

Stoke Orchard & Tredington Newsletter



February 2026

Spring winds shake raindrops

During morning prayer (which I join online, the church of St Martin in the Fields has a wonderful choir and their music really lifts the service!) we have been listening to readings from the very first of the Bible, Genesis. 'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...' and further on: 'And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years..."; followed by the familiar refrain of 'and there was evening, and there was morning, the [first / second / third etc] day.'

And just as between evening and morning is the deep darkness of the night followed by the dawn and gradually increasing light until it's morning, so there are gradual changes from one season to another. We have four seasons, but a few years ago I heard about Japanese 72 microseasons. Every four or five days, the seasons change, and they have quite evocative names. This month, they are called Spring Winds Shake Raindrops, The Curlew Calls, Spring Is In The Air, The Earth Becomes Damp, and Haze First Covers The Sky. I have a little calendar that tells me the name and date of each microseason, and is illustrated by beautiful images. I then go out in nature and when I find something similar, I take a picture and put it in a special 72 Seasons file on my computer. At the end of the year, I'll have created my own microseason calendar! And I hope I can use that as part of the final (25,000 word!!) piece of work for the course I am starting this month: a course in Spiritual Accompaniment, which is a sort of spiritual listening / walking alongside people who want to explore their faith / spiritual beliefs. All clergy are advised to have a spiritual director, and I started seeing one 18 years ago, well before I thought of ordained ministry - spiritual accompaniment is for everyone, not just for clergy. The course takes place over six weekends in Norwich, and the first weekend is this month. Spiritual Accompaniment is for people of and about all faiths and spiritual beliefs, and living in harmony with the earth and its seasons is supported by many of them.

How do you follow the seasons, and in particular the smaller changes that indicate we are moving from winter to spring? Please come and chat to me about that if you want!

Peace and blessings to you all,

Ilse

Church services - February

- Sunday 1st Feb 10am • Tredington Benefice Communion
- Sunday 8th Feb 9.30am • Holy Communion at Stoke Orchard
- Sunday 15th Feb 9.30am • Holy Communion at Tredington
- Sunday 22nd Feb 9.30am • Holy Communion at Stoke Orchard



Stoke Orchard & Tredington Parish Council



Parish Councillors from May 16th 2025 are:-

Cllr Alan Macdonald (Chairman) • Councillor Sue Shorrock (Vice chair),
Cllr Andrew Troughton • Cllr James Gilder • Cllr Tim Jukes
Cllr Graham Ferguson • Cllr George Fairbairn

Contact Details - through the Clerk: Mrs Michelle Hinde

Email: clerk@stokeorchardandtredington-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of Past Meetings are to be found on the Parish Council Website.

Notice of Stoke Orchard and Tredington Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Wednesday March 4th, 2026 at 7pm at the Community Centre, Stoke Orchard and will be held according to standard Parish Council Meeting regulations. The Council will continue the Clerks special Powers Facility invoked for Covid Regulations for the foreseeable future.

www.stokeorchardandtredington.org.uk



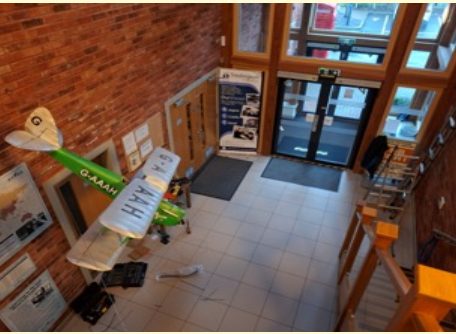
Dear Resident,

I hope you all had a cracking New Year and that the often anti-climactic month of January went as well as could be expected. I'm sure loads of you tucked into your haggis on the 25th to celebrate Burns Night too. 😊

Now with the advent of February and the snowdrops and crocuses peeking out, the promise of Spring and the coming year is waiting.

Lots going on as ever...

- Nikki has been forging ahead collecting, chasing and collating the quotes we need to improve the community centre. These include: a hatchway in the meeting room to open up options with the kitchen, replacing & upgrading the exterior centre doors to incorporate a better entry system for our community & hirers, insulating the storage cupboard in the main hall, and replacing the flooring in the meeting room too. This is being funded through 106 monies from the Roseleigh development.
- Work has nearly finished on The Attic by our residents John & Suzanne. They plan to open for business on the 2nd of March, so please do support their exciting plans.
- Cllr Tim Jukes has been sourcing quotes to clear the ditch along from the Juliana units to Dean Lane, which is clogged up and restricting flow. With this cleared the downstream flow should pass more quickly and efficiently through the village and mean less flooding on this stretch of road.
- The Council are seeking a meeting with the Junction 10 team, Highways and TBC to ensure that the mitigation scheme planned through Stoke Orchard is delivered as efficiently as possible.



- Brandon, the mural artist, spent a week creating a panoramic diorama of our Parish in the foyer of the Community Centre. The results are amazing! Later in January, local resident Gordon Webber suspended (with the occasional buttock-clenching moment!), the precious scale model of Amy Johnson's plane.
- The solar company Ilos have submitted a 'screening' application to TBC regarding their proposed construction plans etc for the site they wish to build on, in the fields along Mill Lane. The Council has submitted a response addressing their points.
- Local resident Neil Venton has come up with an idea for a Parish welcome pack. This will be really useful and will have contact details, clubs, amenities and other info, hopefully helpful to new and current residents in our community.

Have a good month all !!

Recycling & Waste Collection Dates for February 2026 - Stoke Orchard & Tredington

BLUE	Thursday 5th	Thursday 19th	Thursday 5th Mar
GREEN	Thursday 12th	Thursday 26th	Thursday 12th Mar

Vicar	Revd Ilse Ferwerda	01452 780880	apperleypriest@gmail.com
Assistant Priest	Rev. Kay Mundy	01452 780634	therevkaymundy@gmail.com
Church Warden	Tessa Mills	01684 216563	
Reader and Young People's Church	Mrs Vivienne Troughton, Tredington	01684 293540	
Tredington Primary School	Head Mrs Emily Watton	01684 293617	Head.TPS.glatrust.org.uk
Tredington Church Hall/ Village Hall	Frank Jukes	01684 292143	tredingtonvillagehall@gmail.com
Stoke Orchard Community Centre Bookings	Nikki Clegg	01242 680941	info@stokeorchard.org

LEST WE FORGET...

SAY HIS NAME: THOMAS BRENNAN, 54

Thomas Brennan, age 54, a civilian gravedigger from Leeds, was recruited by the British Army in 1915 to work at the military cemeteries in France. He thought he would be burying soldiers with proper ceremonies, giving them dignified rest. Instead, during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, Thomas became an industrial death processor.

On July 1st, the first day of the Somme, 19,240 British soldiers died in one day. Bodies arrived at Thomas's cemetery in wagons, stacked like firewood, sometimes forty bodies per wagon, hundreds of wagons per day. Thomas and twelve other gravediggers worked around the clock, digging graves in assembly-line fashion – dig, bury, mark with a temporary wooden cross, move to the next plot, repeat.

On July 8, 1916, one week into the Somme offensive, Thomas had personally buried 247 soldiers. He stopped reading their names after the first fifty—couldn't emotionally process each individual death anymore. They became numbers, bodies, corpses to be efficiently interred so the next wave could arrive. Thomas's hands bled from wielding the shovel eighteen hours a day. His back screamed in constant pain. His mind was numb, operating mechanically – dig a hole six feet deep, four feet wide, help lower a body, cover with earth, place a cross, move eight feet over and dig the next hole. The cemetery expanded daily, white crosses spreading like a disease across the French countryside. Thomas was creating a city of the dead, and the bodies kept coming.

Thomas kept a private count on paper hidden in his coat – a tally of every body he'd personally buried. By August 1916, the count reached 500. By September, 800. By November when the Somme offensive finally ended, Thomas had buried 1,247 soldiers with his own hands. The number haunted him. 1,247 young men he'd put in the ground, most unmarked except for a number and a temporary cross. Some bodies were so damaged Thomas couldn't tell if they were one person or pieces of several. Some were just fragments – a torso without limbs, a leg still in a boot, partial remains that barely filled a coffin. Thomas buried them all with equal mechanical efficiency, his humanity slowly eroding under the sheer volume of death.

On December 3, 1916, Thomas collapsed while digging grave number 1,248. His heart simply gave out – not from disease but from exhaustion and psychic trauma. He died in the cemetery he'd spent eighteen months expanding, surrounded by 1,247 graves he'd dug personally and thousands more dug by others. Thomas was buried in the same cemetery by his fellow gravediggers, given plot number 1,248 – the grave he'd been digging when he died. His wife Alice traveled from Leeds to see Thomas's grave in 1920, after the war ended. She was shocked by the size of the cemetery—over 10,000 graves spreading in perfect rows. A cemetery chaplain told her Thomas had dug 1,247 of these

graves personally. Alice stood at Thomas's grave and wept, realizing her husband had died from the weight of burying an army, from the psychological toll of processing industrial-scale death day after day until his body and spirit broke.

Alice brought Thomas's count paper back to England – 1,247 tally marks in her husband's handwriting, the last mark incomplete, his pencil having fallen from his hand mid-stroke when his heart stopped. She framed it and hung it in their bedroom, a memorial to a man who died from witnessing too much death. In 1958, Alice donated the tally paper to the Imperial War Museum with a note: "My husband Thomas buried 1,247 soldiers in eighteen months. This killed him. Not battle, not bullets, but the horror of endless burial, of seeing humanity reduced to corpses to be efficiently interred. Thomas died from bearing witness to industrial slaughter. He deserves to be remembered too – not as a soldier but as a man who broke under the weight of burying an entire generation of young men." The tally paper is displayed at the museum, 1,247 marks in fading pencil, the final mark trailing off mid-stroke—a gravedigger's count of the uncountable cost of war.

OUR COMMUNITY...

We welcome PCSO May and PCSP Parker to the community centre as they will be holding regular Police information points at the centre, Dates will be displayed on the noticeboard and Facebook so please keep a look out.

As a local resident, it is your opportunity to pop in and have your say about neighbourhood policing and raise any concerns you may have or just pop along to say hello and meet the local Neighbourhood officers.

It's also an excellent opportunity for anyone to come and find out about Community Alerts and sign up if interested, the Alerts are email communications about incidents within the local area and how to stay safe. They can also be followed on Facebook - Tewkesbury Neighbourhood Policing team.

Reporting a crime or an incident - The Facebook page is unable to act on any crimes or incidents that are reported on social media. Please use the online reporting form to report any crimes or incidents. Always call 999 in an emergency. <https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/.../how-to-report.../>



STOKE ORCHARD FOOTBALL CLUB



WE NEED YOUR BLUE TOKENS PLEASE!

Great news for our community! Stoke Orchard Youth Football Club has been selected for the Tesco Stronger Starts in-store token vote.

This is a brilliant chance to secure funding that will directly benefit our young players and help us continue growing as a club. From mid-January 2026 to the end of March 2026, please pop your blue token in our box when you shop at any off the following Tesco stores:

- Bishops Cleeve Superstore
- Cheltenham Superstore
- Tewkesbury Express
- Cheltenham High Street Express
- Cheltenham Express
- Cheltenham Hewlett express
- Queens Road Cheltenham Express

Every token really does make a difference!



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PLAYERS, OUR VOLUNTEERS AND OUR GROWING FOOTBALL COMMUNITY!

GRAVITY @
THE FITNESS ATTIC



Launch Party

Join us in celebrating the grand opening of our new studio, The Fitness Attic!

7.00PM FRI 13TH FEB

What to Expect

- Drinks & nibbles
- Special Offers
- Team meet and greet
- A sneak peek of what we have to offer!

Where...

Stoke Orchard Community Centre, GL52 7SB

When....

7.00pm - 9:00pm
Fri 13th February

Tel: 07707891824

Gravityfitness@live.co.uk | www.gravityfitness.org

GRAVITY FITNESS

THE FITNESS
ATTIC

GRAND
Opening

Monday | 02 | March
2026


WWW.GRAVITYFITNESS.ORG



Amy Johnson

Amy Johnson is truly an outstanding British heroine who lived in Stoke Orchard during the 1930's, her house Old Rowley still stands today. Her path into flying is one of those brilliant stories where curiosity turns into obsession and then into history.

Amy didn't grow up around aircraft. She was born in Hull in 1903 and worked as a typist after university. Her introduction to aviation came almost by accident: One quiet Sunday in London, she hopped on a bus with no destination in mind. It dropped her near Stag Lane Aerodrome, where she watched small biplanes taking off and landing. She was instantly captivated – that moment changed her life, she would spend all her spare time at the aerodrome.

She gained a ground engineer 'C' license and with financial help from her father, took flying lessons achieving her pilots license in 1929. Despite only having 100 hours of flying experience she set her sights on becoming the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia.

Amy got the money to buy her first aircraft from her father and Lord Wakefield who was always one of her strongest supporters, She bought a second-hand de Havilland DH.60 Gipsy Moth G-AAAH and named it Jason after her father's business trade mark.

She was the First woman to fly single handed to Australia flying her de Havilland DH.60 Gipsy Moth G-AAAH.

The replica 'Jason' is hanging in the Stoke Orchard Community centre and depicted in the new wall mural painted by the talented Brandons Murals.

Some of her records include:-

- London to Moscow, Siberia, Tokyo in her de Havilland DH.80 Puss Moth G-AAZV named Jason II (with Jack Humphreys).
- London to Cape Town in a de Havilland Puss Moth G-ACAB, named Desert Cloud (with Jim Mollison).
- Second World war -she rose to become a first Officer in the Air Transport Auxiliary.
- In January 1941, aged 37, Amy was killed during a delivery flight, taking an Airspeed Oxford from Prestwick to RAF Kidlington, Oxford, thought to have got lost in adverse weather, ran out of fuel and crashed into the Thames.



Amy Johnson's aircraft flying over Hawthorne, Australia

De Havilland DH.60G Gipsy

Engine: 100 hp (75 kW) de Havilland Gipsy I

Length: 23 ft 11 in (7.29 m)

Wingspan: 30 ft 0 in (9.14 m)

Maximum Take-off Weight: 1,650 lb (748 kg)

Capacity: Pilot and Passenger

Maximum Speed: 102 mph (164 km/h)

Normal Cruising Speed: 85 mph (136 km/h)

Additional Information: The aircraft featured only four instruments: air-speed indicator, an altimeter, an indicator for turning and bank, one compass. Fuel from the extra tanks had to be pumped by hand a pump similar to a bicycle pump.

Amy Johnson's Route Map



Moth

nts, an
king, and
nd using

Old Rowley,
Stoke Orchard,
Cheltenham,
Tel. 52407.

7th Dec. 1930.

My dear Lona,

Sorry I've typed a letter, but I'm afraid all my friends have to put up with letters otherwise they'd never get any letters to all!

Many thanks for years. What a surprise it gives me. I've seen Mrs. Sansom since, but haven't had time to go into see Mrs. W., and I haven't the slightest idea what it's all about, except that you had a motor. Mr. Sansom seems to think it's a good thing you left. Am going to hear all about it.

Keep my saddle for the time being will you, and, of course, use it as often as you want to. I haven't time for riding at present. One of these days I'll try to find time to come in and see you and then if we've a horse, I can put it to some practical use. You're a long way off still I'm afraid though.

There's no news, or at any rate, I've nothing of interest to report.

Old Rowley,
Stoke Orchard,
Cheltenham,
Tel. 52407.

Wednesday

Dear Lona

Give a part and be a New Present. I had a bit more to tell you about the motor. I have had a letter from Mrs. Sansom to say you've enjoyed it. How do you like it? I have given a long letter to you, but I have only just got back. I have an accumulation of mail I've left.

Love Amy

29th December 1930

Dear Lona

You've a part to send me. I had a bit more to tell you about the motor. I have had a letter from Mrs. Sansom to say you've enjoyed it. How do you like it? I have given a long letter to you, but I have only just got back. I have an accumulation of mail I've left.

Please forgive a longer letter now. Have only just got back. I have a rather an accumulation of mail.

I love the best that you often

Love Amy

Old Rowley,
Stoke Orchard,
Cheltenham,
Tel. 52407.

30th Dec.

My dear Lona,

Dear Lona, I have a bit more to tell you about the motor. I have had a letter from Mrs. Sansom to say you've enjoyed it. How do you like it? I have given a long letter to you, but I have only just got back. I have an accumulation of mail I've left.

31st May '31 (1931)

My Dear Lona

Miss Sansom told me you were down Pines Barrow way but I couldn't possibly come down. My only chance is to get to the 'bus at 11. It's heavenly here. I had hoped to get a (Friday) holiday but it has proved impossible. I have taken on a flying job at Portsmouth and am in that town three days a week. Travelling two days is going a westerly (plane) article.

Londis

DON'T FORGET! DROP YOUR PARCELS WITH US!



Our Drop & Collect service launched last Thursday at **Londis Stoke Orchard Store** and it's already making life easier!

You can now drop off your Royal Mail return parcels while doing your shopping



ROYAL MAIL RETURNS ONLY AT THE MOMENT

- Shop & post in one stop
- Fast & convenient
- No extra journeys

Thanks for supporting your local store!

So grab your parcels, pop in, and let us do the rest!

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Saturday: 7:00am – 8:00pm

Sunday: 8:00am – 7:00pm



Tredington & Stoke Orchard News for February 2026

TREDINGTON & STOKE ORCHARD WI next meet on **Tuesday, February 10th at 7.30pm in Tredington Village Hall**. We are going to hold a member's social & craft evening & I understand we will be playing a **Beetle Drive**. We are always delighted to welcome visitors or possible new members, so do come & join in the fun!

.....

TREDINGTON & STOKE ORCHARD GARDENING CLUB are holding their next meeting on **Monday, February 16th at 7.30pm in Tredington Village Hall**. Our speaker is **Dede Liss** who is speaking on **"From Grain to Bread"** and is bringing samples! Visitors are very welcome, or come & try an evening to see if you would like to join our small & friendly club.

.....

TREDINGTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE are holding another **Afternoon Tea & Cake Whist Drive** on **Thursday, February 12th from 2 - 4pm at Tredington Village Hall**. The tickets are £5. To book your place please ring Paddy on 01684 294053. There will be an opportunity to play or have help if you need it. The object is to enjoy a happy, relaxed afternoon of cards!



POETS CORNER

Echoes of Kindness

A smile exchanged, a helping hand,
In echoes of kindness, we bravely stand.
Each gentle act spins threads of grace,
In harmony's tune, we find our place.

Across the streets, the whispers flow,
Transforming the world with a warm glow.
In heartbeats shared, our fates embrace,
In kindness' wake, we leave our trace.



REQUEST FOR HELP AND DONATIONS

TRUSSELL TRUST TEWKESBURY shopping list for food bank. As we are able to shop at places like Bookers, a monetary donation would be much appreciated right now. BACS details are as follows:
Tewkesbury Foodbank, sort code 30-91-87, account no 52870560

AJ Babbage Electrical

07977 262 907



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- (EIC) Electrical Installation Certificate
- Minor Works Certificate

Tel: 07977 262 907

Email: ajbabbage.electrical@yahoo.com

5 Feddon Close, Stoke Orchard, Cheltenham, Glos



Stoke Orchard Community Centre



MONDAY

ZUMBA 9.30-10.30am

Michele.darnell@btinternet.com

**AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS CLUB -
MULTISPORTS** 4-5pm

Community Sports foundation

For more information contact Rich, email

communitysportsfoundation@outlook.com

CHILL DANCE ACADEMY 6-7pm

Chloe 07972 350896

TUESDAY

**TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY
U3A ART APPRECIATION GROUP**

9-4pm

PILATES BY CHARLOTTE 9.30-10.30am

Pilatesbycharlotte@gmail.com

CHILL DANCE 4.30-6.15pm

Chloe 07972 350896

TRED TRAINING Kettles 6.30pm

Hog Pilates 7.20pm

tredtraining@outlook.com

CHILL DANCE 8pm • Chloe 07972 350896

WEDNESDAY

**STOKE ORCHARD BABY AND
TODDLER GROUP** 9.30-11am

THURSDAY

**THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY
FOR THE LITTLE ONES -
TRAIN MASTER AND RIDE**

9am-12.20pm, to book email

cotswolds@rideontimehire.com

CHILL DANCE 5.45-6.45pm

Chloe 07972 350896

THE VILLAGE CUPPA 10am-12pm

Every Thursday in the meeting room,

enjoy a nice cuppa in our pop up tearoom.

FRIDAY

**FRIDAY 13TH FEBRUARY
THE FITNESS ATTIC
LAUNCH EVENING**

7-9pm • *gravityfitness@live.co.uk*

**FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY
PUB NIGHT**

7pm

GRAVITY FITNESS - PILATES

9.30-10.30am • *gravityfitness@live.co.uk*

SUNDAY

TRED TRAINING Kettle Bell HIIT 9am

Body Weight HIIT 9.30am

tredtraining@outlook.com



HAVING A **COMMUNITY**
IS HAVING A **SUPPORT NETWORK**

ERIKA HELSTROM

Valentine's Biscuits



Make these showstopping biscuits as an edible Valentine's Day gift for loved ones

Ingredients:

300g plain flour, plus a little extra for dusting
200g salted butter, diced
120g golden caster sugar
2 large egg yolks
2 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp rosewater or 25g/1oz freeze-dried raspberries, whizzed to a powder (optional)
Red or pink food colouring

Method:

Step 1 - Tip the flour and butter into a food processor and whizz to fine crumbs. Add the sugar and yolks then whizz to a smooth dough. Remove one-third of the dough, add vanilla to what's left and pulse to whizz in. Wrap this dough in cling film and leave at room temperature.

Step 2 - Put the reserved dough back in the processor with the rosewater or dried raspberries, if using, and a drop of food colouring. Pulse and add more colouring to achieve an intense colour. If the dough has become too soft, pulse in a few spoonfuls more flour until a similar consistency to the vanilla dough. Put the dough in the fridge, remembering to remove it 30 mins before you need to roll it out.

Step 3 - Thickly roll out the coloured dough between baking parchment. Use a small 3-4cm heart cutter to stamp out hearts. Keep re-rolling and stamping until all the dough is used. Line up hearts on top of each other and press to form a cylinder, taking care to retain the heart shape. Wrap in cling film and freeze for 3 hrs until solid.

Step 4 - When the heart dough is hard, roll the vanilla dough, using your hands, into 3 cylinders the length of the heart stack. Stick one to each 'side' of the hearts, pat together to form a fat cylinder, then gently roll on your work surface until it completely encircles the coloured dough, with the frozen heart dough hidden in the centre. Chill for 2 hrs.

Step 5 - Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Use a sharp knife to slice the log into 1cm-thick discs. Place on trays lined with baking parchment, allowing space for spreading, and bake for 20 mins. Cool on wire racks. Will keep for up to 4 days in an airtight container.



Chill Dance Academy has officially arrived at Stoke Orchard Community Centre, bringing its vibrant, high-energy classes to our community!

The academy is led by the talented and dedicated Chloe Branch, who provides her dancers with incredible opportunities. Many students compete at championship level, and this year an amazing 40 dancers will be taking part in a Guinness World Record attempt, performing behind the famous DJ Sigala.

For the past 10 years, Chill Dance Academy has been inspiring dancers of all ages – 7 years in Bishops Cleeve and 3 years before that in Kent. Their classes cater to both children and adults, offering street dance, contemporary, and a range of fun fitness sessions including DanceFit and Step & Sweat.

Chill Dance Academy now hires the Stoke Orchard Community Centre on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, bringing even more activity, creativity, and energy to the village.



*Support
local!*



*You'll find us just
down the road!*

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