

For a large print version of this edition please contact Dave Evans, 490698,
ssrs@btopenworld.com Extended version available at www.stokestgregory.org

Daffodils Thank you John

Children from *Mrs Robinson's class enjoyed planting bulbs by the entrance to the Playing Field with Sue Hembrow on a very cold and wintry Friday afternoon in November. "Thank you," says Sue, "to John Musgrove, who supplied the bulbs and carried out all of the preparation/ finishing work to make this possible. Don't forget to look out for the blooms in the spring."

* (now safely back in Australia enjoying the summer!)

Easter Egg Hunt

Is there anyone out there who has any hands on experience/ knowledge of staging an event like this and would be enthusiastic enough to help Sue Hembrow run it on the Playing Field over Easter weekend? It could be a lot of fun.

Contact Sue on 490 598

Alternative Fashion

Stoke St Gregory WI, as part of the *Somerset @ 90* year, have organised an Alternative Fashion Show of recycled garments to be held on Saturday 5th April at 2.30pm in The Williams Hall. Tickets, at £3.50 each are available from Mary Kelsy, Beechcroft, Willey Road, Tel: 01823 490550 Cheques payable to "Stoke St Gregory WI", please mark envelope "Alternative Fashion Show"

All garments will be for sale at reasonable prices. Any unsold will go to the St Margaret's Hospice shop.

The WI meets on the 2nd Tuesday in the month in the Williams Hall at 7 p.m. Please note this is a slight change of time. New members are always welcome. Please contact the Secretary, Pat Hembrow 490492.

Short Mat Crunch

Although several people have shown an interest in forming a Short Mat Bowls Club, not enough have come forward so far to make it viable.

A meeting has been called, (see "Notice Board" page for details) to make a final assessment of the situation and decide whether the idea can be taken forward or whether it has to be abandoned.

Parish Precept

The annual precept, that is the amount of money the Parish Council requests from Taunton Deane Borough Council, has been agreed at £6000 for the financial year commencing 01.04.08. This is the same figure that has been requested for a number of years.

The Parish Council plans to spend more than this amount during the financial year but the residue will come from reserves held.

Father Christmas

visited Stoke on Wednesday 19th December, and arrived in time to join in with the carol singing in The Square. Santa says "Thank you to the playing field trustees, the village school and of course John Hembrow not forgetting his trusty tractor who made my visit possible. Ho ho ho!"

Stoke Stampede 2007

– the organizers would like to thank everyone who helped make the race such a success. 203 runners entered the race and everything went smoothly. The weather conditions were ideal and £1500 was raised towards repairs to the BMX circuit and replacement of some of the Pavilion doors. "Well done to James Timmins of Church Close who won the Eric Hembrow Memorial Cup." Said the organizers, Dennis Silk, Stuart Wilkinson and Sue Hembrow. "The closure of the Square really does make the course much safer and we really do appreciate the cooperation shown by everyone regarding this matter."

The Anniversary Ball

held by the school last September has realized £8579. All the hard work and effort put in has been rewarded with this splendid sum. Both The Willow Set and the Youth Club will receive £1000, the Youth Theatre Group £450 and The Playing Fields £100, with the remainder going to the school to help pay for the new playground/ planned sports area. "Thank you once more," says Barbara Berks, "to all in our community who helped make this event such a success."

Apologies to those who missed this one, but don't forget the next deadline – 21st March

Football Coach

WANTED URGENTLY

Sadly Chris Larkin who successfully ran the football coaching sessions on Saturday mornings has moved on to work with Ilminster Town. We have a group of 7 – 11 year olds who enjoy meeting up to learn football skills/ techniques and a good kick around. So if there's anyone out there who could assist with this task or a group of chaps who could get together and organize a rota the young players would be delighted.

Please contact Sue Hembrow 490 598

Stoke Green Group

(No official group has yet been formed – for the present please contact Trevor Williams, 490827, or Dave Evans, ssrs@btopenworld.com)

The January event was well attended. Following two excellent presentations the discussion showed that there is interest in all matters green in the village and a will to come together to make a difference locally.

Topics for future discussion and action include:

- * Tree, hedge & bulb planting
- * Renewable energy & energy saving
- * Better recycling and re-use
- * Water conservation
- * Growing and eating local food
- * Involving the young people of the village
- * Carbon rationing
- * Public transport

Anyone not at the event who would like to get involved in any of these issues, or would like more information, please get in touch. More details are also available on the new web page on www.stokestgregory.org

March should see the screening of the Al Gore film "An Inconvenient Truth". In the meantime, two practical projects are being launched (see below)

Trees For Life: 2008

One broad leaf tree will absorb approximately 730kg of carbon dioxide during its full life-time (approximately 100 years). Trees also look rather fine, and can even provide food. For a village tree planting scheme in the autumn of 2008 we need the following: Identification of possible sites – Landowners' co-operation – Decisions on species – Funding – Ground preparation – Planting – Fencing/ guards – After-care - Management.

Please contact Stoke Green Group (details above)

TakeArt Live

Jo Davison writes: "I'm delighted to let you know about two terrific live professional shows, supported by TakeArt Live, coming to the Williams Hall."

THE POLISH PLAY, on February 14th at 7.30pm, starts in a village hall and ends at a country dance, and because of the date, the company is adapting it especially for Stoke. Using an accordion, YouTube, Yuri Gagarin and the 1974 World Cup Final, this is a story about belonging, growing up and our place in the World. (Find out more from: www.farnhammaltings.com)

In keeping with the Valentine's theme, tea and cakes will be served (free of charge) in the interval, and there will be a paying bar for wine and soft drinks before and during the show.

Jo says: "I would be really grateful for any contributions of cakes - especially if they could be 'Valentines-y'. Could you let me know if you would be able to provide anything?"

MADAME LUCINDA'S WONDER THEATRE on March 4th, asks you to 'journey through the doors of imagination into a world of mystery and spectacle' with Rogue Theatre's mix of live music, circus, illusion, comedy and explosive physical theatre. (www.roguetheatre.co.uk)

Tickets for each show are £8 and £6 (children/students and those in receipt of benefit) from Stoke Village Stores, or Jo Davison 01823 490313/07770 302370

Safari Supper 2008

This highly successful bi-annual event will be on **Saturday Evening 14 June**. Sarah Upfield has the dubious honour of taking over the organisation of this somewhat prestigious event - so any offers of help to cook, host or assist would be most welcome. Sarah can be contacted on 01823 490114 or by email: sarahupfield@btinternet.com or better still pop in and see her at Iris House, Woodhill. If she's not in you can always put a note through the door. Thank you in advance.

Christmas Decorations

The Parish Council would like to thank all local businesses and residents who put up Christmas trees, lights and outdoor decorations which brightened up the village during the festive period.

Allotments for Stoke?

Would you like an allotment? Do you have any suitable land? Are you a negotiator? Could you help organise a scheme? Could you help prepare the ground and fencing? Yes? – please contact Stoke Green Group (details above)

Farming Focus

Milk production is an important part of farming in Stoke that has changed dramatically in only two decades. Half of the dairy herds have gone, the six remaining have become more intensive, expanded and/or diversified. So, in the village the number of cows is the same, still more cows than people, but the total milk yield has risen by about 50% due to better breeding and feeding.

It is difficult to move large herds to and from grazing fields so they spend more time housed and conserved feed is brought to them. Each cow has a calf every year, is milked for about 10 months then spends 2 months resting dry. She is at least 2 years old when her first calf is born and will have 4 or 5 more in an average lifetime. Of the calves born in the herd each year at least half will be reared by others for beef, a quarter will become replacement cows and the rest will be pet-food.

Tankers visit the village every day to take the milk to local processors, ours goes to Yeo Valley Organic or Coombe Farm. The new Wiseman dairy at Huntworth, next to the market, will soon be processing much of the milk from this area. Some milk, bottled nearer London, is transferred from the small local tankers to large artics at a compound near Lyng for the motorway journey. Farms generate employment, not just farm workers, but also vets, contractors, nutritionists, A.I.staff, mechanics, auctioneers and of course a host of officials to inspect everything!

Peter House

Police News

Hello all. There is a difficult balance between making people aware of crime risks and frightening them into thinking there is a problem. It is encouraging that in Taunton Sector we have seen a -12.9% reduction in total crime from this time last year which equates to 346 fewer victims. Criminal damage year to date is down -12.6% (195 fewer victims), theft of motor vehicles is down -30% (63 fewer victims) and violent crime is down -18.5% (258 fewer victims), but we cannot afford to become complacent. There is always a risk but by taking simple steps to reduce it happening in the first place we can reduce that risk even further. Once an area becomes 'known' by criminals as being an easy target they tend to stick around. What we want to do is prevent our area becoming 'known' as easy. Every little bit helps. An action on its own, putting a lock on your shed, removing everything from inside your car, leaving a light on in the house when you are out might seem insignificant but when everyone is doing it these contributions towards making YOUR community a safer place obviously make a big difference. Please, for everyone's sake MAKE IT HARD FOR CRIMINALS. Mark it up, Lock it up, Keep it.

Usual numbers 0845 456 7000 for all requests for assistance and you can reach me on Voicemail 01823 363287 and 70106 at the prompt.

Regards, Lynsey Gamblin, PCSO 8784

News from the School – Barbara Berks writes:

Happy New Year to you all. We are delighted to welcome the Daniels family back to the village after their year in Australia even though saying goodbye to the Robinsons was not easy. It seems hardly possible that a year has gone by so quickly! Of course much has changed since Lisa Daniels left and she has returned to a school newly federated with Burrowbridge. It is still early days but already we are working on ways that the 2 schools can enhance the learning of all our pupils, as well as the sharing of staff expertise and possible cost savings. The one governing body we share has held 3 meetings now and we are getting to know each other much better and enjoying working together. We are looking forward to having the first joint venture of the Friends of both schools with a Children's Fashion Show, which will take place on 19th March. Tickets from the school.

2008 looks as if it will be an exciting year for the school as the new building is going up very fast and successfully. Just 2 weeks into the new term we were able to move the children of Class 3 out of the old and very dilapidated Elliot hut classroom into their new accommodation. What a contrast! The new build is not completed yet but the upstairs room is coming on well and once the Elliot hut has been removed the outside areas can be finished off and a new tarmac playground area built where the old classroom was. We hope to be able to invite you all to a grand opening later this term, possibly just before Easter.

Notice Board

Details of future events to Dave
Evans, Stoke House, 490698
ssrs@btopenworld.com
Deadline – 21st March

Winter Lecture

Luckily, efforts to book an internationally renowned speaker for the winter lecture have narrowly failed so Alex Morrice will give a follow-up talk to his "Nelson the Man not the Battles" on **Friday 29 February 2008 in the Williams Hall at 7.30pm**

"Lady Emma Hamilton" - a true story of talent rising from rags to riches and by accident of history doomed to tragedy
£7.50 (including the traditional post-lecture cheese rolls and home-made soup)

Tickets from Post Office, Shop and 490152

Advance Notice

Annual Parish Meeting This will be held on Tuesday 29th April at 7.30pm in the Williams Hall. Everyone is encouraged to attend as it gives you an opportunity to find out the activities that the Parish Council and other local groups/organisations have been involved in during the year.

KIM HICKS - New One-Woman Show Based on the life of Amelia Blandford Edwards - Novelist, Traveller & Egyptologist
Saturday 19 April 2008 at 7.30 in the Williams Hall. £15 (including buffet supper)
Tickets will be available from Stoke Shop & PO, Ross 490152 & Alex 490917

St Gregory Players

On Saturday 5th April they plan to do a Double Bill of the One Act plays which they are entering in the Somerset Festival. One is the Youth Theatre's production of Sylvia Plath which won the Youth Festival last November; the other is the first act of an Ibsen play Young Eyolf.

The Ayckbourn play *Improbable Fiction* will run from 15th to 17th May

Safari Supper 2008
Saturday Evening, 14th June (See Page 2)

Job Vacancies at the School: Available Immediately

Lunchtime Supervisor on Monday, Thursday and Friday: 1 hour daily from 11.45 - 12.45 to help support the provision of hot dinners to the pupils in the Village Hall (which starts on Tuesday 22nd January)
Will put out tables and chairs ready for meals, help support the children in the hall and clear up after lunch. Paid £6.17 per hour Grade 16, pts 6-8.

Caretaker : 5 hours a week and extra paid when specific tasks need to be done. Involves dealing with daily maintenance of the school and its site, as well as some occasional manual handling if required.
£7.71 per hour, Grade 14 pts 13-17

School Crossing Patrol : 5 hours a week, divided into half an hour morning and afternoon (but 2 people could share the job) to help the children cross the road safely in front of school. Can be combined with the above job very easily.
£6.17 per hour, Grade 16, pts. 6 - 8

Interested in Drama, Pantomime, Backstage work? Come along to
ST GREGORY PLAYERS AGM :
WEDNESDAY 12TH
MARCH 7.30PM
WILLIAMS HALL
FOYER

Take Art - Williams Hall (see Page 2)
THE POLISH PLAY, on February 14th at 7.30pm
MADAME LUCINDA'S WONDER THEATRE on March 4th Tickets for each show are £8 and £6 (children/students and those in receipt of benefit) from Stoke Village Stores, or Jo Davison (01823 490313/07770 302370)

Short Mat Bowls
Meeting:
20th February
Williams Hall
7.30 pm
(see Page 1)