

Steeple Aston

October 2026

Issue No. 638

Life

Steeple and Middle Aston Magazine



• Flower & Dog show • Mother Nature's Notes • Brownies report •



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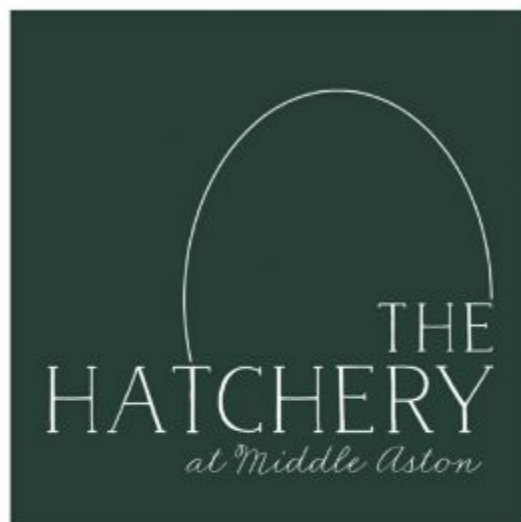
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steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine

Previous issues of SAL are also available on this site

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Photo by Nigel Francis

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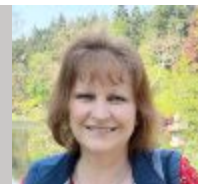
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Allotments (Church) SACAA		Amanda Rodgers	07793 553150
Angling Club		Sean Simms and Antony Morley	information@steepleastonanglingclub.com
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Stuart Cummins	01869 349155
Baby and toddler group		Katy, Martha, Hilary and Lisa	steepleastontoddlergrp@gmail.com
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	01869 340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	01869 347033
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	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	david.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Oxfordshire County Councillor (Deddington Ward)		Cllr Gareth Epps	Gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk
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	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	Deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk	
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Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Headteacher	Lorraine Wood	01869 340204
Environment and Sustainability Committee	Chair	Chris Nevile	chrisnevile@gmail.com
	Secretary	Martin Dale	martindale865@gmail.com
Fix My Street		Graham Porcas - grahamporcas@btconnect.com	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
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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	sawgox25@gmail.com
Team Steeple Cycling		Steve Boote	07805 910281
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	01869 340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Village Emergency Telephone System			690691
Village Website	Editor Jenny Bell	steepleastonwebeditor@gmail.com	01869 943573
Volunteer Driver Service (North Oxfordshire)		live.well.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Services/2561	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*

October 2026

Issue No.638

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Autumn often signals a time of change, as youngsters are now back at school or college, whilst others are embarking on their university adventure. Many of us take up a new interest, sport or evening class in a bid to keep our minds and bodies active after the excesses of the summer holidays.

Life also brings natural ebbs and flows along the way, that are beyond our control and sometimes challenging. This month, we moved my father into a care home – at almost 90 years of age, a significant event for all concerned that we hope will be a safe and happy environment as he moves into the next phase of his life. Steeple Aston recently bade farewell to Dorothy Clifton, a longstanding villager known to many in our community, and we offer sincere condolences to her family and friends on their loss. Touching tributes are included in this issue – many thanks to all concerned.

To celebrate the children in our community, we are pleased to welcome a report from the village Brownies, who hope to provide termly contributions to SAL which we very much look forward to reading.

Mother Nature's Notes tell of a 'False Autumn' due to the summer heatwave, and further evidence is shown by the early use of the Apple Press in the Community Orchard, which is a month earlier than usual this year.

Hope the seasonal changes bring good cheer!

Carol

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for the November 2026 issue is
Wednesday 14th October



READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE

<https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine>

ADVERTISING

All adverts, and all advertising queries
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Wednesday 14th October

ADVERTISING RATES

¼ page- £10

½ page- £18

Full page(village events only) - £20.00

The views expressed are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Committee. Readers are recommended to seek appropriate financial or legal advice before entering into any binding agreement with advertisers, as appropriate.



Tribute to Dorothy Clifton née Minnet

20.12.1944 - 25.08.2026

Dorothy was a farmer's daughter, and the youngest of six children living near Winchcombe, Gloucestershire. She grew up understanding the often-harsh realities of life, learning practical skills and a knowledge of the natural world. She travelled to school in Cheltenham by steam train. Inevitably she became a member of the Young Farmers' Club and was chosen to represent the South of England on an exchange visit to the USA. She stayed with local families, addressed meetings and the experience she gained she valued for the rest of her life. When she flew the nest, she sampled the high life in London and decided that her future career was as a social worker. This brought her to Oxfordshire in 1971, where she found a house in Middle Aston which she shared with her black labrador, Squire. Initially working with children and the fostering team, she later chose to work with the elderly. Always on the lookout for ways to serve her community, Dorothy joined the Church Council and the Horticultural Society, which happened to need a secretary, so she stepped into the role. She enjoyed badminton and lacemaking, and decided to try church bellringing. This was a crucial decision that changed her life. She met Graham, a bellringer from Great Tew, and in June 1976 they were married in Steeple Aston church. First came baby Vicky, then Sam was born, and the house became a family home with a series of dogs following Squire. She ensured that her children grew up to be practical and hardworking, like their parents. When they left home, Dorothy took a turn at being the Parish Chair for Middle Aston and also served as Church Warden.

Dorothy was never happier than when organising a big event. In the 1980s, when a huge sum of money was required to save Steeple Aston's church bells, she spearheaded fundraising activities every month for three years. She took a great interest in politics and, until recently, would walk her dog daily to collect her copy of *The Times*. Having survived major heart surgery in January 2024, the chronic leukaemia turned to acute and took control. She died peacefully at home, just as she had wished. Her funeral took place on 10th September. The half-muffled bells called to the congregation as they entered the beautifully decorated church which was packed full. It was a magnificent service, combined with Evensong, greatly enhanced by the singing of the choir. Tributes from Graham and Sam were read by Dorothy's nephews, and we'd all like to know how it was that Sam set fire to the garage door! In the village hall every cup and mug came into use, but the sandwiches and cakes kept coming - very well done, Vicky! If anyone needed proof of Dorothy's influence during her life, it was clearly seen in those crowded buildings.

Dorothy - a true village stalwart, so practical, so decisive and with such wise words to share. My friendship with her developed over 55 years until we were truly best friends. She has given me such support and I like to think I was able to support her through her more recent difficult times. Of course, she enjoyed teasing me. I was never allowed to forget that she was younger than me. 'Happy birthday! Love from your young friend, Dorothy.' Such a cheek considering she was born just three days after me!

Farewell my friend, you knew it was time to say goodbye, but we all miss you so much.

Diana Gardner

Dorothy Clifton - a message from the family

It's hard to believe that Dorothy was ringing the church bell on 28th July and then on 25th August, only four weeks later, she had passed away. Her chronic leukaemia, which she had for years, had turned to acute. She was started on treatment, but after a few days requested the treatment be withdrawn and asked to come home from hospital. It was her wish to die at home. For a few days she brightened up, was enjoying eating fresh vegetables out of our garden and doing *The Times* crossword. Eventually nature took its course and on the morning of 25th August she passed away quietly with Graham and Vicky by her side.

Graham, Vicky & Sam are so grateful to many people. Rev Harriet Orridge who, within minutes of her passing, came and prayed a blessing with us. She then later helped to put the most wonderful funeral service together which we will all remember for a very long time. The wonderful fresh flowers in church, the music and singing, all helped to make it such a special send off. Thank you all. And of course, the special half muffled bells.

To the generous people of the village who provided the refreshments afterwards, we had enough cakes to feed a small army, thank you all so much.

We have never been great at sending cards, but that might change now. We never realised how much it helps to receive all the messages and cards (well over 100), to know people are thinking of you and supporting you. All the extra little comments people put in the cards, the personal things they remembered about Dorothy. We knew she was a special person to us, but we didn't realise how special she was to so many others.

Thank you everyone, from the bottom of our hearts,

Graham, Vicky & Sam Clifton



Steeple Aston Online

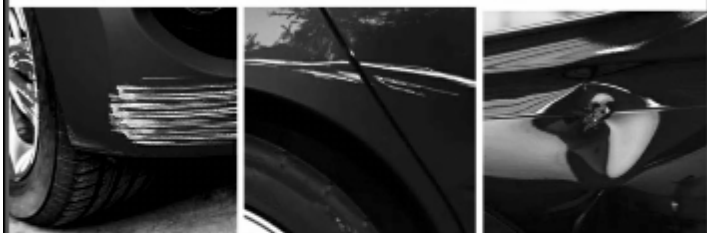
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Village Hall News



Thursday 5th November: Annual 'Fireworks Spectacular'

Gates open & food from: 6.00pm; Bonfire from 6.30pm approx. Fireworks at 7.00pm.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible to enjoy a spectacular evening of fireworks and refreshments. The Recreational Trust and Village Hall committee will present a great display in a safe environment. **Please do not bring fireworks, laser pens or sparklers to this event.** Glow sticks will be available for sale at the gate. Ticket price includes our special home-made soup together with sausage in a roll and squash for the very young. If anyone has any wood to burn, please contact a village hall/recreational trust committee member. **Please do not dump any wood or rubbish outside the gate or in the field prior to the event. All children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult throughout the event.**

Ticket prices: bought in advance - £14 family, £5 single. On the gate - £16 family, £6 single. **CASH OR CARD Tickets available from Barbara (01869 340423) and Steeple Aston Village shop, CASH ONLY from Monday 19th October. NB:** Ticket sales from the Village shop will close at 3.00pm on the day.

Sunday 6th December: Wassail evening

Enjoy a lighthearted evening of mulled wine, soft drinks, mince pies, carols, readings and Christmas music. This is an opportunity for everyone - families, young and old - to join in with some community singing. So come along and celebrate a country Christmas. Everyone is welcome. Free entry.

Saturday 23rd January 2027: Annual Quiz Night

Please book your teams early to avoid disappointment. Further details next month.

Please note our letting agent is Mrs Angela Smith 07734112967. Please do not call this number between 6.00pm and 8.00pm unless urgent.

Email steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com. Collect keys from 'Mijas' South Side, Steeple Aston OX25 4RU.

Victoria Clifton (chair) savh.org.uk/

Sean Woodcock signs Parliamentary Call

In a hugely positive development we are delighted that Sean Woodcock MP is now supporting plans for an emergency National Climate Broadcast after meeting constituents in Charlbury on 14th August - thanks to everyone who came to put questions to Sean on what was a swelteringly hot afternoon. After the meeting, Sean wrote on his Facebook and Instagram pages:

'As a result of communication from constituents, I have signed the Parliamentary Call for the National Emergency Briefing, calling on the government to stage a prime-time televised emergency briefing across all the main channels, delivered by independent experts and supported by the UK's Chief Scientific Adviser. Thank you to everyone who has been in touch with me about this.'

More than 3,450 People's Emergency Briefing screenings have either been held or are booked across the UK, giving communities a clear, expert-led account of the risks to food, health, the economy and national security. 149 MPs have now signalled support for the National Emergency briefing - we are delighted that our MP is now one of them.

Thank you to the new Parliamentary Call signatories





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Fireworks Start at 7.00pm promptly

Admission including food

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On the Day (Cash or Card)	£6.00	£16.00

U16s must be accompanied by a responsible adult

Members of the Public must not bring sparklers, fireworks or laser pens of any description

Please do not bring alcohol



Advance tickets will be on sale from Monday 19th October from the Village Shop and Barbara Brewer (01869-340423). Advance sales will close at 3.00 pm on the 5th November.

Proceeds will be shared between the Recreation Trust and the Village Hall



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School Report



As we begin a new academic year at Dr Radcliffe's Church of England Primary School, it has been wonderful to welcome children, staff and families back through our doors. There is always a special excitement in September, and this year feels particularly significant as I have had the privilege of officially joining the school as substantive Headteacher. I have already been impressed by the warm welcome I have received from children, staff, families and members of the wider Steeple Aston community. It is clear that the school sits at the heart of village life and enjoys strong links with local organisations, churches and community groups.

The children have returned full of enthusiasm and ready for learning. Across the school, classrooms are buzzing with activity as pupils settle into new routines, build relationships with their teachers and begin exciting new topics. We are particularly pleased to welcome our new Reception children, who have made a fantastic start to their school journey. We also welcome Beth Crocker, who joins our teaching team and will be teaching Year 4 this year.

Just before the summer holidays, the school also welcomed its SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. We were delighted that the inspection recognised the many strengths of our school community. Inspectors praised our deeply embedded Christian vision and values, the strength of our Religious Education curriculum, our commitment to the wellbeing of pupils and staff, and the strong partnership between the school and our parish church. We are incredibly proud of these outcomes, which reflect the dedication, care and commitment of our staff, governors, church partners, pupils and families. The full report can be read on our school website.

We are also looking forward to a busy term ahead. Harvest celebrations, sporting events, educational visits and community activities will all form part of the rich experiences that children enjoy at Dr Radcliffe's. We remain committed to helping every child flourish academically, socially and spiritually, while developing confidence, curiosity and a lifelong love of learning. As I begin my journey as Headteacher, I am excited about the future and look forward to working alongside staff, governors, families and the wider community to continue building upon the many strengths of this wonderful school. Thank you for your continued support of Dr Radcliffe's. We look forward to sharing more of our news and celebrations with you throughout the year.

Lorraine Wood, Headteacher, Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School

1st Deddington Guides Report



We finished last term in style with two favourite evenings. Backwoodsman cooking where the guides took up the challenge and we cooked all sorts of exciting things, all without pots and pans or utensils. Thank you to the Wolfe family at Barford who allowed us to go stream walking ... it was great fun - I'm sure all Barfordians were aware of our presence that evening!

Now in the fresh new term ... everyone's very excited to get back together again we had a lot of fun and we're looking forward to lots of exciting activities as we go into Autumn! Any girls of 10 years or over are very welcome to come along and see what we get up to.

Maggie Rampley 07957 600755

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From the ashes of disaster....

Our scheduled speaker had unfortunately suffered an accident and had to cancel her talk at short notice. However, we weren't going to let that stop us from having an enjoyable evening. Instead, we enjoyed a lovely social get-together, reflecting on the Horticultural Show, where our stall attracted plenty of attention — and not just because of the delicious selection of homemade jams, chutneys, breads and cakes. Perhaps the 'Bra Game' had something to do with it, too!



The evening was also a great opportunity to catch up after a busy summer and put our grey cells to the test with four table quizzes, all put together by Tina Ferguson. The hall was abuzz with chatting and laughter, along with quite a bit of head-scratching as we tried to find the answers to the Dingbats, Connection Walls, Name That Country and Name That Celebrity. In the end, it was the taking part that counted rather than the winning — although there was certainly plenty of competitive spirit around the tables! All in all, we had a really fun evening.

If you are reading this and fancy joining us, do come along to one of our meetings and find out a little more about what we get up to. You will be made very welcome.

Hildy Frenken

(Photo by Nigel Francis)



THE VALENTINE CLUB

If you have not been to the Milestones Museum in Basingstoke, I would recommend it as a great place for all ages where you will be transported back to the early 1900s and a slower way of life. The club took a full coach there during late September to rekindle memories of olden days. Also in September, we welcomed back to the club Tony Hetherington, who sang his way through the decades accompanied by his guitar.

This month, we will sit down for a fish and chip meal accompanied by various desserts supplied by the members. Early in the month we will take a break by the seaside, the Isle of Wight to be more precise, and hopefully enjoy some late summer sunshine or possibly, some early Autumn warmth. Who knows?

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

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

Summer Show defies the weather!

After such an extraordinary summer of heat and dry weather, many of us wondered what would make it onto the show benches. Our exhibitors once again did us proud, with fruit, vegetables, flowers, baking, crafts and children's entries showing real dedication and skill. It was especially lovely to see a particularly strong number of children's entries this year, along with new exhibitors entering in the vegetable, flower and craft classes, which is fantastic for the future of the show. And while the rain chose the one day we hoped it would stay away, a few heavy showers were never going to spoil the Horticultural Society Annual Show.

A huge thank you to everyone who came along. Early figures suggest around 600 people attended, and every cup of tea, slice of cake, raffle ticket, donation and entry fee helps cover the cost of putting on the show. With costs creeping up each year, that support really does keep the marquee standing and the rosettes flowing. We are very grateful to our sponsors: Middle Aston Pets, Flora & Fauna, The Hatchery, PTA Garages, S&J Catering, Medivet Woodstock and Finders Keepers, whose support shows how much the event is valued locally.

Dogs for Good were a wonderful part of the show once again, running the dog show and bringing plenty of wagging tails, hopeful handlers and very worthy rosette winners. It is always a popular part of the day.

The refreshments were a real highlight, as always. The village hall teas, organised by Barbara Brewer and a brilliant team of volunteers, kept everyone happily supplied with homemade cakes and drinks - just the thing for sitting down with a cuppa and taking stock of the day. It was also lovely to welcome The Chequers, who added to the occasion with the BBQ and bar, and brought another valued village business into the heart of the show.

Thank you to the committee, volunteers, stewards, judges, stallholders, helpers, washer-uppers, heavy-lifters and last-minute problem-solvers who make the show happen.

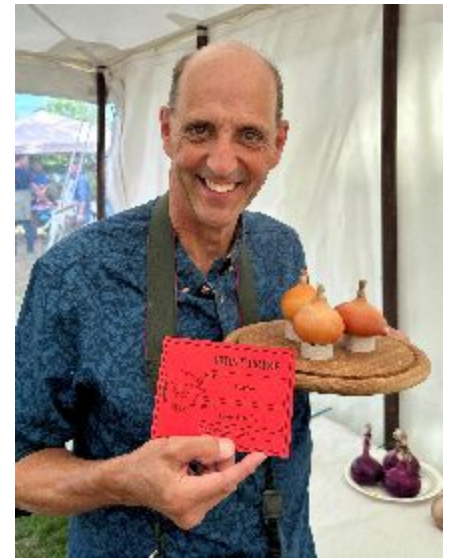
Our AGM will be held on 29th October, and we would love to welcome new committee members and helpers. With some long-standing committee members stepping down or changing roles this year, we would be especially pleased to hear from anyone who feels able to contribute to the planning, setting up or running of next year's show. You do not need years of experience or detailed knowledge of dahlias - just ideas, enthusiasm and a willingness to muck in. Many hands really do make light work.

Claire Coysh, Steeple Aston & Middle Aston Horticultural Society

Right: Junior Photography winning shot by Jacob Lewin.

Below: 'wonky veg'. Photo by Nigel Francis





Photos (mostly) by Nigel Francis (above!)





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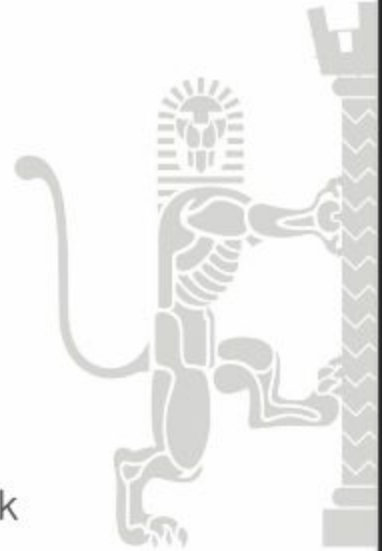
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Flourish Wellness Garden

As always, a huge thank you to all the people who have so kindly donated to our work, and this month especially to Councillor Gareth Epps at OCC for recommending us for an Oxfordshire Councillor Priority Fund Grant. We are so very grateful. Our work is not just one year, but we hope to be available always and are initially working towards five years, so such funding is vital and amazing at the same time.

So, what have we been up to? We won first prize for our beetroot at the Horticultural Show - quite an achievement after only three months! It was a lovely occasion and our little stand attracted plenty of interest with our pink wheelbarrow outside, packets of seeds as gifts on offer and a chance to make newspaper pots for seedlings. Approximately 50 people came down to see our Flourish Garden on the Allotment Open Day - an altogether jolly occasion.

New opportunities are opening up now we have our shed, and we will be developing ideas for the winter.

Ruth Dale



Steeple Aston Garden Club



A wonderful evening spent in a Steeple Aston garden

After the very hot summer we've had, our gardens desperately needed the rain. Fortunately for the Garden Club, the rain held off and it was a fine and warm evening for our September event hosted by Chris and Ray at their house in Steeple Aston, so it wasn't far for us to travel! We had a lovely evening admiring their garden as we had drink and delicious food brought by many members. Frodo their dog was also a very enthusiastic host and helped quality assure any food he was offered! We admired all the plants and how well they have survived the drought, unlike many of our gardens!

Wednesday 14th October sees the first indoor event of the season when Anton Blackie, Head Gardener from Estelle Manor, a country club and hotel near Witney, will be talking about either 'Horticulture in Hospitality' or 'Horticulture - Art or Science' which he is going to confirm when I contact him. He sounds like quite a character, so please come along and hear him speak in the village hall at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. If you want to know which talk Anton has decided to give us, please check out the Steeple Aston website steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/, contact me or Richard Preston using the details below, or just come along. You'll be very welcome. Further details about forthcoming events can also be found on the village website.

Alison Llewellyn alisonllew.home@gmail.com

Richard Preston richard.preston5@btopenworld.com



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Paul Badley - Conductor

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The Arts Page



Dinosaurs Are Forever

Blenheim is currently hosting 'Dinosaurs Are Forever', a major new exhibition by artist Jay Jay Burridge, created in partnership with the Museum of Natural History, University of Oxford. At the heart of the exhibition are five monumental sculptures of *Megalosaurus*, the first dinosaur ever to be scientifically named. Discovered in Oxfordshire in 1824, *Megalosaurus* changed our understanding of the natural world and helped lay the foundations of modern palaeontology. Fossil remains of *Megalosaurus* are now on display at the Museum of Natural History, University of Oxford.

These sculptures are not traditional museum reconstructions. Built from advanced modern materials and designed to be fully articulated, the sculptures reimagine dinosaurs through a contemporary lens. Making their public debut at Blenheim Palace, the exhibition offers visitors a rare opportunity to encounter the world's first named dinosaur reimagined for the 21st century. This exhibition is included with an Annual Pass or Park & Gardens ticket.

Runs at Blenheim Palace gardens from 10th August to 1st November 2026, 10.00am – 5.30pm.

(Photos by Carol Neville)



Poetry Corner



DRESSING UP

In days gone by, women's clothes
Really were quite grim
You were laced tightly into
whalebone
With the aim of looking slim.

You also wore a bustle
To emphasise your rear
It made sitting down quite difficult
So that was rather queer.

We believe that things are better
now
But that is simply not the case
Uncomfortable clothing for women
Is still quite commonplace.

Firstly, there are panty-hose
Which we British know as tights
I'm sure these items of torture
Contravene my human rights.

The damn things always get twisted
When you put them on
And that one leg is longer than the
other
Is a conclusion that's foregone

Who was it who decided
That bras should fasten at the back?
Didn't they quickly realise
This was a real drawback?

To fasten a brassiere
With tiny hooks and eyes
And to put them out of sight and
reach
I ask you, was that wise?

They should fasten at the front
Near the main attraction
Easy to see and to undo
When there's a call to action.

Now someone's had the bright idea
Of providing a bra inside a vest

So, you can put on both at once
It's quicker to get dressed.

A t-shirt with a built-in bra
Sounds like a good idea
But how to put the garment on
Is not made very clear.

Should I step into it with my feet
Then pull it up from down below?
Or should I pull it over my head?
How am I to know?

The t-shirt bit is inside out
And the straps are all awry
I'll have to start all over again
I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

So, try on these apparels
Wear them, if you can
But I bet you all these garments
Were thought up by a man.

Cathy Lawday

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



What a night for me to be running late! It felt like I'd arrived in a scene from *The Twilight Zone*.

So, I cracked open the digestives, took a slug from the thermos, sharpened my pencil and focused on the Clerk's Report. A reflective bollard purchased for a concrete plinth has already been knocked down and resurrected; grass cutting on Sixty-Foot is on the agenda; and platforms around trees in the playground need trimming – but who's responsible for the bill? That's better!

OCC's Cllr Gareth Epps sent his apologies along with a comprehensive report – he says the sudden halt to the local government reorganisation process has dominated the last week; he'd welcome feedback from users of the S4 bus; and the Oxford Traffic Filter trial is about to start. As residents of the county, we can register our vehicles for 25 free passes - but we don't have to if already registered for the congestion charge.

CDC's Cllr David Rogers was in attendance – he didn't mince his words and started by saying that the local government reorganisation project meant "£3.25m wasted"! There was happier news next as there is a big chunk of funding available to parishes, and he encouraged us to apply. The PC will investigate whether we can get funding for improvements for pedestrians coming from Middle Aston into Steeple – perhaps some road markings and signage, and maybe some improved bus shelters too, which I would heartily back.

Apparently, an application is already in for a new bus shelter at the Duns Tew/North Aston junction, which I thought was pretty rich given they already have one there, and on both sides of the road!

Cllr Rogers was getting into his stride now and the topic of the Kidlington illegal landfill was in his sights – "How long does it take to fix a padlock on a gate? Instances of fly-tipping have nearly doubled - it's a ridiculous disgrace!" or words to that effect. A shuttle bus is being considered between Heyford Station and Bicester, and GWR are looking at how they can better serve the area. Some cynics did wonder how long this interest in our area would last once the Dorchester subsidy runs out.

Next up was the topic of PFAS – which both Councillors Epps and Rogers, as well as our own PC, have been paying close attention to. It struck me as a very sad tale of historic contamination having a very real effect on us today. One of our PC has been in touch with an international campaigner, based in the USA, on the topic – he apparently shared evidence that real harm is being done to people, and these chemicals are shown to cause cancer. Our PC has been asked to provide details of all "publicly available taps" – some pumps and wells were noted on a map dating from c 1900, but I'm not sure how much pumping goes on in the village these days. And it's not just PFAS in Heyford, as apparently a site in Islip that has just got planning permission for over 200 new homes is so full of these chemicals that you can smell them in the air!

There was more despair on the topic of Planning, which frankly could fill my whole report this month! I know planning permissions can sound quite dull – but do bear with me, I promise it's worth staying on top of. A big 16-day appeal is just starting (and may well have concluded by the time you read this), all about some large warehouses at Junction 10 of the M40. The impact for us includes increase in traffic and irreversible damage to landscape.

Cllr Rogers seemed quite cross about it all, and even declared that he was close to using some expletives, suggesting that a "unilateral decision" had been made on the topic by someone in the council a while ago saying he "couldn't find a barrister to defend them" (Struggling to find a defence lawyer looking for some cash? It was back to the *Twilight Zone* as far as I was concerned!). We're now in the position where Cherwell is not defending its own refusal to grant planning – and the barrister appearing is in fact representing the local communities. This is possibly unprecedented, and also possibly a test case for similar developments. Another big development – the Puy de Fou theme park – could have a decision as soon as November, while the Railfreight Interchange examination is starting at the end of September and expected to last 6 months. Freight might come from Southampton, but is the track suitable and are the bridges high enough? Plus, with the planned 9,500 new homes in Heyford Park, let's not forget the cumulative effect of all these proposals!

Continued on next page

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



Closer to home, one property owner in Steeple Aston is apparently using new planning legislation to circumvent Cherwell local planning authority and put their planning application into central government (thinking about it, the whole evening had a real feel of The Twilight Zone). Still more planning on the agenda with news of possible changes at The Hatchery... Are we getting a farm shop? Or Padel courts? Or maybe both!?

Onto Highways and some possible white lines on the stretch on South Side from The Dickredge. Given that white lines can be ignored, there are lots of cars that park there (where would they go?) and we've been waiting for three years for white lines to be painted elsewhere in the village – I'm not holding my breath on this one. Feedback has been requested on the 20mph speed limit – one

councillor remarked that he's "hoping fewer cats have been run over"; while we've had intel that our "S106 Steeple Aston White Gates are ready for delivery" - what an exciting surprise, as no-one actually asked for them!

The meeting ended (with two members of the public who impressively both stayed to the bitter end) with news that the PC had a lovely letter from benefactors who want to donate a bench for the playground, and that a damaged wall needs repair.

The next meeting is on 19th October.

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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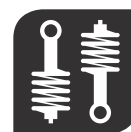
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2026 STEEPLE ASTON & MIDDLE ASTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW

Hayter Cup	G Clifton	Fothergills Cup	Mary White
Robson Cup	Richard Preston	George Alder Memorial	Daphne Preston
Wadham Cup	Daphne Preston	Beehive Cup	Mary White
Walker Cup for Show Champion	Daphne Preston	Lilley Cup	Caroline Parsons
Coronation Bowl	Victoria Clifton	Jean Stone Trophy	Jon Gascoyne
Gladys Stevens Memorial Cup	Claire Coysh/Janet Coley	Photography Cup	Jon Gascoyne
Scott Cup	Daphne Preston/Rebecca Lewin	Senior Children's Cup	Isobel Coysh
Rose Lilley Memorial Trophy	Caroline Edwards	Junior Children's Cup	Isobel Coysh
Lee Cup	Mark Utting	Under 8s Cup	Jacob Lewin
Rousham Cup	Richard Preston	Under 5s Cup	Keegan Evans
Doug Walton Trophy	Stuart Broadbank	Children's Photography	Jacob Lewin
	First	Second	Third
Division 1			
4 tomatoes	Penny Cummins	Barbara Brewer	Rachel Marsden
5 pods of runner beans	Graham Clifton	Alison Llewellyn	
3 onions	Nigel Francis	Rachel Marsden	Mark Utting
3 carrots	Rachel Marsden	Graham Clifton	Keegan Evans
3 salad vegetables	Graham Clifton	Mary White	Mark Utting
4 potatoes – coloured	Graham Clifton	Rachel Marsden	
4 potatoes – white	Graham Clifton		
3 beetroot	Alison Llewellyn		
3 courgettes	Mary White	Harriet Higgins	
5 cherry tomatoes	Mary White	Caroline Parsons	Harriet Higgins
5 dwarf beans	Rachel Marsden		
Collection of 4 vegetables	Mark Utting	Graham Clifton	Rachel Marsden
Best other vegetable	Mary White	Graham Clifton	Penny Cummins
3 dahlias	Rachel Martin	Stuart Broadbank	Penny Cummins
3 stems of annuals	Mary White	Caroline Edwards	
Cut, mixed flowers	Mary White	Rachel Marsden	Mark Utting
3 stems of roses	Caroline Parsons	Rachel Marsden	Mark Utting
Outdoor planter			
Division 2			
5 tomatoes	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	
5 pods of runner beans	Graham Clifton		
A cabbage	Richard Preston	Graham Clifton	
3 carrots – long	Stan Nelson		
3 carrots – short	Richard Preston	Keegan Evans	Stan Nelson
4 potatoes – coloured	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	Kristie Pickersgill
4 potatoes – white	Richard Preston	Kristie Pickersgill	
3 beetroot	Richard Preston	Stuart Broadbank	Stan Nelson
Collection of 5 vegetables	Richard Preston		
4 onions – over 250 gms	Stuart Broadbank		
4 onions – under 250 gms	Stan Nelson	Richard Preston	
Collection of salad vegetables	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	
A cucumber	Alix Gosden	Kristie Pickersgill	Stuart Broadbank
5 pods of dwarf beans	Stan Nelson		
A lettuce	Stan Nelson		
5 cherry tomatoes	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	Fiona McLoone
Pair of table marrows	Maurice O'Connor	Mark Utting	
3 courgettes	Stan Nelson		
2 peppers	Stan Nelson		
2 sweetcorn	Stan Nelson	Richard Preston	Mark Utting
5 spring onions	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	
2 leeks	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson	Mark Utting
2 parsnips	Stan Nelson	Richard Preston	
6 shallots – pickling	Stan Nelson		
6 shallots – large			
2 sticks of celery	Richard Preston		
Best veg not otherwise specified	Richard Preston	Charlotte Utting	Stan Nelson
Collection of herbs	Mary White	Richard Preston	Stan Nelson
Division 3			
4 apples – culinary	Penny Cummins	Mary White	Graham Clifton
4 apples – dessert	Charlotte Powell	Nigel Francis	Julia Whybrew
3 pears	Mary White	Julia Whybrew	Penny Cummins
5 plums	Mary White	Fiona McLoone	Penny Cummins
Dish of blackberries	Rachel Marsden	Julia Whybrew	
Dish of fresh fruit	Mary White	Richard Preston	Kristie Pickersgill
Bowl of mixed home-grown fruit	Mary White	Julia Whybrew	
Division 4			
3 dahlias – cactus	Caroline Parsons	Daphne Preston	
3 dahlias – decorative or ball	Daphne Preston	Harriet Higgins	Victoria Clifton
5 dahlias – pom-pom	Daphne Preston	Caroline Edwards	
3 stems of annuals	Daphne Preston	Caroline Edwards	Victoria Clifton
Vase of mixed grasses	Caroline Edwards	Daphne Preston	
3 vases of garden flowers	Daphne Preston	Victoria Clifton	
3 Gladioli spikes			
Single gladioli spike			
Cut mixed garden flowers	Daphne Preston	Victoria Clifton	
3 single rose blooms	Taissa Csaky		
A single bloom rose – unwired	Charlotte Utting		
Roses for scent	Victoria Clifton	Caroline Edwards	

Spray of floribunda roses	Daphne Preston		
5 stems perennials	Victoria Clifton	Daphne Preston	
3 stems chrysanthemums	Daphne Preston		
5 stems sweet peas	Katie Marshall	Daphne Preston	
Pelargonium - pot plant	Daphne Preston		
Pot plant flowering	Daphne Preston		
Pot plant foliage	Daphne Preston	Barbara Brewer	Alan Brewer
Pot plant succulent	Sue Porcas	Helen Wright	Daphne Preston
5 Clematis blooms floating in water	Caroline Edwards		
5 Fuchsia flower heads	Kristie Pickersgill	Victoria Stokes	Daphne Preston
Division 5			
Arrangement from my garden	Harriet Higgins	Caroline Edwards	Judith Pettersen
Flower arrangement 'Sport'	Daphne Preston	Charlotte Powell	Rebecca Lewin
Arrangement 'English summer'	Daphne Preston	Rebecca Lewin	
Arrangement in a welly	Rebecca Lewin	Judith Pettersen	Charlotte Powell
Foliage arrangement	Caroline Edwards	Charlotte Powell	Judith Pettersen
Arrangement for 5 blooms	Daphne Preston	Rebecca Lewin	Caroline Edwards
Miniature arrangement	Judith Pettersen	Charlotte Powell	Rebecca Lewin
Division 6			
Hand knitting/Crochet gloves	Diane Dale	Joanna Buckingham	
Handmade metre of bunting	Claire Coysh	Janet Coley	Sarah Darby
A celebration card	Janet Coley	Claire Coysh	Kristie Pickersgill
Handmade tree decoration	Janet Coley	Claire Coysh	Joanna Buckingham
Vegetable animal	Thomas White	Rebecca Lewin	Claire Coysh
A painting or drawing	Harry Gascoyne	Claire Coysh	Sarah Darby
Piece of embroidery or tapestry	Janet Coley	Sarah Darby	Claire Coysh
Any other handicraft	Charlotte Bartlett	Astrid Monsarrat	Jon Gascoyne
Limerick	Thomas White	Aldwyn Adams	John McLoone
Division 7			
Photo: Panel of 4 'Life'	Helen Lauder	Rebecca McLoone	John Coley
Photo: 'Childhood'	Jon Gascoyne	Isobelle Reid	Janet Coley
Photo: 'Poppies'	Jon Gascoyne	Janet Coley	John McLoone
Photo: 'Sea of colour'	Amanda Gascoyne	Jon Gascoyne	James Marsden
Photo: 'Gateways'	Jon Gascoyne	Lauren Reid	John Coley
Photo: 'Macro'	Jon Gascoyne	John McLoone	Peter Sage
Division 8			
Lemon curd	Mary White	Victoria Clifton	Fiona McLoone
Raspberry jam	Hattie Wright	Victoria Clifton	Julia Whybrew
Other jam	Julia Whybrew	Rachel Marsden	Victoria Clifton
Marmalade	Caroline Edwards	Judith Pettersen	John Coley
Pot of jelly	Fiona McLoone	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton
Pot of chutney	Judith Pettersen	Victoria Clifton	Julia Whybrew
Granary loaf	Victoria Clifton	Julia Whybrew	John Coley
Savoury flan	Charlotte Utting	Victoria Clifton	Caroline Edwards
5 Savoury straws	Julia Whybrew	Margaret McLoone	Victoria Clifton
5 Fruit scones	Victoria Clifton	Fiona McLoone	Julia Whybrew
3 Banbury cakes	Claire Tunbridge	Taissa Csaky	Victoria Clifton
Victoria Sandwich	Fiona McLoone	Victoria Clifton	Helen Wright
3 Viennese fingers	Victoria Clifton	Rebecca McLoone	Julia Whybrew
5 Pieces of fudge	Charlotte Utting	Rebecca McLoone	Victoria Clifton
Jamaican ginger cake	Claire Tunbridge	Margaret McLoone	Charlotte Utting
Homemade cordial	Hattie Wright	Victoria Clifton	Fiona McLoone
Home flavoured gin	Aldwyn Adams	Victoria Clifton	Charlotte Powell
Dundee cake	Victoria Clifton	Daphne Preston	Rachel Marsden
Division 9			
Under 5: Collage natural materials	Sophie Bennett	Lily Trienekens	Keegan Evans
Under 5: a painting or drawing	Keegan Evans	Hector Baggallay	Penny Davies
Under 5: 3 decorated biscuits	Evelyn Utting	Lily Trienekens	Keegan Evans
Under 8: Lego vehicle	Rebecca Purtell	Jacob Lewin	Douglas Buckingham
Under 8: a vegetable animal	Jacob Lewin	Douglas Buckingham	Edward Coysh
Under 8: 3 rock cakes	Ava Reid	Edward Coysh	Joey Stokes
Under 8: a painting or drawing	Jacob Lewin	Douglas Buckingham	Rebecca Purtell
Under 12: Lego wild animal	Douglas Buckingham	Isobel Coysh	Edward Austin
Under 12: vegetable animal	Isobel Coysh	Charlotte Purtell	Jessica Reid
Under 12: shortbread biscuits	Rose Preston	Megan Walker	Jessica Reid
Under 12: a painting or drawing	Lottie Baggallay	Isobel Coysh	Charlotte Purtell
Under 16: a vegetable animal	Isobel Coysh	Douglas Buckingham	
Under 16: a painting or drawing	Edward Austin	Isobel Coysh	Douglas Buckingham
Under 16: 3 millionaires shortbread	Jacob Lewin	Isobel Coysh	Douglas Buckingham
All ages: Any other handicraft	Darcy Yates	Isobel Coysh	Douglas Buckingham
Junior photo 'Summer'	Jacob Lewin	Rebecca Purtell	Douglas Buckingham
Junior photo 'Orange'	Charlotte Purtell	Jacob Lewin	Isobel Coysh
Junior photo 'Clouds'	Woody Wright	Megan Walker	James Marsden
Division 10			
Largest sunflower head	Edward Austin		
Heaviest pumpkin	Richard Preston		
Heaviest potato	Graham Clifton		
Heaviest marrow	Andrew Grimmett		
Most misshapen vegetable	Richard Preston		
Longest runner bean	Andrew Grimmett		



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# Upcycled Autumn Makes

As the evenings draw in, why not embrace the change of season and indulge in a spot of autumn crafting, with these easy, upcycled makes.

## Cereal Packet Pumpkins

### Materials Needed

- Cardboard (cereal boxes, delivery envelopes, or corrugated card)
- Pen or pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Brown paper (or a small twig)
- String or wool
- Paints or crayons (optional)



### Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Cut the Pumpkin Shapes:** Trace and cut out 3 identical egg shapes from your cardboard.
2. **Decorate (Optional):** Paint or colour the front of all three egg shapes, then let them dry completely.
3. **Assemble the Base:** Lay two egg shapes side by side, overlapping them by c.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their width. Glue them together where they overlap.
4. **Add the Centre Oval:** Glue the third egg shape directly over the middle, covering the overlapping seam between the first two pieces to create a 3D layered effect.
5. **Make and Attach the Stalk:** Roll a small rectangle of brown paper into a tight tube (c. 2cm tall – think of a typical stalk), glue it shut, and glue it to the back of the pumpkin so it sticks up from the top centre. (*Alternatively, glue a small twig to the back.*)
6. **Add the Bow:** Tie a small bow using string or wool, then glue it to the front of the pumpkin right at the base of the stalk.

### Helpful Tips

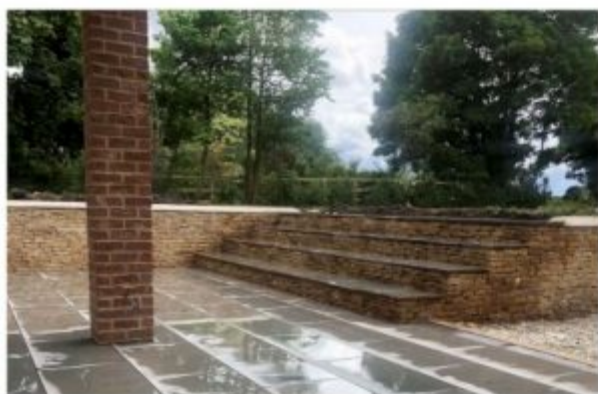
- **Texture:** Use corrugated cardboard to give your pumpkins a ridged, realistic look.
- **Colour:** Paint your card in a mix of orange, yellow, and muted green tones for a varied seasonal display.
- **Bunting:** Glue string along the back of multiple pumpkins to turn them into an autumn garland.
- **Hanging Ornaments:** Glue two pumpkins back-to-back with a hanging loop of string inside and hang them from branches.

*When you're finished with them for this year, either recycle component parts, or store for use next year.*

**Amanda Rodgers**

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## **SAVA Exhibition: 'A history of Steeple Aston's Clubs and Societies'**

*When the working day was over, opportunities to relax, socialise  
and build friendships*



The annual Village Archive Exhibition this year will showcase the many clubs and societies that have existed throughout the years. Many are still in existence, not least SAVA of course, but Football, Cricket, Golf, Netball, Cycling, Angling and Badminton are amongst the sporting clubs, with Brownies, WI, Valentine Club, Horticultural and Allotments amongst the less sporting, but just as essential clubs and societies that continue today.

Several former groups such as the Scouts, and Steeple Aston Players, are well known and deeply missed, but our research through the Archive has unearthed many other unusual and fascinating societies, all of which will be described and, wherever possible, illustrated with photographs. Have you heard of the 'Foresters', for example, who met seemingly quite secretly in the rooms above the Chequers, or the various 'Slate Clubs' and the notorious 'Sparrow Club'?

Details of all current clubs and societies featured will be displayed so that any enquiries about joining can be made.

The exhibition will be held on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2026** in the village hall, 2.00pm till 6.00pm and 12.00 till 4.00pm respectively. Look out for posters, Facebook and the village website for details nearer to the date. Entrance is free, with donations welcomed to enable the Archive to continue with its work.

***Stuart Cummins – SAVA Chair***

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# Mother Nature's Notes



As I start the first draft of my introductory Nature Notes for SAL, it is the end of August, and we are still in drought conditions across the country. Wildfires, lack of water and soaring temperatures have undoubtedly drastically affected the wildlife. There has also been a 'False Autumn' which is a phenomenon where signs typically associated with autumn, such as leaf drop and early fruit ripening, occur earlier than usual, often in late summer. This can be misleading, as it does not indicate the actual arrival of autumn, but rather reflects stress in trees and plants due to adverse weather conditions, particularly prolonged dry spells, and high temperatures. Drought conditions cause trees to enter a kind of survival mode, dropping their leaves early to preserve themselves for the rest of the year and beyond. While the trees are not dying, they're not thriving either, and the early leaf fall is a sign of the stress caused by the summer's extreme conditions. However, by the time you are reading this, it will be late September coming into October and the real Autumn will be upon us. It is a time for reflection and preparation. Fruits like blackberries, hawthorn, elderberry, and sloes which are normally ready to feed the animals, birds and insects to fatten them up in readiness for hibernation or the more meagre supplies of winter, are not so abundant this year due to the drought.

We can help the wild inhabitants of our gardens and fields by ensuring that food and shelter are available to them. Many animals will not be in the best condition following our arduous summer, so leaving fallen fruit on the ground in our gardens and orchards is beneficial. If you are leaving food out for wild visitors, make sure it is healthy for them and follow manufacturer's instructions if you are buying packaged foods. Did you know that, after Halloween, leaving a pumpkin to rot in your garden or throwing it out into a public space such as a wood, layby or field, can be very harmful as they take a long time to break down and as they rot, they damage delicate ecosystems, attract rats and can be fatal to animals like hedgehogs.

Leaving the dead structures of plants standing in your garden is ideal for our insects, providing shelter and warmth until spring arrives. Instead of piling all the dead leaves into the compost, push them into a secluded corner or under decking or a shed as bedding for hibernating hedgehogs. A pile of logs can make a warm dry home for a myriad of creatures. Don't be too tidy in the garden: less jobs to do, more wildlife helped! If you only have a small garden or even no garden at all, you can still help. A balcony can provide a space for a dish of water for birds and insects to drink, or ivy grown along the rails can provide highly beneficial food for birds, bees and other insects.

If you are interested in helping our wildlife at any time of the year, there is plenty of information available on what you can do provided by organisations such as the [woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk) [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk) or [wildlifetrusts.org.uk](http://wildlifetrusts.org.uk)

## Mother Nature

*Sloes, fungi and hawthorn berries*





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# 1<sup>st</sup> Steeple Aston Brownies

1st Steeple Aston Brownies has had an amazing final term of the 2025/26 school year which also marked our unit's 15-year anniversary! We kicked off the term with our annual sleepover at Youlbury Scout Camp near Oxford. For some of our Brownies, it was their very first night away from their parents, making it an especially exciting milestone. While at Youlbury, they had the chance to challenge themselves even further with a range of adventurous activities, including climbing, go-karting and the 3G Swing — a thrilling giant swing that sends them soaring into the tree canopy! This has not been our only weekend adventure of the term; we have had two day trips too. The first was for a girl-guiding takeover of Wicksteed theme park and the second was a local Division funday with even more activities and experiences to enjoy with fellow members of girl-guiding. Back at our unit meeting place, we have tried to be outside as much as possible including one evening providing some maintenance to our bug hotel at the community orchard. Brownies have also been exploring all sorts of things that fly to earn their aviation badge, including giant bubbles, paper airplanes, kites and mini bottle-rockets! With all of the hot weather to contend with, we have enjoyed some chill times with water games, fruity mocktail invention and ice-cream sundae making.

In September, we have already had a trip outside of the unit, but more of that next time! Brownies meets on a Wednesday from 6.00pm to 7.30pm during school term time at Steeple Aston sport and recreation building and is open to girls aged 7-10 years. For vacancy enquiries (including becoming an adult volunteer), email Fiona at [aston.brownies@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aston.brownies@yahoo.co.uk) or call/text on 07745 602231.

**Fiona McLoone**



*An action-packed term  
for the Brownies.*





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# The Cricket Report



Returning to Oxford Downs after a few years absence for a declaration game, Steeple bowled first. An opener with a South African accent who once played first-class cricket for Auckland spells trouble.... our bowling attack was dispatched to all corners of the ground. The exception was Hector Higgins who bowled brilliantly for no reward – 0-29 off 8 overs.

Despite attempted distraction tactics from Steeple's keeper, including conversations about Cape Town's finest restaurants between each ball, the sixes kept on coming. The century and retirement took just 60 balls, with the opener replaced by a lad in his early teens. Surely the wickets would come .... sadly, not. A superb technical demonstration quickly took the youngster to 31 before top edging Josh Drennan. Oxford Downs declared on 277-1 off 33.3 overs when their other opener reached his century (yes really!). Mmmm...

After a cracking tea, decent batting from the top order (including a dogged 27 from Nick Foster) took us to 95-3 off 22 overs, but with the last 20 overs called, the win was out of reach. Hector Higgins nevertheless decided to have some fun with a swashbuckling 38 off 29 balls, but with him gone and with 5 wickets in hand and 5 overs left, defence was the only sensible approach. The real entertainment then began. Alain Michaelis hit a risky four just over mid-off and, after a few calming words from his skipper, decided to march down the pitch, completely missing the ball to get stumped. Absolutely classic!!! Squeaky bum time ensued for the Steeple team as Ben Woods came to the crease with two overs remaining. But Ben and Nigel Doggett played some excellent shots and calmly led the team to safety, with Nige then offending the overseas pro by hitting him for a glorious six over mid-wicket to finish the season in style with a captain's 46 not out.

The declaration format provided a great fun game and exciting finish, and a very fitting end to the season. More next year!

**Phil Chesser**

## Steeple Aston Golf Society



I did say in last month's issue that this would be our last outing of the year, how wrong was I. See details below for our October meet at Olton Golf Club.

This is our rearranged match due to the weather forecast that day of heavy rain with potential thunder & lightning all day:

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

Olton Golf Club Mirfield Road Solihull West Midlands B91 1JH

Tel: 0121 704 1936 [oltongolfclub.co.uk](http://oltongolfclub.co.uk)

It's a 95-acre parkland course, over 100 years old, with prevailing south-west wind. The greens are said to be outstanding and the putting surfaces are recognised as some of the best in the UK. We shall all meet up at 11.00am for a 12noon start. Contact the usual suspects: Alan or Chris on 01869 340423/347173.

*I was sat in a restaurant and got hit on the back of the head by a prawn cocktail.  
I looked round and this bloke shouts 'That's just for starters!'*

Happy golfing!

**Alan Brewer**

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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 tranquility. Footpaths vary in length from 2km to 5.2km with different routes available. This informative guide is produced by Steeple Aston Life, therefore, all sales help with product costs of the magazine.

*Thank you.*



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## Join the handbell ringers

Handbell season is fast approaching, and we need some help! Every year the Steeple Aston Handbell ringers go door to door, ringing a carol or two to spread Christmas cheer and raise money for charity. This tradition has been going for well over 50 years. However, we need some help.

Have you ever fancied learning a new instrument? Doing something for your community? Being part of a team to spread Christmas cheer? Then why not come along and have a go. Rehearsals start in late October on Sundays from 7.00pm-7.45pm. Adults & children (from 9 years are welcome to have a go, but must be accompanied by an adult at all times). Ideally the parent will want to learn as well. If we have several new learners or children, we could look at having a session on Thursdays, early evening.

No musical training required, just a willingness to learn and recognition of Christmas carols. It really is quite fun, that's why people tend to stick at it for life or until uni takes them away! If you're interested, then why not join us for just one evening and see what it is all about.

Please contact me for more details: Vicky Clifton (07817 025948) [ymcstedman@btinternet.com](mailto:ymcstedman@btinternet.com)

*(Photo by Nigel Francis)*



## Spooky rides for Hallowe'en

Come to the bus museum on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October for a thrill or shock! During October we shall be decorating the museum ready for Hallowe'en. Each year we introduce new devices to entertain and scare. As usual, we shall dress up one of our buses taking visitors out for rides at 12.15pm and 2.15pm on each day. At 6.00pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> the bus will emerge from our running shed into the dark yard to pick up passengers for a creepy night ride through the eerie countryside. You are invited to come dressed up appropriately. Last year a skeleton turned up!



*Oxford Bus Museum, Long Hanborough*

# Church Tower Open Morning

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September, the bellringers opened the church tower in an attempt to find more bellringers. Our numbers have dwindled recently, and it is not always possible to find enough ringers, especially to ring the bigger bells. We were very pleased to welcome about 40 people to climb the tower to view the bells and see how they work. For the brave there was an opportunity to go out on the tower roof and view the village.

Everyone was encouraged to have a pull on a rope and try ringing a bell, the aim being to find more ringers and keep this traditional art going. Bells have been rung from Steeple Aston church for 350 years and it is up to us to try and preserve it. Some of the keen potential recruits need to grow a little taller but we can wait! We will have to see if any turn up on a Tuesday evening, when anyone is welcome at 7.30pm.

The open tower coincided with a 'big clean' working party in the church. It was great to see so many people just enjoying being in the church working, chatting and sharing delicious cake.

## Graham Clifton

*(Photos by Nigel Francis)*



# A juicy time at the Orchard!

Our first Apple Pressing Day went well, with the Orchard Friends turning a bumper crop of very early-ripening apples into some delicious fresh apple juice. The apples seem to be falling from the trees at an alarming rate this year, no doubt thanks to the dry weather, so if you have apples going spare, don't let them go to waste!

If you'd like to have a go at making your own juice, the apple press is available to borrow. Pick your apples, chop and mulch them, then squeeze out all that lovely juice. We also have a pasteurising machine, which helps your juice keep for longer.

So, if your garden is currently raining apples, get in touch with the Orchard Friends and turn your unwanted apples into something rather tasty!

**Annie: 07740290291**

**Nigel: 07836261532**



*Everyone enjoyed getting involved, from chopping up the fruit to squeezing out the juice.*



*Photos by Nigel Francis*





Steeple Talks November 19th  
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**Dr Philip Davies**

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**Please book by 23rd November**

# Church Matters



Hello, have you had a good summer? That has been a regular question over the last month as schools return and we get back into the swing of things. But what makes for a good summer? This summer the weather here has been glorious, with lots of sunny days, sometimes rather too hot, and very little rain. This has created the opportunity to spend time outside, with trips to the seaside, or stately homes, long walks or simply sitting outside in the shade enjoying a long cool drink. Personally, I have had a lovely summer, with a wonderful holiday in France cycling in some beautiful countryside in the morning and then lazily reading books in the afternoon. But what of others? Have farmers had a good summer? Due to the weather last year, the crop yield was down, as dramatically seen on *Clarkson's Farm* with the rye only being a small heap compared to filling the barn. This year, I understand that the yield has been okay but of lower quality. So probably not a good summer again.

In one of the harvest Bible readings from Deuteronomy (in the Old Testament), God promises that if Israelites follow all his commandments, he will bless them, including in the city and in the field, when you come in and when you go out. When Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment he replied with the summary of the Law: *Love the LORD your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.* He was then asked: *And who is my neighbour?* with Jesus responding, giving us the Parable of the Good Samaritan. We usually think of our neighbour as the person next door. Events around the world can stretch us to think of our global neighbours, e.g. people in Nepal suffering massive loss due to the landslides.

Over the summer, I read Robert MacFarlane's book 'Is A River Alive?', opening my eyes to think about creation as our neighbour. In the book, Robert visits three rivers, looking for the river's source in Ecuador, visiting a dying river in Chennai, India and canoeing down a river in Canada, as well as writing about how his local chalk stream varies through the seasons. Our weather is changing as a result of our activities. For years, we have treated creation as something we own, often abusing it. There are two islands of rubbish the size of France floating in the oceans. At times, we behave with the attitude 'out of sight, out of mind' which becomes 'not my problem'. I am wondering 'has creation had a good summer?' What would happen if we actually saw creation as our neighbour, with full 'human' rights i.e. with the right to exist and flourish? Back in Genesis, at the beginning, God made us in his image to reflect his nature, so we can be responsible for the fish, the birds, the cattle and, yes, the Earth itself (Genesis 1:27-28 MSG). He is a loving God - so we are made to love. Being responsible for something involves caring for it, looking after it. This month, as autumn truly arrives with the nights closing in, I invite us all to think about how we can help creation to have 'a good summer' next year? What individual actions can we take to help creation?

**God Bless, Harriet**

## Church Services October 2026

| Date                                      | North Aston                  | Steeple Aston                 | Tackley                    |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Sunday<br/>4<sup>th</sup> October</b>  | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion BCP | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion BCP | 5.30pm<br>Evensong         |
|                                           |                              |                               |                            |
| <b>Sunday<br/>11<sup>th</sup> October</b> | 9.30am<br>Morning Prayer     | 11.00am<br>Family Service     | 5.30pm<br>Holy Communion   |
|                                           |                              |                               |                            |
| <b>Sunday<br/>18<sup>th</sup> October</b> | 9.30am<br>Holy Communion     | 11.00am<br>Holy Communion     | 5.30pm<br>Evensong         |
|                                           |                              |                               |                            |
| <b>Sunday<br/>25<sup>th</sup> October</b> | 9.30am<br>Morning Prayer     | 11.00am<br>Morning Prayer     | 9.30am<br>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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Applications are invited to the Dr Radcliffe's Trust to help young people aged 16 – 25 to further their education or training. This can be at school (post GCSE), college, apprenticeship, university, or some other form of training. For more details, please see the Steeple Aston website. Applications close for this academic year on 11/11/26. Please make sure that you read the information at the top of the application form before you fill it in.

You can find the application form using this link

**<https://forms.gle/UuNa3fZBiueZDQD6A>**

Or use the QR code below



# Travel Times

## 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)**

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

- The Sport & Rec is available to hire
- The "Friendly" space - the ideal venue for smaller parties, children's parties and get togethers
- Need more space? Hire the Sport & Rec and Village Hall together
- Fantastic playground just outside
- Internet
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- Small kitchen and separate bar
- Room for around 50 seated
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- Car Parking
- Regular events include Home Education, Babies & Toddlers, Brownies, After School Club, Bridge and of course the Football Club (it's been going since 1898!)

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

## STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL

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



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or call 07734 112967

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

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

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

**Steeple Aston and Middle Aston  
Refuse & Recycling collection day  
is THURSDAY.**

#### October 2026:

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Blue and brown

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Green

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

#### November 2026:

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> Green

Thursday 26<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)**

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# 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 November and December to [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

| Month                 | Event                                                                                              | Venue                 | Time               |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>October</b>        |                                                                                                    |                       |                    |
| Mon 5th - Fri 9th     | Valentines: Holiday to the Isle of Wight                                                           | Isle of Wight         |                    |
| Saturday 10th         | Race Night - in aid of SA Sport & Recreation Centre                                                | S & R Building        | 6.30pm for 7.00pm  |
| Tuesday 13th          | WI: Archaeological discoveries at Broughton Castle                                                 | Village Hall          | 7.00pm             |
| <b>Wednesday 14th</b> | <b>SAL November copy and advert deadlines</b>                                                      |                       |                    |
| Wednesday 14th        | Garden Club Talk - Anton Blackie, Head Gardener Estelle Manor                                      | Village Hall          | 7.00pm for 7.30pm  |
| Thursday 15th         | Golf match at Olton Golf Club, Solihull, West Midlands                                             | Olton Golf Club       | 11.00am for 12noon |
| Monday 19th           | Parish Council Meeting                                                                             | S & R Building        | 7.30pm             |
| Tuesday 20th          | Valentines: Fish & Chips                                                                           | Village Hall          | 1.30pm             |
| Saturday 24th         | Farmers' Market                                                                                    | Deddington            | 9.00am - 12.30pm   |
| Thursday 29th         | Horticultural Society AGM (NB: Change of Date)                                                     | Committee Room        | 7.30pm             |
| Saturday 31st         | Church Halloween event                                                                             | Village Hall          | 5.00pm-7.00pm      |
| <b>November</b>       |                                                                                                    |                       |                    |
| Wednesday 4th         | Garden Club                                                                                        | Village Hall          | 7.00pm for 7.30pm  |
| Sat 7th & Sun 8th     | SAVA exhibition:A history of SA's Clubs and Societies                                              | Village Hall          | 2-6 Sat; 12-4 Sun  |
| Mon 9th - Thurs 12th  | Valentines: Holiday to Gunton Hall, Lowestoft                                                      | Lowestoft             |                    |
| Tuesday 10th          | WI: 3 Chemists & a Doctor                                                                          | Village Hall          | 7.00pm             |
| <b>Saturday 14th</b>  | <b>SAL December copy and advert deadlines</b>                                                      |                       |                    |
| Saturday 14th         | Quiz and curry night - for Princess Alice Hospice                                                  | Village Hall          | 7.00pm             |
| Monday 16th           | Parish Council Meeting                                                                             | S & R Building        | 7.30pm             |
| Tuesday 17th          | Valentines: 60s & 70s music                                                                        | Village Hall          | 2.30pm             |
| Thursday 19th         | Steeple talks: Blood and Fire - Social History of the Salvation Army (change of date from October) | SA Church             | 7.15pm for 7.30pm  |
| Saturday 21st         | Christmas Fair - Dr Radcliffe's School, Fir Lane                                                   | Dr Radcliffe's School | 11.00am - 2.00pm   |
| Sunday 22nd           | SACS Autumn Concert: A Celebration of John Rutter                                                  | SA Church             | 7.00pm             |
| Friday 27th           | Church Quiz Night                                                                                  | Village Hall          | 7.00pm for 7.30pm  |
| Saturday 28th         | Farmers' Market                                                                                    | Deddington            | 9.00am - 12.30pm   |
| Sunday 29th           | Church Messy Advent event                                                                          | Village Hall          | 1.00pm - 5.00pm    |

**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

**Bellringing 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

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

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Unit 2 Glenmore BusinessCentre, Range Road, Witney, OX29 0AA Tel: 01865246762

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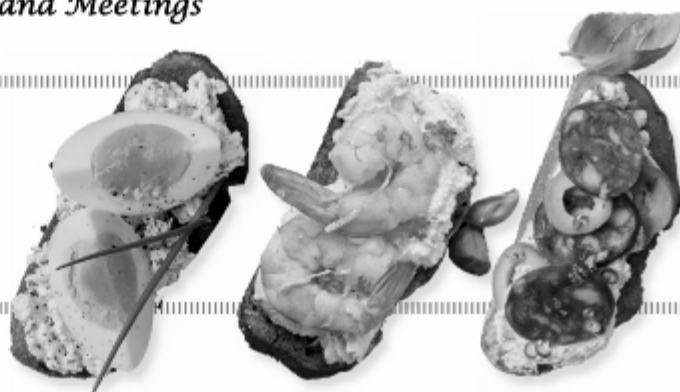
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