

STEVENTON NEWS

ESTABLISHED MAY 1969

February 2023



The villainous Luciferous confronts Fairy D in Sleeping Beauty - the NSPCC Panto.

Dates for February

4 th	Panto tickets on sale	14 th	GARD public meeting - see p9
5 th	Panto first afternoon performance	21 st	WI meeting
7 th	Parish Council Meeting -School Hall	22 nd	SARINC meeting
7 th	Panto first evening performance	23 rd	Darby & Joan Meeting
9 th	Panto evening performance	25 th	First Lent Lunch
10 th	Panto evening performance	28 th	Flower Festival planning meeting
11 th	Panto final performances		
12 th	Darby & Joan Club - Fish & Chips		Warm Space Cafe - every Tuesday



Hi all the Steventon people!

Firstly, I would like to wish you all the best this year! I wish peace and happiness to all your houses. On behalf of the Ukrainians who live in Steventon I would like to thank you for all your help and support. Many thanks to those who have hosted Ukrainian people, who helps Ukrainian army, civil people or injured animals. And thanks to those who just don't ignore. I wish your country and your nation will live in peaceful and safe times.

I was very happy to see a lot of you at Ukrainian Christmas Eve party in the St Michael's hall on the 6th of January. It was a very big joy for us to share our Ukrainian traditions, food and music. It's very important not to ignore nowadays situation in our country but I'm very happy to let you know something new about Ukraine but the news from the front line. And it was very important for us to feel a little bit at home in your place.

Many thanks to all the great people who helped me to organise this event and thank you very much for coming!

Anastasiia Kozak

Roots & Shoots Steventon update



The Warm Space Café has continued to flourish during January, helping to chase away some of those post-holiday blues. Open every TUESDAY from 9am to 2pm.

Since we started the café in October 2022, we have had an average of 50 villagers coming every week to enjoy the hot drinks & cakes, soup & bread (and sometimes even breakfast bacon butties!), as well as great company. Attendees also include around five youngsters every week who enjoy playing with the toys and games generously donated by villagers. We also offer



Lifts to the café – If you need a lift or know someone who does, please send an email to Deborah on vol.steventonrootsshoots@gmail.com

Takeaways - If you are in a hurry, or unable to stay. If you or a loved one would benefit from receiving some warm soup and bread after the café closes, please contact Phil on 07507 378737. We value the feedback we have received so far - in particular a few access issues at St Michaels Hall, especially

when it is wet and muddy. As a result, we are currently looking to move the café to a more central location in the coming weeks – we hope that this will encourage more villagers to attend. Watch this space and the posters dotted around the village for details about the new venue! So, come on down in February to the only café in the village! - Bring your friends. We look forward to seeing you.

Work on our “no dig” community allotments slowed because of the cold and wet weather of late, but the cabbage, beans and garlic we planted in autumn continue to flourish. Over the next few weeks you will start to see some changes – thanks to villagers who have donated compost and improved topsoil. Plot 11 will begin to take shape and we are planning to build three compost boxes alongside the plot from recycled pallets. As spring approaches, we will be looking for more volunteers to help with various jobs on the allotments – no gardening skills necessary, just a bit of time and enthusiasm! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Deborah (see above) or scan the QR code on this page and leave a message on our Facebook site.



Steventon News Contributions and Advertising

Cut- off dates for next issue

Contributions for the **March** issue to steventonnews@outlook.com by **Sunday 12 Feb.** please. Advert cut- off is 5 Feb. If you do not have access to a computer, then please type or write clearly and leave it in the blue folder at the Steventon Co-op counter.

Steventon News Advertising

Ad Prices until 31.03.2023			
Residents			
	12 issues	6 issues	1 issue
1/10th	£47.00	£24.00	£16.00
2/10th	£95.00	£47.00	£24.00
5/10th	£237.00	£119.00	£32.00
Non Residents			
	12 issues	6 issues	1 issue
1/10th	£79.00	£39.00	£16.00
2/10th	£158.00	£79.00	£24.00
5/10th	£395.00	£198.00	£40.00

1/10-page boxed adverts are 5.0 cm high x 8.5 cm wide and 1/5-page ads are 10.2 cm high x 8.5 cm wide.

Steventon News Advertising - formatting

Acceptable digital artwork formats for adverts only include PDF, JPG* and TIFF* (*300ppi at final size). Word files may also be acceptable, e.g. where an ad is text only; other formats on request. We strongly recommend that artworks are designed to fit the space (not stretched or shrunk) and text checked for legibility at final printed size. Please send all enquiries about adverts by email to

steventonnews@outlook.com

Local events with no entry fee FREE if space available

Important Information - The Editors reserve the right to alter, omit or hold over any item. The views expressed in Steventon News are not necessarily those of the Editors. We will not publish anonymous letters or contributions but will withhold names on request.

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SARINC (Steventon Allotments and Relief In Need Charity) – 2023

SARINC is a charity which was established in 1987 with two main roles:

- To maintain the allotment site for the villagers of Steventon
- To support any residents or groups within the village who are in need

As the new year gets underway the Charity is dealing with preparing its Annual report and reviewing the grants made available to support residents and groups in Steventon. The Trustees will next meet to consider grant applications and any other business on **Wednesday 22 February**.

Residents and groups can contact the Clerk or any of the Trustees to discuss any support. All requests will need to complete the Charity's application **The closing date for Education Grants is 31 January 2023** To request a grant application form, please contact The Clerk or any of the Trustees.

Email info@sarinc.org.uk

Call 07361 250 922, Post 19, Lime Grove, Southmoor, Abingdon, Oxon, OX13 5DN

Your Steventon Councillors

Oxfordshire County Council:

Sally Povolosky **07939 912997**

Sally.Povolotsky@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Vale of White Horse District Council:

Sally Povolosky **07939 912997**

sally.povolotsky@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Parish Council Chairman:

Dr Chris Wilding Tel 01235 861665

Email: crwilding@aol.com

Steventon Parish Council Clerk

Angela Einon Tel 01235 831024

Email: steventonpc@tiscali.co.uk

Halls for hire in the Village

For availability and to book

For Village Hall contact Booking

Secretary Tel: 07561 209421

SteventonVillageHallBookings@gmail.com

For St Michael's Hall contact

The Booking Clerk

Ruth Howard Tel: 01235 831409

Steventon Sports & Social Club

President: Michael Jarvis
Chairman: Stuart Fisher
Steward: Lucy Perkins
Telephone: (01235) 821507
Email: steventonssc@hotmail.com

What's on at S.S.S.C

Catch all the sporting action on Sky and BT Sport!

Wed 7pm -11pm Pool/Crib Night & Football Training
Thurs 7pm -11pm Darts Night
Fri 4pm - 11pm Wind down after a hard week's work
Sat 12pm - 11pm Football on the Green, Live Sport TV
Sun 12pm - 7pm Live Sport on TV

Club Facilities are available outside above times by prior arrangement. Speak to Lucy for details

Dates for Your Diary

Sat 4th Feb Start of the 6 Nations Rugby
Sun 5th Feb Bingo – Tickets on sale from 6pm-6.45pm
Eyes down 7pm
Sat 25th Feb Football Club Race Night Fundraiser
Sun 5th Mar Bingo – Tickets on sale from 6pm-6.45pm
Eyes down 7pm

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S.S.S.C. Membership Renewal Update

Membership renewal emails should have all gone out providing email information is correct. If you haven't received yours yet, please get in touch at:

steventonssc@gmail.com

New members' applications are welcome and can be processed by scanning the QR code.

Annual Membership Fees Single £10
 Family £15
 Senior Free

Membership Application 2023

Please scan to apply for membership via your mobile device



You will need a proposer's name and email (current member of the Steventon Sports and Social Club).

Please make sure your proposer knows they have proposed you, as they will need to respond to an email as confirmation.

Once confirmed you will receive an emailed invoice which may be paid via bank transfer or card at the bar.

Payment at the bar can only be taken with invoice number.



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Steventon Sports and Social Club George Swatton Memorial Darts 2022

Darren Swatton presents this year's shield to the winner Kiefer Slade with runner up Dave Imrie is also present.

Sleeping Beauty - the Panto

Village Hall, in support of N.S.P.C.C

Performances:-

Sunday **5th Feb** 2.30pm.

Tuesday **7th Feb** 7.30pm.

Thursday **9th Feb** 7.30pm.

Friday **10th Feb** 7.30pm.

Saturday **11th Feb** 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets may still be available from

Steventon Village Hall 10.30am to 12 mid-day: on Saturday **4th February**.

Or: Margaret email: asham07@yahoo.co.uk.

Or: telephone: 01235 834067 & leave a message. Adults £9 Concessions £7

Steventon Darby & Joan Club.

We started the year with our meeting on the 12th January, but sadly we were low in numbers due to illness, I think. Never the less, it was a good meeting and members enjoyed the afternoon. Please do support the Club as it is for its members. Our next meeting is on:

Thursday February 12th when we will be having Fish and Chips, 12.15 for 12.30. If you have been unable to attend a meeting please let Audrey know your choice of menu.

Thursday 23rd February meet in the Hall. From the 9th March, we are planning a meal on the first meeting of the month, there will be a choice of two meals and the cost will be £6.00. From this date we will meet at 12.30pm to sit down at 1pm.

Best wishes

Jack

A Celebration for the Coronation of King Charles III.

It has been announced that the King will be crowned on May 6th. We think that this will be a really good time to hold a Flower Festival in St Michael's Church to celebrate this very special event, and to include anyone who would like to join in. There will be a meeting to discuss plans at the Cherry Tree on Tuesday **February 28th** at 7.30pm; all are welcome. If you cannot come and would like to be involved, do email your details. Contact Mary Thompson and Hilary Otterburn and St Michael's Church Flower Arrangers.

coronationflowers23@gmail.com

Lent Lunches 2023

There will be soup and bread lunches again this year on Saturdays during Lent which begins on February 22nd. Lunches will continue every Saturday until April 1st. The first lunch will be at 27 Stocks Lane on Saturday **February 25th** from 12 till 2pm. Do come along and enjoy homemade soup – and raise money for Christian Aid. If you would like to host a lunch, or to help, do get in touch.

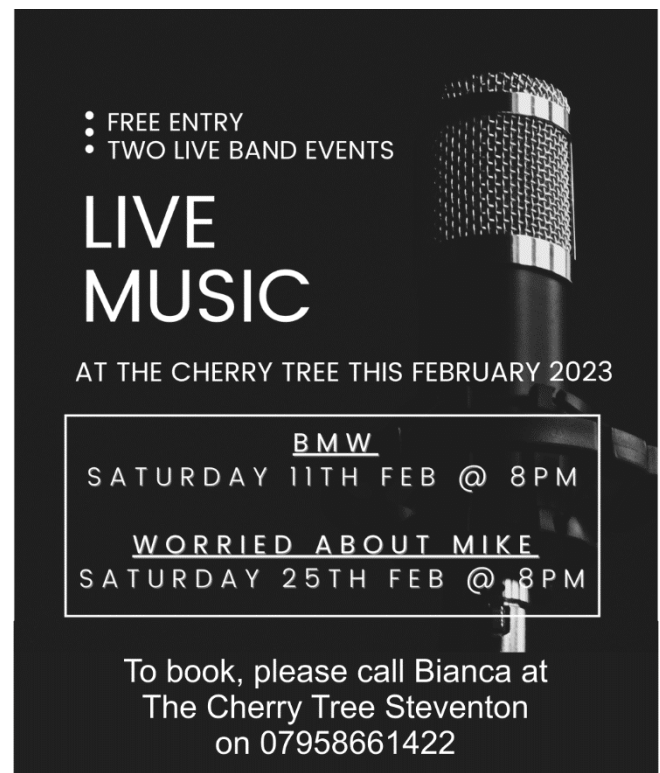
Mary Thompson. 832077

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who came along to the village Hall in December to help us to celebrate our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Extra special thanks to our daughter Joanna who organised the whole evening and to Lucy and staff for supplying the bar and excellent food.

50 years together is an achievement and I have to thank Chris for his continued support and caring throughout the normal ups and downs of our years together. It has been particularly difficult for him during the last few weeks after my unexpected operation.

Dilys Wilding



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Steventon Women's Institute



Members are currently considering the WI resolutions for this year, the short list of which are:

'Save our water - every

drop matters',

'Women to women - turning over a new leaf in the lives of women tea workers',

'Online gambling: time for action' and

'Clean rivers for people and wildlife'. Each

member can cast a vote on the resolution

they support the most and the winning

resolution nationally is adopted at the Annual

Meeting, then the Public Affairs Department

turns it into a campaign. Over the years the

WI has been involved in a large number of

campaigns on a wide range of subjects.

This month's meeting will be on **Tuesday 21 February** when the speaker will be our vicar, Phil Sutton, who will be talking about Assistance Dogs.

If you'd like to visit one of our meetings they are on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm in the Millennium Room, you'd be most welcome. It's been good to see some new faces recently. Further details can be obtained by calling 01235 833009.

Steventon Friendly Association

On Sunday Jan. 15th we ran the annual Senior Citizen's Party in the Village hall. It went down very well and was enjoyed by all those who attended. They were wine and dined and later entertained by the West County group The Twirzels.. I would like to thank all those who helped us on the day to make this possible. Thanks to Martin for arranging a supply of mince pies and to Robert Tyrrell for donating the barrel of Abingdon Bridge beer.

Pat Hemmings, Chairman- SFA
01235 83162
07808086603

And huge thanks to Pat too for all the time and effort he puts in throughout the year - Ed

Steventon Friendly Association WED 59 Club Results

Week	No.	Winner
1160 14/12	6	Kelly Robins
1161 21/12	31	David Norton
1162 28/12	30	Mr Butler
1164 4/1	26	Mr & Mrs Broughton
11624 11/1	21	Jimmy Axford

SAT 59 Club Results

Week	No.	Winner
1379 17/12	32	Margaret Downes
1380 24/12	19	Val Thomas
1381 31/12	19	Val Thomas
1382 7/1	18	Sandie West
1383 14/1	24	Beryl Dawson

SAT "59 Club Extra" Results

Week	No.	Winner
455 17/2	32	Roger Orchard
456 24/12	19	Debbie Powell
457 31/12	19	Debbie Powell
458 7/1	18	Chris Wilding
459 14/1	24	Bimbo Joyce

Congratulations to this month's winners



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GARD is a local community group formed to campaign against Thames Water's proposals to build a reservoir south-west of Abingdon.

MESSAGE FROM GARD to Thames Water: Stop the Reservoir, fix the leaks, transfer new water from the Severn. You have seen the banners – now you have a chance to make your own voice heard. **RESPOND NOW** to the Water Resources South-East (WRSE) plan and to Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) - see our website for links: Draft plans for WRSE were published mid-November, consultation ends **Monday 20 February**. Thames Water's WRMP was published mid-December, consultation ends **Tuesday 21st March**. **Information and bullet points to help with the response are available now** on the GARD website. You can make a difference to the outcome, as you did in March 2022. NB if there are two householders, it is helpful if both submit a response. Oxfordshire County Council, the Vale of the White Horse District Council and your MPs remain strongly opposed to the plan and these democratic representatives would like to know you have responded. A list of MP and Council contacts is on the GARD website; please copy your response to them and to GARD.

Abingdon Reservoir is still central to the plans with construction starting ahead of the Severn Thames Transfer, for no good reason. If the reservoir plan goes through, you will have to pay for the reservoir through your water bill, even though that money is needed to increase sewage infrastructure and fix leaks, and even before a drop of water is supplied by the reservoir. The reservoir is a solution looking for a problem. In the plan, it is no longer to provide water for Oxfordshire and Swindon (as in 2010), nor mainly for London (as in 2019). Now the plan is to sell most of the water out of the water-stressed Thames region by pipeline to Portsmouth, for simple profit. The planned reservoir is unnecessary (the population and reduced water abstraction figures are grossly exaggerated), ecologically disastrous (biodiversity cannot be restored and a huge amount of carbon is released in construction) and dangerous (pollution, general flood risk and risk of catastrophic inundation).

GARD is holding public meetings in February; so is **Thames Water**. Please come to ours for information and attend the Thames Water meetings to ask questions.

GARD:

Grove: Friday 27 January – WaGCG and GARD, Old Mill Hall, Grove 7.30pm
Steventon: Tuesday 14 February - GARD Steventon Millenium Room, 7.30pm
Abingdon: Thursday 16 February - GARD Preston Rd Community Centre, Abingdon

THAMES WATER:

Abingdon: Friday 20 January - Thames Water, Trinity Church Abingdon, drop-in
Oxford: Wednesday 1 February - Thames Water, Westgate pop-up
Steventon: Saturday 18 February - Thames Water, Steventon Village Hall, drop-in

The Oxfordshire County Council Water Summit took place on 30th November and provided a useful airing of the issues. GARD made a keynote presentation, giving our version of a feasible regional plan without any mega-Reservoir, and there were also presentations from WRSE, the Met Office, the National Farmers Union and experts in water-saving in building design. Thames Water declined to give a presentation – claiming they were not ready! (but still sent along the largest single delegation).

For updates, contact details or to join GARD visit: www.gard-oxon.org.uk or email gard.secretary@gmail.com / gard.membership@gmail.com
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Sleeping Beauty - the Panto - part 3 !

Mario the Italian Chef (aka Mike Davies) has sent us this taster of the Panto - see p1 for sneak preview pic. and p 3 for dates, times and ticket details.

Our story starts before the christening of the newly-born Princess Milly.

Fairy D, one of the fairies who live in Steventon Copse, is the godmother of the Princess, and begins by telling the tale. The evil witches Luciferous and Malificent curse the baby to prick her finger and die on her 18th birthday. Fairy D then casts her spell - that the Princess will not die, but only sleep for one hundred years.

The 18 year old, Princess Milly is more interested in D.I.Y. and fixing things than in Princes, and how dare they try to kiss her - remember germs? (don't forget Covid).

The plot is filled with jealousy and intrigue. Funny and outrageous is this panto. Can the king and Queen stop her pricking her finger?

Can the Italian Chefs manage to feed the whole palace in spite of help from the Swedish Chef?

Will the Castle disappear under the water if the reservoir is built?

Great lively dancing and good old fashioned romance - well, it is on near Valentine's Day isn't it?



Steventon Cricket Club

Big news this month is that the SCC committee applied (and recently received news of success!) for a grant from the FCC Communities Foundation to construct the new nets facility at the club. The work on that is scheduled take place in the 2nd half of March, for a couple of weeks, so that the nets will be ready in good time for the start of the 2023 season. We are grateful to the FCC Communities foundation for the grant, and also to the Parish Council for their support and assistance in making the project a reality, and to everyone else in the village for their support. It will be a fantastic new sports facility that will be of enormous benefit to the sizeable and ever-growing village cricket community.

We will shortly be launching our summer term 2023 junior softball programs, Allstars (for ages 5-8) and Dynamos (for ages 8-10). These are very popular and usually oversubscribed, so please do book your child in early, and do feel free to contact us with any queries. At time of writing we've also begun winter training, on Sunday mornings in Abingdon, for Senior & Junior hardball groups - do get in touch for more info. We welcome new players to our women and men's squads, and boys and girls of all ages too.

If you or your child would like to get involved with our community club, whether playing, umpiring, scoring, doing groundwork or coaching, do get in touch. Contact Joe on 07966 592381, email SteventonCC@gmail.com, or use the website to find out more and get in touch, SteventonCC.org.uk

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Parish Council Report

The Parish Council met on Tuesday 3rd January with 5 Parish Councillors, Sally Povolotsky, who is Councillor for both Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) and several members of the public being present.

Sally informed the meeting that OCC have to make circa £45M savings with no money coming down from Government.

The consultation on the proposed 20mph speed limit in Steventon has finished. Sally will make a speech to OCC cabinet in February recommending that a 20mph speed limit in Steventon is implemented.

Yet again a minority of irresponsible dog owners are letting their dogs foul the village green causing significant health hazard, particularly to young children and those involved in sports activities.

If not picked up, the effects of dog poo can stay in the environment for up to a year. It may look like the rain is gradually “washing it away” but the bacteria, viruses and parasites can be very persistent. This can cause a very real risk to humans.

Dogs may deposit roundworm eggs (toxocara canis) in their faeces, which become infectious after about 3 weeks, and can remain so for up to 2 years.

Dog poo can contain roundworm eggs, and accidental ingestion through not washing hands thoroughly after contact may develop into a form of larvae that can migrate to your brain, lungs, liver, kidneys, or heart. When they migrate to the eyes, they can cause blindness, especially in children.

If you see a dog owner allowing their dog to foul and not picking it up, please note down as many details as you can that might help us to identify them. The Vale of White Horse District Council require the following information to commence an investigation:

- date and time of incident
- location of incident
- description of person in charge of the dog
- description of the dog

- name and/or address of person in charge of the dog

They will need a written statement from you for investigation that could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. The current fine is £50. If a person refuses to pay, they can be taken to the local Magistrates Court for the dog fouling offence and fined up to £1,000. Parish Council Elections will be held in May. Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils have put together a one hour Zoom session which sets out the basics of being a councillor with the opportunity to ask questions as well. If you feel that you would like to be a Parish Councillor for Steventon the sessions are one hour long with no need to book, on:

- **13th February 10-11am**
- **15th March 2-3pm**

Zoom joining details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrbmVxTUUs2QT09>

Meeting ID: 871 2501 2109

Passcode: 386520

The next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday February 7th, 2023, at 7pm in St Michael's School Hall (Oh yes it is!).

Litter Picking Report 2022

The increasing size of the village certainly reflected in the volume of litter which we have collected over the past year. Our statistics show that this amounted to 327 sacks of general rubbish and 21 green re-cycling bins. All of which involved 222 hours of labour. This represented a 6% increase in the figures for 2021.

We continue to find bags of discarded household waste - (which should be disposed of at home) – and many packs of sandwiches, which we suspect are thrown away on the way to school? The birds in our back garden certainly benefit!

In separating rubbish from re-cycling, the majority is comprised of dog bags which, en masse, weigh VERY heavily. We do not ever need to go to the gym!!

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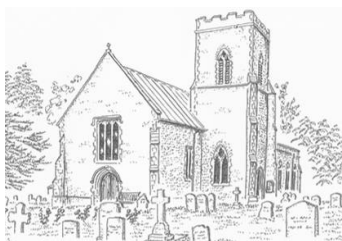
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Lay Minister: Mr Jack Jarvis (01235 831395)

Church Warden: Dr Hilary Otterburn (01235 834725)

Deputy Warden: Mr Alan Binning (01235 820009)

Dear Friends

"The Times They Are a-Changin'"

... Bob Dylan wrote this song in 1963 in the era of the Peace and Love generation, providing his typically eloquent and inciteful analysis of the 60s people who were challenging the values and actions of governments and older generations. The church, although slow to respond to changes in societal values and priorities, is not immune to the requirement to reinterpret how it remains faithful to serving God's people in times of monumental change and uncertainty. We are not able to fund the replacement of a recently retired minister therefore a change in service timings and patterns becomes necessary to ensure that our current ministers have adequate time to travel between the five parish churches every Sunday. **This means that from Sunday 5 March our Sunday services will start at 09:30.** The timing of evening and weekday services remains unchanged.

Change is not always welcomed; concerns remain that the Church of England structures are not adequately deploying resources to 'front line mission' work. However, we are learning that as the local church looks outwards to the needs of the communities rather than inwards to its own needs and priorities, we are in a position of attracting funds and resources from external agencies to broaden and strengthen our pastoral care of the vulnerable and marginalised. External funding is finite but significant income has been received in recent months based on the evidence of our service to families who are struggling with the spiralling cost of living. A faithful church will always be a flourishing one as it asks not for the interests of self, but of the needy. In Dylan's words serve as a timely reminder to the church: *'keep your eyes wide, the chance won't come again.'*

Between 18:00-19:00 on Thursday 23 February, the eve of the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we invite you to see and hear the church bells rung in the Ukrainian style. Candles can be lit for those who suffer because of this terrible war and as a sign of solidarity with our Ukrainian neighbours. Please come and leave as you are able.

Wed 1 February	09:30 Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by Mr Jack Jarvis
Sun 5 February	09.45 Holy Communion	18:00 Evening Prayer led by Mike Murray
Wed 8 February	09:30 Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by Jack Jarvis
Sun 12 February	09:45 Morning Worship	
Wed 15 February	09:30 Holy Communion (BCP)	Led by Jack Jarvis
Sun 19 February	09:45 Holy Communion	
Wed 22 February	09.30 Holy Communion (BCP) 19.30 Holy Communion for Ash Wednesday	Led by Jack Jarvis All Saints, Sutton Courtenay
Sun 26 February	08:00 Holy Communion (BCP) 09:45 Family Service	

*May the love and peace of God which passes all human understanding,
reign in the hearts of the powerful and powerless, now, and always.*

Phil Sutton

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Steventon Football Club

December was not a good month for playing football, so there have been few games since the last report. January started well, but at the time of writing Water Polo seems a better option!

The First team had a brief time in the Charity Shield, drawn against the season's best team, losing 5-2 to Abingdon United, although both Dylan & Reece Burgess got their names on the score sheet. Mixed fortunes in the 2 games this month see them 6th in the League:

Played 10 Won 3 Drawn 3 Lost 4 = 12 points;

Steventon 1 vs Cholsey Utd 3 :
Cholsey completed the double over us, despite Anton Mundy scoring his 1st goal for the club
Steventon 2 vs East Hendred 2 : VAR, VAR away!

Evenly contested for the first hour, the last 30 mins saw 6 goals, two struck off for offside by the opposition's lino, one away goal allowed even though

the away supporters conceded there was an offside in the build up prior to a penalty being awarded and converted. Dylan Burgess had a goal allowed and one struck off, Dale Cameron scored officially, but Jona Green's back heeled 'winner' didn't count. It can be a cruel game at times!

Meanwhile, 3 away games with 3 defeats meant that the Reserves have fallen two places in the 3rd Division to 8th

Played 10 Won 3 Drawn 2 Lost 3 = 11points

Berinsfield 5 vs Steventon Res 0

Benson 2 vs Steventon Res 1

Sutton Courtenay 3 vs Steventon Res 2

Thanks to Matt Astor, Thiago Beguinho and Thomas Clearly for giving us something to cheer!

Reminder : We are still hoping to form a Youth Team for next season, so are on the look out for a coach, helpers and of course sponsors, so if you'd like to more just let us know

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Elm trees on the Causeway

From Alexandra Freeman



I've never seen a mature elm tree, and yet they were once one of the most noteworthy trees in the UK: tall, living hundreds of years, and having beautiful wood – seen in many of the old houses in Steventon. We're hoping we can bring them back to the village.

There are two species of elm in the UK: the Wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) is mostly found in the north and west. The Field elm (*Ulmus minor*) is the one that is common in southern England.

And it *is* still common – many of the hedges around the village are thick with them. But as soon as they reach around 5m in height, you'll see them die off.

Recent genetic testing has shown that the old story – that the Field elm was introduced to the UK by the Romans – is true. From 100BC writers described how elms were ideal as living supports for vines (there is an old saying about 'the elm and the vine' meaning a partnership where one supports the other). The Roman writer Columela, who came from Spain, particularly mentions the northern Italian strain known as Atinia as being ideal for this use, and it grows almost entirely from suckers rather than seed. In fact, Columela himself inherited 3 farms in Northern Italy – and sure enough, when the genetic testing came back it showed that the Field elms across the UK and many of those in Spain - where Columela had his fourth farm - are suckers from that strain in northern Italy, which rarely sets seed.

After nearly 2,000 years of success, when the elms dominated our countryside and were vital in supporting certain other species (such as the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly), two pandemics struck them. The first was in the early 1900s, when a fungus from Asia, spread by two species of beetle that live under elm bark, was imported by accident through timber trading. It devastated elms of several different species across Europe and North America. This is when the first breeding programmes were started to try to cross-breed western species of elm with eastern species, which were resistant to the disease. Then, another disaster came in the 1960 and 70s, when a second fungus species was spread from Asia – even more deadly to European elms than the first. These two related diseases – known (rather unfairly to the Dutch) as Dutch Elm Disease (or 'DED') – have been described as 'one of the worst plant diseases ever known'. DED is, in fact, still spreading north in the UK. You may have heard recently of it killing an 800 year old Wych elm in Scotland. The bark beetle that spreads DED only attacks trees when they have got to a certain size, which is why our hedgerows are still full of small elms – and why they die once they get to a certain size. It can also only fly a certain distance, so some old elms have been protected, particularly around Brighton and Hove, by cutting down all elms in a 'cordon sanitaire' to protect a central area from incoming beetles carrying the disease (although it has now reached Brighton).

The Causeway probably had elm trees along it in the past, and until a few years ago we had an experimental tree bred for resistance, just next to the entrance to the Village Hall car park. It sadly proved not to be resistant to being hit by a car, just as it was approaching the size where its disease resistance would be put to the test.

Now, though, we have just planted several precious new elm trees along the Causeway. Three of these are traditional hybrids, originally from a Dutch breeding programme (a variety known as 'Lutece'). The others, though, are pure *Ulmus minor*, from a breeding programme in Madrid. These have a fascinating story themselves. As part of the Spanish search for disease-resistant elms, the arboriculturalist Margarita Burón was searching the Spanish countryside in 1996 for individual Field elm trees that had survived. She brought her labelled specimens back to the breeding centre, where they were grown on and eventually tested for their resistance to the fungus.

One of the cuttings, labelled 'Adémuz', turned out to be extremely resistant. But Margarita had flown to Ethiopia to help with their reforestation programme and was tragically killed in a car accident, so no one knows the location and description of the tree from which the cutting was taken (though its genetics show that it is a pure Field elm, not a hybrid). It is thought probably to have been from near the Spanish town of Adémuz – but the word actually also means 'impregnable' or 'adamant'.



Our precious little Adémuz plants have come from Hampshire Butterfly Conservation who have been testing many varieties of elm on many different types of soil and conditions in the south of England in order to help preserve the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly. There they have grown well and seem to have good resistance to drought as well as flooding, so we hope that they will prove suitable for the Causeway, and – in 20 years or so – start to return a long-lost look of pre-1970s England.



White-letter Hairstreak (underwing) Iain Leach



About the people who have become our people.

We planned to visit Great Britain as tourists one day. But we couldn't think that Britain would become our shelter from the war that Russia unleashed in Ukraine. Our daughter and granddaughter first left to London by "Homes for Ukraine" programme. This fact motivated us although it was hard to make up our minds to come to the very different country with unfamiliar traditions and customs. The host searchings didn't last for long. After several emails and video calls we

understood that we match each other. They are very educated family of the same age as we are. They appreciate honesty, kindness and intelligence. Well, and we've been here for 5 months now. You could guess that we mean the Jenkinsons – Sharron and George. People in Steventon love and respect this family for their deeds. In the beginning it was hard to get used to the thing that you are in a safe place now. There aren't any alarms, explosions. There's no need to go to basement. But we managed to cope with our fears owing to that friendly atmosphere in Jenkinson's house. Moreover their pet Joy is totally wonderful. Sharron and George plunged us into the English culture and music. They showed us a lot of different sights in Britain. We miss our Motherland very much, our native home in Kiev. We are hoping to come back as it becomes safe there.



Sincerely yours, Ukrainian family Malko - Mila and Valery.