

# News Sheet Autumn 2025

**Thanks to your kind support and Joanna's amazing organisation we have had some wonderful events and there are more planned for 2026. Keep up to date via the web site [www.fosmk.org.uk](http://www.fosmk.org.uk)**



## **Joanna looks back at the autumn programme.....**

The new programme opened in September with a fascinating talk given by William Whyte Professor of architectural history at St John's College. (and former Curate of St Mary's) He told us the story of our 800 year old Church. It was an intriguing tale and now as we look around at the different parts of the building we can imagine the Nave with a gallery high above us and the beautiful woodwork on the choir stalls salvaged from the ruins of Osney Abbey. In October we were enchanted by the first public readings ever of the love letters written 250 years ago between John Constable and his wife Maria. James Hamilton, resident under the spire of St Mary's, edited and reduced around 1000 letters. They were beautifully read by his wife, Kate Eustace, Shirley Steventon and accompanied on the organ by Philip Towler.

At the end of November ancient folk songs about love, war & nature were sung in English and Zulu by Oli Steadman who was one of the Founder members of the Oxford band Stornoway that has had great success round the world and in 24 hours filled the 6000 seats for a concert in The Royal Albert Hall next March. It was Oli's first solo gig and we learned about his passion for conservation, for wildflowers and his two year old daughter Merry who clearly also enjoyed his singing and playing of the 'Zulu squeeze box' as well as the guitar and mouthorgan.



## **And Joanna looks forward**

**24<sup>th</sup> Jan Lennox Cato from The Antiques Roadshow** – will tell us how to be an antiques expert!

**21<sup>st</sup> March Irene Tracey, Vice Chancellor of Oxford University** (and ex pupil of Gosford Hill School) and **The Rt Rev. Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford** will reflect together on 'Leading Change'

**26<sup>th</sup> April Talk and Supper with Imogen Cooper** who will tell us about her life as an internationally famed pianist.

## Funds Raised so Far:

### 2025 events:

'Seasons' concert £858

'Spitfire Jackie' talk £1436

'Tastes of Spring' Food Festival £1681

William Whyte Talk £1039

Constable Love Letters £1040

Oli Steadman concert £1044

**Total Funds Raised from events over £7000**

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR SUPPORTING THESE EVENTS

### What are FOSMK funds for?

The aim of The Friends is  
*"To raise funds to assist the Rector and Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Kidlington with Hampton Poyle in maintaining, improving, protecting and ensuring the future of the fabric and fittings and in extending community access to St Mary's Church Kidlington and its.... hall."*

After several winters of dangerous darkness it is wonderful that The Friends were able to pay for the new lighting. Joanna writes, "Our new lights are glowing. Our Membership is growing and the dripping from the roof is alas also doing that." Now we can safely use the church through the winter. Thankyou.

The PCC's priorities are to make the building water-tight, safe, and accessible. Mending the roof remains an expensive priority. Levelling the dangerous floors, removing the steps in the porch, and renovating the N Transept follow. We have to do these things before the many other things that we might like to do.

**Your support really makes a difference. Thankyou!**

### Active Friends:

By joining *The Friends* you are helping preserve and make the best use of one of Kidlington's treasured assets. Annual membership for one person is £25. You can join through the web site or by email. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us. A priority for 2026 is to increase our relations with local businesses. Please let us know if you have any contacts. Margaret Day looks after membership and finances.

You will notice how active Joanna is organising events, along with a few helpers. She cannot do all of this on her own. Joanna writes, "Very welcome too would be some help in particular with the publicity, distribution of the posters and leaflets, and through social media and websites. This is very important. Please contact me"

We need active members willing to get involved in making our wonderful events happen: logistics, communication, chair moving... We would love to hear from you.

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