



Looking to God, Looking to Care, Looking to Grow

About Upper Stour

serving the villages of

**Bourton
Kilmingington
Stourton
Zeals**



October 2026

Parish Contacts

Clergy

Rev'd Dr Graham Southgate, Rector

01747 476 316 / Email: rector@uswmb.co.uk

(day off Tuesday)

Lay Pastoral Assistant

Caroline Worthington

(also Lay Worship Leader)

Barbara Borwell

Enquiries regarding Baptisms/Christenings, Weddings and Funerals to the Rector, Graham Southgate

01747 476 316 / Email rector@uswmb.co.uk

Parish website www.upperstour.co.uk

Facebook Group Parish of Upper Stour

Parish Administrator, Sarah Pike (works part time)

Contact her by email: parishoffice@upperstour.co.uk

Contacts for Churchwardens

Bourton Harry Allen 01747 840948 harry.glenis@btinternet.com

Margaret Martin 01747 840433 bookworminbourton@gmail.com

Kilmington Chris Reeves 01985 844894 c.reeves110@btinternet.com

Celia Cotton 01985 844613 celiacotton1@outlook.com

Stourton Jane Parker 01985 844248 jane.homefarm@gmail.com

Steve Harris 01985 844227/coldcotfarm@hotmail.com

Zeals Val Rowe 01747 841163 valrowe@btinternet.com

About Upper Stour Magazine: Contacts

Editor: Josh Larcombe 07487 582243/joshlarcombe26@outlook.com

Advertising: Celia Cotton 01985 844613/celiacotton1@outlook.com

Distribution: Diana Tadd diana.tadd@gmail.com / 01747 840663

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All items for the November 2026 issue

should be sent to the editor Josh Larcombe at

joshlarcombe26@outlook.com / 07487 582243

by **Friday 23rd October** please

A TIME FOR EVERY SEASON

As October begins, the familiar landscape around our villages is gradually changing. The fields have taken on their autumn appearance, the hedgerows are beginning to turn and fallen leaves collect along the lanes. The mornings can feel noticeably cooler while the evenings seem to arrive almost before we are ready for them.

This year the autumnal equinox fell on 23rd September. At the equinox, daytime and night-time are approximately equal in length, and from then onwards the hours of darkness gradually begin to predominate.

Living among fields, woods and hedgerows, these changes are impossible to miss. Yet autumn is not simply a time of things dying back. It is also a season of abundance, thanksgiving and preparation. The harvest has been gathered, seeds are being dispersed, and the natural world is preparing for the quieter months ahead.

Perhaps that is one reason why autumn can resonate so clearly with religious faith. We sometimes imagine that life should always be a time of growth and progress. Yet creation teaches us otherwise. There are seasons for growing and seasons for resting; times for beginning and times for finishing; times for holding on and times for letting go.

Many trees do not cling to their leaves indefinitely: they surrender them when the time comes, trusting the rhythm of the seasons, and I think there is something for us to learn in that. We too may sometimes need to let go of things that have served their purpose: an old worry, a disappointment, a habit, or perhaps an expectation about how life ought to be.

The biblical book Ecclesiastes does not pretend that every season of life is about constancy, reminding us that there is “a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted”. Yet throughout Scripture there is also the assurance that God remains faithful through every changing season.

As October progresses, the earlier evenings will confront us increasingly with darkness. That makes the Christian promise of light all the more significant. Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.” His light is not dependent upon sunshine or summer. It remains with us when life is bright and when it is difficult; when the way ahead is clear and when we cannot see very far. Perhaps, then, as we move around our villages this autumn, we can take a little time to notice the changing landscapes. Let us give thanks for the beauty of the season, for the harvest and for the ordinary gifts of country life. And as the evenings draw in, may we remember that God's presence does not change with the seasons. The light of Christ continues to shine, in every season of our lives.

Graham Southgate, Rector (01747 476316)

St George's 100 Club

September draw winners:

1st Prize – Peter Diggins

2nd Prize – Bob Davies

3rd Prize – Sarah Gibson

The next draw will be held on
Sunday 4 October at Bourton
Village Hall.

Contact: Philip Newton
on 07947 054534

St. Martin's Church: Millennium Lottery

September winners:

P Banbury A Etherington
C Hurt D Gale

Next draw w/c 5 October

This lottery raises funds in support
of St Martin's church in Zeals
For inclusion in monthly draws or
questions, please contact:

Ashley Kemp
treasurer@agkemp.co.uk
01747 840272

**See notice on page 5 about the
lottery's future**

Mobile Library: September 2026

October 1	Zeals	School, Chapel Lane	10:00-10:40 am
	Zeals	Rise	10:45-11:05 am
	Kilmington	Home Guard Club	11:20-11:45 am
October 15	Zeals	School, Chapel Lane	10:00-10:40 am
	Zeals	Rise	10:45-11:05 am
	Kilmington	Home Guard Club	11:20-11:35 am



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St Martin's Millennium Lottery ending

Over the past two years, rules and regulations (monitored by Wiltshire Council) have become more onerous, requiring monthly monitoring instead of annual reports. At the same time, fewer people are participating in the lottery. In 2025 the nett income from the lottery was almost half the previous year's and reviewing 2026 to date it is still decreasing. To comply with the Gambling Act, we are now obliged to submit monthly documents of data to the Council and meet the minimum profit regulations. To meet the criteria we had to reduce monthly prize winners from five to four but the profit target is still vulnerable. If we were forced to cease part-way through 2027 then St. Martin's church would have to administer the part-refund of subscriptions to avoid breaking the law. This would be further complicated by the fact that some people pay one annual £amount by the beginning of each January while others pay in monthly installments.

For these reasons, we are sorry to announce that the Millennium lottery will not run in 2027 and the annual operating cost of St. Martin's (circa £12,000) will no longer be helped by the lottery. If you have a standing order to the millennium account please cancel it effective from mid-December 2026.

Thank you very much to all the supporters over the years.

**Ashley Kemp (lottery admin) and Val Rowe (Churchwarden) –
treasurer@agkemp.co.uk**

Book review:

Wild Dark Shore by Charlotte McConaghy

Climate change is an inescapable fact which we can no longer choose to ignore. This thriller, set against the back-drop of rising sea levels threatening to destroy the world's last remaining seed bank, is bleak from the outset and yet it is a compelling and absorbing book. The title itself sums up the book – it is set in a wild part of the world. It is a 'dark', thrilling story and the marooned characters are washed up on both a metaphorical 'shore' and in reality.

Reading this book during the searing heat of July, it was hard to imagine angry skies, violent storms and the dark forces of nature at work in the lives of a small family unit living on a remote island way off southern Australia. The contrast was stark and yet the subject was topical, as we were, and still are, suffering from drought here in England. The rest of the world, particularly in remote regions such as Tibet and Nepal, is also seeing signs that the world has changed dramatically in what seems to us just a few short years.

This is a book about love: love for one's family, love for one's home, love for animals, marine life and our environment as a whole. It is a story of a young family living with their angst-ridden father struggling with suppressed grief for his wife who has died very recently.

Part family drama, part mystery, part psychological thriller, *Wild Dark Shore* is completely absorbing. It is a climate thriller; an eco-thriller which exposes the vulnerability of the planet and human frailty itself.

Wild Dark Shore highlights the fine balance between coping and chaos. When a ship-wrecked woman is hurled onto the island in a violent storm, their world, which until then had been the only world the young children Raff, Fen and Orly had experienced, is thrown into total disarray. The family's whole way of life is turned upside down, both mentally and physically.

Over time, the woman questions the way in which the children are being raised by their self-absorbed father, who seems unaware that he has teenagers on the brink of adulthood needing so much more than he alone can provide. He has been guilty of putting their needs to the back of his mind trying to ignore the inevitable push-back from the teenagers. She brings with her mystery and eventual love for these children – the family she had never had. Throughout, there is a simmering undercurrent, then a murder and a huge sense of urgency. This is a beautifully-written story, but it is raw, hauntingly sad and unsettling.

I am glad that it was a book recommended by our book group in Bourton. The story will remain with me for years to come.

Sheila Williams – sheilawilliams51@btinternet.com

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**National
Trust**

News from Stourhead

October has arrived, bringing with it the much-anticipated autumn season at Stourhead. As the landscape garden goes through its transformation, visitors can enjoy crisp walks, family activities and seasonal colour throughout the month. Keep an eye on Stourhead's social media channels for regular autumn colour updates direct from the garden team.

From 3 October, families can take part in our new marvellous moths trail, helping to bust myths about these fascinating and often misunderstood creatures. Alongside the trail, there's plenty of seasonal fun in the Stableyard with autumn games running throughout October. During half term, visitors can get creative with free, drop-in autumn craft activities led by volunteers in the Stableyard.

For keen photographers, our popular first light photography is back, providing early-morning access before the garden opens, giving visitors the chance to capture seasonal mists, vibrant foliage and the beauty of Stourhead at sunrise.

October is also the last opportunity to enjoy the Drawn to Trees: Tree Zodiac exhibition, created in collaboration with artist Luke Adam Hawker. Featuring a series of striking etchings inspired by the ancient Celtic Tree Zodiac, the exhibition invites visitors to pause, reflect and explore their connection with the natural world before it closes on 1 November.

As autumn draws on, we're also looking ahead to A Nutcracker Christmas at Stourhead, that will see the house transformed into a magical retelling of the beloved tale. Tickets are on sale for the Christmas light trail and Storytime with Father Christmas - early booking is recommended for these popular festive events.

For more information on all upcoming events for September, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/wiltshire/stourhead/events

Lucy Fenna, Communications & Marketing Officer
lucy.fenna1@nationaltrust.org.uk or 01747 842032.

**Warminster Military Wives Choir will perform
at St George's Church Bourton**

Friday 27th November 2026 at 7pm.

Programme includes St George's Primary School Choir.

Tickets and further details in the November issue.

ROSE MEMORIAL PEDESTAL-St George's Church Bourton

Once again this annual Remembrance of loved ones passed has been requested and demonstrates the need to continue this act of respect.

The Book of Remembrance will be on display in the church from November 1st.

Please send B. Borwell printed details of the deceased with donation enclosed no later than 24 October 2026.

Either given by hand or posted through the letter box at 25 New Close, Bourton.

For enquiries, please email: barbaraborwell@gmail.com

October Catering: Saturday 24th to Monday 26th, 10am-4:30pm

We are looking for volunteers, bakers and produce makers to cook, cater and sell over the bank holiday weekend. We will be serving soup, sausage rolls and sandwiches, and lots of home-made cakes out of Stourton Memorial Hall to raise funds for the whole parish.

Please let Jane Joyce know what you can do and please make cakes - we sell lots and lots of cakes!

Jane Joyce j-joyce@dircon.co.uk / 01747 840149

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Contact: Irene Snook 01747 840 477 / irene.snook@btinternet.com

Country Calendar: October

Rain hath cometh! At last, the dry, parched dust that was once fields has had life giving rain. It never fails to amaze me how quickly the pasture rejuvenates as the green shoots of new grass appears. Still, unfortunately, not enough to produce the amount of grass needed to allow us to stop feeding our winter fodder to the herd. We are now well into autumn.

The trees have long been turning due to the drought and we farmers are now feeling the effects of the harvest. It has been officially confirmed that the UK's arable harvest is to be even smaller than previously forecast, by figures released by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, with production of key crops falling to just 18.5 million tonnes in 2026. We farmers have faced the wettest winter on record, the hottest summer on record, and now what's on track to be an even hotter summer for 2027. These extremes are making it harder to grow food, reducing yields and leaving us with less to sell while many of our costs continue to rise. The UK faces challenges to its food security, driven by a heavy reliance on imports and mounting climate and economic pressures. As per the Office for National Statistics, food prices have increased by roughly 30.7% overall since April 2022. Yet farm incomes have dropped massively. On average, cereal farm business incomes in England are forecast to drop by two-thirds, driven by consecutive poor harvests and falling crop prices. Despite this, the price of food is predicted to go even higher. Who is profiting? Certainly not the farmers! Major supermarkets and large food processors are widely accused of squeezing the food supply chain and keeping the lion's share of profits while UK farmers struggle below production costs. With some reporting showing that arable growers report making less than one penny of profit on a £1.50 supermarket loaf of bread. Market dominance is due to a small number of massive supermarket chains controlling the retail market, leaving growers with little power to negotiate fair prices. The UK government tackles supermarket unfairness through dedicated statutory watchdogs and codes of practice, and it is actively shifting regulatory oversight to better join up enforcement across the food supply chain.

Really, it is hard to believe when you hear from producers that prices paid to British farmers by supermarkets are often so poor that farmers are virtually subsidising supermarkets and their shareholders. The UK faces warnings of upcoming shortages and reduced yields in crops like wheat, oats, barley, oilseed rape, potatoes, and carrots due to the severe summer drought and record-low rainfall. To rub salt into the wounds we are now told to expect severe fertiliser and fuel shortages heading into 2027, due to Middle East conflicts resulting in soaring input costs. One must keep their spirits up so I am dedicating this poem to all farmers:

When the sky is grey and the market dips low,
And the mud sticks fast where the seeds should go,
Take a breath of the air, put the kettle on for a brew,
For the earth keeps turning for me and for you.
The tractor may stall and the ewe may go lame,
And the weather man never can stick to his game,
But you've weathered the frost and the dry summer heat,
And you've grown the green stuff that puts food on the street.
So hang up your cap when the evening is near,
Leave the grief in the yard and the worry and fear,
Tomorrow's a new day to tend to the land,
With the soil in your boots and the grit in your hand. Anon

Jane Parker



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SERVICES IN UPPER STOUR WITH MAIDEN BRADLEY

October 2026

Sunday 4th

11.00

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Harvest Worship at Saint George's Bourton

Sunday 11th

10.00

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

Parish Communion at St Mary's Kilmington

10.00

Morning Worship at All Saints Maiden Bradley

Sunday 18th

10.00

St Luke's Day

Parish Communion at Saint Peter's Stourton

Sunday 25th

10.00

The Last Sunday after Trinity

Parish Communion at Saint Martin's Zeals

10.00

Patronal Festival Communion at All Saints Maiden Bradley

November 2026

Sunday 1st

10.00

All Saints Day

Harvest Morning Worship at St George's Bourton

~~oOo~~

Weekday Services

Mondays:

09.00 Morning Prayer at Saint George's Bourton

Wednesdays:

16.00 Holy Communion at Saint Martin's Zeals

Thursdays:

09.00 Morning Prayer at Saint Mary's Kilmington

From the Registers

Funerals:

Rosella D Rawlings – 27th August at St Martin's Zeals

Gwendaline L Wilks – 16th September at St George's Bourton

Baptism:

Angus F D Nicholson – 23rd August at St Peter's Stourton

Parish of Upper Stour – Volunteer Treasurer

The Parish of Upper Stour (Bourton, Zeals, Kilmington and Stourton) is looking for a volunteer Treasurer to help care for the finances of our four churches and support their work at the heart of local life.

You do not need to be an accountant: good organisation, confidence with numbers and a willingness to learn are the main ingredients. The Treasurer keeps clear financial records using our new online accounts package, helps make sure income is banked, monitors spending, pays authorised bills, prepares the annual accounts and advises the PCC on budgets and the parish's financial position. You would work closely with the churchwardens and be part of a team helping to bring together all parts of the community.

If you enjoy working with numbers and would like to make a meaningful contribution to parish life, please contact **George Bullivant** at georgebullivant@gmail.com or **07939045917**. Alternatively, speak to one of the churchwardens.

Harvest thanksgiving service

This a time for all ages to be giving thanks for God's creativity, and the hard work of local farmers. The service is at **11am on Sunday 4th October in St George's Church, Bourton.**

Dennis Chapple

Dennis Chapple, who lived opposite St Peter's Church in Stourton for very many years, was an important part of the delivery team for this magazine, and for a great many years was responsible for delivering over 50 magazines to households in Stourton, Gasper and all the way up to Search Farm. He also delivered a supply of magazines to St Peter's Church and was an important keyholder for the church.

All of us on the magazine team are most grateful to Dennis for his contribution and for all his efforts over the years. He will be much missed in his retirement. Dennis has now moved to Zeals where we all wish him all the best.

Celia Cotton



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Film night at Stourton Memorial Hall

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Nowhere**

Food served from 7:15pm, film begins at 8pm.

For tickets and information, please email Chris through
stourtonfilm@gmail.com

STOURTON WITH GASPER – Community litter pick

Saturday 31st October | 11am | Meet at the Airfield on Stourton Lane

Join us for our Autumn Parish Litter Pick – with a Halloween twist!

Start the morning with hot sausages, muffins, tea and coffee, before
heading out for the litter pick – with a Pumpkin Hunt along the way.

All litter-picking equipment and protective gear supplied.

All ages welcome.

For more information, please email: clerk@stourton.org.uk

News from Parish Councils

Bourton

The Parish Council met on 28th August. Concerns were raised about bags of rubbish left outside the Pickwick Academy's gates over the summer, issues relating to the Fantley Lane planning application, and dangerous broken handrails on the zig-zag path, on what is referred to in Silton as the Surgery Footpath. The Clerk has reported the handrail issue to Dorset Highways, and the Chairman has liaised with Silton Parish. A dying sycamore on New Road will be assessed by a tree surgeon and reported to Dorset Council. Speed monitoring figures were shared: in July, 1,063 vehicles were checked with 79 receiving tickets; in August, 638 vehicles had been monitored, with 41 reported. The Village Hall car park has been cleared and tree works will begin shortly. A full programme of films is scheduled from September to December. Planning discussions included concerns that residents are not being given the opportunity to comment officially on the Fantley Lane application. The Council also noted progress on the Jubilee Meadow play area application, with the Clerk having prepared a detailed response to Dorset Council. Updates were provided on several development sites. The Council's balance stands at £46,755.75. Payments for August were approved, and a £100 grant was awarded for the Halloween Fun Dog Show, being held on Saturday 24th October. Thanks were recorded to Celia Cotton, and councillors welcomed Josh Larcombe as the new editor of the Parish of Upper Stour magazine. The next PC meetings will be held on 28th October and 25th November. All will be held in the Village Hall, starting at 18.30. **Eve Wynn, RFO & Clerk – clerk@bourton-pc.gov.uk**

Kilmingtion

The Parish Council continues to monitor developments relating to the future of Mere Fire Station. Following the Fire Authority's decision not to proceed with station closures at this stage, councillors recently wrote to the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority, Chief Fire Officer and local MP to emphasise the importance of maintaining fire and rescue cover for rural communities and to ensure the concerns raised during the consultation remain firmly on the agenda. Councillors also received an update from the National Trust regarding the future of the former Red Lion public house. While no immediate solution has been identified, discussions are expected to continue later in the year and the Parish Council remains keen to work with neighbouring councils and the National Trust to help secure a sustainable future for this important local building. The new shared Speed Indicator Device (SID), being purchased jointly with Zeals and Stourton with Gaspar Parish Councils, remains on order and is expected to be delivered in the coming weeks. The Council is also arranging repairs to the post-and-chain fencing surrounding the War Memorial following damage caused by a vehicle at the end of August. The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Monday 9th November at 7.30 pm at the Stourton & Kilmingtion Home Guard Club. Residents are always welcome to attend.

Steven Willis, Clerk – clerk@kilmingtionwiltshireparishcouncil.gov.uk



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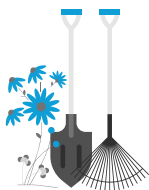
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Green Fingers: Notes from a Fairweather Gardener



If you see a fairy ring
In a field of grass,
Very lightly step around,
Tiptoe as you pass.

Have you got a fairy ring of bright red toadstools in your garden? Along with brightly coloured leaves on the trees, the appearance of fungi of all shapes and sizes heralds the arrival of autumn. The damp misty mornings and lower overnight temperatures are ideal conditions for them. Traditionally fungi have been associated with hallucinations, strange happenings and poisonings. Their unpredictable appearances remain mysterious.

The good news is that the vast majority of fungi are actually good for the garden, regardless of whether or not they are edible. The toadstools we see on the surface are evidence of a widespread web of roots underground. These might lie dormant for months or years before fruiting in the form of a toadstool whose sole purpose is to spread spores to generate more fungi. The underground fungal web is extremely valuable to gardeners, especially as we tackle climate change. Most varieties of fungi enhance soil health. Their root systems hold water for plants to access during drought periods and conversely improve soil drainage to help prevent waterlogging in heavy soils.

Encouraging fungi to grow in our gardens is not difficult, especially for organic gardeners. Although it might go against the grain for the tidy minded among us, leaving some piles of dead leaves and wood chippings from pruning to rot in a hidden corner of the garden will encourage fungi to grow. Consider adopting a no dig approach to vegetable cultivation so that the valuable fungus roots are not regularly disturbed. Use organic fertilisers and mulches: a healthy soil with plenty of fungal growth will keep your plants nourished.

This autumn keep a look out for fungi in your garden and on your walks around the area. Apart from the beautiful red spotted fly agaric, you might find shaggy inkcaps in grass or gravel, blue grey or golden oyster mushrooms or if you have some dead holly leaves, a few dainty holly parachutes growing from them. Some of these are edible, but unless you are expert in distinguishing them, it is best to admire them from a distance. Some fungi will have survived underground unseen for hundreds of years, nourishing our gardens and countryside. We should do our best to allow them to survive for many more years.

Daphne Knott

BURROW



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Bourton Village Hall – October 2026

Village Lunch

Monday October 5th, 12:30-2pm. Costs £5 and includes a delicious, hearty lunch.

Bourton Film Night

Join us on the first Wednesday of the month (October 7th) for our next screening, we are showing Tuner. Tickets cost £6 at the door. **Special Offer:** Want to save on tickets while supporting the hall? Ask us about joining the Founders' Club. This October meeting is your final chance to enrol for the year. A huge thank you to everyone who has already joined!

Bourton Village Hall AGM

Curious about what goes on behind the scenes, or keen to get involved? Come and meet the team on Friday October 30th. Doors open at 4pm with refreshments (tea and cake) for a 5pm start. Trustee give introductions before discussing the 2025–2026 activity & financial overview, followed by the election of new Trustees and the Chair. Everyone is welcome! Whether you want to volunteer or simply find out what the hall offers, we'd love to see you there.

Stay Connected: bourtonvh-dorset.org / hello@BourtonVH-Dorset.org

HALLOWEEN FUN DOG SHOW 2026

Bourton Village Hall on Saturday 24th October

Entries from 10:45 for an 11am start

Lots of fun classes: Best Fancy Dress-Dog/Owner, Best Sausage Catcher, Baby Puppy etc

Proceeds go to Hope for Tomorrow (mobile chemotherapy unit).

Schedules available from Bourton Village Shop

Children Under 12 Must be accompanied by an Adult

The owner must take full responsibility and liability of any damage incurred by the dog and be kept on a fixed lead at all times.

Diary Dates for October

1st	Mobile Library – Zeals and Stourton (p.4)
4th	Harvest thanksgiving service at St George's Bourton (p.13)
4th	St George's 100 Club draw (p.4)
w/c 5th	Millennium Club draw (p.4)
5th	Bourton village lunch (p.23)
7th	Bourton film night, Tuner (p.23)
15th	Mobile Library – Zeals and Stourton (p.4)
24th	Halloween Fun Dog Show at Bourton Village Hall (p.9)
24-26th	October Catering at Stourton Village Hall (p.9)
28th	Bourton Parish Council meeting (p.17)
30th	Bourton Village Hall AGM (p.23)
31st	Stourton community litter pick (p.16)

Regular Weekly Events



Weekdays 08.45-09.15 **Preschool meeting** at the Preschool playing fields, West Bourton (*term time only*)

The ZAC Zeals Afterschools Club meets daily 3.15 – 6 on school days at the Playing Field, Wolverton Lane, drawing children from 5 local schools. Contact Sarah on 07908 664 676; zealsafterschoolsclub@gmail.com

Tuesdays **Toddlers sessions:** 9am-12pm (term time only) at Bourton Village Hall. Contact Caroline Worthington 07754 882454

Craft & Chat: every Tuesday in Bourton Village Hall from 2-4pm. £3 includes tea and biscuits.

Wednesday **Bellringing practice** at St Martin's church Zeals. Beginners and lapsed ringers welcome. Contact Georgina Muir 01985 844245

Fridays **Choir Practice:** most Fridays 5.30-6.15pm at St Martin's Zeals. New singers welcome. Contact Tom Wheare 01747 840622

Pilates at Bourton Village Hall. Every Friday from 16 October, starts at 6pm until 6:45pm. Please bring a mat. Call Lucy to book, 07711 943337.

**All items for the November 2026 issue by
Friday 23rd October please**