how and when to join our WI, please contact Julie Hillier by email [j.hillier3@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:j.hillier3@hotmail.co.uk)

**Merrill Bayley**

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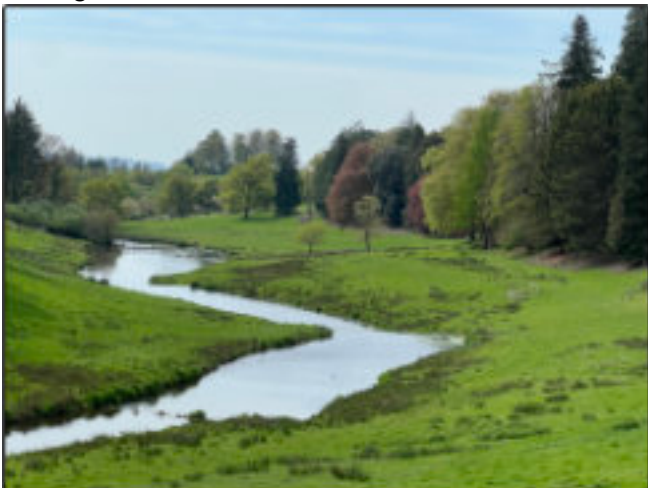


## THE VALENTINE CLUB

I know it's June and summer is here, but I must take you back to April when the club seemed to be out and about rather than staying at home. We took 42 members and friends to Cricket St Thomas, the home of 'To the Manor Born', if you are of an age to remember that iconic comedy, starring Penelope Keith and Peter Bowles and, dare I remind you all, of Mr Blobby? The hotel, set in some amazing grounds with lakes, picturesque gardens and a bowling green, was home for five days during late April where we ate, slept and enjoyed high-class entertainment. We ventured to Weymouth, West Bay, Sidmouth and a donkey sanctuary, along with taking time out to enjoy the grounds, playing bowls, swimming and generally relaxing with some great company. As is customary, we must mention the weather, which was dry, sunny and for the most part, warm, even down to shirt-sleeve conditions.

Less than a week after returning from South Somerset, we were back on the road, this time to Sudeley Castle by Winchcombe. We packed 45 onto the coach and again, the sun shone brightly, well, you know what they say: "the sun always shines on the righteous". The castle is still occupied and displays much history from the time of Catherine Parr for whom it was her final resting place. It has a variety of gardens displaying flowers across the seasons. We took lunch in the Orangery which was absolutely fine, but maybe a little warm under the constant sunshine and that glass roof.

May has proved to be another busy month with our monthly meeting, where Lucy Busby told us all about Bicester Village followed the next day by a steam train trip from Toddington to Cheltenham and return for lunch at The Pheasant Inn before continuing onto Broadway and returning to Toddington to catch the coach.



*Lakes at Cricket St Thomas*



*Meal time in the Orangery at Sudeley Castle*

June is going to be very similar. Music on the 16<sup>th</sup> in the village hall provided by Chris, then a week or so later we are off on a river trip down the Thames from Henley with, of course, a meal on board. Again, there isn't a coach large enough so another car trip to take a few more members to Henley where we have chartered a boat large enough to accommodate our needs.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, simply visit our own website on [valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston](http://valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston) (simply log onto 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](http://steepleaston.org.uk) or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512. We are now also on Instagram but with my IT skills, it might look somewhat different to what you might expect.? Address, I have been told is, **The Valentine Club SA.**

**Richard Preston – Group organiser (for lack of a better description)**

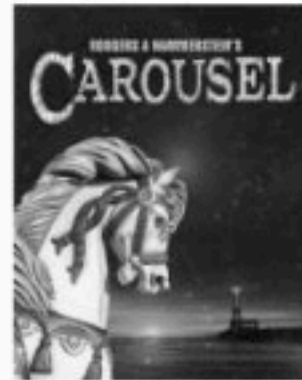
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## Jack and the Steeple Ars'n Beanstalk

Jack and the Beanstalk was one of the pantomimes written and directed by Rev Michael Hayter for a performance in 1972. Michael was someone who knew our village and its people inside out. When Michael Hayter became Rector of Steeple and Middle Aston in 1937, a cultured man, leading some people to describe him as 'uppish', the Rectory and its gardens were in a dire state of neglect. Needing to provide a home for his wife, Patcie, her mother (Mrs Schofield) and their children, five eventually, he rolled up his sleeves and set to work. He sought out skilled and experienced villagers to help and advise him on updating the house and managing the gardens. As he worked alongside these local folk, he learnt about their lives and he appreciated their company. For most of his ministry, he had only our parish of Steeple and Middle Aston to cover, so was always around and about, calling in on people and keeping up with local gossip. He was a good listener, and made use of his accrued knowledge of the very essence of rural life when he wrote 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. He had cast members in mind as he composed his pantomimes, and in this one he included local dialect, much of which is probably lost already.

Jack and the Beanstalk was set in Steeple Ars'n Market Place, the backdrop being the 'Dun Cow' pub on Church Corner. Michael set the mood for the pantomime with the opening poignant and all too often relevant, words: "Wot sum wevver we bin 'avin, wot sum wevver!" The programme for the play helpfully includes a glossary of words written in the script, many of which certainly need translating.

I goli	an expletive
Burrow	sheltered
Fammelled	starved
Frit	frightened
Gellus	wretch
Maggled	upset
Middlin	ill
Mi duck	affectionate term
Muckle	rubbish dump
Muffadite	queerly dressed person
Mullock	rubbish
Okkard	obstinate
Quack	kill
Smollocky	untidy
Tackle	produce
Tiggle	mess about
Unkid	cruel
Waywind	bindweed

SAVA hopes some readers may be able to add to this list, enriching and encapsulating the Archive's memoirs of Steeple Ars'n's relatively recent past.

**Diana Gardner, SAVA**



*The rogue Arthur (Ron Gardner,) who exchanged 'magic' beans for Jack's cow, is berated by his wife (Lily Elmer).*

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# Village Hall News



## **Murder mystery evening**

Wow what an evening! We have received so many lovely comments from people who were lucky enough to attend. Apologies to those that couldn't get tickets. We were surprised and delighted that tickets sold out within a couple of days, and rest assured, we are discussing repeating the event in some form next year. My thanks to Tina for organising and convincing her friends to put on a show, and to the rest of the trustees, true team work.

BUT.... don't wait for us, the hall is available for anyone to hire. Amazing kitchen, sound and lighting system, plus a great stage to put on your own show stopper. This could be the income your charity is calling out for. It was wonderful to showcase what facilities our hall has to offer.

## **In other news....**

The new hiring charges went live last month, but if you have any questions please do get in touch with our letting agent, Angela, as she will be able to help. Alternatively a copy can be found within every edition of SAL, or on the village hall website [savh.org.uk/](http://savh.org.uk/)

Apart from that, the hall trustees take a back seat on fundraising until the Autumn, but there will be many exciting village events to fill the summer – fetes, fairs, parties and shows. Keep an eye open for adverts, or better still, hire it and party!

Our letting agent is Angela Smith – Mob: 07734 112967.

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

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# Parish Council Meeting Notes



I'd nodded off in front of The One Show, so missed the start of the meeting - apologies! That said, the meeting had started early because we had the Annual Meeting before the actual meeting. All sounding much grander than it actually was, if I'm honest. Quite a lot of palaver with councillors standing down and then being formally co-opted and standing back up again; taking the Chair and then resigning it again (I started to wish I'd stayed with The One Show for longer). I'm told this was all done to comply with the rules, and we actually ended up with the same Chair as last year.

Once we finally got under way, we heard from OCC Cllr Gareth Epps who congratulated our local Parish Councillors and told them how vital their work is. I think he was being sincere, in spite of the fact his comments came after the nonsense at the start of the meeting. Gareth did look quite tired after all the recent local election excitement, and told us it was likely that he'd be appointed to Cabinet this week, which sounded important and would probably involve a "transport related portfolio". Gareth said he'd asked the relevant crowd to fix the bus stop at Rousham bridge. Our Chair then added that some people had requested an upgrade to an actual shelter – hopefully that won't throw a spanner in the works! Gareth is also keen to hear if school transport is an issue for anyone? Get in touch and let him know. And he told us about a Paper on "Quiet Lanes" where vehicles are discouraged. Apparently, there are some pilots afoot with the aim of making cycling safer for everyone. I might dust off my pushbike.

Onto the Clerk's Report which started with "a finger pinch problem" in the playground. The water pump is wobbling and needs to be

mended. A member of the public who was at the meeting did question whether we actually needed this water pump, which in turn led to a discussion as to whether it had any (lost) historical significance? I think the conclusion was that it was just put there when the Millennium Park was created. It's going to be mended, so here's hoping it can find a purpose too!

Staying with the playground and an imminent RoSPA report, which everyone is looking forward to reading after all that recent work! In spite of all that work, we're getting quotes to fix rot on a ladder - more than £1k for a small piece of wood! Apparently, it's very special wood that can only be sourced from two places in the UK. So, one councillor who knows about fencing is going to see if they can find a cheaper option. When I asked about splinters, I was baffled by a response involving "peeled posts", but comforted by the fact they seemed to know what they were talking about. We also have rotten boards and a broken slide, which is still functioning but "an accident waiting to happen". I was personally very sad to hear that the days of the yellow curly slide could be numbered – it's always been a favourite of mine. And our zipline isn't in good working order – some of the PC had attempted to "rock the cradle" (I daren't ask) and Cllr David Rogers told us a story about him on a zipline which left him "talking in tongues"! Finally, a "jagged stump" has been smashed and turned to useful woodchips. The last comment was "we know where we're going with the playground", which was reassuring.

# Parish Council Meeting Notes



Cllr Rogers then started his report with an apology that his spellcheck had failed and throughout he had referred to “Chard” (Somerset) not “Cherwell”. He too talked about a “frantic election” and how everyone is now jostling for position. He said he intends to stay fully involved with planning issues, if no longer on the Committee.

There was talk about window frames at the village hall. Apparently two windows at the History Centre have “a strange decorative attachment” which has rotted and is now being replaced, and flat roof issues. Plus, some news (wait until I tell Mr Miggins) that we may have a pizza van visit our village on a regular basis. Our Chair asked them for all their relevant licences, but things have gone strangely quiet since the request was made.

We then had a long discussion on our Emergency Plan and whether our “vulnerable list” was up to date. One councillor said they would be asking the Valentine Club, but then we had all sorts of chat about what constituted a “vulnerable person” (“age isn’t the only signifier of need, if it even is a signifier?”), and whether someone should visit the Toddler Group too? And what happens if someone was ill and needed to keep medicines in their fridge and the power went off? All sorts of different scenarios.

Then the PC decided they needed to be practical as there are only five of them, so if hundreds of people apply to be vulnerable, the system might struggle a bit. Not to mention the difficulty of keeping the list current (apparently 12 people from the Covid list have now passed away). I think we’ll be hearing more on this topic in due course, but the feeling was that “we’re nearly there”.

One councillor then told us about a presentation he had with Aubergine. He was impressed, unlike our Clerk. I think it involved website and .gov email addresses rather than vegetables. It led onto a discussion on our much-loved village website, with one member sharing the controversial opinion that we should “go big and rebuild the whole website”!

Finally, we heard that the strategic rail freight interchange project at Ardley has been accepted to go to the next stage of planning – “an examination”. Local organisations can register to be interested parties and appear at the examination and present evidence. The MCNP have raised £5,500 towards employing a consultant to represent local parishes who oppose the development – apparently the cost is closer to £10,000, so more fundraising is needed.

The next meeting is on 15<sup>th</sup> June. Until then,

*Mrs Miggins*

## **Steeple Aston Parish Councillors**

Angharad Lloyd-Jones (Chair)

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

Greg Elphick

Andrew Gibson

Charlotte Powell, Sports & Recreation  
Centre, Environment

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## BLAST *from the past*



### Memories of the Whitsun Village Pram Race

We moved to Steeple in 1972, to be met by a friendly welcoming village. By 1973 I was involved in the Whit Monday Race, a community event centred around the White Lion pub. The Pram Race consisted of five stops – the White Lion, halfway, the Red Lion, then halfway back and finish at the White Lion. Both participants had to drink beer on every stop. Local boy, Steve Bell, convinced the new kid in town, myself, to join him and take up the challenge. Chris Cross, who still lives in The Crescent, gave us a pram she could vouch for; bless her, a worthy chariot. It was a frantic race to begin with, then settled down and we actually ending up winning! Whether we drank all of the beer, who knows? Steve Bell and Tony King won that year, and to prove it wasn't a fluke, we won again in 1974 and 1975. The photo shows Tony King in the pram and Steve Bell pushing, and further behind pushing is Colin Meade, former landlord of The Red Lion. A thoroughly enjoyable day and conversational get together with Draught Bass at 15p a pint 🍺



**Tony King**

## Steeple Aston *Garden Club*



On an unseasonably cool afternoon in mid-May, members of the Garden Club went to Waterperry Gardens for a very enjoyable visit. The spring plants were mostly over and the summer plants were coming into colour, with the famous border on its way to full splendour. There was one lily flower about to open in the Waterlily Canal, which will be even more impressive in a few weeks! The most spectacular feature at the moment is the wisteria arch shown in the photo. Waterperry have developed several new areas such as a small arboretum in the meadow area, so there was something new for everyone to see. Many of us took advantage of the cafe for tea and cake afterwards, and a few had lunch there before our visit.

On the evening of Wednesday 10th June we will be visiting nearby Rousham to enjoy the gardens and landscape before some refreshments. If you'd like to join us, 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** [richard.preston5@btopenworld.com](mailto:richard.preston5@btopenworld.com)



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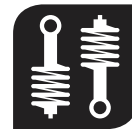
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# Horticultural Society



## Summer Show top tips from Steeple Aston & Middle Aston Horticultural Society



Following the successful Spring Show on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, the Horticultural Society asked show judges to provide top tips especially for new show entrants. Lots of advice and guidance for all sorts of show items can, of course, be found online, but here are a few suggestions for your entries for the summer show on 31<sup>st</sup> August.

**Flowers:** read the schedule carefully to be aware of requirements especially on the size of the display. Choose foliage carefully and remember that blooms can deteriorate quickly which influences selection, so cut as late as possible to preserve quality.

**Handicrafts:** items presented should be fit for purpose, neat and well-finished and bear in mind safety, use of appropriate materials, colour, texture and proportion. Garments should be unworn when presented and items that are original designs can gain extra credit.

**Art and Photography:** within the theme area provided, judges will also consider interpretation of the theme, visual appeal, colour, perspective and balance.

**Cookery:** all cookery items gain most marks for excellent flavour/aroma, so it's well worth experimenting and tasting beforehand. Try to use the freshest possible produce.

**Preserves:** higher scores can be gained by using unbranded jars with new unused twist-top lids, filled up to the top and still closed on show day to preserve the seal. Plain labels should be in the middle of the jar stating the

date and year of making. For jams, marmalades and jellies, ideally a wax disc and cellophane should be used, and if these are correctly affixed to form a seal, a twist top lid is not needed. The wax disc should go on immediately the jar is filled, but the cellophane should go on when the jar is completely cold, so as not to trap any moisture. A curd should have a wax disc and cellophane only. Chutneys and pickles should have a new twist top lid and be presented in a clean sterilised jar.

**Vegetables:** detailed guidance can be found at [rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own/features/top-tips-for-entering-your-first-show](https://rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own/features/top-tips-for-entering-your-first-show)

**Limerick:** must be 5 lines long. Lines 1, 2 and 5 must rhyme with each other (rhyme A) with 3 stresses or beats in the rhythm, and lines 3 and 4 must rhyme with each other using a different rhyme (rhyme B) with 2 stresses or beats.

Good luck with your entries!

**Diane Dale**  
Judges and Stewards Secretary -  
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## Launch of the Morris 10 Series M

Our 1948 Morris 10 Series M emerged from our workshop on Bank Holiday Monday 25th May after a major restoration. While in our workshop, we rebuilt the engine, attached a new clutch assembly, repainted and polished the bodywork, replated the chrome, upholstered the interior and reupholstered and refurbished the original seats. We know that the car was first registered on 31st March 1948 as HON 490. On 10th June 1961 it was transferred into the ownership of Dennis Flowers who lived near Coventry. Twenty years later, the Flowers family donated the car to the Coventry Transport Museum from which the Morris Motors Museum acquired it in December 2011. The Morris 10 Series M was launched in September 1938, a wholly rethought 10hp model with a four-cylinder 1,140cc engine. The main new feature was the mono-construction that was draught- and sound-insulated. This was a new way of building cars replacing a separate body mounted on a chassis. It was not aesthetically pleasing, but the body was Morris's first unitary construction. The design was up-to-date with a better-conceived front end than the competing Vauxhall model. Morris put wood into the sills for further strengthening. To reassure customers that the new technology was safe, Morris carried out a demonstration in May 1939, crashing a new Morris 10 Series M into the previous Series II Ten of the old design. The Series M came out best.

The Second World War halted production of the Series M when the Cowley factory's output was diverted to war needs. Nevertheless, 27,020 units of these cars had been sold by May 1941. When the war ended, once permission was granted by the

Government, production restarted, not only in England, but also in India and Australia. There were two versions produced, one with a sliding roof at £305, plus purchase tax, and the other had a fixed head at £295, plus purchase tax. However, there were materials shortages and car manufacturers were directed to prioritise exports to gain scarce foreign currency. The Government also maintained a high rate of purchase tax to depress home demand. After the war, a few modifications were made to the Series M such as the bonnet grill which was rounder. Another 80,990 cars were sold before the Series M model was replaced. The photograph is of the car with some of the team who restored it. There will be free heritage bus rides at 12.15pm and 2.15pm on Sunday 7th and Sunday 21st June. The latter date is Father's Day, when we shall give free entry to the museums to Dads accompanied by their children. The Dads will also be given a free bacon butty!

### Frank Collingwood – Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museum



*The team pictured here polishing their pride and joy, our 1948 Morris 10 series*

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## Insect Week: Tiny Creatures, Big Impact

They may be small, but insects make a BIG difference to nature recovery. From 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June, the Royal Entomological Society's spotlight week is a celebration of all things insect. Check out their website on [royensoc.co.uk](http://royensoc.co.uk) These small critters really do make all the difference... there are more than 24,000 species in the UK alone, and they can be found in almost every habitat. Their jack-of-all-trades role spans pollinators, predators, pests, parasites and prey, and the study of insects has long been central to conservation, food production, medicine and ecology.

### How You Can Help

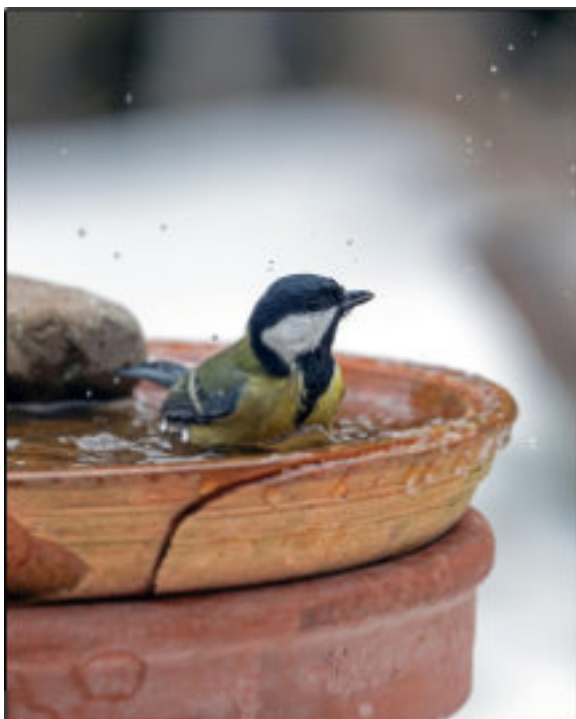
Volunteer: We occasionally ask for volunteers to carry out small projects, ranging from helping out with fieldwork and managing data to creating visual aids for our work. Our partner, Earth Trust, [earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/](http://earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/) regularly recruits volunteers. Whether you are out counting insects or sitting at a desk, all these tasks will help carry out their vital work. Have an idea for a research project? We are keen to hear from students and researchers about their research ideas and would be happy to discuss the possibility of using our site to support your research. Please get in touch to discuss what might be possible by emailing: [sophie@wildoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:sophie@wildoxfordshire.org.uk)

### Help to look after our grasslands

- Stick to the path and avoid wandering into the fields as this may disturb nesting birds or lead to nest abandonment.
- Be respectful of livestock, keep dogs on leads when there are calves in the fields.
- Remember to take your and your dog's rubbish home with you.
- Don't have BBQs on grasslands, as you may cause a fire.

### Gardening tips for June

*Want to help garden birds? Don't feed them in warmer months* - the RSPB have released guidance on feeding birds, stating that putting up bird feeders in your garden could be putting some species at risk of disease. Stop filling bird feeders with seeds and peanuts from **1st May to 31st October** to prevent too many birds gathering in one place. Instead, still put out small amounts of mealworms, fat balls or suet all year round.



*Let the grass grow* - June is peak time for insects like butterflies, bees and beetles. Leaving even a small patch of lawn uncut creates shelter and food for the likes of Meadow Browns, Large Blue butterflies and Thick-legged flower beetles.

*Go chemical-free* - gardening organically is a good way to ensure that the food and plants you grow are free of pesticides or chemicals and the wildlife will thank you for it too. By stopping the use of chemicals, slugs, snails, and insects such as aphids will return, but don't worry! In time, so will their natural predators, such as hedgehogs and slowworms to help keep pest numbers down.

*Keep Bird Baths Topped Up* - fresh water is essential for birds in warm weather. Keep a shallow dish with a few pebbles and help insects drink safely. However, only put out a bird bath if you can replace the water **daily** and clean the bird bath **weekly** to prevent the spread of diseases, especially in the warmer months.

**Jessica Bouwer, Wild Oxfordshire**

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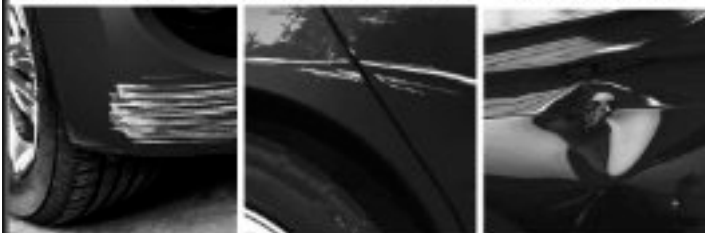
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# The Cricket Report



## Minster Lovell

And so, the summer finally started with our first match against Minster Lovell. We even had 12 players, which allowed our players to rotate in the field. Tim Jones found this particularly refreshing as he followed the Ben Duckett approach to Ashes Batting and slotted half a pint down whilst "resting". He even outscored Duckett, though not by much! Jon Scotchbrook won the toss - his main contribution to the day - and Arthur Higgins (75) and Matt Belton (15) on debut took us to 97-1, until Matt fell to a great catch in the Covers. Alain Michaelis (12) and Hector Higgins (18) got us back on track at 128-4, but a comms mishap saw Hector run out and the tail did not wag, as Steeple Aston subsided to 160 all out.

## Was it enough?

Alain and Hector started with 3 maidens in the first 6 overs; clearly Minster Lovell were adopting the Australian approach to cricket. They dug in and gradually the scoring rate picked up. Paul Longman (2-26) then came into the attack and kept Minster Lovell in check with an economical 7 overspell that included 2 wickets, ably supported by Raj (1-44). Our fielding could perhaps have been better with a few mishaps, but Jonty Renk (2-24) gave us a chance at the death with 2 quick wickets. Minster Lovell CC held their nerve, however, and just got over the line with 2 overs to spare to win by 5 wickets.

## Batting Net!

If any of the team feels in need of a Batting Net, please do let me know and we can arrange one in our paddock. Arthur had one just before the game and got all his bad shots out of the way! Next up it's the King's Head away on 18<sup>th</sup> June, a T20. Remember - if we win the toss to bat first, as it gets very dark for the team batting second!

With best wishes to all,

**Peter Higgins, Chairman SACC**

# Steeple Aston Golf Society



Our first meeting of the season was at Hearsall, Coventry. I don't think that I've played on a more well-maintained and manicured course for a very long time. This was helped by the club holding a Ladies Open 3 ball alliance on the day prior to our arrival. We all very much enjoyed the day, especially the chicken curry. The winner of the Richard Cardew Trophy with 31 points was Eric Blincoe, in 2nd place on countback with Tony Giles was Alan Brewer. Nearest the pin on the 10th was Tony Giles. NP in 2 on the 4th, nobody hit the green.

Looking ahead to Thursday 11th June, we will be visiting Olton in Solihull, B911JH. This is a parkland course, over 100 years old, which is our second outing for SAGS and we're looking forward to it very much. If you would like to join us, then call the usual suspects, Alan or Chris, on 01869 340423/347173.

We had some very warm weather a couple of weeks ago, so I put away my mock turtle sweater tops, which my wife thought was an indie-rock band from Manchester. It's a sweater that resembles a polo neck and which Tiger Woods made popular a few years back. Comfortable, warm, stylish and not too dressy, it works as well on the high street as it does on the golf course. It still doesn't quite suit the guy whose belly droops over his belt though! But then, what does?

Happy golfing!

**Alan**



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# Heyford Watercourse - MP Asks Questions

## Questions over watercourse at Heyford

The Environment Agency have found that a watercourse near Heyford Park has one of the highest concentrations of harmful 'forever chemicals' in the country. I attended a public meeting with constituents recently where many concerns were expressed. The EA tested a series of waterways and found that concentrations of PFAS (forever chemicals) were alarmingly high in the Gallos Brook, approximately 4.5km downstream from Heyford Airfield. This is consistent with what we know: PFAS are used in firefighting foam which was used extensively by the US Air Force at the base. The readings, taken in 2023 and 2025 were 2,021 and 2,294 nanograms/litre respectively. The US Government says that drinking water should have no more than FOUR nanograms/litre and that a level over 1,000 is 'critical'. No wonder constituents are worried. There are 16 waterways running off Heyford Airfield (which is on a plateau). The USAF had a fire pit at the airfield used for training their fire crews. Fuel was used to set a plane alight and the crews had to extinguish it. The plane sat on a concrete base which drained to the soil beneath. Here are the questions we need answered urgently:

### Constituents rightly want to know:

- what danger do the PFAS pose to them, their families and pets?
- what is known about the levels in PFAS in air, soil and water in the area?
- who is responsible for measuring, monitoring and containing the PFAS?

### I have written to the Environment Agency to ask them:

- to monitor water and soil beyond Gallos Brook and to release their results.
- whether the site has been prioritised for future monitoring and investigation?
- what assessment have they made of the risks to people and animals?

### I have written to the MOD to ask:

- whether the USAF shared any environmental assessments or made remediation commitments when it handed back the base in 1994?
- whether the MOD made any environmental assessments in 1994-97 (before they sold the site)?
- for any records relating to the historic use of firefighting foams at the site.

### I have written to the Department for Education to ask:

- whether any environmental, soil or air quality testing has been undertaken at Heyford Park School?
- whether the Department has assessed risks to pupils and staff from construction activity at the Heyford Park development?
- what guidance is in place for schools located near sites of known or suspected PFAS contamination?

### I have written to Cherwell District Council to ask:

- whether the environmental screening and assessment that was done as part of the Heyford Park development proposal addresses the risks of PFAS?
- what steps it has taken in respect of past developments to ensure there is appropriate remediation to protect the health of local residents?
- whether it has sufficient information to take decisions on current planning applications?

For completeness, here's a link to a statement from the current owners of the site, the development group Dorchester Living. They state there is no conclusive link between PFAS readings downstream in Gallos Brook and the historic activities on their site, and they argue that PFAS risk is best addressed by developing the site as they would then undertake remediation: [heyfordpark-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/PFAS-STATEMENT-FINAL.pdf](https://heyfordpark-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/PFAS-STATEMENT-FINAL.pdf) Thank you to the team who have raised concern and who organised the public meeting, whose website is here: [gallosbrook.wordpress.com/home/](https://gallosbrook.wordpress.com/home/)

This is a very serious matter. I have demanded urgent replies from all of these government bodies and departments. People in the Heyford Park area deserve answers about who knew what, when, and who now has the responsibility for monitoring PFAS levels and for keeping them safe. I am determined to pursue answers:

[bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cewpln9d28ko](https://bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cewpln9d28ko)

**Calum Miller, MP for Bicester & Woodstock**



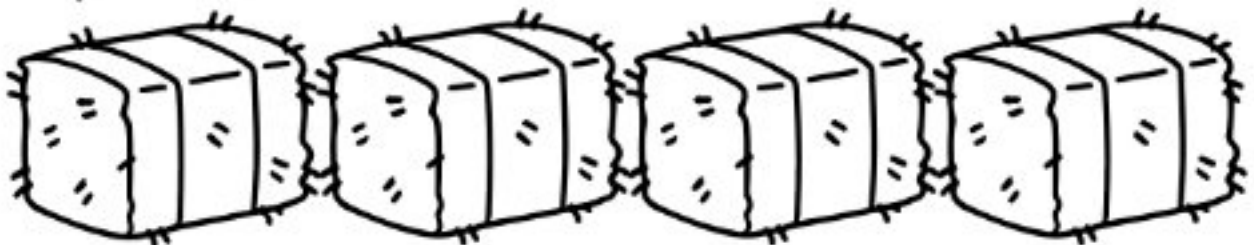
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## Football Focus

The 2025-2026 season ended with the Club's awards ceremony at the end of April. The village was well-represented among the winners. Adam Peckham picked up most 'Man of the Matches' and 'Players' Player' awards, Alex Keal took home the 'Supporter's Player of the Year' and Alan Peckham lifted the 'Robbie Munson trophy', which takes some lifting! Starting around lunchtime, some of the team showed their typical match-day tenacity, taking the celebrations into the early hours.

With professional levels of commitment, pre-season commences soon with the aim of building on a much-improved overall performance last year. There will be weekly sessions at Robinson's Close and various friendlies played later on in the summer. As ever, do please get in touch if you are keen to turn out and help our push for promotion.

**Spyro Markesinis**

[s\\_markesinis@hotmail.com](mailto:s_markesinis@hotmail.com)

### ***Stop Press! New Pub landlord***

The Red Lion will open on Thursday, 18th June, according to the Hook Norton Brewery website. The new landlord is Jonathan Perritt who has been running the Port Mahon pub in St Clements, Oxford, as well as some other pubs in London.



Steeple Talks June 18<sup>th</sup>  
In the Church – 7.15pm for 7.30pm



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# Church Matters



June sees the official start to summer (although BST began at the end of March), and it is good that the weather seems to have caught on and is warming up. A few weeks ago, I even managed to get out on my bike in shorts! Whenever I'm riding, I have to think carefully about how I'm going to fuel the ride. For long easy rides, I take a pack of fig rolls. For shorter but more intense rides, I add sugar to my drinks, as it's easier for the body to absorb it on the go. We also think carefully about the food we eat when we are wanting to 'watch' our weight, counting calories and ensuring that we get the right balance of carbohydrates, proteins and nutrients. With the war in Iran, the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, and resulting increase in fuel prices, we are thinking more carefully about the fuel we put in our cars, and how often we use them. Whilst we may think about the food that fuels our bodies and the petrol/diesel for our motor vehicles, how often do we think about what we put into our minds and souls? We know that getting outside, for a walk or gardening, can massively improve our emotional well-being. The digital environment that we are surrounded by equally can have an impact on our emotional state. The sharp increase in mental health issues from 2012 is linked to the advent of smartphones which many of us now carry. In May, the BBC ran two articles highlighting the dangers of misleading information on social media, self-titled 'baby sleep experts' who were giving false and dangerous advice, and 'AI generated weight loss professionals' who were setting unrealistic expectations. The difficulty is discerning what information is real and trustworthy.

At the end of May, as a church, we celebrated the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on everyone. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to help us discern the 'Truth' especially of God. At his Last Supper, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth when he was promising his disciples that they wouldn't be left alone. The Holy Spirit, which is open to everyone, gives us Peace, Power and Purpose. God's Peace is knowing that we are loved for who we are (having peace with ourselves), which leads to peace between us and others because we are secure in who we are. God's Power enables us to stand up for what is right, giving us the courage and confidence to share God's love with the wider world. This can be like on the first day of Pentecost, when the disciples were suddenly able to speak to the crowds gathered in Jerusalem in a variety of languages. God has a purpose and a plan for each one of us and the Holy Spirit helps us to know and fulfil that purpose. In a jigsaw, no two pieces are alike, each one has its own unique place and purpose and, without all of the pieces, the jigsaw is incomplete. This month I invite you to consider giving your digital environment an annual MOT. Take a moment to think about what you would change for your digital environment to reflect your priorities perfectly.

God bless, *Harriet*

## Church Services June 2026

Date	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
<b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June</b>	9.30am Holy Communion BCP	11.00am Holy Communion BCP	5.30pm Evensong
<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer	11.00am Family Service	5.30pm Holy Communion
<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June</b>	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Holy Communion	5.30pm Evensong
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June</b>	9.30am Morning Prayer	11.00am Morning Prayer	9.30am Family Communion

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

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

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King George's Field Hall  
Lower Heyford

Friday 11:00 - 12:00  
foundation - improver

Somerton village hall

Friday 12.15 - 13.00  
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Somerton village hall

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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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**Monday-Friday am/pm commuter run**

a scheduled service to/ from Lower Heyford Station

**Friday - shopping run to Bicester**

Leave – 10.23  
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[www.ourbusbartons.org.uk](http://www.ourbusbartons.org.uk)

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## 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)*

# Local Information

## Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre and Field

Letting charges	
Social Function peak times (Daily up to 6 hours from 6pm)	£55
Social Function off-peak times (Daily up to 5 hours before 6pm)	£27.50
Meeting of represented clubs (Daily per session up to 2 hours)	£11
Caution money for private lettings	£100
Block bookings for social events 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 <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!)



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

	Monday to Friday	Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays Before 6pm	Sat/Sun & Bank Holidays 6pm to Midnight
<b>Steeple &amp; Middle Aston Village Residents / Voluntary Groups</b>			
All Facilities (Main Hall, Kitchen and Meeting Room )	£10 per hour (£20 min charge) £75 Deposit	£10 per hour (£40 min charge) £75 Deposit	£15 per hour (£60 min charge) £200 Deposit
<b>Non-Residents/Commercial Organisations</b>			
All Facilities (Main Hall, Kitchen and Meeting Room)	£10 per hour (£20 min charge) £75 Deposit	£12 per hour (£40 min charge) £200 Deposit	£20 per hour (£80 min charge) £200 Deposit
<b>All Hirers</b>			
Main Hall	£8 per hour (£10 min charge) £75 Deposit	Not available to book separately	
Meeting Room	£5 per hour (£10 min charge)	Check availability with Letting Agent	

See website <https://savh.org.uk/village-hall-hire-fees/> for full details

# HARRIS'S STORES & POST OFFICE

Opening hours:  
7.30am – 7.30pm (Mon-Fri)  
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e-mail: [raj4878@hotmail.com](mailto:raj4878@hotmail.com)

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

### 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

### July 2026:

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> Green  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Green  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Blue and brown  
Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> Green



### 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 July and August to [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

Month	Event	Venue	Time
<b>June</b>			
Thursday 4th June	Guided Tour of Rousham House (organised by Anne Haymes)	Rousham	2.00pm
Sunday 7th June	Heritage bus rides (free) at the Bus Museum	Long Hanborough	12.15pm & 2.15pm
Tuesday 9th June	WI: SueSmith - 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 Golf Club, 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	Steeple Aston Cricket Club at King's Head, Bledington	Bledington	6.00pm
Sunday 21st June	Deddington Open Gardens	Deddington church	2.00pm - 5.00pm
Sunday 21st June	Heritage bus rides (free) at the Bus Museum on Fathers' Day	Long Hanborough	12.15pm & 2.15pm
Wednesday 24th June	Valentines: Boat trip Hobbs of Henley including meal onboard	Henley	
Wednesday 24th June	National Festival Circus - two show times available (SA Pre-School)	Robinsons Close	4.00pm & 5.30pm
Saturday 27th June	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9.00am - 12.30pm
Saturday 27th June	SACS - Meddlin' with Musicals! - A summer concert	Village Hall	6.30pm for 7.00pm
<b>July</b>			
Sunday 5th July	Steeple Aston Cricket Club - v - Moo Cow Club	Great Tew CC	2.00pm
Sunday 12th July	Steeple Aston Church Fete	Robinsons Close	2.00pm
Tuesday 14th July	WI: Afternoon tea party at the Sports & Rec	S & R Building	4.00pm
<b>Tuesday 14th July</b>	<b>SAL August copy and advert deadlines</b>		
Wednesday 15th July	Golf Society Meet - The Vale Golf Club, Pershore	Pershore	10.30am
Saturday 18th July	Tribute Music Festival at Middle Aston House	Middle Aston House	2.00pm
Sunday 19th July	Steeple Aston Cricket Club - v - TBC	Great Tew CC	2.00pm
Monday 20th July	Parish Council meeting	S & R Building	7.30pm
Tuesday 21st July	Valentines: Tea at Rousham (meet outside the house)	Rousham	2.30pm
Wednesday 22nd July	Valentines: Coach Trip to Bath	Bath	
Saturday 25th July	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9.00am - 12.30pm
Saturday 25th July	Moonrakers - Celtic, traditional & contemporary concert - St Mary's Church	North Aston	7.30pm
Sunday 26th July	Steeple Aston Cricket Club - v - TBC	Great Tew CC	2.00pm

**Pilates.** Village Hall. 2.00pm - 3.00pm & 3.15pm - 4.15pm - Mondays  
**Choral Society Rehearsals.** Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 10.00am - 12.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Bell Ringing practice.** Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Walking Netball.** Village Hall - 10.15am - Wednesdays  
**Brownies.** Sport & Rec Centre - 6.00pm - 7.30pm - Wednesdays  
**Toddler Group.** Sport & Rec Centre - 9.30am - 11.30am - Thursdays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 8.00pm - Thursdays  
**Village History Centre (SAVA).** 10.00am - 12 noon - Saturdays

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