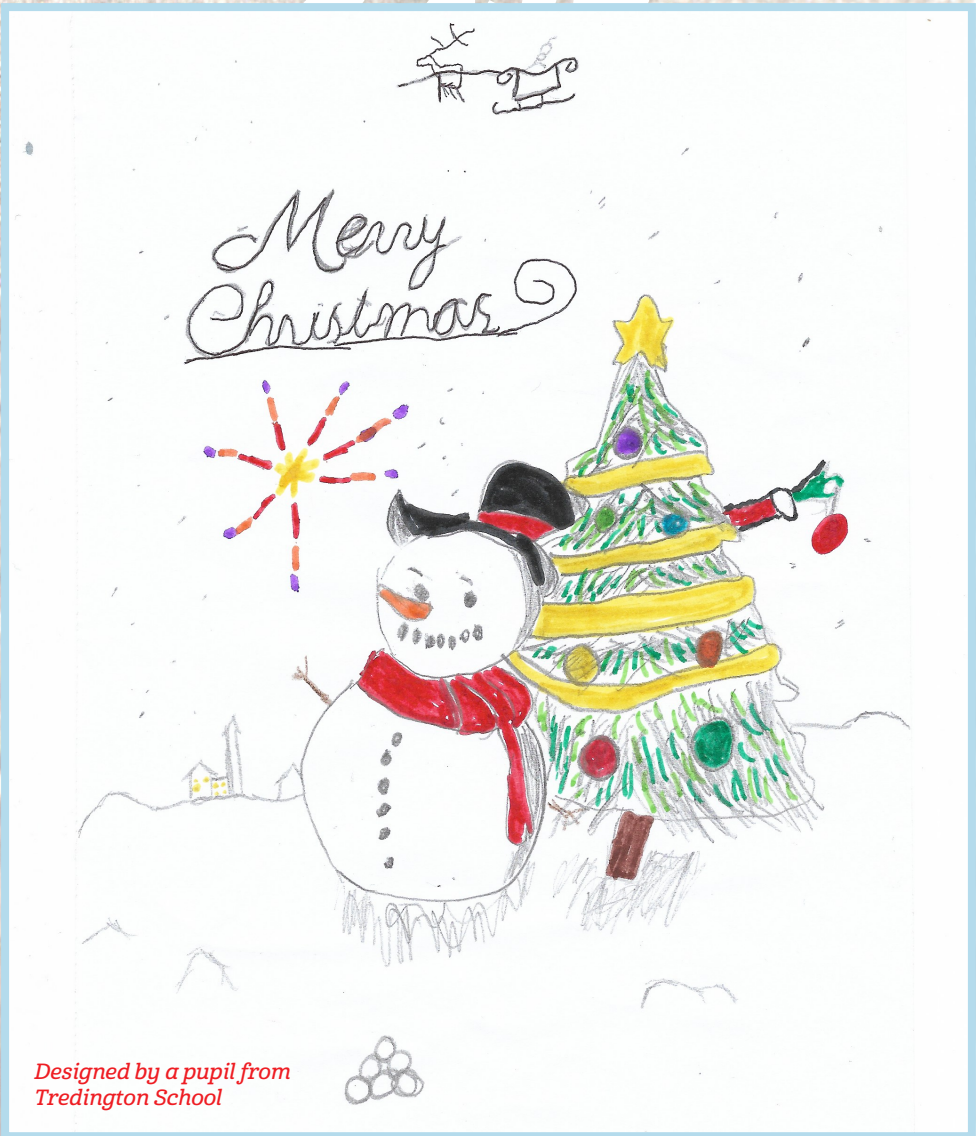


# Stoke Orchard & Tredington Newsletter



*Designed by a pupil from  
Tredington School*

**December 2025**



# HOPE, CONSOLATION, STRENGTH AND PEACE...

For the fourth year in a row, a friend of mine has arranged a series of online meetings consisting of music, poetry, and silence, called 'Sacred Darkness.' The clue is in the name: as we gather online for this meeting, we are asked to ideally have all the lights off and sit in darkness, or have just one candle which can be shown on screen. I nestle myself under my electric blanket on the sofa with a cup of tea within reach, and just one candle in the corner of the lounge. And once the meeting starts, I feel like I did when I was little and being read stories by my parents at bedtime: warm, comforting, sleepy, wonderful!

December is the month where we surround ourself with extra lights. It is of course one of the darkest months with the shortest days of the year. And many of us, whether we have a Christian or other faith or none, put decorations up in our houses and get the extra lights out: coloured, white, flashing, static, candles, or electric; some in the form of stars or reindeer or icicles; and many of us have a Christmas tree which is also adorned with shiny glittery things and garlands. Streets in towns and villages are decorated; shops are full of lights and upbeat music. It really gets us in a celebratory mood, ready to spend time with family and friends during the Christmas holidays, and to come together to remember and celebrate again the birth of the Light of the World: Jesus Christ.

Whether we love to engage with the bright lights and busyness of December, or prefer the silence and darkness of the early evenings and long nights, we can be assured that God is with us. The Bible says, 'Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.' (Psalm 139 verse 12) God is in all the ups and downs of life; in all the busyness, bright lights, and dark nights of this season; in all the joys and sadnesses we feel at this time. When life is difficult, God is there too, like that one candle in the corner of a dark room. That light can be a source of hope, consolation, strength, and peace. I wish you all of that, as well as comfort and joy this month!

Happy Christmas everyone, peace and blessings to you all,

*Ilse*



## *Church services - December*

- Sunday 7th December 9.30am • Morning Worship at Tredington
- Friday 12th December 7pm • Carol service at Tredington
- Sunday 14th December 9.30am • Holy Communion at Stoke Orchard
- Sunday 21st December 9.30am • Holy Communion at Tredington
- Wednesday 24th December 4pm • Christingle service at Stoke Orchard
- Thursday 25th December 10am • Family Communion at Tredington



# 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](mailto: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 January 7th, 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](http://www.stokeorchardandtredington.org.uk)



Dear Resident,

Finally! Some colder weather. The poor gardens didn't know what to do with themselves! Now on the run into the festive season, could I wish the compliments of the season to everyone and a Merry Christmas all. Please do support the hall and come along to the big light switch on. I gather Santa is really on one this year! 😊

- The solar company Ilos held a presentation at the hall on the 12th of November. I'm not sure how many residents attended but members of the Council went and gathered information to allow us to plan our position on this. They have asked to come to the PC meeting in January, at which we will present some of the questions we have as to any beneficial reason this should go ahead.
- The land by the existing solar farm where there is an application for a further 102 houses, which has been used for many years has been fenced off and secured, supposedly by the solar farm tenant. He has decided that he now wants to graze sheep on his land, with further plans to install an electric fence. Sadly, this now means that a well-used footpath is now not available for the community's benefit and wellbeing.
- I know I keep banging on about the opening of the Orchard Stores. It does seem to be dragging on. However, the Sohals have been working their socks off, and with the refit of the Gotherington Store at the same time, they have definitely been up against it. It looks amazing inside and the builders have done a cracking job. The latest is that a hitch with the broadband they need in order for the tills and cctv to function has meant another small delay. However, they are mooting early December as an opening date, so there will deffo be fanfares when they do! (See page 6)

- The Attic room from Gravity Fitness is in the process of being altered and transformed. This will be a lovely space to exercise, and I'm sure John and Suzanne will be well supported in their venture. (See page 14)
- The PC has managed to approve and buy two new speed cameras. (More in the Community Speed Watch report later). This has been driven by Cllr Sue Shorrock and represents the culmination of much work to get them. The CSW as a sub-committee of the PC, is such a valuable entity against the perpetual and careless speeding through our villages. It is run by a merry band of kind volunteers, who all feel passionately about trying to reduce the danger that this behaviour creates. As always, more volunteers are needed so please do contact Cllr Shorrock if you'd like to help. (See page 15)
- An idea to fill the blank white wall in the foyer of the community centre has been mooted, and we think it'll look amazing. We have asked an artist called Brandon's Murals -[www.facebook.com/Brandonsmurals/](http://www.facebook.com/Brandonsmurals/) - to create a pictorial history of the significant people and landmarks within our village. As yet a design hasn't been finalised, but it will transform this space and provide a visual, historical reminder of our remarkable community.
- As usual, behind the scenes, there has been so much going on, not just by the PC but by hall manager Nikki too. We are a dynamic and effective crew who love to get things done. If there is any kind person who can spare an hour or two occasionally, not necessarily to be part of the Council, but just to informally help, that would be so helpful. Please contact Nikki at the hall if you can help. 01242 680941. 😊

*Have a good month all and an amazing Christmas!  
See you all in 2026!!*

### Recycling & Waste Collection Dates for December 2025 - Stoke Orchard & Tredington

BLUE	Thursday 11th	Saturday 27th	Friday 9th Jan
GREEN	Thursday 4th	Thursday 18th	Saturday 3rd Jan

Vicar	Revd Ilse Ferwerda	01452 780880	apperleypriest@gmail.com
Assistant Priest	Rev. Kay Mundy	01452 780634	therev kaymundy@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



# THE BIG FAMILY CHRISTMAS QUIZ & PUB NIGHT

**FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER**

Doors open at 6.30pm, join friends,  
neighbours for an evening of festive fun!

Pop up Pizza Co will be serving up a festive treat

To Join the quiz, £2 per person, Maximum 8 on a team.

To book a table email [info@stokeorchard.org](mailto:info@stokeorchard.org)

Xmas Raffle

**Don't forget your Christmas  
jumpers, prize for the best one!**

# SHOP UPDATE



We're delighted to announce that the brand-new Stoke Orchard Convenience Store is now open and ready to serve the community! Packed with everything you need - from everyday groceries and fresh local produce to sweets, alcohol, and our already popular homemade curries - we're here to make shopping easier, faster, and friendlier.

## REGULAR OPENING HOURS

**Mon-Sat:** 7am - 9pm

**Sun:** 8am - 8pm

## CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS



**Christmas Day:** 9am - 3pm  
(yes, we're open!)

**Boxing Day:** 8am - 8pm

**All other days as normal.**

Whether you need last-minute bits for Christmas dinner, treats for the family, or simply want to support a new local business, we've got you covered. We can't wait to welcome you in, get to know everyone, and become a real hub for the village.

**Thank you for supporting your new local shop -  
together let's make this one of the best in the area!**



# STOKE ORCHARD FOOTBALL CLUB



## Stoke Orchard Youth Football Club Update: Expanding Opportunities, Celebrating Success

Stoke Orchard FC is proud to share exciting developments from the 2025/26 season. The Club has grown significantly, since our inaugural season in 2024. We now field seven, mixed gender, teams across a wide range of age groups. This includes two Under-8 squads, alongside teams at U9, U11, U12, U13, and U15.

Of these, the five older teams are competing in league fixtures, and their efforts have already produced impressive results: a total of 36 matches played so far, with 24 victories recorded. This achievement reflects the skill, determination, and team spirit of our boys and girls, as well as the tireless support of coaches, volunteers, and families.

Beyond the match results, this progress shows the club's commitment to inclusivity and community spirit. Stoke Orchard FC is building a supportive environment where children can grow, develop, and thrive through grassroots football.

As the season progresses, the club looks forward to further successes on the pitch and to strengthening its role as a hub for local families. Stoke Orchard FC remains dedicated to fostering teamwork, resilience, and pride in our parish community.

## Charity Fundraiser: A Day of Football and Community Spirit

On Sunday 16th November 2025, Stoke Orchard Football Club proudly hosted a special Charity Fundraising event at the Civil Service Sports Ground in Cheltenham. The event was held in support of the father of one of our Under-8 players, who is currently living with Motor Neurone Disease. He is a former professional rugby player who represented both Leicester Tigers and Gloucester with distinction.

The event was officially sanctioned by the 4Ed Charity and the Gloucestershire Football Association, adding further recognition to the cause.

The day featured an Under-8s football tournament with eight invited teams, alongside a range of family friendly fundraising activities including a raffle, tombola, and the ever-popular Beat the Goalkeeper challenge. The tournament was a resounding success, bringing together families, players, and supporters in a wonderful celebration of community spirit and youth football.

Thanks to the generosity of all involved, several thousands of pounds were raised to help support families affected by Motor Neurone Disease.

Stoke Orchard FC would like to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed, participated, and supported this memorable day.

Up the Orchard!



# LEST WE FORGET...

She stood at the border with grenades under both arms, pins already pulled and smiled at the German guards: *"Shoot me, and we all die together."* The guards fled. She calmly replaced the pins, tucked the grenades away, and continued her mission as if nothing had happened. Just another day for Britain's most audacious spy. Her name was Krystyna Skarbek – codename Christine Granville – and her story reads like fiction because the truth was too extraordinary for anyone to invent.



Poland, September 1939. Krystyna watched her homeland crushed under Nazi boots in a matter of weeks. Most people in her position would have accepted defeat, sought safety, mourned from a distance. She did the opposite. Within months, she made it to England and walked straight into British intelligence headquarters with a proposition that sounded like suicide: *"Let me ski through the Carpathian Mountains in winter, cross into occupied Poland, print and distribute anti-Nazi propaganda, establish intelligence networks, and help evacuate resistance fighters."* The Special Operations Executive (SOE) looked at this 31-year-old Polish countess and saw either brilliance or insanity. They approved the mission.

December 1939. While most of Europe huddled in fear, Krystyna skied through treacherous mountain passes into Hungary, set up underground printing operations, then made the deadly crossing into Nazi-occupied Poland. She didn't just distribute flyers. She built entire intelligence networks. She coordinated resistance operations. She became so effective that within months, large reward posters bearing her likeness appeared in every Polish train station. The Gestapo wanted her desperately.

In 1941, they got their chance. Captured. Interrogated. Facing torture and execution. Most agents broke under Gestapo questioning. Krystyna had already prepared her escape plan. She bit down on her tongue so hard that blood pooled in her mouth, then began coughing violently, spraying crimson across the interrogation room. *"Tuberculosis,"* she gasped between bloody coughs, making herself appear contagious and dying. The Gestapo – more terrified of infection than impressed by bravery – released her immediately. She escaped to SOE headquarters in Cairo, only to face a new enemy: suspicion. British intelligence suspected she might be a double agent. For months she was sidelined, investigated, scrutinized. The woman who'd risked everything for the Allied cause had to prove her loyalty all over again.

Eventually cleared, she begged to return to Poland. Too dangerous, they said. You're too recognizable. Too wanted. Your face is too famous. So, in July 1944, she did what any reasonable person would do: she parachuted into occupied France instead.

Southern France became her new battlefield. She coordinated operations between French resistance fighters and Italian partisans, moving through enemy territory with such confidence that she often walked past German checkpoints without raising suspicion. When they did stop her, she had creative solutions. Like those grenades at the Italian border.

But her most legendary exploit came in August 1944, in the town of Digne. Three British SOE agents – including Francis Cammaerts, one of the most valuable operatives in France – had been captured by the Gestapo and sentenced to execution. They had hours to live.

Krystyna walked into Gestapo headquarters. Alone. Unarmed. With nothing but nerves of steel and a silver tongue. She convinced the Gestapo liaison that the war was already lost. That the Allies were coming. That executing British prisoners would guarantee his own death sentence at war's end – but releasing them might earn him mercy. She negotiated their freedom for 2 million francs – money she didn't even have but promised to deliver. The Gestapo agreed. Hours before their scheduled execution, all three agents walked free. Krystyna had bluffed her way into one of the most daring rescues of the entire war.

By the time victory came in 1945, Christine Granville had become Britain's longest-serving female special agent – decorated with the George Medal, OBE, and Croix de Guerre. Churchill himself reportedly called her "my favourite spy."

But peacetime held no place for women like her. The world that once desperately needed her courage now found her inconvenient. She struggled to find work, to fit into the ordinary world after years of extraordinary danger.

And then, tragically, the woman who survived countless Nazi encounters was murdered in 1952 by an obsessed acquaintance in a London hotel. She was only 44 years old. She survived Gestapo torture. Parachute drops behind enemy lines. Mountain crossings in winter. Years of living one mistake away from execution. Only to be killed in peacetime by a man who couldn't accept her rejection. But her legacy endures.

Krystyna Skarbek proved that courage has no gender. That audacity can be a weapon more powerful than any gun. That sometimes the most dangerous person in the room is the one everyone underestimates. The Germans thought women were invisible. Krystyna made sure they were unforgettable. She stood at borders with live grenades. Walked into Gestapo headquarters unarmed. Bluffed her way through impossible situations. And saved countless lives through sheer, unshakeable nerve. She wasn't just brave. She was strategically fearless using the enemy's assumptions against them, turning vulnerability into power, making audacity her greatest weapon.

In a war filled with heroes, Krystyna Skarbek stood apart, not because she was reckless, but because she understood that sometimes the boldest move is the smartest one.

Her name was Krystyna Skarbek. Codename: Christine Granville. Britain's longest-serving female spy. Churchill's favourite. The woman who made the impossible look routine. And she deserves to be remembered.

# Non-Alcoholic Christmas Mocktail

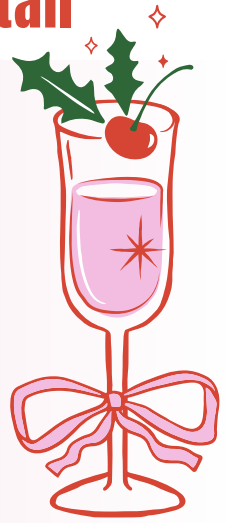
This drink is quick to make and family-friendly

## Ingredients:

75 ml cranberry juice  
50 ml orange juice  
100 ml ginger ale  
Ice cubes  
Garnish: rosemary sprig or star anise

## Instructions:

Fill a glass with ice cubes.  
Pour in cranberry juice and orange juice.  
Top up with ginger ale.  
Decorate with rosemary or star anise.  
Serve immediately and enjoy the fizz!



## Make a Christmas Reindeer

Whilst out walking or in the garden, gather some small twigs, they are perfect for this craft.

You will need;

- Twigs
- Pom Pom
- Glue
- Wiggly eyes
- Twine/ Ribbon
- Scissors

To make one Christmas reindeer, take three sticks, which you can then glue together in an upside-down triangle.

Glue on the eyes and add a pompom for its nose.

Allow to dry and add some twine to hang.

A quick and easy craft, Merry Christmas!



# Tredington & Stoke Orchard News for December 2025

**TREDINGTON & STOKE ORCHARD WI** next meet on **Tuesday, December 9th at 7.30pm** in Tredington Village Hall. Our speaker will be Kirstie Bingham telling us all about "A Merry Tudor Christmas". Do come & join us. It should be a fun evening!

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**TREDINGTON & STOKE ORCHARD GARDENING CLUB** don't meet in December, so our next meeting will be on **Monday, January 19th at 7.30pm** in Tredington Village Hall. We would love to welcome new members but visitors are also very welcome.

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**TREDINGTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE** The Tea & Cake Whist Drive in November was a great success, so we are planning another one on **Thursday, December 11th** in Tredington Village Hall from 2 till 4pm. To help with catering please ring Paddy on 01684 294053 to book your place.

*We wish all our readers a Very happy Christmas & a Peaceful & Healthy New Year.*



## POETS CORNER

### The Power of Community

With every hand, a burden we share,  
In vision and action, we show we care.  
With dreams united, we forge our way,  
Creating a safer, brighter day.

In every challenge, our voices rise,  
Together we shape the future, the prize.  
With courage and joy, we cultivate fate,  
In community's heart, we find our great.



### 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

# Stoke Orchard Community Centre

*Stoke Orchard Community Centre would like to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas*

A big thank you to our hirers and the local community!

The hall has hosted a wonderful variety of celebrations this year, and we are so proud of the support you've given to our events.

We'd love for you to join us on 19th December for our Big Family Christmas Quiz.

Looking ahead, we have lots to plan for next year and would welcome your ideas for what you'd like to see at the hall. In January, the events committee will be meeting to plan for 2026 – if you'd like to get involved, please keep an eye on the noticeboard for meeting dates.



*Book the Community Centre today!*

Looking to host an event? Don't delay—dates are filling up fast for 2026! All residents of Stoke Orchard and Tredington enjoy a special resident rate on hall hires. To secure your booking, email: [booking@stokeorchard.org](mailto:booking@stokeorchard.org)

# Stoke Orchard Community Centre

**NO CLASSES ARE HELD BETWEEN XMAS AND NEW YEAR**

## 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

**GREEN TREE YOGA** 7-8pm  
*info@greentreeyoga.co.uk*

## TUESDAY

**PILATES BY CHARLOTTE** 9.30-10.30am  
*Pilatesbycharlotte@gmail.com*

**CHILL DANCE** 4.30-6.25pm  
Chloe 07972 350896

**TRED TRAINING** Kettles 6.30pm  
Hog Pilates 7.20pm  
*tredtraining@outlook.com*

**CHILL DANCE** 8pm • Chloe 07972 350896

**16/12/25 - U3A ART APPRECIATION**  
2-4pm

## WEDNESDAY

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

## THURSDAY

**CHILL DANCE** 5.45-6.45pm  
Chloe 07972 350896

**04/12/25 - U3A SCIENCE GROUP** 2-4pm

## FRIDAY

**GRAVITY FITNESS - PILATES** 9.30-10.30am  
*gravityfitness@live.co.uk*

**5/12/25 & 12/12/25 GERRARDS  
AUCTION HOUSE VALUATION  
MORNING** 10.30-12.30pm  
(in the meeting room)

**12/12/25 NHS BLOOD DONATION  
TEAM** 11.30am-8pm

**19/12/25 THE BIG FAMILY CHRISTMAS  
QUIZ & PUB NIGHT** Come and join us for a  
night of festive celebrations. From 6.30pm.  
Pop Pizza Co from 6pm.

## SUNDAY

**TRED TRAINING** Kettle Bell HIIT 9am  
Body Weight HIIT 9.30am  
*tredtraining@outlook.com*

**7/12/25 CHILL DANCE ACADEMY  
DANCEATHON** 1-6pm

**14/12/25 STOKE ORCHARD BABY &  
TODDLERS CHRISTMAS PARTY** 2-4pm  
**TICKET ONLY EVENT**





## UPDATE FROM 'FITNESS IN THE ATTIC'



Building works to convert the Attic room into the Community Centre, from storage room to Fitness Studio commenced at the end on November, and are progressing quickly.

We are designing our fitness class timetable and will have sessions in the morning, lunchtime and evenings, as well as at weekends. We will offer both pay-as-you-go and membership options and will have something for everyone.

Our classes will include:

Pilates • Yoga • Bootcamp • Body Pump • Reformer Pilates  
Boxercise • Kettlebells • Barre • 1to1 Sessions • 60+age sessions  
Healthy Pregnancy fitness • Baby & Mama fitness • and many more!

We are looking to open our doors, early in 2026 and will give regular updates to the community. We can't wait to be part of our communities' fitness journey.

*John and Suzanne @Gravity*





# Stoke Orchard and Tredington Parish Council Community Speed Watch



## Community Speed Watch Superstar award

Graham Wright (aka Captain Speedwatch!) was honoured recently for his outstanding contribution to the work of our local CSW team.

Well done and thank you Graham!

In our parish, we are lucky enough to have a very active CSW group. In fact, our group has been the most active in the Tewkesbury area for a number of years. Graham organises and leads the Speedwatch sessions and checks the recorded VRNs on the DVLA website. CSW volunteers not only make a valuable community contribution but also gain new friends and share lots of laughter!



## Coming soon! New vehicle activated speed signs

The Parish Council fully supports the work of the CSW group and after reviewing various options, has now purchased two solar powered VAS from Elan City. Their signs (see photo) can be seen in a number of local parishes. One will be set up in Tredington and the other in Stoke Orchard.

**We would welcome new members especially in Stoke Orchard, so if you would like to find out more about how you can help, please email Susan via [speedwatch@stokeorchardandtredington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:speedwatch@stokeorchardandtredington-pc.gov.uk)**

# MERRY CHRISTMAS



**typecraft**  
Print. It's what we do.