

FROM THE SUTTON HALL
STOCKCROSS
November 2025 No: 135

THE Grapevine NEWSLETTER



Look inside
this wonderful
packed
Christmas
goodies edition of
the
Grapevine:

**Christmas drinks for Stockcross
Villagers, a Pop in pub for you to meet your
neighbours and friends before Christmas and
much more inside! Join in and you will be
made welcome!**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!**

The Editor

Any contributions for the **February edition 2026** for the Grapevine must reach me no later than **Thursday the 15th January and before 3.30 pm.**

Have a great Christmas & New Year

If you would like a PDF file/ email copy of the Grapevine (in colour) and regular updates then please email me (Glenn) at :

stockcrossgrapevine@gmail.com

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Village Hall Chairman's piece for grapevine November 2025

Welcome to Autumn everyone. My husband and I returned in early October from warm and sunny but drought ridden New England to a much cooler and damper Stockcross. The central heating was turned on the second we got home! Surprisingly, our apples and pears are just ripening, but the most abundant crop in our garden this year seems to be acorns! It feels a bit like skating to walk across areas which are entirely covered with the rascals. But there do not seem to be any squirrels. Puzzling...

Whilst the hall organised no late summer events (many villagers are away on sunny hols) we have a few village events organised thru the rest of the year. The Hall's Annual General Meeting was recently held in early October. Below are the upcoming our events. There are details for most in this issue but re-

member to mark your calendars!

--Following on from the success of the "after the pub-crawl bar" in June there will be an Evening Bar in the small hall on November 21st. Please drop in from 6PM and bring your friends.

--December 5th we will have the local Incantata Choir performing for us and once again the bar will be open! A relaxing evening to catch up with friends.

--Then on Saturday December 20th is the Village Christmas Drinks evening. Santa will make a detour to Stockcross so bring the children and enjoy the company of neighbours and friends over conversation and drinks.

-- And in March Tony Hersh will be hosting another of his fabulous wine tasting events. Look out for details soon!

Most of you will recall that the hall committee has been working on the idea of revamping the small hall to make it a cosier place for meetings, clubs and other small groups to use while also providing a place for occasional village pub nights. There has been a very good bit of news recently - the estimated funding to revamp the small hall has been secured. Thanks go to Mark Nevitt and Tony Hersh. Their mastery at charity funding applications and their patience have paid off! There is much to do but a team has formed to drive this project forward. There are no dates for completion of the project but you can be certain that there will be a grand opening celebration! We'll keep you posted!

Finally, I hope each household in Stockcross enjoys a warm and enjoyable Autumn and a healthy, happy year end.

Liz

CHRISTMAS IN STOCKCROSS

Come and Join Us!

Christmas Drinks

Sutton Hall

Saturday 20th December from 6.00pm

Stockcross Christmas Get-Together

Join us for our Christmas event.

A great opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours.

At 6.30pm Father Christmas will visit with a free gift for all good children.

Enjoy a **free** glass of mulled wine, hot dog and mince pie.

The bar will also be open.

Everybody welcome!

S&SHA
Stockcross and Surroundings
History Association

Our monthly meetings are held at
2pm
in The Sutton Hall on the
2nd Wednesday of the month

Up and Coming Meetings

Wednesday 10th December 2025

This will be our Christmas social.

If you are interested in local history why not come along and join us for a chat, tea and a mince pie or two..

Wednesday 14th January 2026

Annual General Meeting

To find at more about S&SHA visit our website:
www.stockcrosshistory.org or our Facebook page:
Stockcross and Surroundings History Association.

Angela Tyler



The Pop Inn
At Stockcross

At The Sutton Hall

THE POP INN
Friday 21st November - Doors open 6.30pm

Back to to popular demand.

The Pop Inn will be open on Friday 21st November in The Small Hall.

This is a great opportunity to catch up with neighbours, friends and family.

The bar will be open from 6.30pm.

Please note the bar will be card only.



A TIME FOR REFLECTION

Who would have thought that the simple raising of a flag would cause so much consternation and division in our village? For those in the village who are not already aware, an unfortunate situation has developed concerning the flying of flags at the Sutton Hall.

I have been raising flags (all purchased at my own expense) at the Sutton Hall on behalf of the village for around fifteen years after taking over the role following on from Ivor Scull at the request of the Sutton Hall committee. During this time we have raised the Union Flag in celebration of royal events, such as royal birthdays of the Queen and now the King, the sad death and funeral of our late Queen Elizabeth and the coronation of King Charles, also Trooping the Colour, and other royal occasions. The Union Flag has also been raised for VE Day and VJ Day (I supplied two Union Flags to decorate the Sutton Hall).

We have flown the St George's Cross to celebrate England's National Day, the Easter period, as well as various sporting events in support of England teams.

More recently, we have raised the Ukrainian flag in support of that poor country against the madness and evil of Putin. Over all these years I have never had a single word of criticism or derogatory comment from anyone, and quite the opposite, there have been many times when people have commented how nice it is to see the flags flying, and thanked me for my efforts. For much of the past two years the Ukrainian flag has flown in support for that country against Putin. A year ago the flag became torn and I removed it for repair. In late August the same thing happened again and, having again removed it for repair, I thought it would be an opportune time to fly the St George's Cross. I chose this for the normal patriotic reasons – pride in our country, its royalty, military, way of life, countryside, institutions, etc. Additionally, anyone who is interested in sport would know that at time England were engaged in various sporting activities – the Women's Rugby World Cup (which we eventually won), England cricket versus South Africa, Tour of Britain cycling, and other events not forgetting Tom Pidcock vying for a podium place at the Vuelta. However, the St. George's Cross was only allowed to fly for less than a week before it was unceremoniously removed by certain people in the village who I later believe considered it to be racist and anti-immigrant. Unfortunately, at that time, there was anti-immigrant feeling in various parts of the country where some lobbyists were using both the Union Flag and St George's Cross to protest against immigration and the use of hotels, etc. I can quite understand that if that is your point of view, then the flying of our national flag in Stockcross could be considered to have ulterior motives.

However, that is not my point of view, and I think the use of our national flags in support of these causes is entirely wrong. Europe, Scotland, Ireland and Wales as well as Ukraine and especially the USA all use flags to signal unity and a sign of belonging and shared pride. People will have noticed flags and bunting flying in Newbury town centre all summer long. I personally think it nice to see our national flags flying from churches and Town Halls, etc. It must be remembered that these are national flags, and not political flags.

We should note that our political leaders at their party conferences have all embraced the national flags to show that they support national pride, unity and cohesion, and that they are *against* racism and division. Ed Davey and the Liberal Democrats started the ball rolling with a great show of enthusiasm, followed by Keir Starmer and Labour, and of course the Conservatives as well. In my opinion it is misguided to assume that support of a flag shows support for a particular political party, for example that support of the St George's Cross is an indication of support for the Reform party as has been suggested. In any case these political views are personal views, and we are all different. The fact is that we all live quite closely together in a small village, and we should be able to debate issues quietly and sensibly without being acrimonious with each other.

I do think that there is also a generational divide in that persons of more advanced years do tend to have more traditional outlook and are more likely to support our way of life, our conventions, our institutions and our history than other age groups. I may be wrong but this does seem to be the situation.

As a result of this the Sutton Hall committee is vociferous in not wanting our national flags to be flown at the village hall, in spite of the fact that several villagers have said that it should be up to the "villagers as a whole" to make these decisions, that it is their village, and it should not be up to just a few people on the committee to make such decisions for the wider community.

I will be more than happy to continue my duties as Flag Master if the majority of villagers would like to see flags flying at the Sutton Hall. However, for the time being my flags are folded and put away.

Nick Drewe

Village Hall Flagpole

The Village Hall Committee recently discussed the flying of flags on the village hall flagpole. The Committee decided that the flags flown should be decided by the Village Hall Committee rather than individuals. We also agreed flags should not be political in nature or cause bad feelings because we are encouraging harmony and mutual support in our village. The Committee is aware that unfortunately, at the moment, the St George's flag makes some villagers uncomfortable with its associations with anti immigration policies so that flag was recently removed and the Committee will decide which future occasions and celebrations it will be appropriate to fly this and other flags.



PORTADOWN MALE VOICE CHOIR CONCERT. THIS BUSY SOCIAL SCENE DURING THE INTERVAL IS COURTESY OF MIKE MERCHANT

The concert by **Portadown Male Voice Choir** proved to be a great success with well over 100 people attending. As there were 40 people in the choir plus soloists, the church was packed full and we all benefited from the atmospheric candlelit environment.

We were treated to a variety of music including *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Morte Chryste*, *Bridge over Troubled Water*, *My Heart Will go on*, *Round the Riverside*, *Shenandoah*, *When the Saints go Marching in*, *An Irish Blessing*. *The*

Colonel of the Crimson Hussars and several others.

Emma Hewetson, the guest artiste who is a well known soprano, with her accompanist Lorraine Homewood, provided a delightful medley of songs old and new. During the interval, the choir's accompanist, Steven Bell, demonstrated his keyboard artistry with much foot tapping and entertaining music.

Church funds benefited from the generosity of the people of Stockcross and further afield with over £2500 being raised towards essential repairs and improvements to the church.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO THOSE OF YOU WHO BOUGHT CONCERT TICKETS, RAFFLE TICKETS, CONTRIBUTED TO RAFFLE PRIZES AND HELPED DECORATE THE CHURCH.

YOUR SUPPORT ENCOURAGES THOSE OF US WHO WISH TO SEE THIS CHURCH, WHICH IS A KEY FEATURE OF THE VILLAGE, STAY OPEN, TO KEEP PERSEVERING.

Following on from the success of the two concerts held in the church this year, we are planning for further fund-raising concerts in 2026, with a variety of music styles. Please watch out for further exciting news!

STOCC Update

I'm writing with some news and a proposal about the future of Stockcross Two O'clock Crowd which meets in the hall on the last Wednesday of the month.

After 23 wonderful years, it's time for me to step back from the coordinating role after the November meeting. While this is a personal change for me, I absolutely believe there is a need for this community group to continue in order to provide a regular social opportunity for locals who may be retired.

The great news is that because our group is so successful, we no longer need one person to take on the whole job. We can make the work much lighter and more fun by working as a small team—the "many hands make light work" approach! By joining in and stepping up, you ensure we can continue to enjoy the fantastic programs and connection we share in our beautiful and much-loved village hall.

Even if you haven't been along to STOCC yet you might consider volunteering to help keep this regular daytime group available for the community.

Here's How We Can Keep STOCC Going Strong:

Since we meet monthly, you only need to commit to helping out on a rotational basis or taking on a small, specific task. You don't have to be at every meeting or do a job every month.

We need a few people to step up and form three simple, low-commitment teams: Advance Planning, Providing Refreshments and Setting Up on the day.

For details please email: janeatorchard19@gmail.com or call me on 07771511317

Coming up - Our meeting on Wednesday October 29th will be a talk by Dr Hugh Pihlens "Who do you Think You Are Hugh Pihlens?" Hugh is a brilliant speaker, do come along and enjoy the story of his ancestor's escape from tyranny and subsequent success. Christmas Tea on Wednesday November 26th

Jane Batt

Village News

The Apollo Big Band: Blowing Our Own Trumpet.



Le On Solent puts on a spectacular event each year. 2025 was a little different in that the 3 days of celebration and entertainment was a commemoration and remembrance of the 80th anniversary of VE & VJ days and the end of World War II. Apollo was pleased to be invited to open the celebrations with 2 one-hour sets which included many tunes suitable for the period. Of course, Glenn Miller's In The Mood was in there somewhere and our singer on the night, Kitty Mazinsky looked and sounded fabulous dressed in 1940's style. Of course, we had to include the period tunes of White Cliffs Of Dover and We'll Meet Again. The show was so well received that the audience would not let us off the stage ed 2 encores. A late night for the

until we had complet-band but enjoyable.

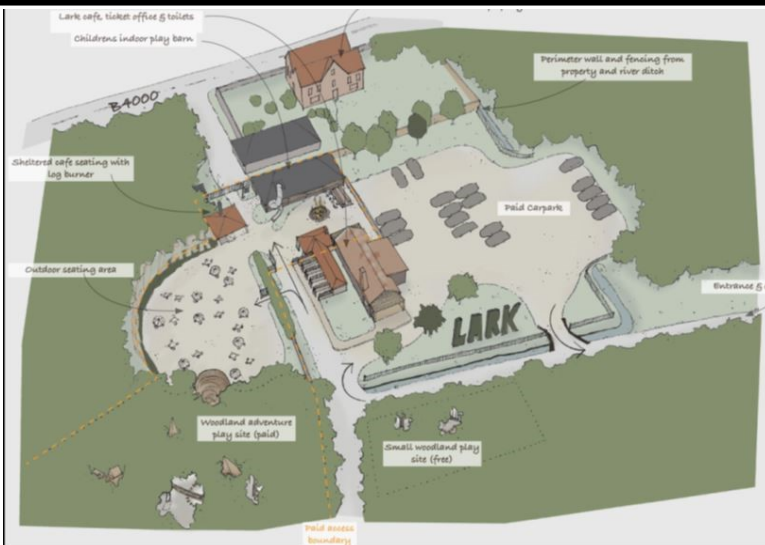
The band has been event of the year at the We have 2 local sing-star appearing with us. trombone prodigy only a performer and poses music for big Bublé have used his work. And now Callum will be performing with Apollo, Stockcross's own big band!



working hard, rehearsing for its big Arlington Arts Theatre on 18th Oct. ers and one international musical Callum Au at 35 years old is a known around the world. He is not first call session musician but writes arrangements and com-bands. Many well-known performers including Micheal



Apollo is continuing with its Jazz@Stockcross concerts. Our next show will be on 12th Dec in the Sutton Hall. We have had to make a change of singer and we have engaged Emily Apps who has previously sung with us at Stockcross and a large hotel in Cirencester. Emily trained in musical theatre in London and has performed around the world e.g. Paris, the Americas and many other places including on the Disney Cruise Line in the USA and Canada. She really knows how to put on a show so why not come along on Friday 12th Dec and don't forget to keep in touch with Apollo via our website at Apollobigband.co.uk



Wild Lark is Underway!

We're excited to share that work has now begun on [Wild Lark](http://www.wild-lark.com) — our new **adventure playground** at Shepherds Farm. Once complete, Wild Lark will be a place for children to explore, climb, and play in nature, with imaginative structures built from natural materials and designed to blend beautifully with the landscape. Our site will feature a beautiful café that will be open to the public and we look forward to welcoming all the local residence for a coffee soon.

Construction is now underway, and we're aiming to **open in 2026**. Over the coming months,

you may notice some activity on site as the playground takes shape, and we're very grateful for the patience and support of our local community while the work progresses.

We can't wait to open the gates and welcome you all to come and play! Find out more and follow our progress at www.wild-lark.com.

Village news & Events

1/. Village Small Hall Refurbishment

Fundraising to redecorate the small hall is underway, with plans to make it more comfortable and suitable for village social events now we've lost the pubs. Plans include better seating, tables, lighting and an improved bar area. We also plan outside seating and signage and then to open the Pop Inn more frequently once the redecoration is complete. The plans have support from Sutton Estates and our local MP. I am very pleased to tell you that we have received a grant of £15,000 from the Lottery Commission Community Fund. We are also extremely grateful for other donations from villagers and additional money will be raised from our forthcoming events. Improving the small hall is intended to benefit all villagers so you have any suggestions for how we can raise additional funds for this project or if you would like to contribute to the project please contact me. We would also like to gather names of people who would be happy to help behind the bar once the work is completed. Again if you're willing to help please contact me on tonyhersh@hotmail.com

2/. Village Social Event 21st November

The bar will be open in the village small hall from 6pm on Friday 21st November selling beer, wine and soft drinks. You can order food to be delivered via Deliveroo. Please come along to enjoy a few drinks and chat with villagers !

3/. Cheese and Wine Event Friday 13th March

A date for your diaries for next year is another cheese and wine evening in the village hall. This time we will be sampling New World reds or whites. Tickets are already available from www.jumblebee.co.uk/cheesewine2026 currently with a big early bird discount !

INCANTATA CHOIR Friday 5 December starting at 8pm. Two thirty minute slots with a 20 minute interval between. Raffle.
The Incantata are a ladies choir. The evening will have a Christmas theme to get you into the mood with popular songs and a few carols to join in.
The Pop Inn bar will be open at 7.30pm and throughout the concert, closing at around 11pm.

<https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/incantatachoir>

Coming Events

Look out for a leaflet through your door soon with details of all the below upcoming events:

Pop in Pub – Friday 21 November at 6pm:

Incantata Choir Concert – Friday 5 December

Panto – December: There will be no panto this year.

Village Hall Drinks Party – Saturday 20 December.

Cheese & Wine: 13th March 2026

COMING EVENTS



Church Services

Services of Holy Communion at 11am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month



CHRISTMAS IN STOCKCROSS

Come and Join Us!

Christmas Drinks

Sutton Hall

Saturday 20th December from 6.00pm
Stockcross Christmas Get-Together

Join us for our Christmas event.

A great opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours.

At 6.30pm Father Christmas will visit with a free gift for all good children.

Enjoy a **free** glass of mulled wine, hot dog and mince pie.

The bar will also be open.

Everybody welcome!

Regular activities at Sutton Hall, Stockcross |

Daily

Snooker & Billiards — stockcrosssnookerclub@gmail.com

Weekly

Monday Evening	Dance	Cheek2cheekdance@hotmail.co.uk
Tuesday Evening	Hatha Yoga flow 6.45-8.00	Beth Trotter 07790 015762 www.beyoga.co.uk
Tuesday Afternoon	TOFFS bridge 13.15	Annagent13@gmail.com
Wednesday Morning	Gentle Hatha Yoga to ease & relax 9.45am-10.45am	Beth Trotter - As above
Wednesday Evening	Tango Dance	Justtango.co.uk Hespinosa1111@gmail.com
Thursday Morning	Life drawing classes	arranmiles@googlemail.com
Friday Morning	Baby Ballerina	www.babyballerinas-newbury.co.uk Sharon Moore 07770825191
Friday Afternoon	TOFFS bridge 13.15	Annagent13@gmail.com
Saturday morning	Baby Ballerina	As above

Monthly

2nd Tuesday of the month — hall committee meeting, small hall, 20.00

Last Wednesday afternoon of the month — STOCC, Jane_batt@btinternet.com

Second Wednesday afternoon of the month — SASHA — contact Angela Tyler to confirm
ange.sunflower@gmail.com

Hall Hire Rates (£ per hour)

From 1st August 2024 (time booked must be sufficient to include set up cleaning afterwards)
Minimum hire 2 hours

	Small	Large	Both
	Hall	Hall	Hall
Resident	11.5	15.75	20
Non resident	17	23	27.5

Call Jay on 01488 608769 to book
or visit our website

www.suttonhallstockcross.org

or email

suttonhall642@btinternet.com

NOVEMBER
OPEN
MORNINGS



Welcome to

The Kite Primary Federation

Flying Higher Together



Stockcross Primary School
Wednesday 19th
November

Welford and Wickham
Primary School
Thursday 20th
November

9.15am arrival for
refreshments and
presentation, followed
by a tour of the school

Book via the office addresses
below and visit our websites
to see more about our
wonderful rural schools.

stockcrossprimaryschool.org office@stockcross.w-berks.sch.uk

welfordandwickhamprimaryschool.org office@welford.w-berks.sch.uk