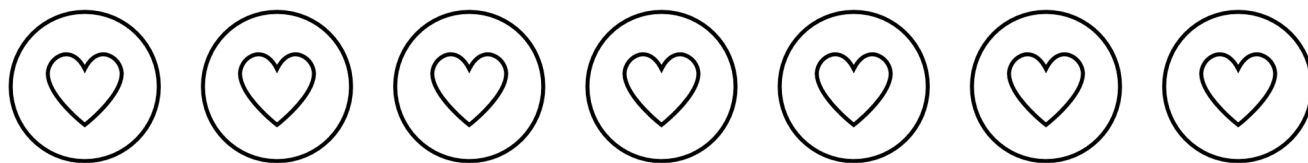


ELKSTONE NEWSLETTER



A busy month!

Decorations not taken down by Twelfth Night had to stay up until Candlemas on February 2nd, when every leaf and bit of greenery should be removed so the goblins had nowhere to hide. I'm somewhat sceptical about that bit!

Shrove Tuesday. If you can actually toss a pancake, then it's too thick. A fact that I find reassuring, because the image of myself skittering around the kitchen waving a hot frying pan is somewhat disturbing.

Lent. I may resolve to 'give something up' for Lent. Something enjoyable, naturally. This can, with me, result in a spirit of excessive piety, especially if I constantly remind all around me of how much I'm suffering. Better perhaps as a time for reflection.

14th February, Valentine's Day. So lovely to honour it. But if you don't have a special 'other', think of giving yourself something. A few simple flowers perhaps, or greenery from the hedgerow, an hour of relaxation or an interesting walk. Spoil yourself a little.

And we are only halfway through the month! Have a wonderful following fortnight!

Barbara and Kevin

email: editor@elkstonevillage.com

Deadline for the next newsletter - 20 February 2025

Regular Village Hall Activities		
Indoor Bowls	Every Tuesday, 7.30pm	Ronnie Bury – 870493 or Martyn Wylie – 870441
Art Club	Every Thursday, 9am - 1pm	Penny Casewell – 03330 119663
Yoga	Every Monday, 10.00 – 11.00am	Emma Lowther – 07967 215569

Other dates for your diary		
Waste & Recycling	Recycling boxes, recycling bags, refuse and garden waste	Friday 7 February Friday 21 February
	Food Caddy	Friday 7 February Friday 14 February Friday 21 February Friday 28 February
Church Services	(See page 2)	

Elkstone Parish Church February Services

Sunday 2 February	Morning Worship. Elkstone	11.00 am
Sunday 9 February	Benefice Service for Candlemas at Stratton Church	11.00 am
Sunday 16 February	Holy Communion. Elkstone	11.00 am
Sunday 23 February	Morning Worship at Rendcomb Church	11.00 am

Christingle Service



Our annual candlelit Christingle Service was on 5th January in Elkstone Church. We raised funds for The Children's Society during the service and from the House Boxes, which were brought along from homes around the village. If you'd like a box, or would like to contribute to the society, please get in touch with Jennie or Carole.

The Christingles were handed out to everyone, with fruits and a candle giving light into the darkness. Jennie always makes plenty of Christingles loaded with plenty of fruits and nuts, and several were distributed around the village

later during the Sunday afternoon.

As yet, we don't have the total raised, but please be assured all funds will be well used for projects organised by the Children's Society for children and young people.

Elkstone Church

Churchyard Tidy Up Morning Saturday 11 January

It was a crisp January morning with sunlight pouring through the churchyard and the Ivy Wall Party were ready. Secateurs - check, gloves - check, rake - check, power tools - check, trailer in position - check, plenty of willing volunteers - check.

Work started about 10am, steady and painstakingly starting at the roots and working up through the stems and weaving through the nooks and crannies of the Cotswold stone walls. Our aim was to cut all the invasive ivy away.

By mid-morning both sides of the Church wall were free from ivy.

I guess around mid-day we heard the call 'tea, coffee, traybakes, biscuits' and we all gathered at the tabletop tombstones for much needed refreshments and noisy chatter.

Looking across the wildflower meadow, and down to the bottom gate the walls seemed to be breathing again.

Trailer full, and two heaps of cuttings ready for disposal!

There is just one tiny section of the wall on the road to finish, but that's for another day.

A massive thank you to everyone who came to help and 'Cheers' to Clive for the use of your trailer.

Ivy Wall Party '2' date to be announced.

Ronnie on behalf of St John the Evangelist Church



Beetle Drive Friday 17 January

17 villagers met in the Village Hall for the Beetle Drive, with everyone prepared to relax and enjoy the evening. No-one sulked if they didn't throw a six and remained Beetle-less for that game, Sarah displayed 'killer' gaming instincts closely emulated by Nathan and Carole's two-handed dice throwing hinted at a mis-spent youth. Quite a lot of noise, a splendid rendition of 'Happy Birthday'



and a Beetle artistically created by Darci-Mae in Twiglets.



Thank you to all who came and made the evening such fun.

Roads, Potholes and Underpass flooding

Graham Hopkins and David Kearney met on 15 January with Anne Johns and Craig Church from Gloucestershire CC Highways on behalf of Elkstone Parish Council.

The meeting had been arranged to highlight the concerns of many Elkstone residents about the state of the road through the village (the 3/190) and the regular flooding of the underpass at the A417 junction.

The following key points were discussed:

- Until at least the start of the new financial year (FY) (April '25), pothole repairs will continue, although more regular monitoring by GCC will be undertaken, as it is recognised the route is a diversion for the Missing Link works.
- GCC highways will design and implement an improved drainage scheme for the Pike Hill dip, which has the most potholes. Following this work, the GCC capital team will assess the state of the road from the A417 underpass to High Cross and arrange for full or partial resurfacing, depending on the condition meeting their criteria for such work. This is planned for the 2025/26 FY, although no exact date was given. Both works are likely to mean temporary road closures and will need to be co-ordinated with the A417 Missing Link work.
- A full survey of the drainage from the underpass will be undertaken shortly to establish what short term works can improve the situation, with longer term repairs being passed to a capital 'highways drainage' team at GCC. However, it was pointed out that capital drainage repairs tend to prioritise areas where homes are at risk of flooding, which is not the case with the underpass.
- All villagers are encouraged to continue to report potholes or other road dangers on the 'Fix My Street' website. The more reports are submitted the greater the chance of meaningful repairs being carried out.

To summarise then, it is unlikely that significant improvements will be seen in the short term, but we can hopefully expect some better-quality repairs in the next 12-14 months.

We're planning a summer getaway to Greece, and I'm worried we'll forget something important, which could ruin the holiday. What steps can we take to make sure we're fully protected and prepared if anything goes wrong?

Booking a holiday can be overwhelming, especially if it's been a while since you last went away. It's unlikely anything will go wrong, but we've prepared a simple checklist to make sure you can relax into your holiday knowing you're protected from the unexpected.

Check your passport is in date - especially for EU travel

Renewing your passport can take several weeks and isn't something to leave until the last minute. Check the validity of your passport for your trip on GOV.UK by finding out the entry requirements of the country you're travelling to.

If you're heading to Europe, bear in mind EU countries don't accept passports more than ten years old. This includes passports issued pre-Brexit, which may have longer expiry dates. Just remember, the golden rule for EU travel is: if your passport was issued over ten years ago, you'll need to get it renewed.

Know your rights if something goes wrong

If your flight's delayed long enough - usually two to four hours, depending on the journey - your airline must provide access to food and drink vouchers, phone calls and emails, and accommodation if you're delayed overnight. If it's cancelled, you're legally entitled to a full refund or replacement flight to help you get to your destination. You're also entitled to compensation if your airline delays, loses or damages your checked-in luggage.

Get travel insurance

Although it's an extra expense, travel insurance can cover many of the things already mentioned, like flight delays and lost luggage, but also things like a holiday cancellation and medical emergencies. Citizens Advice recommends getting insurance as soon as you book a holiday to make sure you're covered right away - but always check first to see if an existing insurance policy, or your bank account, covers what you need for your holiday. There's no need to double up if you're already covered!

The chances are your holiday will be problem-free, but early planning and preparation can make all the difference. If you need advice on a consumer problem, head to the Citizens Advice website (www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

Jessie's Nature Notes

A full moon and frosty ground have made the nights very light. At last, a few early snowdrops are in flower, which is a promise of growth and one or two trees have hazel catkins out, but most trees seem to be completely asleep. This allows us to see the beautiful bark patterns and branches and views across the country, which are obscured when the leaves are out. My grandmother used to tell us to look out for the rooks getting busy, as they are the farmer's friend, eating lots of pests.

Barbara's Nature Notes

I was out in the garden a few days ago when two ravens flew over, calling. An unmistakable sound. I imagine they were a pair because ravens are one of the first birds to breed after the turn of the year. They feed on carrion, so in cold weather there are enough dead animals around to feed their young. And although at one time ravens were only seen in the uplands, they have moved southwards, so we now see and hear them more often.