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PARISH LINK

Serving the villages of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade for 41 years





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Clayhall Road
Kensworth
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Dear friends and parishioners,

Do you believe in angels? Lots of people do, and it seems you don't even have to call yourself religious. Sometimes people say they feel moments where there's a special connection with something beyond their immediate to-do list, or perhaps with someone they have lost and need to remember – perhaps for advice or reassurance. Perhaps they see a feather floating on the breeze, or just get that particular feeling of something beyond the ordinary. Or it may be art, or poetry, or simply religious stories and tradition which make the idea of a messenger from God seem possible.

Are you one of those people? Or are you someone who shies away from anything that doesn't seem rational or scientific?

What are the answers here? One thing we can say is that the belief in angels has a long and varied history, across faiths, across cultures, across periods of time. So then – do the different religions agree or disagree? Do their different beliefs in angels support each other, or cancel each other out? Have people always thought of angels in the way we do (or refuse to do) now? Has the idea of angels made people behave better, or worse? Are there any rational grounds for this idea anyway?

We're going to have the opportunity to hear what one expert on all this has to say, based on knowledge of how these ideas have grown and developed over the centuries, and to drill down deeper into what it all means and whether it makes any sense in a short, informal study course led by the Revd. Dr Stephen Burge. It's on Tuesday evenings from 20th February to 19th March at 7.30pm, in Kensworth Church Hall (behind the Vicarage at the corner of Clayhall Road and Lynch Hill). You don't need any particular beliefs or knowledge – just interest or curiosity!

Come along and listen, learn, or even disagree!

With my love and prayers, this month and always,

Nicola

AROUND ABOUT STUDHAM

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Church prayers: in February our annual cycle of prayers will focus on Oakway and we shall make special mention of all the residents in our prayers. If you would like a prayer to be said for a special person or event, please contact the churchwarden, Meg Bender (872967 or megbender4@btinternet.com). You are also very welcome to write your own prayer and hang it on the prayer tree located on the table just inside the main church door.

Kids' Club meets on Friday 9th February in church from 3.30pm until 5.30pm. There will be some enjoyable activities followed by a short worship and a hot tea. Children and young people of all ages and their parents and carers are very welcome; to help us with our planning, please contact Caroline Child (cjhitchman@hotmail.com) to let us know you are coming. The afternoon is free of charge but donations to cover the cost of food are very welcome.

Children's Church will be held on Sunday 18th February within the normal Sunday morning service at 10.30am. The children will be thinking about the good news of God's promise to Noah, that after the flood, He would always be with him through the times ahead – the rainbow would remind him (and us) of God's promise. Everyone is very welcome to stay for refreshments after the service and to the celebration of all the February birthdays with a delicious birthday cake.



FRIENDS OF STUDHAM CHURCH

The Friends believe that, whether you are religious or not, the Church, which is over 800 years old, is an important part of Studham's history and heritage. Our aim is to raise money to help maintain the fabric, but not the running costs, of this lovely building.

The 100 Club is one of our fundraisers – existing players will have recently received renewal notices – your continuing support is much appreciated. In December, Leslie Martin won first prize with Les Randall the runner-up, winning £50 and £10 respectively whilst in January, Andrew Selous and Jane Jacoby were the lucky winners.

Please put **Saturday 18th May**, the date of Studham May Fair, in your diaries – see p.13 for details of how you might get involved.

If you would like to know more about the Friends of Studham Church or would like to join the 100 Club, then contact john.mcdougal@btinternet.com/873257 or look at our website <https://friendsstudham.wixsite.com/website>.

KENSWORTH NEWSROUND

KENSWORTH CHURCH

Our prayers for you: if you would like a particular prayer to be said, for a loved one or a special occasion, please contact Dorothy Blackburn (872670 or e-mail: dorothy.godbod1@outlook.com). In February our prayers will include all the people who live in the Ridgeway, Russell Close and Plewes Close.

The Christmas services: Christingle (see photo), the Carol Service and the Crib Service all took place and our thanks go to all who supported them, and to those who organised, decorated, cleaned and generally helped to make it all so successful.

We welcomed Nicola back from her sabbatical on 3rd December, when we celebrated Advent Sunday and lit the first candle on our Advent wreath.

The Christingle Service on 10th December was well attended, and the lighting of the Christingles shed a beautiful warm glow around the church. Thanks to all who helped assemble the Christingles the previous day.



Sunday 17th was our Carol Service, led by the choir and soloist Emma Hall; it was lovely to see a full church, and to welcome staff and pupils from Kensworth Academy. The service culminated with the drawing of the Christmas hamper raffle. Thanks to Jane Bedlington for coordinating it, to everyone who donated prizes, to Emma Tyrell for her wonderful presentation of the hampers, and to all who bought tickets. A magnificent £315 was raised for church funds.

The Crib Service, on Christmas Eve, is very special, in that all children are invited to take part and dress up for the Nativity Scene. The children did not let us down with their enthusiasm and lovely costumes!

Our final service in the season of Christmas was the celebration of the Epiphany on 7th January, when the three wise men visited the newborn Christ.

Special thanks, of course, to Nicola and Dave, our Ministers, for leading the services with love and inspiration. If you missed any of these services, put them in your diary for next year!

KENSWORTH DROP IN CLUB

All are welcome to 'Drop In' at Kensworth Village Hall every Thursday 9am – 11am for tea/coffee and biscuits (soft drinks and crisps for children). Enjoy a chat and games and get to know new friends! We also have outings.

WHIPSNADE INCLUDING OLDHILL WOOD

PAM WARD MBE

In the New Year's Honours list, Pam was awarded an MBE.



We would like to congratulate Pam; it's well deserved. Her dedication to her causes and charities and her work around Whipsnade village is much appreciated.

CHURCH NEWS

Charitable giving

We are very grateful to everyone for the contributions that have allowed us to help a range of charities:

Remembrance Sunday collection which resulted in £276 for the British Royal Legion.

Christingle service and the carol singing around Whipsnade Home Park, together with the Christmas eve service, which resulted in £672 being sent to the Children's Society.

The church also made its **annual donation** of £100 to each of the following charities; Keech Hospice care, Rennie Grove Hospice care, Dunstable Salvation army, the Society of Mary and Martha, Smile, St Martins in the Fields and Dementia UK.

The church was beautifully decorated for Christmas. Thanks to the Tree Cathedral for the Christmas tree, which was decorated by the Whalley family, and Ann and Teresa for their lovely flower displays.

This month, we are praying especially for the people of Whipsnade Park Homes. If you want prayers for a particular purpose or people, write it on the prayer tree in the church or contact the churchwardens, Isobel or Martin, who will add it to the Sunday prayers.

Sunday school

Every second Sunday of the month (11th February) the children meet in the church vestry during the 9am service for activities connected to Bible stories. Bring your children along for fun and friendship.

Whipsnade church working party

Come and join us on Saturday 10th February from 9.30am until 12pm. Help us clear the churchyard ready for Spring. Coffee and biscuits provided.

STUDHAM SCHOOL

Studham Village CE Academy would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year. We are very excited about our planned events for this year and look forward to sharing them with you over the upcoming months.

Our children are enjoying the outdoors, despite our rather wet and cold weather, making the most of our Forest School areas and preparing our allotment for spring. Our Sapling Club members have already made bird feeders, bug hotels and look forward to sitting round the fire drinking hot chocolate!

We are building our own weather station to track the weather in Studham. If you would like to share your knowledge, expertise or help with this, we would love to hear from you! Updates will follow as we venture into becoming meteorologists!

If you are interested in a place for your child (preschool to year 4, from 2 years old to 9 years old), or would like to arrange to visit the school, please contact us (872337 or e-mail school@studhamschools.org.uk) for more information.

Sarah MacKenzie-Skea, Headteacher

KENSWORTH CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY ACADEMY and PRESCHOOL

It has been wonderful to welcome our children and families back to school after the Christmas break. We are so proud of the confidence and oratory skills demonstrated in the Christmas performances and it was fantastic to welcome our parents in to share the excitement.

On a personal note, I am very excited to be the Interim Head Teacher at Kensworth CE Academy and have received a very warm welcome from everyone in our school community. I have really enjoyed getting to know the children and their families.

Years 5 and 6 in Hornbeam Class have been learning all about Greek history in their topic, 'Ground-breaking Greeks', Years 3 and 4 in Oak Class have been finding out about the Earth in 'Rocks, Relics and Rumbles' and our Year 1 and 2 class, Holly, have been exploring cities in 'Bright Lights, Big City'.

At the other end of the school, our young children in Saplings and Cherry Classes have been getting to grips with their local community in their project, 'Let's Explore'.

If you are interested in a place for your child (Preschool to Year 6, from 3 years old to 11 years old), please contact Mrs Rooney in our school office (872336 or email office@ken.dsamat.co.uk) for more information or to book a visit.

Sarah Dryden, Interim Headteacher

Kensworth School Parent Teachers' Association asks for your support: find us on Facebook or e-mail us at kensworthacademypta@gmail.com.

MORE KENSWORTH CHURCH NEWS

Church Calendar: 2nd February is the festival of Candlemas. It celebrates the infant Jesus' first visit to the temple and the command that his followers act as lights to the world.

Easter Sunday is on 31st March this year, so Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, 14th February, celebrated by a Benefice service of Holy Communion in Kensworth (page ?), and the first Sunday in Lent is 18th February.

Everyone is very welcome to all our services. (NB - 8am Holy Communion on 25th February is held in the Church Hall, Clayhall Road).

Choir News: if you would like to join the choir, please telephone the Vicar (872223) or e-mail: revnicolalenthall@btinternet.com. Instrument players are also welcome, to help accompany on occasions. We have room for all voices, and you don't need to read music to take part!

Sunday School: Morning Service at 10.30am on Sunday 11th February will include Sunday School, with classes for both older and younger children.

If you would like your child to join Sunday School, or if you want to help, contact Katherine Huggins (607841) or e-mail: hugginskatherine1@gmail.com for details.

Messy Church: this will be on Friday 16th February at 3.30pm in the Church Hall. All children aged 3+ are welcome, accompanied by a parent or carer; older children are very welcome to come and help. Time for craft work, songs and story, followed by a hot meal for everyone.

CHURCH RE-USE CENTRE (formerly known as the Church Shop)

In the Church Hall, Clayhall Road (behind the Vicarage). 2 – 4pm on Wednesdays and 10am – 12 noon on Saturdays. All kinds of treasures are available – come and have a browse! (Unfortunately, we cannot sell electrical goods, clothing or large items of furniture – and please ensure that items for sale are clean and unbroken). Cash only.

KENSWORTH METHODIST CHURCH

For all services, see page 15. The February Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 3rd. Everyone is very welcome for delicious cakes, coffee/tea and a chat.

KENSWORTH MAY FESTIVAL

Please "Save the Date" for the **May Festival** at St Mary's, Kensworth, on **Sunday 5th May**.

More details will follow but there will be the usual sideshows, stalls and games, a BBQ, the crowning of the May Queen and Morris dancing.

STUDHAM EXTRA

STUDHAM MAY FAIR - MAY 18TH 2024. YOUR HELP NEEDED



The May Fair is a great village day enjoyed by the whole village and, last year, raised money for 13 local organisations and 2 hospices. But we need more help if May Fair 2024 is going to happen. Your help, yes yours, is needed.

To help keep the May Fair going, come and show your support at a meeting in the Village Hall on **Saturday 24th February at 11am.**

May Fair 2024 needs the contribution of many people, however large or small that contribution is – at the moment, we cannot be certain how this can be achieved but together, with your help, we know we can

STUDHAM COMES TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A pop-up restaurant and auction at Studham Village Hall raised an amazing £6350 for the charity, Mary's Meals. The event was organised and Village Hall transformed by the efforts of Mandy Marvally, Joan Wright, Karen Nicol and Emma Faulkner. Over seventy people attended the evening and a delicious Indian meal was produced by Tikka Nation of St Albans, who also made a generous donation to support the event.



Mary's Meals is a charity which provides more than 2.5 million children across the world with school meals. The funds raised in this evening will provide in excess of 29,000 meals. Terrific!

STUDHAM PLAYING FIELDS

Tennis and the new Studham football team are open to new players if you are interested in joining. Also, you can put yourself forward for next year's cricket team ready for when the season starts up again. If you are interested in joining any of these, please get in touch (Studhamssc@icloud.com).

The playing fields are also available for other events and have previously hosted marquee parties, touch rugby tournaments, school sports and other village events. If you would like any further information or are interested in using the fields to host an event, please contact the Secretary, Tricia Harris (871293).

LOCAL NEWS

RELICS and PILGRIMAGES in the MIDDLE AGES

With particular reference to St Albans and Ashridge

Saturday 20th April, 7pm, St Mary's Church, Kensworth

A talk by the Historian Dr Michael Carter from English Heritage.

Michael will discuss the role of sacred relics in medieval religious belief and society, with evidence from St Albans and the monastery at Ashridge. He is a specialist in monastic history and art and his research has been featured in *The Times*. He recently spoke on the BBC comedy podcast and radio show *You're Dead to Me*, about Medieval ghost stories.

Drinks and nibbles will be served. Tickets £15 (Concessions £10).

DUKE OF EDINBURGH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



Are you doing Bronze, Silver or Gold and want to complete your Volunteering section? We have had 3 helpful D of E participants over the last 3 years helping with maintaining the gravel skirt around St Mary's Church at Kensworth.

If you are interested, please contact Jane (jane.bedlington@btinternet.com).

WARM HUBS

The Warm Hubs in Studham are on Monday or Tuesday mornings, alternating between the Village Hall and the Methodist Church, 10am – 12noon.

Come and join us for coffee, tea, or even hot chocolate. Nibble a biscuit or two, or even three – who's counting? Join in the chat and the laughter in an area that is not only warm in heat but also in friendship, with people you have known for years or only met last week. A place where the smiles are as warm as the radiators, and the kettle is always hot.

What's more it is all free thanks to the kindness of others, who maybe cannot join us, but who have generously donated the tea or coffee or biscuits or money towards the heating and electric bills. Thank you all, your generous donations are gratefully received.

Tuesday 6 th February	Studham Methodist Chapel
Monday 12 th February	Studham Village Hall
Tuesday 20 th February	Studham Methodist Chapel
Monday 26 th February	Studham Village Hall

ECO CHURCH

Unusually, Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday fall on the same day this year. This will only happen one other time this century. This serendipitous meeting could lead to conflict with chocolates and romantic meals on the one hand, and Lenten fasting and abstinence on the other; however, it could also be combined to focus on love for our planet as well as self-reflection and sacrifice. Why not show how much we care through some conscious thought and practice to make our lives more sustainable and less destructive? A Rocha (a Christian environmental charity) have lots of ideas to 'Go Greener for Lent'. Warning – these aren't easy, but A Rocha do give helpful suggestions to start slowly to build up good habits.

Here are a few examples: go plastic-free; switch off from digital with some technology-free times of the day or spaces; buy less or buy second hand; spend more time in nature; try a plant-based recipe or diet; change your method of transport; take a step to save energy in your home and introduce more wildlife into your garden. Have a look at the website (www.arocha.org/go-green-for-lent) and choose one thing you can commit to this Lent.

STUDHAM METHODIST CHURCH

Our minister, Rev. Helen Roberts, can be contacted on 01582 713773 or at revhelen2015@gmail.com. Or you may contact Linda Hillier on 01582 872860.

February services:

Tuesday 6 th	10am-12noon	Warm Hub
Sunday 11 th	10am	Local Arrangement
Tuesday 20 th	10am-12noon	Warm Hub
Sunday 25 th	10am	Rev. Helen Roberts
Holy Communion		

Those services which are 'Local Arrangement' means that members choose the readings, and hymns.

Although our own services are not being streamed, services are available from one of our Circuit Churches.

For details of the Warm Hubs, see page 14.

KENSWORTH METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday services are usually at 10.30am. Services for February:

11 th February	Morning Worship	Led by the Reverend Jenny Spouge
25 th February	Morning Worship	Led by Mr Roger Owers

Particulars of other services can be found on the chapel noticeboards.

MORE STUDHAM

TABLE TENNIS GROUP

9.30am – 12.30pm Fridays in Studham Village Hall

The table tennis group is thriving and by popular demand we have reverted back to playing for 3 hours on a Friday morning from 9.30am and continue the coaching sessions on Wednesdays between 10am and noon.

New members are welcome to come along any Wednesday for a taster session, or just join our friendly group for a cuppa and biscuits, at about half time either day. This is a social meeting group as well as a chance to play a well-loved sport, so it does get bit noisy at tea break!

CARPET BOWLS

2pm Thursdays in Studham Village Hall

We are a friendly mixed group and new members will be made welcome. No experience is necessary and no equipment is needed. It is an opportunity to relax and, at the same time, have some very modest exercise. Contact Pat Thorne (872751) or please just come along.

SCRABBLE

2pm Tuesdays in Studham Village Hall

All welcome. Contact is Mary Must (alan.must@churchclose1.plus.com).

BINGO

There will be no bingo during February. We look forward to seeing you again on Wednesday 13th March.

SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

Opening times are: Monday to Friday 4.30pm, Saturday and Sunday 12pm.

Special evenings are in the pipeline, so watch the noticeboard for times and dates. All members should receive details of events etc. via e-mail; if you have not been receiving yours, please make sure that your e-mail details are up to date by letting the bar staff, or Sarah Thorne (Studhamssc@icloud.com) know.

We welcome all visitors and new members. We provide competitively-priced drinks and the facility is also available for private events such as parties, birthdays, wedding celebrations, music evenings, etc. If you are planning an event, please contact Sarah Thorne to see what we can offer.

Subscriptions are currently: family (parents and children under 18) – £25; single (18-64) – £20; concessions (students in full time education and those aged 65 and over) – £10. All will be renewable on 1st April 2024.

Please pay your subscriptions as soon as possible. They are an important element of keeping our Club in the financial condition required for the future. If you wish to join us, we will be delighted to see you. Membership application forms are available at the bar (and from Sarah Thorne).

MORE KENSWORTH

The return of the very successful

Family Barn Dance with Live Ceilidh band and Caller

with supper included.

Saturday 9th March 5.30 - 8.30pm @Kensworth Village Hall

Tickets: Adult £18.50 / Family 2+2 Under 16s £50/ Child Under 16 £8.50

Any profits to St Mary's Church Kensworth.

Contact Jane for a ticket on jane.bedlington@btinternet.com or 07796 015292

Book by 26th February to secure your place.

KENSWORTH VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall Committee would like to thank all the residents who attended the Christmas activities in the Hall. Despite the weather being cold and dismal on the day of our Christmas Fayre, we made a total profit of £1004.05. Grateful thanks to all the stall holders for your continued support. Also to Saffron Spice, Dunstable Golf Club, T C Feeds, Chelsea Direct, Whipsnade Golf Club, Farmers Boy and Fab Facial Aesthetics for their very generous raffle prizes.

We continue to make upgrades to the Hall, with some new lighting, which was fitted by an electrician, as the previous wiring was deemed unsafe when checked by the Fire Safety Office. We have replaced the curtains, and also purchased a new water boiler. We continue to review and plan for more updates in the Hall, as funds allow.

On the bookings side, we continue to get many requests to hire the Hall for various events, and have had to turn people away on many occasions as it was already booked. This all bodes well for the coming year, when we are planning some more events for the village - so watch this space!

Chat and Snack - Friday Afternooners:

We are back after the Christmas break, every Friday afternoon 1pm - 4pm.

On Friday afternoon 9th February a lady from CBC Safer Communities is dropping in for an informal chat on keeping safe, scams, online crime and any other community concerns. We have all had concerns about some of these things from time to time, so why not come in and we can discuss them?

Happy New Year to all our hirers. The Committee welcomes new members to help us run the Village Hall and we need a Treasurer and an Auditor for our annual accounts; if anyone is interested, please contact Pat Mitchell (pat@ysmit.co.uk).

WHIPSNADE & STUDHAM PARISH COUNCILS

WHIPSNADE PARISH COUNCIL

Ever thought of becoming a parish councillor?

Councillors play a key role in the life of a parish. They are a vital cog in making life better for its residents. Whipsnade parish council currently has two vacancies for councillors that are available to be filled by co-option.

No specific qualifications are needed to become a councillor – life experience is the best thing to bring to the role. People become councillors for all manner of reasons but most want to:

- make a difference to their local community and to be involved in its future shape;
- ensure that their parish can access the services it deserves;
- represent the views of local people and ensure that they count.

If you would like to know more about the work of your local parish council and are possibly interested in joining us, please contact the Clerk to the council, **Mrs Sally Harrop** (e-mail: Clerk@Whipsnadeparishcouncil.org.uk) or contact the Chair of the Council, **Ken France**, at Hill Farm (872375).

Next meeting: (also our AGM) in Whipsnade VH **Tuesday, 12th March at 7.30 pm.**

STUDHAM PARISH COUNCIL (clerk@studhamparish.co.uk)

Our **next meeting** will be at 7pm on Tuesday 6th February at Studham Scout Group Headquarters, Clements End Rd. Members of the press and public are welcome to attend. Parking is available and the meeting room is accessible.

Studham Common Strategic Alternative Green Space (SANG) – village centre car park: Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have advised that they are not intending to pursue the proposal of a village centre car park at this stage. Further updates on SANG will be provided when they are received from CBC.

Salt bins: the salt bins in the parish are replenished during the winter as and when required. If you notice a salt bin that needs refilling, please e-mail the clerk

Highways issues: any highways issues can be reported to www.FixMyStreet.com. Please e-mail the clerk with the details of the report.

Fly tipping: fly tipping incidents can be reported on the CBC website 'Report fly-tipping or illegal waste dumping'. Please e-mail the clerk with details of the report.

Footpaths: recently horse riders have been using footpaths and turning up the soil, which is very dangerous for walkers in the current conditions. It would be appreciated if horse riders could please confine themselves to bridleways and not use any footpaths. Issues regarding rights of way can be reported on the CBC website 'Reporting issues on a right of way'.

STUDHAM EXTRA

STUDHAM TENNIS CLUB

Paul Hobday is now our coach at the club. Paul is a level 4 (out of 5) coach with over 25 year's experience of coaching in the local area. He runs coaching sessions for adults and juniors of all ages and abilities on a Saturday afternoon during term times. Anyone can book either a course of coaching, or a weekly session. We know juniors enjoy playing support with friends and family, so they can get a 33% discount if they sign up to a course with a friend or sibling.

Join our coaching to either start playing, or support your comeback after time away, or develop your skills as a regular player. The more people involved the better!

More details can be found at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/StudhamTennisClub/Coaching>. Any queries to John Callender (johnccallender@gmail.com).

QUIZZES

Quiz Night in the The Red Lion is at 8 pm on Tuesday 6th February

The rounds will be: 1: sport & recent news; 2: school days; 3: alphabet (all answers start with K); 4: entertainment; 5: what's left? Anything we couldn't fit in the previous rounds! and 6: music 1960s-2020's, (letter O).

There is no fixed team size – so you can go solo or bring all the family; however, please ring the Red Lion (872530) to book a table (and order food if required).

VILLAGE HALL

If you would like to organise a regular group in the hall, or make a single booking, please contact Lynne Smith (bookingstudhamvh@gmail.com) who will be happy to discuss your needs. The Hall is ideal for parties – rates are very reasonable.

The **Warm Hub** will alternate between Mondays at the Village Hall and Tuesdays for the Methodist Chapel but will both be 10am to 12noon. See page 14 for more details. All are welcome to come and join us.

We are always happy to welcome anyone who would like to become a Trustee; the work is not onerous and we have around 4 meetings a year. If you would like to join us, please let either Des Salmon (872082) or Chrys Smith (872989) know.

WI

Thursday 1st February, 7.15pm in Studham Village Hall - **SPEAKER TO BE CONFIRMED**

MORE WHIPSNA

KNIT AND NATTER

The group will meet in the church for company, refreshments, and shared crafts on Tuesday 13th February 2pm – 4pm. Choose your project, bring it along, and one of our many knitters will be there to help you along your journey to achieve amazing results.

WHIPSNADE VILLAGE GET-TOGETHER

Whipsnade Village Hall on Tuesday 27th February from 2pm – 4pm. Refreshments and a raffle will be available. Come along for a chat or to play cards and dominos with old and new friends.

DEFIBRILLATOR

Whipsnade Village Hall is pleased to say that we have had a defibrillator installed on the porch wall of the Village Hall. For use and support, please contact 999. There is also an online link to a professionally recorded full demonstration training session (<https://vimeo.com/557677120/e7524918c5>).

DECORATING OF WHIPSNADE VILLAGE HALL

Over the past few weeks, we have had the hall completely redecorated and it is looking good. The work was carried out by DC Plastering and Decorating; thank you Dan and Sam for an excellent job. We can thoroughly recommend them and their details can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

WHIPSNADE VILLAGE HALL YOGA CLASSES

Monday: pre-natal yoga 6pm – 7pm

Wednesday: dynamic yoga 6.30pm – 7.30pm

Thursday: gentle chair yoga 10.45am – 11.35am

£12 per session or £50 per 5 sessions.

Contact Sarah Jane (07375 352890 or sarahjanehorn@gmail.com).

WHIPSNADE VILLAGE LUNCH

The Christmas lunch was well attended, and everyone was very grateful to Isobel for the hard work she has done in organising and cooking for the lunches for many years.

We are hoping to do a lunch on 14th March, but that will depend on helpers coming forward. If you are able to help in any way, please contact Pam Ward (872406 or e-mail pamelaj.ward@outlook.com).

Refer to the March Parish Link for more details and to see whether the lunch is going ahead.

KENSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Website: www.kensworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Contact: Christina: (clerk@kensworthparishcouncil.gov.uk Tel : 07387-789897)

Villager of the Year – Nominations are Open

Each year Kensworth recognises a local resident who regularly gives of their time for others. Please send in your nominations for this year with your reason for nominating the person, closing date 28th February ** see note below.

Community Grants – Invitation to apply

The Parish Council is pleased to invite grant applications from Voluntary, Community Groups and organisations for expenditure that will, in the opinion of the Parish Council, bring direct benefit to Kensworth or all or some of its inhabitants. Closing date 28th February ** see note.

** Nomination and application forms with further information are available from the website, or from the clerk. Please email your completed form or post into the Village Hall letter box.

Bus Services

There are concerns over the longevity of the service currently available. The advice being given to users of these services is to consider forming a local Bus User Group to raise awareness and consider solutions or implications a potential loss of the service will bring.

Motorbikes

There has been recurring issues with young riders on motorbikes riding over the recreation ground causing damage to the grounds for families, the local football teams and others who regularly use it. Motorbikes are not permitted on the recreation ground and will be reported to the Police.

Next Parish Council Meeting:

8th February, 7.30pm Kensworth Village Hall.

A Kensworth resident writes: I would like to say a very big 'Thank you' to whoever was responsible for putting in the path by the side of the Rec, with benches. It is clean and makes walking past Common Road so much safer and pleasant, with lovely views across the fields from the benches. A real asset to everyone who walks up or down the village. Well done!

SMILE LINE

Last night our wifi stopped working, so I had to spend a few hours with my family. They seem like good people.

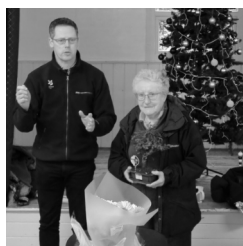
ENVIRONMENT

TREE CATHEDRAL – VOLUNTEERS DIARY

At the end of November, The National Trust took over the running of the Tree Cathedral from The Trustees, who have run it since its conception. The Trustees have historically been made up of a team of local people, some members of the Blyth family, and of course for many years all held together by Pam Ward.

To mark this change, a thank you lunch was held at Whipsnade Village Hall which was combined with the annual leaf sweep. This year saw a great turnout for the event including 1st Eaton Bray, Edlesborough and Caddington Scout groups, many members of the public and a strong contingent from the Blyth family.

After the lunch there were speeches by Will and Kell Blyth and Paul Miller from The National Trust, who is seen here making a presentation to Pam Ward. Pam and her late husband John, who cut the grass for many years, have been amazing caretakers of the Tree Cathedral for over 30 years. Pam has been custodian of the gate keys, going over to open and then back in the evening to lock up through all weathers, she has run groups of volunteers, arranged annual services and lots more beyond. Pam was presented with a Bonsai tree and a bouquet of flowers.



It is an exciting time for the Tree Cathedral and the National Trust has many ideas for improvement and re-planting areas following as much of the original plans as is feasible with some modern-day additions.

Come and join us volunteers. Tuesday mornings 9am – 12pm.

FRIENDS OF STUDHAM COMMON

The next work-party for the Friends will be on Saturday 17th February 2024.

The work envisaged for the day will include the trimming and re-laying of the hedge on the southern border of Middle Common, including reducing the height of the hedge overgrowth and cutting back the bracken between the hedge and the footpath. This will ensure a good continuous dense habitat for nesting birds and a protective corridor for other animals.

In addition, we will attend to light trimming of brambles on the west boundary of Middle Common, to conserve the hedgerow as a habitat for breeding birds whilst preventing overgrowth into the grassland.

Everyone is welcome – please come and help out, all tools will be provided. We meet at the War Memorial on West Common, opposite the Red Lion at 10am. Please contact Lynn Draine for further information (call 07807 363629 or e-mail: l.draine@draines.co.uk).

MISC

29th FEBRUARY 2024: WHY LEAP YEAR?

A Leap Year occurs almost every four years on 29th February. For a year to be a Leap Year, it must be evenly divisible by 4; however, if the year is evenly divisible by 100, it is not a Leap Year unless it is also evenly divisible by 400, in which case it is a Leap Year. This means that 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not Leap Years, but 2000 was a Leap Year (are you still with me??). This is because the actual length of a year, defined by our calendar, normally is 365 days. This is about a quarter of a day less than the actual number of days in a year, so an extra day is added to the calendar almost every four years to correct the situation.

Fun facts about Leap Years:

1. Without Leap Day, our calendar would be wrong by about 24 days every 100 years!
2. The first Leap Year was introduced in 46 BC by Julius Caesar.
3. People born on a Leap Day are sometimes called *leaplings*.
4. More than 4 million people around the world are leaplings.
5. On non-Leap Years, some leaplings choose to celebrate their birthdays a day early on 28th February, while others choose to celebrate a day later, on 1st March.
6. There is an international club for leaplings! The Honor Society of Leap Year Babies has over 10,000 members worldwide.
7. Some cultures that use a *lunar* calendar, based on the moon's movement, add a whole *Leap Month* every three years.
8. The Summer Olympic Games are held every four years on Leap Years.
9. There are 525,600 minutes in a typical calendar year. On Leap Years, there are 527,040 minutes. What will you do with the extra 1,440 minutes this Leap Year?
10. The next Leap Year will be 2028.

SOUTH BEDS ASSOC. OF NATIONAL TRUST MEMBERS

The next talk will be on Monday 2nd October at 2pm in the Salvation Army Centre in Bull Pond Lane, Dunstable. This will be by Ann Ledger and is on the subject of "Ashridge". Guests are welcome at £4; refreshments provided.

DUNSTABLE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The society meets at 7.45pm on the second Tuesday of each month at the Methodist Church Hall, The Square, Dunstable, where visitors are welcome. On 13th February, the talk is on "The Admiral, the Rector and Long John Silver", weird and wonderful stories about Bedfordshire churches and their ministers, recounted by David Longman.