

# STEEP AND STROUD NEWSLETTER

NO 638

FEBRUARY 2026





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# STEEP WELCOME CLUB

*Judy Thompson*

The Club was founded soon after the arrival of the Reverend Douglas Snelgar and his wife Pam in Steep in 1957. At that time the Mothers' Union met in a room in the vicarage grounds. As Pam and Douglas had no children as yet, Douglas decided to close the Mothers' Union and start a new group for anyone over 60. This met at the Village Hall and so Steep Welcome Club was born.

The club met once a month for table games, speakers, tea, and a chat. Folk paid a fee of two shillings for each meeting. A benefactor provided funds for outings and a Christmas party, and a domestic servant made cakes for the teas, and used to sit in the kitchen of the hall making sandwiches. Various visits to gardens were arranged in the summer.

However, the club gradually dwindled and by the late 1990s had ceased. In 2009 however a small group of enthusiasts felt this type of social event should be revived.

The Welcome Club we have today evolved from this and is now open to anyone, in or around the parish, who would like some social interaction, and can in actual fact be any age.

The meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, from 2.30pm to 4.30pm,

mainly meeting as before in the Village Hall. The club provides an opportunity for those who would like to come together for an activity followed by tea, homemade sandwiches and cake, and lively chat.

Our programme tries to reflect the interests of our members and our local environment. Indoor activities include quizzes, talks, films, demonstrations, discussions and music. We visit further afield in the summer with various outings, sometimes in members' homes or gardens and which include lunch or tea.

At Christmas, we have a festive lunch in a seasonally decorated Village Hall with entertainment and carol singing by all.

We have a willing band of volunteers and will always welcome more.

We hope the Welcome Club will continue to be an integral part of village life, responding to the wants of the members.

And we look forward to seeing you if you would like to join us - we are exactly as our name says!

Judy Thompson 07769 182181  
judy.thompson@me.com  
Heather Maybury 07554 747361  
hjmaybury@gmail.com

**Cover Picture:** Winter flowering Honeysuckle

**Inside Cover:** Welcome Club Christmas lunch



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# DIARY DATES

## STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

Next Meeting:

**Monday 2nd Feb 7.30pm**

**Steep Village Hall.** All welcome.

Contact: Sam Marchant

([clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk))

<https://www.steep-pc.gov.uk/>

## STEEP VILLAGE HALL

**7th Mar at 7.30pm** 'CALL MY WINE

BLUFF' See page 8 for details

Contact: Louise Knight

[manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk) or

01730 774936

## STEEP FILM SOCIETY

**Steep Village Hall, 7.30 for 8pm start.**

**30th Jan** SUNSHINE ON LEITH (Burns  
Night Theme)

**13th Feb** THE ROSES (Valentine's  
Night – Cup Cakes etc)

**27th Feb** THE BALLAD OF WALLIS  
ISLAND See page 14 for details

<https://steepfilmsociety.org.uk/>

## BEDALES LIVE EVENTS

**Wed 4th, Thu 5th & Fri 6th Feb**

BEDALES ROCK SHOW

**Mon 9th Feb** ECKERSLEY LECTURE

**Mon 23rd & Tue 24th Feb** STUDENT  
DIRECTED PERFORMANCES

**Wed 25th Feb** STEINWAY AND SONG  
CONCERT

**Mon 2nd & Tue 3rd Mar**

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<https://www.bedales.org.uk/whats-on>

## FROXFIELD CHOIR

**Sat 14th Mar at 7.30pm** at the **Festi-  
val Hall, DUKE ELLINGTON'S SACRED  
CONCERT** See page 14 for details

## STROUD PARISH COUNCIL

Next Meeting:

**Tuesday 17th Mar 7.30pm**

**Stroud Village Hall.** All welcome.

Contact: Sam Marchant

([clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk))

<https://www.stroud-pc.gov.uk/>

## STROUD EVENING W.I.

All meetings take place at **Stroud  
Village Hall**, on a Tuesday, starting at  
**7.30pm.**

**10th Feb** THE POWER OF AUTISM  
ASSISTANCE DOGS

[https://hampshire.thewi.org.uk/find-  
wi/stroud-evening](https://hampshire.thewi.org.uk/find-wi/stroud-evening). X @WiStroud

## STROUD VILLAGE HALL

**Fri 30th Jan at 7pm to 10.30pm**  
JANUARY QUIZ

**Fri 6th Feb at 6pm to 8pm** and **Sat**

**7th Feb at 9.30am to 11.30am**  
PARISH PLAN CONSULTATION

[www.stroudvillagehall.org](http://www.stroudvillagehall.org)

## STEEP WELCOME CLUB

**Thurs 12th Feb at 2.30pm** at **Steep  
Village Hall** - Barbara Homer asks you  
to bring something made by you, or  
someone close to you.

**Thurs 26th Feb at 2.30pm** at **Steep  
Village Hall** - BEDALES PREP  
STUDENTS ENTERTAIN.

*Heather Maybury: 07554 747361;  
01730 266855; [hjmaybury@gmail.com](mailto:hjmaybury@gmail.com)  
[judy.thompson@me.com](mailto:judy.thompson@me.com)*

**EDWARD THOMAS LITERARY  
FESTIVAL AND BIRTHDAY WEEKEND**  
**Fri 27th Feb to Sun 1st Mar** See  
page 12 for details

# STEEP AND STROUD NEWS

## STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

*Robin Hollington,  
Councillor, Steep Parish Council*

The Parish Council met on 12 January. The meeting agenda is available on the Parish Council website:

<https://www.steep-pc.gov.uk/your-council/agendas-and-minutes>.

The approved minutes will be published shortly.



### Council Membership

Following a recent resignation, Paul Nayton was co-opted onto the Council. We are pleased to welcome Paul and thank him for stepping forward.

### Key Matters Discussed

The Council discussed concerns relating to potentially contaminated water and the possible installation of traffic survey cameras to determine whether vehicle weight restrictions in Steep Marsh are being observed. Further investigation is required before progress can be made, and these matters will be revisited over the coming months. Residents with an interest are encouraged to attend future meetings.

In the village, a group of residents is exploring crowdfunding to purchase a plot of land and place it in trust, protecting it from development despite it currently being outside the settlement boundary. Consideration is also being given to whether the land

could be designated an Asset of Community Value.

### County and District Updates

Our Hampshire County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer, reported that the County's recommendation is to proceed with local elections in May.

District Councillor Nick Drew highlighted the growing problem of potholes and urged residents to continue reporting them via:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes>.



### SSEN Electricity Substation Proposal

SSEN has approached the Parish Council with an aim to explore if it would be possible to install a new electricity substation at the Village Hall as part of a multi-million pound "beautification" scheme. This would remove visible overhead cables in the valley north of Church Road and eliminate some substations currently located in residents' gardens.

SSEN has submitted one proposed location, so the Council is working at exploring all options before any final decision is made. The Council noted that while it may support improvements to the vista and part of the village's electricity supply, the Sole Managing Trustee of the Village Hall may understandably take a different view.

### Road Naming – New Development

The SDNPA and Royal Mail are now at the stage of considering road

names for the new development adjacent to the Village Hall. Their current suggestion is “The Green”, but we are seeking residents’ input for this lasting legacy. Please send any suggestions to the Parish Clerk at:

[Clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk)

### **Church Road / Mill Lane Area Improvements**

For some time, the Council and the Village Hall have been working on ideas to improve the appearance of the Church Road/Mill Lane junction, the new Public Open Space, the Village Hall Land, and the Hall itself, aiming to treat the area as a single, coherent whole.

As a result, the Council has decided to seek some co-ordinated artistic sketches to help illustrate possible improvements for residents. We are approaching local residents known to have relevant skills and would welcome hearing from any architectural or landscape artists willing to help. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you are interested.

### **Works on the Common**

Councillor Shannon Askew has overseen renovation works to the entrance to the Common, including improved drainage inside the gate. Please see page 8 for further details

### **Finance and Budget**

Although the Parish Precept (the portion of Council Tax that funds the Parish Council) was increased in line with inflation at the December meeting, approval of the detailed budget was delayed to iron out some finer details.

However, several notable potential

future projects were highlighted:

- £5,000 pa to establish a savings fund for the replacement of play equipment on the Common in the next 3–5 years.

- Up to £18,000 for professional fees to develop proposals for Church Road, Mill Lane, the Village Hall, and the Public Open Space, subject to parish support.

- £20,000 in both 2026–27 and 2027–28 to *potentially* progress a Neighbourhood Plan. The council will be seeking the advice of a specialist consultant to determine the benefits of proceeding sooner rather than later.

### **Grants**

A grant of £450 was awarded to the Newsletter. Two larger grant applications were not approved, although the Council expressed a strong desire to find alternative ways to support the Cricket Club.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on:

Monday 2 February at 7:30pm

Residents are always welcome to attend.

### **NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

The Steep and Stroud Parish Newsletter team wish to thank councillors Drew and Mocatta for their grants which enabled us to produce the full colour, extended edition in December which included a pictorial ‘look back’ over events in both parishes during 2025. We know this was much appreciated by the villages.

## STEEP COMMON

Shannon Askew



### Works on the Common

Councillor Shannon Askew has overseen renovation works to the entrance to the Common, including improved drainage inside the gate. The pedestrian gate has been improved in several ways.

First, it closes completely which will be a safer system for everyone including the Steep Primary School children who use the Common at play-times.

Second, it is now accessible for everyone, including those in wheel-chairs and is more useable for people with pushchairs.

The holes in the entrance surface have been repaired, and the surface has been replaced.

A new soak away system has been dug down into the ground on the Common side which will improve the drainage resulting in less mud around the gateways.

A deep channel was dug into the clay from the gateway entrance down towards the wood on the right-hand side. This created a drainage system to take excess water from the gateway and drain into the lower area.

Thanks to Arbolec for carrying out the work in rather bad weather!

The cost of the work was paid for by Steep Parish Council and a grant from SDNPA which was used to pay

for half of the project.

If anyone would like the astroturf beside the gate, then please help yourself. It is muddy but will wash off and it could cover a bare patch in your garden!

The work is now complete, and we are sure residents will agree that the improvements are very welcome.

## STEEP VILLAGE HALL

Alison Driver

### Save the Date!

**CALL MY WINE BLUFF** - an evening of fun and entertainment based on a wine tasting theme.....where knowledge of wine is neither expected nor required!

Tickets are only **£25** per person (all proceeds go to Steep Village Hall for outside seating)

**Date:** Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March, 7 - 7.30pm for a glass of fizz, 7.30 – 10.30 for the quiz

**Where:** Steep Village Hall, Church Road, GU32 2DN

**Event:** A comical wine tasting evening where you will be served 3 white wines and 3 red wines along with bread, cheese and charcuterie platters. For each wine served, 3 accounts of its provenance will be presented by a panel of 3 “bluffers” and YOU will attempt to guess who is telling the truth!

Hosted by Trustees of the Steep War Memorial Village Club. To buy tickets, please contact Louise Knight [manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk) or 01730 774936

# STROUD PARISH COUNCIL



STROUD  
PARISH COUNCIL

Stroud Village Hall and Residents Association, supported by Stroud Parish Council, invite you to...

## Have your say on our village's future

### What we are inviting everyone to be part of:

- Reflecting on what has been achieved since the writing of the 2013 Parish Plan
- Writing a new 2026 Parish Priorities Statement

### Why:

It has been 13 years since we wrote our Parish Plan, and we think it is valuable to have an updated document to shape future change.

Parish Priority Statements give communities the opportunity to set out their aspirations for the future and identify any local issues in relation to planning matters

### How:

There are a few ways to get involved:

- In person workshops in the Village Hall
  - o Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February – 6pm-8pm
  - o Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February – 9:30am-11:30am
- In person by posting comments on the village hall display boards from 6<sup>th</sup> Feb to 28<sup>th</sup> Feb
- Online via this link or QR code until 28<sup>th</sup> Feb <https://forms.office.com/e/UeFjNp7kww>



### Would you like to see an example?

Other village's documents can be found here [southdowns.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/parish-priorities-statements/](https://southdowns.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/parish-priorities-statements/)

## STROUD VILLAGE HALL

*Katy Lace  
Hall Manager*

Firstly a belated Happy New Year! I hope that 2026 has started well for you all. As I write this we have our first event of the new year coming up - the annual January Quiz which takes place on Friday 30th. Trustee and Stroud resident, Kat Wooton, will be our quizmaster for the evening and Charlie's Baa will be serving up a pint of real ale or two. We're hoping for a good turnout and all profits will go towards the running costs of the village hall. This may have taken place by the time of reading so thank you in advance to everyone who is planning to come along to support us!

In other news, the first Management Committee meeting of the year took place this week and the Board of Trustees is scheduled to meet a little later this month. Among the items for discussion will be the budget for the next financial year, any maintenance or improvement works required, and event planning for the year ahead. I'm delighted to announce that we have two new additions to the Board of Trustees - local residents Heather Coulson and Chris Holt - who both bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm with them. Thank you Heather and Chris!

**Finally, the Parish Council and Stroud Village Hall & Residents Association (SVHARA) are jointly working on updating the Parish Plan. We**

will be hosting public consultation meetings at the village hall (see dates below) which everyone is welcome to attend. You can also provide comments online and the Parish Council will share details of how to do this. This is your opportunity to have your say on the future vision and priorities for our village so please do share your ideas. All feedback is gratefully received.

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01730 377978  
[www.stroudvillagehall.org](http://www.stroudvillagehall.org)

### Dates for the diary:

Fri 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan	7pm to 10.30pm	January Quiz
Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	6pm to 8pm	Parish Plan Consultation
Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb	9.30am to 11.30am	Parish Plan Consultation
Sat 25 <sup>th</sup> July	3pm to 11pm	Stroud Revels
Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> to Mon 31 <sup>st</sup> Aug	Timings TBC	Hampshire Open Studios Art exhibition



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## STROUD COMMUNITY GARDEN

*Katy Lace*

*On behalf of Stroud Garden Group*

All is quiet in the garden this month. January is a season of watching and waiting, and we are using the opportunity to slow down and reflect on our plans for the year ahead. First on the list is to plant some new fruit trees and create a (very) mini orchard for the community to enjoy. Volunteers planted new spring bulbs last autumn so we are looking forward to seeing those begin to bloom as we move closer towards spring.

Now is a great time to get involved with the Community Garden and share your ideas on what you'd like to see in the garden this year. Please do get in touch if you are interested - no experience necessary and you can give as much or as little time as you are able. We'd love to run some gardening workshops, particularly (but not exclusively) for children, so please do also drop me a line if this is something you might be able to help with. Stay warm and dry, and enjoy the sunny days when we get them!

*Contact detail as page 10.*

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## POPPY APPEAL

*Philip Milleham*

I am delighted to report that the parish of Steep raised £1063 for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. This was achieved through donations made at Steep, Bedales, Petersfield Golf Club, Owens Cycles, the Cricketers Inn and the All Saint's Remembrance Sunday Service.

Particular thanks are again due to Caroline Welch, Gill Wicksteed and Bridget MacMillan for their sterling efforts in undertaking door to door collections. In addition, an amazing effort has again been made by Jenny Hollington and others who raised a further £150 through the Stroud Mission Church plant stall.

Steep's contribution helps to underpin the enduring work of the Royal British Legion to care for and support those who have served, many of whom have complex physical and mental health issues and other problems. When need is apparent, it is vital that the Legion's case workers can get to individuals and families needing support as quickly as possible, to start the process of assessment of need, the delivery of care and hopefully improvement. On occasion assistance might include signposting to other services, including help with employment and housing. By enabling this vital welfare and benevolent work, the lives of the ex-Service community and their families can be greatly enhanced.

Please would anyone who might be able to offer help with door-to-door collections from late October get in touch. This will greatly assist in maintaining the contribution that Steep Parish makes to the Poppy Appeal.

## EDWARD THOMAS LITERARY FESTIVAL AND BIRTHDAY WALK WEEKEND

*Jeremy Mitchell, Chair  
The Edward Thomas Fellowship*

This year's Edward Thomas Literary Festival will take place over the weekend of Friday 27 February to Sunday 1 March when the Edward Thomas Birthday Walk takes place and to which everyone is welcome.

The Friday and Saturday Festival events take place at Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery and further details, including ticket prices and participants, should now be appearing on the Museum's website.

The programme is:

### **Friday 27 February**

At 7 pm – Jonathan Jones as Edward Thomas – a one-person performance

### **Saturday 28 February**

At 10.30 am – the ever-popular *Brunch of Poets* – join 4 poets in discussion and readings over coffee and croissants

At 2.00 pm – 2 poets: 1 conversation. This year, rather than an online conversation it will be 2 local poets live, having a conversation in the Old Courthouse

At 3.30 pm – a talk about Edward Thomas by Dr Guy Cuthbertson, Edward Thomas and First World War expert.

### **Sunday 1 March**

At 10.15 am – assemble in Bedales car park for the strenuous Birthday Walk up to the Memorial Stone. Everyone is welcome, plus dogs.

At 1.00 pm (or thereabouts) – picnic or other lunch arrangements (bring or make your own). The Reading Room at Bedales School will be available if the weather is not behaving.

At 2.15 pm – assemble again in Bedales car park for a shorter, less strenuous village walk – ending up at the Church for tea.

At 3.45 pm – tea and cake (donations please to Steep Church) followed by The Edward Thomas Fellowship AGM and readings by winning poems from the 2026 Edward Thomas Fellowship Poetry Competition.

Further details about the walks and the AGM will be available on the Edward Thomas Fellowship website (<https://edward-thomas-fellowship.org.uk/>) in due course.

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[www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk](http://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk)

## REFLECTIONS ON KARL JENKINS' *THE ARMED MAN*

David Dobson

One of the most appealing things to me about Froxfield Choir is the variety it has shown over the years, and one never knows quite what's coming next. Two years ago, we sang Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert and last year in the summer we tackled the mountain of Brahms' German Requiem, a really tough sing – never any time to sit down – but I think we sang it well, with at the end that familiar feeling of pleased exhaustion. Then in the autumn came Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man*, something very different. Essentially it is an anti-war piece, composed in 1999 in reflection of 'the most war-torn and destructive century in human history' and as a message of hope that the world of the future would have more peace and fewer wars.

Now, I am writing this in January 2026, a month when we all hope for better things, but in spite of our pious wishes the world continues to rage – in the Middle East, in Ukraine, in Venezuela and Iran – and that's just for starters; and as I look back on *The Armed Man* last November, I can't help feeling that Karl Jenkins' subliminal message was 'when will we ever learn?'

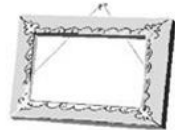
But to the music. I could sum it up and say it is a mixture of the sublime and the savage, with moments that shock in their bleakness, and moments where one feels pure joy. We started off singing and stamping our feet to a 15th century French marching song, with the piccolos egging us

on. That set the scene for war, but here came the first surprise: a muezzin, with powerful voice and snowy white vestments, sang the Muslim call to prayer, and that was tremendously moving. Next came another twist, with the familiar words of the Kyrie Eleison, and that was followed by belligerent music which we knew presaged war.

I've said the music was a mixture of sublime and savage, but it was the words that really got to me. They came from a variety of sources, and most poignant was when we got to the immediate aftermath of war in the section called Angry Flames. This is brutal stuff, much the more so when one realises that what we were singing was a direct quotation from a Japanese man, Sankichi Tobi, as he describes what he found at Hiroshima (he survived the bombing but died of leukaemia later).

It was a relief when we moved on to see the resumption of peace – tremendously moving Agnus Dei and Benedictus, before the last rousing anthem "Better is Peace" with its quiet contemplative resolution at the

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end. We stood stock still in silence for it seemed an age before Michael, our conductor, slowly lowered his hands to break the spell.

Nobody I feel could sing this work and be untouched, nor feel its relevance. No wonder it is the most sung choral work in the world today.

## FROXFIELD CHOIR

### Jazzing up this year's Petersfield Musical Festival!

Buy your tickets now to avoid missing one of the highlights of this year's Festival, Froxfield Choir's reprise of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert at the Festival Hall, on Saturday 14 March at 7.30pm. Tickets via the Festival website are on sale from Monday 2 February. £18, £22, £5 (under-19s) [www.thefestivalhall.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.thefestivalhall.co.uk/whats-on)

We welcome singers to join our amateur choir. Come along any week for a taster session. We rehearse on Thursdays at Froxfield Village Hall between 7.45-9.30pm. Please contact Lesley Howe at [lkhowe58@gmail.com](mailto:lkhowe58@gmail.com) for more details. Follow us on Socials @Froxfield Choir and on our website [www.froxfieldchoir.co.uk](http://www.froxfieldchoir.co.uk)

## STEEP FILM SOCIETY



Steep Film Society is a charity which shows films every fortnight at Steep Village Hall.

Members pay £6 per showing, guests are welcome but pay a bit more. For free membership go to [steepfilmsociety.org.uk](http://steepfilmsociety.org.uk) or contact Robin Hollington at [robin.hollington@steepfilmsociety.org.uk](mailto:robin.hollington@steepfilmsociety.org.uk).

Book preferably online or by email or phone to Robin or (01730 774869). Please check online that your membership is in date.

### 13th February—The Roses

Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Ivy and Theo Rose: successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. But beneath the façade of their supposedly ideal life, a storm is brewing. As Theo's career nose-dives while Ivy's own ambitions take off, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentment ignites in this wonderfully wry, dark comedy.

### 27th February—The Ballad of Wallis Island

Charles (Tim Key), an eccentric lottery winner who lives alone on a remote island and dreams of getting his favorite musicians, McGwyer Mortimer (Tom Basden & Carey Mulligan) back together. His fantasy turns into reality when the bandmates and former lovers accept his invitation to play a private show at his home on Wallis Island. Old tensions resurface as Charles tries desperately to salvage his dream gig.

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## LENTIL SOUP

Elizabeth Housden

What could be better for lunch on a chilly winter's day but home-made soup? Try this one!

### Ingredients:

2 litres of good vegetable stock or ham stock if you eat meat  
150g red lentils  
6 carrots, peeled and finely chopped  
2 medium leeks, trimmed and sliced  
Good handful of chopped parsley





Heat the stock in a large saucepan and add the lentils. Bring to the boil and let the lentils soften for a few minutes.

Add carrots and leeks and check seasoning.

Bring to the boil again, reduce heat, cover and simmer gently for 45 minutes to an hour until the lentils have broken down. (Partly cooked lentils are vile as well as indigestible!) sprinkle with parsley and serve with warmed, chunky buttered rolls. Perfect for a cold day!



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# RON'S NOTES

Ron Allen

The trouble with **gathering winter fuel** is that to a naturalist the fuel is a haven for all manner of plants and animals. Branches and logs are covered in all sorts of ferns, mosses, fungi and lichens. **John Wyndham** (lived in Steep and attended Bedales School) had 'Trouble with Lichen' but whether he pronounced them 'Liken' or 'Lichen' I do not know. All sorts of animals use logs too.

**Plants** appear simple enough and include trees, herbs, and grasses that have flowers and reproduce with seeds. **Ferns** however, release spores from the undersides of their feathery fronds. **Mosses** lack roots, flowers or seeds, reproduce with spores, and have only very simple very thin leaves that transport water and nutrients.

**Fungi** are a kingdom of their own and decompose organic matter using enzymes to allow them to absorb nutrients. The great bulk of larger fungi comprise thin filamentous hyphae that either penetrate deep into decaying wood or form extensive underground networks, the 'wood-wide-web', linking with and connecting the roots of trees and plants. Given the right conditions, fungi send up **mushrooms** and **toadstools** that produce and release spores. **Lichens** (lichenised fungi) are a symbiotic complex relationship between certain fungi and the algae and bacteria they support.

**Animals** too. **Wood mice, bank voles** and **hedgehogs** will use fire-wood log piles for shelter as will **frogs, toads, newts** and **grass snakes**. **Slime moulds** (colourful clumped amoeba-

like creatures), will slowly slide across damp logs and then harden and produce spores.

Carnivorous **centipedes** with venomous front legs, and algae-eating **millipedes**, will forage across the logs and cracks in the wood. **Woodlice** (related to crabs) will be sheltering and feeding on decaying wood and many insects, such as **beetles** and **ants**, will use the shelter and hunting grounds. **Spiders** of many species will hunt around dead wood and lay their egg sacs in cracks and crevices. **Slugs** and **snails** relish rotting wood. Many **micro-moths** and **butterflies** will hibernate in cracks in the wood and emerge when brought indoors into the warm.

Having checked out the tree stems and branches for their biodiversity it is time to get the chain saw and the axe out and start destroying the wonderful habitat and stacking the split logs to become colonised with a whole new range of creatures over the winter and summer.

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# CHURCH NEWS

## **Christmas Services**

*Amanda Greenlee*

Our Benefice enjoyed a wonderful array of Christmas services starting with the FOSC candlelit carol service on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. All our churches rang with carols and good news from the traditional service of 9 lessons and carols at Privett on 21<sup>st</sup> December to the more intimate carols at Stroud on 14<sup>th</sup>, where children read the lessons in the beautifully decorated church. There were Carols on the Green, A Midnight Mass at Steep, a Crib service at High Cross and two well attended services on Christmas Day itself. Our Ministry team and the many volunteers deserve our thanks that we were able to welcome the Christ Child into our lives and experience the awe of the Nativity.

## **Epiphany**

We are now in the season of Epiphany so we are still exploring the arrival of Christ. At our All Age service on 4<sup>th</sup> January Graham, Naomi and David led us to the stable and the arrival of the Three Kings. The figures from the Nativity were hidden around the church and were located by Rollo and Cordelia and placed in their rightful places. Adults were encouraged to pray for the different people present at the crib, new mothers, shepherds, wise men. Graham and Ellie played for us. The following Sunday Susie focused on the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Jesus was without sin but shared in our earthly life by coming to be baptized. This marked the beginning of Jesus's Ministry.

## **PACT Events**

Both Steep and Froxfield are

members of PACT (Petersfield Area Churches Together). The PACT carol service, usually held in the Square in Petersfield had to move inside St Peters due to bad weather. Ted Bones joined the Salvation Band musicians and Simon Mason read one of the lessons. On 14<sup>th</sup> January PACT held its AGM and Rev David Maskell from the Methodist Church was elected to be chair. The many groups associated with PACT gave reports including Homestart Butser, the Kings Arms and the driving charity PVCG. Petersfield Counselling Service are looking for trustees, the organization enables people to gain experience in counselling so is a valued part of our community.

## **Roof Repairs**

Steep church had scaffolding up in November and the organ had to be covered as the roof repairs were being carried out. Fortunately Gerald was able to resume his rightful place so he was able to play for us over Christmas. Some additional work on the roof will take place in early Spring.

## **'Christmas in Steep' Poetry Book**

"Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising for the PACT food bank by purchasing a copy of our poetry collection 'Christmas in Steep'. We are particularly grateful to One Tree Books for so generously giving us shelf space. We are thrilled to report that we have raised £1,280 for the food bank which will help support our community. Thank you to all those

who eagerly bought copies; your money is being put to excellent use, and we hope you enjoy the poems!" David, Ellie and Lucy.

**FROM THE CHURCH REGISTERS**  
**Marriage:** 20th December  
Ella-May Butler and Tom Purcell

**FEBRUARY**



**2026**

## **Benefice Worship**

*The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all mankind.*

Titus 2. 11

### **Sunday 1st February 2026**

8.30am Holy Communion, **Steep**

10am TenAM, **Steep**

10am Parish Communion, **High Cross**

### **Sunday 8th February 2026**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP, said), **Stroud**

10am Parish Communion, **Steep**

### **Sunday 15th February 2026**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP, said), **Steep**

10am Parish Communion, **High Cross**

### **ASH WEDNESDAY**

#### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

**10am** Communion Service with Imposition of Ashes, **Steep**

### **Sunday 22nd February 2026**

8.30am Holy Communion (BCP, said), **Stroud**

10am Parish Communion, **Steep**

11am Morning Prayer, (BCP), **Froxfield Green**

### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

8.30am Holy Communion, **Steep**

10am TenAM, **Steep**

10am Parish Communion, **High Cross**

*Welcome to a variety of services across our benefice.*

For further information, request our weekly emailed news sheet at

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

or visit our website [www.steepfroxfeld.com](http://www.steepfroxfeld.com)

**Steep: All Saints' GU32 2DD; Stroud Church GU32 1AT  
High Cross, St Peter's, GU32 1EQ; Froxfield Green, GU32 1DQ;  
Privett: Holy Trinity, GU34 3PE**

**Parish Communion Services** are in modern language (Common Worship)  
**Early Sunday Services (8.30am)** are said, in traditional language, from the Book of Common Prayer

**Silent Prayer, All Saints', Steep:** 6.30-7pm every Thursday

**The TenAM (all age less formal worship):** 10am on the first Sunday of the month

**Choir Practice:** 6pm on Fridays before 10am Parish Communion

**Sunday School:** Second Sunday of the month during 10am Parish Communion excluding school holidays

**Vicar, Steep and Froxfield with Privett and Area Dean of Petersfield:** The Revd Canon Susie Collingridge—624245, [Susie.collingridge@gmail.com](mailto:Susie.collingridge@gmail.com)

**Assistant Curate:** The Revd Sue Jones 07884 141019, [susan.jones1410@gmail.com](mailto:susan.jones1410@gmail.com)

**LLM Graham Madgwick** - 07946 197038, [g.madgwick@btinternet.com](mailto:g.madgwick@btinternet.com)

**PtO Clergy:** The Revd Dr Pippa Madgwick 07923 933649, [Pippa.madgwick1@btinternet.com](mailto:Pippa.madgwick1@btinternet.com)

**PtO LLM:** Caroline Hilton - 263460

**Lay Pastoral Assistant:** Lindsay Clegg - 827505, [lindsay.clegg@hotmail.com](mailto:lindsay.clegg@hotmail.com)

**Churchwardens: Steep:** Judy Thompson - 07769 182181, [judy.thompson@me.com](mailto:judy.thompson@me.com)

**Froxfield with Privett:** Lindsay Clegg – 827505, [lindsay.clegg@hotmail.com](mailto:lindsay.clegg@hotmail.com)

**Benefice administrator:** Helen Muir-Davies - [Steepfroxfieldprivett@gmail.com](mailto:Steepfroxfieldprivett@gmail.com)

**Gift aid(GA) and Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) officers:**

**Steep/Stroud:** Stephen Rae - 260571 and Caroline Robinson

([Caroline@rokehouse.co.uk](mailto:Caroline@rokehouse.co.uk)) **Froxfield/ Privett:** Ian Hughes – 828344

[n.ianhughes@btinternet.com](mailto:n.ianhughes@btinternet.com); Christine Stephens - [Christine@tcfk-stephens.co.uk](mailto:Christine@tcfk-stephens.co.uk)



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## USEFUL CONTACTS (telephone code 01730)

**Newsletter Editor:** Caroline Robinson, [caroline@rokehouse.co.uk](mailto:caroline@rokehouse.co.uk)

**Police Support Officer:** John Payne [john.payne@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:john.payne@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)

**Steep Village website:** [www.steepvillage.com](http://www.steepvillage.com)

**Steep Parish Clerk:** Sam Marchant, [clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk)

<https://www.steep-pc.gov.uk/>

**Stroud Parish Clerk:** Sam Marchant, [clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk)

<https://www.stroud-pc.gov.uk/>

**Stroud Village Hall:** Katy Lace, [manager@stroudvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:manager@stroudvillagehall.org.uk)

**Steep Village Hall:** Louise Knight, [manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk](mailto:manager@steepvillagehall.org.uk); 774936

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**FOR STROUD** to Jeremy Mitchell at Fairlands, Finchmead Lane, Stroud GU32 3PF; [mitchjd@btinternet.com](mailto:mitchjd@btinternet.com); 01730 267214.

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