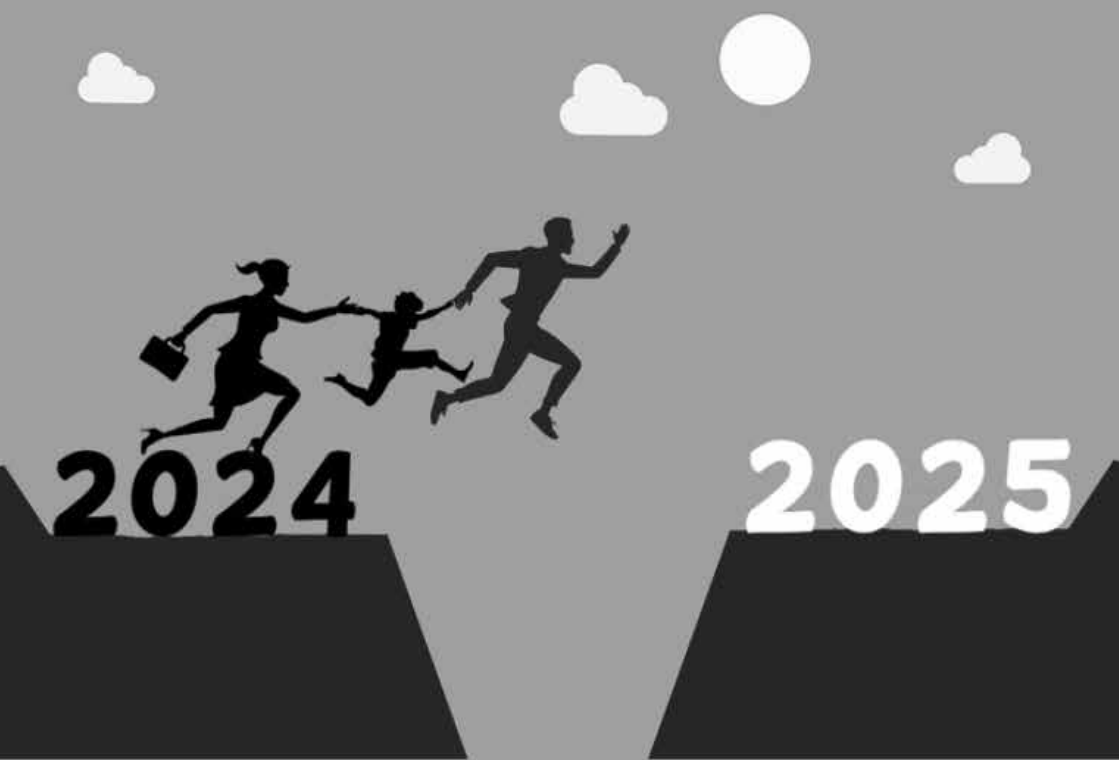


Community Matters



Lower Wylde & Till Valley
Parishes Magazine
JANUARY 2025

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

As we leap into 2025 against a backdrop of worrying global issues, it is wonderful to read the awesome submissions of local community-driven events, organised by so many brilliant volunteers that bring the prospect of shared fellowship to so many people. A huge thank you from us all to everyone involved. May the coming year bring joy, health and togetherness to every doorstep.

Quote for the Month – request from a regular reader to include quotes from A Song of the Weather by Flanders and Swan to cheer us all up!

“January brings the snow – makes your feet and fingers glow”

BERWICK ST JAMES

Happy New Year to you all.

Get Well Soon to everyone who is under the weather.

CHURCH NEWS

I write this in advance of the **Carol Service** so I am hopeful that all the hard work in making the preparations makes it a memorable service. Enormous thanks to Stephen Bush for taking on the organisation for the service, to Bishop Andrew for coming and taking the service, to Martin Gairdner and choir for the singing, to the flower arrangers for the decorations, to Ailsa Bush for the refreshments. Many other people are involved behind the scenes so sincere thanks to them all.

In **January** we have our two usual services, a Holy Communion Service at 9.30am on Sunday 5th January. On Sunday 19th, we are planning a **Plough Service** at 11.00a to celebrate and bless the traditional start of the farming year.

On Friday 24th, starting at 9.30am we are organising a **Deep Clean** of the church. If you fancy keeping warm by some dusting and polishing, we would be delighted to see you for however long and short a time you can spare. I shall put the church heating on. Advance notice that the first Sunday in February, the 2nd, promises to be a particularly busy one, with a baptism for Thilo Hardy (son of James and Johanna) in the Holy Communion service starting at a revised time of 10.30a.m. At 3.00pm we have the wedding of Jack Mynott and Abi Hinchliffe, so that Sunday promises a double celebration and we very much look forward to it.

LAUNCH2LEARNING

Berwick residents may have noticed that Launch2Learning have started operations at the Guide Centre. They are there between 9.00am and 3pm Monday-Friday. Their role is to provide education for children, aged between 5-16, who do not prosper in a traditional educational setting. The approach is based on 1-1 provision in a quiet and calm setting.

The staff made contact via Jonathan Plows and I met them in December. When I visited, they had six children, with a further two expected to start the following week. The staff want to give the children a sense of doing something for others and so they are baking a number of mini-Christmas cakes and mince pies to make into parcels to be given to individuals in the village. This is very generous and much appreciated. If you see a number of young children in the village, accompanied by adults, they may well come from the Guide Centre so please make them feel welcome...

TEA and CAKE and CHAT in the READING ROOM

The January Chats are on **Tuesdays 7th and 21st January from 2.30 – 4pm**, come at any time, lovely to see everyone. There is no charge, cakes are welcome too!

Do you want to move to one Chat each month? Or keep it as it is? And would you prefer the 1st Tuesday or the 3rd Tuesday? Would another afternoon be better? Or are you happy as it is? Please email Nicky on chstreet@btinternet.com with your comments – I really need as many responses as possible!

OLD FORGE FARM SHOP

Christmas Wishes. The lovely Christmas Wishes Afternoon was great fun and the Tree looks lovely. The Christmas Cancer Research Tombola made £238 - a wonderful effort from all for such a great cause. Many thanks to all at The Farm Shop.

Many thanks to Sam and all at the Old Forge Farm Shop for organizing the Needle Felt Gonk making Workshop. It was great fun, and the cakes and sausage rolls very tasty. Looking forward to the next Craft Workshop!

Christmas Closing. The shop will be closed from Tuesday 24th December. And re-open, ready for the New Year, on 2nd January at 9am.

READING ROOM CHRISTMAS FAIR.

A great time was had by all at the Christmas Fair in the Reading Room on 16th November – the room looked bright and cheerful, and full of gifts and raffle, and ready for Christmas. A wonderful amount of £435.50 (including a sale made later on ebay for £15) was raised. Many thanks to all the committee, and everyone who helped, brought donations, came and bought and enjoyed the chat and ginger cake and tea. (and especially to the ones who helped clear up afterwards).

PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED FOR VILLAGE CARDS

We would like to make new village cards and so we need new photographs of the village! The cards will be made in the summer, but we would very much welcome some winter photos. If you would like to, and there is some wonderful weather – snow, frost etc – then please send photos to me at the highest resolution you can, and the Reading Room committee will choose the photos to use later in the year. Many thanks indeed.

Nicky chstreet@btinternet.com

The Reading Room was full of lots of children of all ages on Saturday 23rd November for the Christmas Crafternoon, lots of glitter and glue and stamps, and cards and decorations were made. Great fun for everyone especially for the toddler table too! Many thanks to those who donated craft items – we had lots! Thanks especially to Jo, James, Elspeth and Rosalyn for the fantastic organization and cakes and refreshments, and also to David, Ellie and Aoife for helping to tidy up afterwards!

LOCAL HISTORY; B3083

In my last article I attempted to explain the road numbering system. But our road – the B3083 - doesn't entirely fit.

This is because at the introduction of the Road Numbering in 1923, it was the A360 – the main road to Devizes.

Originally the A360 started at the junction with the A36 at Stapleford (this makes the numbering sensible!). It then followed the route of the current B3083 through Stapleford, Berwick St James, Winterbourne Stoke and over the hill to Shrewton, joining the A344, and then on to Devizes as the A360.

In 1935 there was a revision of the road numbers and the former B3086 between Salisbury and Airman's Corner became the A360. The A344 and A360 ran on the same road to and through Shrewton, but the A360 number became dominant, and continued to Devizes. The A344 between Shrewton and Warminster was later renumbered B390.

Our road from Stapleford to Shrewton became the B3083. The number B3083 was actually originally a short road in Blandford. In the 1935 renumberings this road was renumbered to be part of the B3082, and so the number was available to be used elsewhere!

Why wasn't the Devizes road an A road in the 1923 list? The current A360 was a turnpike (toll road) from 1761 to 1870. Our road was described in 1841 as the "only Public Carriage road between Salisbury and Devizes...for some years past used as the Mail Coach Road". In 1923 it was probably thought that most traffic travelled from village to village, rather than cross country town to town. However, it only took a few years (1923 to 1935) for the authorities to realize that the main road was, in fact, the Devizes road, and it was renumbered the A360.

Written and researched by Nicky Street

THE BERWICK PART OF THIS MAGAZINE-ENTRIES

Please send to me, Nicky Street The Dairy House 790309, or e-mail chstreet@btinternet.com by 14th of the month before the magazine is due out, indicating it is a magazine entry. Or, if you prefer, directly to the editor (see elsewhere in the magazine). It is great to welcome new villagers and congratulate on exam and other successes, and wish goodbye to old friends.

GREAT WISHFORD

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING

We had a fun afternoon on Wed 4th Dec in St Giles' Church when Daphne led an entertaining afternoon of wreath and festive table decoration making! Boughs were swapped and attached; creative chat flowed (carols in the background) plus seasonal mince pies. What a happy afternoon. Thank you Daphs!

WREATH COMPETITION

The results of the Christmas Wreath competition will be announced in next month's mag! Thank you to all who participated and those who didn't know they were participating

ST GILES- THANK YOU AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

A special thank you to all those who have made sure the wheels have not "come off the wagon" which is St Giles. None of the activities this year would be possible without the work which goes on routinely and unseen in the background.

Café in the Church continues to be popular and goes from strength to strength. We are especially grateful to those who bake, in some cases week in week out. The Breadstone was a wonderful community team effort and but one of the occasions in 2024 when the church was packed out. It all takes time and effort to setup and reorganise. From the team of unlockers, who open up the church every day in all weathers, to the flower decorations which are stunning, to the cleaning of the church (a brass chandelier takes an hour if done well) to the volunteer(s) who oversee the cemetery and continue to improve its upkeep, we are most grateful.

A huge thank you to anyone in any form who has given their time and or money to make it work. The measure of how well it does so, reflects your generosity and the investment by this community. We wish you a Very Happy New Year and every blessing to you and your family in 2025.

ST GILES' CAFÉ IN THE CHURCH NEWS

On 12th December, our Café regulars were treated to carols and readings from Wishford school children, who came in to practise for the service proper in church later the same day. They received hearty applause, and everyone present joined enthusiastically in the old favourite "We wish you a merry Christmas"..... it made for a joyous start to the Christmas season. Just a quick reminder that the first Café of 2025 will be on Thursday 9th January. After that, I shall be out of action for a while and as we are already struggling with volunteers to help on Thursday afternoons, if there's anyone you know who would be willing to give just two hours of their time to help out (between 2:00 and 4:00 pm), please contact me or Ruth Miller. We are grateful to our customers for your support and laughter, to our helpers and bakers, and to those who

work hard behind the scenes to help make this happen - we couldn't do it without you. 2024 was a great year for our Cafe - together we can make it even better in 2025. Happy New Year! Yvonne Allen

RECTOR OF THE WYLE AND TILL VALLEY

We are most grateful to the Rev Jonathan Plows for his work to the community as Rector. He works tirelessly for eight churches in the valley, the Schools and the wider community, with no administrative support. We thank him for his hard work and commitment to growing our community.

OAK APPLE CLUB – THANKS!

We would like to thank everyone who came to our rearranged Christmas light switch on which took place on Saturday 14th December. It was lovely to see so many of you and enjoy a drink and a chat together before Christmas.

Special thanks go to Wishford Parish Council for donating the Christmas Tree, Andy from Burlen Fuel Systems Ltd, Philip Dewey and Gus Newman for your generous donations and help given. To James Stewart and Hanna for holding the tractor fundraising event with all proceeds going to Oak Apple Club. To everyone who donated a raffle prize, thank you, we had a great selection of fabulous prizes.

The Oak Apple Club would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy new year and we look forward to seeing you all in 2025 and thank you for your continued support throughout 2024. - Oak Apple Committee.

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

The last PC meeting of the year took place on the 27th November where the parish council welcomed Julian Lewis as its newest member of the council. The meeting was also attended by Area Cllr. Kevin Daley. The minutes of the meeting will be available on the website shortly. The next meeting is the annual budget meeting to be held in January. Drainage clearing will be carried out from the Junction of station road & Langford road continuing up Grovely road to clear the gullies along this section which often overflows during heavy rain. This work was scheduled to take place between 16th- 19th December (no update at time of printing).

STAPLEFORD

STAPLEFORD CHRISTMAS CARDS

An impressive £191.50 was raised from the sale of Christmas cards this year. With the £237.30 we raised last year, that's a total of £428.80 - so huge thanks to Terry for the beautiful photo and Ingvar and Tracy for all their help with the project.

THANK YOU

Many thanks to Nicole for restoring the pathway to the church following the groundwork undertaken by Wessex Internet. Heartfelt thanks also to all the church cleaners and flower arrangers and bell ringers, and all those who contribute to the running of the church. If you are willing and able to join any of the teams in any capacity please do get in touch. We are always on the lookout for anyone who can spare an hour or two every once in a while.

900 YEARS CELEBRATIONS

We can now put forward proposed plans for this year's historic event in a little more detail, as outlined below:

Lent Lunch	27th March
Expanded Plant Sale event and Exhibition	W/E of 25 th May
WI talk by Terry Waldron held in church with tea/coffee and cakes, and Guided tours and talk on The Bells of St. Mary's	Thursday 7 th August at 1.30pm summer
Thanksgiving service attended by Bishop, followed by refreshments	Sunday 7 th September
Dramatic/musical event written by Alistair Sommerlad	Date tbc
Art installation	Date tbc
Candlelit 12 century service with Gregorian chants, as yet still in discussion	Date tbc but late in year

Other celebratory activities may take place, about which you will be informed when confirmed. Plenty of help will be required to make this a roaring success and now is the time to come forward and put your name into the mix so that we can keep you in the loop. Please contact Sue Bale, Sophie O'Sullivan or Liz Stones and we can ensure you are copied in to communications.

With churches across the country finding it increasingly difficult to stay open we in Stapleford need to think about our own church's future. If we can improve the heating system, sound and lighting system and upgrade the kitchen that might be a first step towards making the church an adaptable village venue. There will be a meeting in the new year to discuss how we might proceed, and more information will be given in the February magazine.

STAPLEFORD COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Continuing from December 2024 edition: The New Year brings with it a mighty Community Village challenge. 15 one year old fruit trees have been ordered along with 5 MM106 Apple Rootstock-bare rooted to enable the grafting of traditional Stapleford apples. Yes, these will need planting in a carefully planned lay-out to maximise sunlight exposure and shelter from the cold Northerly winds of winter. The trees will need to be protected from unwanted deer visits, using robust wire guards.

Please consider yourself as a possible volunteer to join in the fun as we embark on a project to benefit the village for many years to come. The provisional date for the digging and planting will be in February. We look forward to hearing from those who would like to be involved. For the first year we are looking for five different strong growing apple varieties from the village where we can take a small cutting early January to graft onto the rootstock to start building our village family trees. Please contact Rob ten Doeschate (07778530480) or Richard Wells (tel 790847) if you are willing to donate. Wishing you a very Happy and Fruitful New Year."

STAPLEFORD LOTTERY

The draw for this quarter will not be held at the coffee morning, due to calendar clashes, but it will be held in the first week of January with the appropriate observance and results will be published in the February magazine. Very many thanks to all those who contribute to the lottery. If you would like to join, do get in touch with Sue Bale via the village whatsapp or on 01722 792763.

VH News for January magazine 2025

There was a good crowd for our Christmas Coffee, cake and chat. The tables were attractively decorated, as was Ingvar, and the cakes were particularly sticky. Many thanks to Keith for baking a lot of mince pies and to Sophie for her exceedingly rich rocky road squares. Keith and his team were in action again the following Wednesday producing and serving a slap-up Christmas lunch (plus wrapped present) for eighteen happy villagers. The lunch was truly excellent, with about four courses if you include the mince pies. It was interesting to note that most people asked for seconds of the brussels sprouts – Staplefordians obviously appreciate this fine vegetable. The turkey was perfect, the gravy hot, the pud was accompanied by lashings of rum sauce so, if you weren't there, you missed a treat. Even the carols were jolly, led by our entertainment duo, Ingvar and Debs, who don't allow them to drag. Bookings open for next year!

The second meeting of Gardening Club was attended by about twenty of us and we were given hot tips on growing citrus, how to protect olive trees and hydrangeas from frost and the best ways to compost leaves. We also shared advice about our favourite garden implements (more interesting than it sounds). Within the club there is a fund of expertise which, if spread among us like a fine mulch, should improve all our gardens! Chat and advice is continued through 'What's App' and we are already wondering how we managed without the club. Talks and trips are planned for the coming year.

Forthcoming events in the Village Hall.

January 7th 7:30 pm Garden Club meeting

January 8th 10:30-12 Coffee and Chat. Note that this is not the first Wednesday of the month, but the coffee/chats will revert to the first Wednesday for the rest of the year.

January 24th Village Hall Quiz (No 5). £5 pp for quiz and supper. The hall will be open from 7pm and the barman ready to take your orders. The quiz starts at 7:30 and will follow the usual format with chicken curry, cooked by Keith, served at half time. Enter as teams of 4 or take a chance and get put into a team. Please RSVP to Keith Jackson on What's App or by emailing staplefordvh@gmail.com so we know how many suppers and question sheets to prepare.

February 11th: 7:30 Gardening Club Talk "Wild Pollinators and your Village Habitats". The first Stapleford Gardening Club talk will be on Tuesday 11th February in the village hall. Doors will be open at 7pm and tickets are £5 (to include a drink). The bar will be open. The speaker is Rebecca Twigg, who creates community gardens. These include the Five Rivers Health and Well-being Centre, Arundels' Veterans Community Gardens and the wildlife friendly planted area in Salisbury Cathedral Close. Rebecca promotes pollinator friendly gardens and was behind Salisbury's Bee Trail. She also set up the first Swift walks in and around Salisbury. All are welcome – do come along to be inspired to attract more pollinators both in your gardens and in your villages.

SOUTH NEWTON AND STOFORD

NEWSHOUND REQUIRED

This is my last regular monthly contribution to the Community Matters magazine; our search for a South Newton "news hound" continues. Please contact me (or the Editor) if you feel you could fill the role. **Steve Black (07510 391900)**

SOUTH NEWTON: WORK AND METHOD OF TRAVEL.

The 2021 census analysed the number of working hours and the distance that 337 South Newton residents travelled to work.

90 residents stated that they worked mainly from home. 136 residents travelled 6 mile or less to work, 31 travelled between 6 and 20 miles, 18 travelled between 20 to 40 miles, with 11 travelling over 40 miles; 51 residents stated that they worked at an offshore installation, in no fixed place, or outside the UK.

The chosen mode of transport for the majority of travellers (210) was via car or van, 13 residents travelled by bus / taxi and 19 travelled on foot. Other modes of transport (in low single figures) were via train, motorcycle or bicycle.

87 residents worked part-time (30 hours per week or less). 250 residents worked full time, of which 214 worked between 31 to 48 hours per week; 36 residents worked 49 hours or more per week.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – JANUARY

4th and 18th January - Mobile Library

This month the mobile library visits South Newton on Saturdays 4th and 18th, located at Vale View Road, South Newton, Salisbury SP2 0RB. Doors open from 3:45 to 4:15pM

NEWTON AND STOFORD DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (Continued on Page 11)

BENEFICE NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY

Dear Friends - Happy New Year! January is the time for fresh starts, new resolutions, and a New Year. I wonder how long it will take you to adjust to writing 25 at the end of the date. I know I will struggle; I have only recently got used to 24!

January is also the time when many people reappraise their lives seeking to improve and reform them. Perhaps to start a new fitness regime or a post-Christmas diet, an attempt to end a destructive habit, or to improve relationships and to become a better person. We all wish to be a better self, and a new year brings the incentive to have a new start.

Sadly, we know from experience that whilst there is no shortage of self-help improvement manuals and books, the biggest obstacle to self-improvement isourselves! We all too rapidly lose motivation, forget our newfound resolutions and slip back into old habits we thought we would leave behind. The aspiration may be strong, but the will is weak. The cold dark mornings, the unreasonable behaviour of others, and the challenge of being kind to ourselves, are all good reasons for us to give up and abandon our resolutions, even before the end of the month.

There is a limit to how much progress we can make using our own strength and resources. Although we may be told "You can achieve anything if you just try hard enough!" The reality is that we are limited by ourselves and our abilities. "You cannot pull yourself up by your own bootlaces" is a phrase which is more true than popular. Fortunately, we have a God who understands all these things and our many failings. He did not write a self-improvement manual or force us to follow a fitness regime. Instead, he sent his son Jesus to show us how to live and to save us from our failings. Jesus did not say "you must be your best person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" or "you have to be a perfect person", Jesus said "believe in me". The Christian gospel emphasises how it is not our own work and efforts that makes us a better person, but by being open to the Spirit of God and allowing Him to change our lives. God accepts us as we are and then offers His support as we draw closer to Him.

With this approach, we move from being self striving (and failing) to seeking and knowing. Seeking God and knowing Jesus. For the free gift of God is available to all who seek and believe in Him and he offers that new start to all who seek Him in truth.

Revd Roger Leake
Wylde and Till Valley Benefice.

Benefice Church Services during January 2024

Sunday 5th January – The Epiphany

09:30am	Stockton	Holy Communion (BCP)
09:30am	Berwick St James	Holy Communion (CW)
11:00am	South Newton	Holy Communion (CW)
11:00am	Stapleford	Sunday Worship
11:00am	Wylze	Sunday Worship
4:00pm	Little Langford	Evensong (BCP)

Sunday 12th January – The Baptism of Christ ~ Epiphany 2

09:30am	Winterbourne Stoke	Holy Communion (CW)
11:00am	Steeple Langford	Holy Communion (CW)
6:00pm	Great Wishford	Evening Worship the Baptism of Christ

Sunday 19th January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

09:30am	Great Wishford	Holy Communion (CW)
11:00am	Berwick St James	Plough Sunday Service
11:00am	Wylze	Holy Communion (CW)
4:00pm	Steeple Langford	Family Christingle Service with afternoon tea
6:00pm	Stockton	Evening Worship

Thursday 23rd January

11:00am	Wylze	Midweek service with organ music followed by coffee
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Sunday 26th January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

09:30am	Little Langford	Holy Communion (BCP)
11:00am	Stapleford	Holy Communion (CW)
6:00pm	Steeple Langford	Iona Service for Epiphany

If you have a relative you wish remembered at these services then please contact Rev'd Jonathan Plows, Rectorwtv@gmail.com, 01722 790616.

CW = Common Worship, BCP = Book of Common Prayer

Please look at the Parish News Sheets for any changes to services or contact the Rector, Rev'd Jonathan Plows

Rectorwtv@gmail.com 01722 790616

Monday being his day off

The **'Winter Mini Challenge'** for children has been launched. Borrow books from the library and sign up online to win rewards and enjoy a cosy winter of reading with your children. Need help with reading suggestions, just ask: <https://orlo.uk/nqb0b>

6th January - Parish Council Meeting.

South Newton and Wishford Village Hall from 7:00pm.

7th, 14th, 21st and 28th January - Bingo

Each Tuesday evening at South Newton and Wishford Village Hall, doors open from 7:00 p.m.; its great fun, we would love to see you.

25th January - Breakfast Morning.

South Newton and Wishford Village Hall, any time between 9:00 until 11:00am. A delicious cooked breakfast for only **£8.00**, with plenty of tea, coffee, toast and marmalade. All proceeds to the Village Hall.

30th January - Village Hall Committee Meeting.

South Newton Village Hall, 7:00pm.

Andy Pandy's Baby And Toddler Group

Sadly the last Andy Pandy's session was held on 11th December. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last two years. We have had lots of fun and share great memories. Wishing all the best to all our families.

Laura and Gill x

SOUTH NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Following the November parish council meeting discussion our Councillor Chris Swanton received a reply from Nick Holder (Wiltshire Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Flooding) regarding the recent utility roadworks on the A36.

The A36 is managed and maintained solely by National Highways and as you have acknowledged, Wiltshire Council do not have any jurisdiction over the road itself or National Highways. That said, we do have continual dialogue with them and Sam Howell, our Director of Highways and Transport, has recently met with the regional director to discuss their approach to management of utility works and the negative impacts that are being experienced by local residents and the wider community.

Please be assured, our Network Management team have been proactive in escalating the recent incidents, including the Wilton SGN gas works, and I am pleased to advise that following the meeting, National Highways have reflected on their approach and agreed additional actions for future works including improving communication with residents. Whilst we must accept some utility works are by nature, urgent and essential, National Highways have a responsibility to fulfil their Network Management Duties as set out in the Traffic Management Act 2024 which seeks to ensure the expeditious movement on traffic on the network.

We have requested further information on their forward work programme to minimise disruption and will be monitoring future works closely.

On 3rd December two Parish Council members participated in a 'Teams' meeting with Mr. Graeme Morrison (Wiltshire Council Strategic Engagement & Partnerships Manager - Amesbury, Tidworth and Westbury Community Areas) and Karlene Jammeh (Engagement & Partnership Lead) in order to discuss the available options of activities/clubs that may engage the interest of the children, teenagers and adolescents of our parish.

In 2024 the Stonehenge Area Board supported a community event for villagers from the Perham Down, Tidworth, Larkhill, Amesbury, Durrington areas. More than 100 people attended to enjoy sports, games and refreshments, finding out about activities in their local area. The event aimed to raise awareness of the wide range of local youth provision, clubs and organisations available in the Stonehenge area for young people. Activities included football, cricket, circus club, girls brigade and air cadets, with many signing up to join the clubs.

Our 'Teams' session discussed the practicality of indoor/outdoor events, pop-up youth events, support groups such as Youth Outreach Project, God Unlimited, Scouts, Guides, etc. Unfortunately there is no budget currently available but monies could be available next financial year (from April 2025) to aid a similar event here in South Newton.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on 6th January at the Village Hall, parishioners are welcome to forward any proposals or attend the session in person. We shall be discussing the established agenda, as well as the forthcoming budget and donation proposals.

SOUTH NEWTON AND WISHFORD VILLAGE HALL

Andy Pandy's

We are sorry to say that the last get together for Andy Pandy's was Wednesday 11th December. There were just too few children and parents attending recently and Laura needed a helper as she could not operate on her own. A huge thank you to Laura Myers and all those who contributed to the running of the group.

Breakfast Morning

We have been very busy during 2024 and there is a real sense of community at Breakfast Mornings. Please note that we have had to increase the price of your breakfast by 50 pence. Everything has gone up We hope that you will continue to support us and come along and enjoy your Full English!

Christmas Fayre

Thank you to the stall holders and the volunteers who spent their time organising the Christmas Fayre on Saturday 23rd November. The weather was appalling. Sadly, we had only a few people attending and made a grand total of £227.00. This was hugely disappointing and we shall think very carefully before we spend our time, energy and money on this sort of event again.

Christmas Bingo

Clearly, this is the event that people really want to come along and enjoy as both Christmas and Easter bingo nights are hugely popular. On Tuesday evening 10th December extra tables had to be laid on for the people who turned up and their children too. Everyone had a great time and there were some fabulous bingo and raffle prizes to be won. I am awaiting the final sum raised on the night but it is certainly above £900.00! What an amazing contribution to our fundraising.

Thank you to our bingo organisers; Cheryl Hooper, Janet Hailstone and Heather Bryans and our caller Henry Swanton.

We also have a weekly bingo session on a Tuesday evening when you will be made most welcome (adults only).

SOUTH NEWTON & BARFORD HORNETS F.C.

South Newton and Barford Hornets are looking for a couple more players for the Under 7s and Under 8s sides (school years 2 & 3), as well as the Under 13 Girls (Ages 11 – 13) side. If your child likes football and would be interested in joining a family run club please either send us a message or pop along to training and see what we're all about. Training is Wednesdays 5.30 - 6.30pm under floodlights at South Newton Recreation Ground, matches are Sunday mornings.

Please contact us via: contactsnewtonbhornets.contact@gmail.com or our Facebook page facebook.com/southnewtonfc/

POLICE CRIME FIGURES

There were four instances of crime reported within the South Newton parish during the month of October:

- 2 x 'Vehicle crime'
- 1 x 'Violence and sexual offences'
- 1 x 'Anti-social behaviour'.

A total of thirteen crimes were reported within the whole of the Wilton Rural Area.

Following on from the December magazine article relating to van break-ins: Wiltshire Police informed that on 19th November three people were arrested in connection with an investigation into thefts from vans across the county, during which thousands of pounds worth of power tools have been stolen.

The three men, all aged in their 20s, two from Buckinghamshire and one from East Drayton, London, were arrested on suspicion of going equipped and theft of a motor vehicle after the involved vehicle was identified as stolen. The driver was also arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving.

Following further enquiries, the three men were further arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to steal from motor vehicles between 20th September and 12th November 2024.

OUR ROAD SAFETY / COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

With team member numbers at an all-time low we have decided to suspend roadside speedwatch activities over the winter period, possibly to reconvene in the Spring. Over the past four and a half years the team has contributed to the reduction of speeding through our parish, with numbers of vehicles travelling above 36mph down to less than 1%.

200 Club December Draws

1st - £50 (162) Carly Foxcroft, **2nd** - £30 (58) Tim Phelps, **3rd** - £10 (176) Rosemary Petty

WINTERBOURNE STOKE

St Peter's Church

As the year comes to an end I would like to thank everyone who has helped keep the church going this year. It is challenging and we are very grateful to everyone who contributes on a regular basis, Heather who unlocks and locks the church every day, Tony for cutting the grass and Claire for providing flowers. Also, the Parish Council for their contribution to the running costs. A huge thank you to Martin Gairdner for playing the organ at our regular services, and also at weddings, baptisms and funerals. The Churchyard has been cut and we are planning a rewilding programme - plans and details will be available in the Church in the new year for information and comment. So thank you to everyone - your support and help is invaluable and much appreciated.

Parish Council - Update on the A303

Parishioners will be aware from earlier reports that members of the Parish Council met with Mr Chris Hilldrup on 29 October and examined all the issues raised at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Village in August. Since then the A303 project has gone through its closing down procedures, including a Community Forum in Andover on 12 November, where Mr Hilldrup, as the National Highways Route Manager for Wiltshire, took on the responsibilities for all the issues that the Amesbury to Berwick Down project would have addressed. At the Parish Council's request, Mr Hilldrup had a meeting in the village on 26 November with Mr Bob Ecclestone, Wiltshire Roads Policing Unit, to examine the road safety issues identified by villagers. These are early days in getting something done to address our concerns, but we have two influential people from National Highways and Wiltshire police who understand the problems and are escalating the issues within their organisations. Following the meeting with members of Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council, and various visits up and down the A303, Mr Hilldrup has worked out his 4 priorities. These are:

1. Winterbourne Stoke. Work towards a speed reduction in the village. Introduce rumble strips to slow traffic. Move the bus stop on the Eastbound Carriageway (He and Mr Ecclestone were horrified that school children have to wait "in a hedge" for their bus). He also wants to stop long-term parking in the lay-bys that blocks visibility of drivers trying to get onto the A303.

2. Longbarrow Roundabout. He described the road-marking arrows on the road as trying to “squeeze a quart into a pint pot” and that as a roundabout, it does not work.
3. The A303 near the Stones. He described the stones as a huge distraction and wants to even out the traffic flow on this section of the A303. He wants to install speed cameras on this part of the road, but this has a number of issues that he has to address.
4. Amesbury. The underpass under the A303 floods regularly and he says that he cannot have pedestrians crossing 4 lanes of traffic by the Countess roundabout. However, there is currently no budget for an £8m pedestrian bridge.

Mr Hilldrup also mentioned that he was well aware of the concerns of Shrewton Parish Council regarding rat running, and wanted to improve traffic flow on the A303 as mitigation. The Parish Council liaises regularly with Shrewton Parish Council so that we can work together for the common good.

The Parish Council has had two outstanding Request for Information Act (FOIA) requests for sometime. The first concerned the Bridge on the A303 by Cleeve View. Corrosion of the iron rebar reinforcements and spalling of the concrete had been recorded under the bridge which was built in 1939. National Highways had responded to the question by saying that routine inspections take place on the surface from a slow moving vehicle and that inspection teams would not enter a water course. When challenged on this, Mr Hilldrup indicated that he was not satisfied with the response, and that he had spoken about the matter to the National Highways Head of Structures, Mr Terry Robinson. The failure of road bridges in the UK is very rare, but National Highways are now firmly aware of the issues and have the responsibility to act accordingly. The issue raised by Councillors was that should the bridge, which maybe becoming close to the end of its lifespan, has to receive extensive repairs then traffic management would be a serious issue if wholesale rat-running through Stapleford, Berwick and Shrewton were to be avoided. The second question regarded the status of the road. Counter-intuitively National Highways class the A303 in Winterbourne Stoke as an urban road as it is subject to a 40 mph speed limit. This does not conform entirely with the Department of Transport definitions, but seems to indicate clearly the dichotomy of the A303 being both a village High Street and part of the National Strategic Road Network, most of which is motorway or dual-carriageway. As an urban road, the speed limit could be reduced to 30 mph, which is the Parish Council’s primary aim. Finally, National Highway has planned a safety inspection of the A303 from the Countess Roundabout to Longbarrow Roundabout for early 2025@. Following his meetings in the village, Mr Hilldrup has escalated the issues raised by us up the National Highways “chain of command” and Winterbourne Stoke is now included in the formal safety inspection plan. In addition he has achieved a degree of “buy in” from his superiors, however, the amount of “buy in” can only be assessed later when budgets are allocated.

ALL VILLAGES

SWANS W.I.

It was party time at our December Meeting. There was much glitter and sparkle to set the scene as well as a lovely Christmas tree, crackers, music and merry making!

There was a large variety of food and toiletries for our regular monthly Food Bank donation plus our Christmas charity choice Alabara, to which members gave very generously. The tea table groaned under the weight of the festive tea, with an absolutely delicious Christmas cake, beautifully decorated and very much appreciated by one and all. We were also treated to an excellent warm fruit punch which added to the party atmosphere. Our raffle was a bit special this month and the star prize was a beautifully presented bag full of goodies donated by a kind member. We had some fun with a quiz and chatted happily over mince pies and cheese straws, then, wishing one another a merry Christmas, we made our goodbyes. We meet in Wilton Community Centre on the first Thursday of each month at 2.00p.m. We are a friendly group, and if you wish to know more about us 'phone Caroline on 01722 792759, or just come along to a meeting, you will be given a warm welcome. Swans W.I. wishes everyone a very, very merry Christmas and a peaceful 2025.

BUS PASS USAGE UPDATE

If any residents, with a Wiltshire concessionary bus pass, have any friends or family coming to stay and they hold an out-of-county issued bus pass, please note it can only be used after 9.30am. Unlike the Wiltshire bus passes which are valid at 9.00am on all buses, provided you board that bus in a bus stop in Wiltshire. Out-of-county passes can't be used after 11.00pm either on weekdays, unlike the Wiltshire pass. All concessionary bus passes though can be used to travel at any time at weekends up to 11.00pm. Swindon, believe it or not, issues their own passes, being a county borough. Therefore, no out-of-county passes, including Wiltshire (!), can be used before 9.30am.
- Councillor Michael Pont

St Andrew's South Newton

I should like to thank Alexander and Fleur Swanton for their generous donation of a fabulous Christmas Tree for the church and villagers of South Newton. Much appreciated. It was very heavy! More news next month. **Derek Blake**

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