

ELKSTONE NEWSLETTER



Every day is a fresh beginning.....
Take heart with the day and begin again.

Susan Coolidge.

January is a 'clean' month. Not only with the promise of snow, drifting over the ground whitely, but with the taste of beginning....again. Clean food after the cloying richness of Christmas fare. Shoots with the freshness of new green. Clean colours of pure yellows and creams. And always the feeling of new beginnings, determination and hope. A resolution, if not to take a completely new direction, at least to make the old direction filled with enthusiasm, kindness, openness and fun. If we possibly can.

A Happy New Year!

Barbara and Kevin

email: editor@elkstoneparish.gov.uk

Deadline for the next newsletter - 20 January 2026

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 - 07775 941876
Yoga	Every Monday, 10.00 - 11.00am	Emma Lowther - 07967 215569

Other dates for your diary

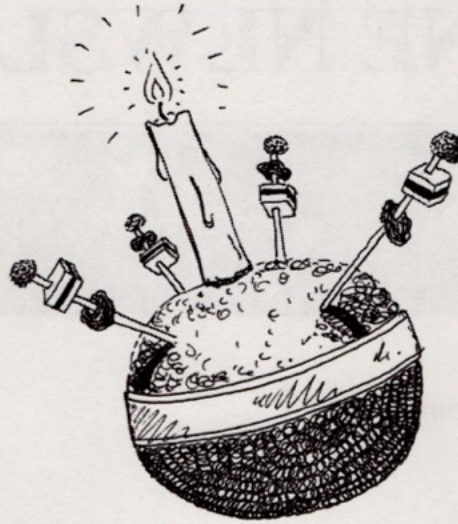
Waste & Recycling	Recycling boxes, recycling bags, refuse, food caddy and garden waste	Saturday 10 January (No Garden Waste) Friday 23 January
	Food Caddy only	Monday 5 January Friday 16 January Friday 30 January

Elkstone Parish Church Sunday Services

Sunday 4th January	11.00am	Christingle Service
Sunday 11th Jan	11.00am	Plough Sunday Benefice Service Slacks Barn GL53 9RE
Sunday 18 January	11.00am	Holy Communion

Christingle Service

Our annual Christingle Service this year is on Sunday 4th January 2026
at 11am in the Parish Church, Elkstone.



Please join us for this candlelit time which draws the Christmas events to a close. Over the last 50 years, Christingle celebrations have raised millions of pounds to support the life changing work with children and young people, organised by The Children's Society.

The money we raise from the house boxes and the offertory on the day helps to rekindle their hope. The warm magical candlelight of the service brings hope to those living in darkness. Please bring your house box to the service or Jennie will collect it later in the month.

Jennie and Elkstone Church

The new Audio Equipment in the Church

Early in December we updated our audio system.

It has served us well over the last 15 years. Over the years we have updated the CD player and different component parts and continually recharging the batteries in the microphones. The hearing loop has served those very well who've needed it, but recently we have suffered interference and an unpredictable quality.

Similar to the Village Hall, we were delighted to receive a very generous donation from Sylvie Pierce. Sylvie and Geoff Gait-Carr had already started the research for this audio-system, making it a fairly pain-free process to continue the conversations with the Audio company and Gloucester Diocese. As our church is an historical building, any new additions have to receive permission from the Diocese. Once this was awarded, the work was able to be booked in and go ahead.

The system now has a blue-tooth link, new speakers and a variety of microphones for different parts of the church. The church has always had very good acoustics and with the enhancement of this system, the sound is now clearer and louder. We have the ability for musical instruments to be connected to the speakers from the chancel at the front of the building.

The Churn Valley Choir are planning a concert in the warmer months, before they support us on Open Gardens Day in June. The choir master will be delighted that the music from her keyboard and phone will be linked to the speakers.

Elkstone Church

Family Carols and Crib Service

Every seat was taken at the service held in the Church on Sunday 21 December, with approximately 40 adults and 20 children joining Rev'd Rachel Saum for a celebration of the true meaning of Christmas. Readings and carols highlighted the Christmas Story, which was illustrated and supported as the scene around the crib was built with figures and human volunteers. An opportunity to think about casting light to the world, the UK, our community and our family was a very thought-provoking element of the service.

The congregation then enjoyed seasonal refreshments before taking their candles home to illuminate the rest of the Christmas period.



Carol Singing

As Buddy the Elf would say "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is by singing loud for all to hear". It was fantastic to see so many villagers joining the Carol Singing on Thursday 18 December. We made our way round the Village and were welcomed with good cheer and treats at many of the houses. We returned to the Village Hall for drinks and nibbles. As one of the villagers commented, "It was just such a lovely way to start the festivities". A big 'thank you' to all who came to sing, and to all of those who received us so warmly.

Village Hall News

The kitchen and main hall will be almost completely re-decorated by the time you receive this Newsletter. The re-painting of both toilets will have to wait until the plaster on the walls has completely dried. In the New Year the Committee will be deciding on future expenditure, the first being new curtains. As no-one claimed the old ones they have been given to a Cirencester Charity who will put them to good use and the same will happen to the ones in the Main Hall, unless someone would like them.

Nature Watch

The number of Field Voles is dropping alarmingly and, unfortunately, domestic cats can play havoc with the population. These little rodents are really dissimilar to mice, with a rounded snout, furry ears and a distinctive short, stubby tail. And if we do have snow in January then breeding can start early under the protective layer of white, which keeps the young warm and safe. They do need all the help they can get as most of these little creatures will die or be killed within a few months. They can be difficult to spot, but if you do catch a glimpse, they are very endearing. Well worth keeping the cat away!

Big Garden Bird Watch

Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers like you take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring. The Big Garden Bird Watch takes place for one hour of your time from 23rd to 26th January inclusive. Just record all the bird species that actually land in your garden (not flying overhead). All details online. www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch



Volunteering in Ghana

As many of you are aware, I was given the amazing opportunity to go to Ghana on a volunteering trip this summer and wanted to share a few photos and tell you a bit about it. It was a life changing experience for me and something I would definitely consider doing again.

The most important bit was the work we did in a school for five days, teaching children and building a new library. During the whole time me and one friend were the only teachers for one of the classes. As well as this, the youngest class had age 3-7 as well as some 12-year-olds: this is because many children miss a lot of school to help at home.

At the volunteer house where we stayed, many children were able to come in and play with us in the evenings, which was amazing. However, it was also heartbreaking to hear that many of them went back to the streets or a foster home.

At the end of our trip, we shared a large number of donations with schools and wider community, some of which came directly from Elkstone, including lots of clothing, stationary, first aid kits, books and sports equipment, which I know was greatly appreciated by the children, staff and families. At lunchtimes, we brought some of the sports equipment out and every item excited them, no matter how simple.

I would like to thank every single person who donated items or money to facilitate this incredible trip. In total I raised around £600. The lead up to the trip was a bit hectic, with trying to get everything organised, so if you wanted to donate and were unable to, please let me know (Evelyn.macfarlane@icloud.com), or visit African Adventures Foundation and donate towards the amazing work they do. There is an option to donate to a specific school and, if you're interested in doing that, my school was called Aklorbordzi School.

