Christmas is coming! Do you have unwanted toys or books? Are you looking for gifts that don’t cost a fortune? Come and take part in Transition Athelney’s Toy & Book Swap

No cash needed! How does it work? Bring your toys and books to one of three drop-off locations and receive stamps that you can then spend at the Swap! If you don’t have anything to swap, that’s OK – you could make a small cash donation instead. Anything that isn’t taken will be donated to a good cause.

Drop off point in December between 9-10am at the event itself at North Curry Village Hall Meeting Room Saturday 3 December – 9am-12noon.
Drop-off also available in Curafield by arrangement only – call Mike on 07768 704466. The North Curry Produce Market is happening at the same time so come along and check out the vendors’ stalls and get all Christmasy with us!

STOKE ST GREGORY PLAYING FIELD
STOKE STAMPEDE 10K ROAD RACE
SUNDAY 8 JANUARY 2017
Race Starts 11am
Pre-Register at www.runbritain.co.uk
Limited on the day registration from 9am
Williams Hall
The Village Square will be closed for traffic between 10:30am and 12:30pm

PANTO IS COMING TO NORTH CURRY…
Oh no it isn’t, oh yes it is.... Yes, Dick Whittington will be coming to North Curry Village Hall from Tuesday 6th December to Saturday 10th December. The show is directed by Greg Phillips, who some of you may know from panto and farce at Somerton and Stoke St Gregory. The curtain goes up at 7.45pm nightly and there is a matinee performance on Christmas Eve. If you think you might want to try your hand at this year’s run please contact Tom Duxbury at duxburytom@gmail.com or tel 690116.

December Events at The Royal Oak
Saturday, December 10th at 9pm - Christmas Karaoke Disco - Always great fun so get down to The Oak for a Christmas sing song.
Tuesday, December 13th at 8pm - Christmas Acoustic Night - Great local talent who will be singing songs and getting us into the Christmas spirit. If you play an instrument or song come along and join us.
Friday, December 16th at 9pm - Live Music from Loose Connections, a Dorset band who play tracks from the 50’s through to today. They aim to entertain so come along and enjoy the Christmas show!
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VILLAGE STORES CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES 2016/17
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Saturday 7 January 2017 New Year’s Day CLOSED
Monday 9 January 2017 CLOSED
Tuesday 10 January 2017 7.30am – 6.30pm
All other days as per published opening times
Thank you for your custom and a Happy Christmas and Bountiful New Year!

STOKE NEWS
Winter 2016

Stoke News
Contact Jean House
jeanhouse@btconnect.com
For more news look at www.stokestgregory.org

Transport Survey
Thanks to all of you who took the time to fill in the Transport Survey distributed in the previous Stoke News. In all a total of forty four replies were received from a total distribution of four hundred and seventy five. The data therefore can only be taken as indicative, rather than the basis from which conclusions can be drawn.

One clear demand was for a transport connection to Langport. Support for this would not result in direct competition with the existing bus service, the Parish Council agreed to explore the possibility of developing this service as a community transport scheme. It is anticipated that this would be an on-demand service during the working day, charged at a nominal mileage rate to cover driver’s costs plus any small overhead charges.

In order to develop this service I would request that the people (there were around twelve) who volunteered to be drivers in the event of such a scheme being developed contact me to discuss next possible steps. Please call me (Graham Gleed) on 490407 or 07557654859, or email me grahamgleed@gmail.com before the end of the month so that we can decide how to progress.

CHANGES TO MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE
Due to continuing funding pressures, the county wide mobile library service is hanging by a thread. It is down from 12 vans a decade ago, to 1 van today, which luckily for us still calls at Stoke St Gregory once a month. There is one more visit this year on Thurs 29th Dec from 3.00 – 3.40pm in the Square. In 2017, the time will be changing to Wed from 2.55 to 3.25pm in the Square. The first visit next year is on 1st Feb. Please support this rural service if you can – the driver is very helpful and friendly and the selection of books is good.

For those in Curafield, there is now a viable wireless broadband network, operated by Wireless Broadband Southwest, offering 10-Mbps, with a cap of 250 GB for £25/month. We hope that this will also be available in Stathé very soon, with Meare Green and Hunsiton to follow as soon as possible. Vouchers from CDS for free installation for those with current speeds of 2mbps had to be applied for by the end of November, and any (free) installations need to be completed by the end of the March. Details from Nick Sloan.

We must apologise for the continuing delays in implementing the new village website. This is a high priority for the PC, work remains incomplete, and we will publish it as soon as we can. A constitution for the Allotments Association was agreed in September, and work on the legal underpinnings for the new allotments is now proceeding behind the scenes. We expect to see results in time for the new year’s growing season.

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INSPIRED BY THE OLYMPICS? - TRY TABLE TENNIS THIS WINTER
The table tennis group continues through the winter on Wednesday evenings, from 7-9pm at the Village Hall. All standards welcome, from beginners upwards, and open to all age 12 yrs up. £2 per week for adults (£1 for youngsters), incl refreshments and use of equipment. We’re a sociable group, so why not give us a try? Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

THANKS TO YOU
Jane Smith and Jill Baker would like to thank everyone for their donations and support for our Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday 30th September. Thanks to you we raised a amazing £322.01 for Macmillan Cancer Care

Special thanks to John Jackson, Pat Sollis, Betty and Dorothy, Phil Lawrence, Karen and Ian at the Village Shop, Also to Morrison’s, Bridgewater; Sainsbury’s, Bridgewater; Ministry of Cake, Taunton; Maisey’s Bakery, Ottery

All items for the Spring edition by Friday 17th February 2017

Stoke News
More Parish Council News  (Sep-Nov 16)

Ann Finn is getting closer to getting a Speed Watch group off the ground in Meare Green. If anyone would like to join in, to help monitor speeds there or in other parts of the village, they would be welcome. The PC has already brought this to the attention of the police, they do not intend to discourage speeding. If anyone on a 30mph limited road would like to display one of these on their bin, they should contact Becky, the parish clerk. See details elsewhere in this edition. The PC continues to support a bursary which can be offered as needed so there should be no barriers to participation. With that in mind, Scouting is an inclusive movement and that there is little or more, to contribute. It is also important that consideration is being given to further expanding the scheme to help people with transport problems.

The Somerset Community Foundation is running a scheme encouraging people who receive Winter Fuel Payments but are not themselves in need, to contribute to the same amount to their Winter fuel campaign. Find out more: http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter

As an alternative, to keep the kindness local, we would invite you to contribute to the Reeve’s Feast, administered by Heather Venn and Barbara Carpenter. As things may not be very aware, the Reeve’s Feast is at least 700 years old. Its early days are obscure, but it originated as an institution for feeding those in need, then degenerated in the 19th century into an excuse for a communal blow-out. It has returned to its roots as a small scale local charity for identifying need and providing help. (It used to cover North Curry and Stoke St Gregory, but the Stoke version is now separate.) Cheques to either Barbara or Heather, especially at this time of year, would be very welcome.

Finally, the North Curry Health Centre is looking for volunteers to join their Patient Participation Group, which provides feedback and helps to shape strategy. Details can be found at www.northcurryhealthcentre.co.uk/ppg.aspx. The PPG is particularly looking for more representation among younger people and men. The next meeting is on 18th January.

Scouts

A recent article in a newspaper described with a small amount of surprise that young people who participate in beavers/cubs/scouts become better equipped with life skills than their peers who don’t. It is nothing more than surprising how Scouting movement in Stoke St Gregory continues to provide these skills to an ever increasing participation. Indeed preliminary consideration is being given to further expanding the group to accommodate this demand.

As always satisfying this demand is dependent upon the guidance adults who are able to give some time, be it little or more, to contribute. It is also important that Scouting is an inclusive movement and that there should be no barriers to participation. With that in mind, we are always looking for charitable donations to support a bursary which can be offered as needed so that no young person is disadvantaged by not participating. If you are willing to help or to offer a donation to the bursary please contact Mike Long (07917552118), Graham Gleed (07557658459) or Bill Carpenter (07721303548).

Village Hall

The Village Hall Trustees have now been joined by Simon Gittins, who will represent the Scouts and Bill Carpenter who has been co-opted to provide expertise in matters financial and audio visual. While the Hall has developed its range of services to the community, such as Wi-Fi and now the evaluation of an online booking tool, its success is dependent upon its use and participation in events by the whole community. Suggestions of how to better use what is a leading community resource are always welcome. Current volunteer schemes to help people with transport problems.

Farming News

A seasonal look at what has been happening on the farms in Stoke St Gregory

Well, at last the very busy summer is over, the Combines and foragers are packed away and the trailers parked up till spring. It has been a fabulous season for growing crops, albeit a little hectic! With many fields having 4 cuts of grass for silage and the same for the Lucerne (a member of the pea family) and a wonderful bumper crop of maize to finish the summer....we are now looking forward to a quieter winter. The cattle grazing on the moors are just beginning to head into their winter barns and let’s hope that there will be no flooding. The baby calves have now been born and are becoming nice and chunky on ready to start calving in the winter months and a bit sooner than last year. The older cows are looking forward to their calving season and will be kept in to stop them getting too fat in readiness for the summer. We are pleased to announce that we have a couple of calves due at any moment and shortly after that a few times again and we should be ready for June when we start again and looking forward to the spring.

All welcome at the School Christmas Performance at the Village Hall on Friday 9th of December.

Open to the community at 1:30pm

News from the Parish Church (Dates for your Diary on page 4)

Charity Lunches

Charity lunches have become a popular monthly tradition in the village over many years and have raised thousands of pounds for various charities. For the past fifteen years these have been co-ordinated by Anne Jackson who feels it is time to hand over to someone else. We are all very grateful to Anne for her hard work in this time. Annette Gage has kindly taken on the task and can be contacted on 01823 490297. There is always space for another lunch and we would be pleased to consider events or causes to support. If you want to support one there is a lot of interest in this sort of event.

Church Room – Available for Hire!

This is a great little facility for parties for all ages, wedding receptions, meetings. The room is equipped with kitchen and bathroom facilities, free Wi-Fi, plenty of tables, chairs, crockery and cutlery and offers space to seat approximately 40 for a meal. For further details and availability please contact Joan Tipping on 01823 490301.

News from ‘The Willow Set’

Last year’s rising 5’s very happily settled into reception class at Stoke St Gregory school in September and are all content. This is wonderful to see and shows that the transition, the Willow Set and Stoke St Gregory school work so hard on together, is definitely working well. The new rising 5’s this year have equally settled in to the Willow Set and have been busy with lots of projects…going on a bear hunt, Halloween & bonfire night crafts, visiting Aura the tortoise and much more. The holiday club continues to thrive, during this half term we were fully booked on 3 days for our Christmas cake making and the other days were really busy with a variety of exciting activities for children aged between 2-14 years old. It’s fantastic to see them all interacting and playing together. Our ‘Sun up Sun down Club’ (SUSD) also continues to be booked up, on some days nearly at full capacity, proving that providing a good wrap around care package for busy and working parents is vital for our village. I’d like to thank all the staff at and the Willow Set for their continued hard work, especially this term - roll on another successful year. For enquiries please contact the Willow Set office on (01823)490311 or email:admin@willowsetpreschool.org.uk

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Winter Club Sessions continue to be held on Mondays at 9.30am till 10.30am Tuesdays at 2pm and Sundays at 2pm (or earlier if light dictates). Membership of the club for the winter only is available at half the normal rate.

Junior coaching on Sunday mornings will also continue during the winter. Please contact Charlie for further information on 07734182663.

Raffle at Stoke Stampede Sunday January 8th – The Tennis Club will again be running the raffle during this event, with profits going to the Playing Fields. Any offers of prizes will be gratefully received - please contact Kathy to arrange collection.

Frostbite Tournament – Sunday January 15th 2017 at 12 noon. This is a popular friendly event early in the New Year. Non-members are very welcome to come along and join in. For further information please contact Kathy Davidson on 490575. kathryn.davidson7@btinternet.com
Ann Finn is getting closer to getting a Speed Watch group off the ground in Meare Green. If anyone would like to join in, to help monitor speeds there or in other parts of the village, they would be welcome. The PC has also recently purchased a sign that says ‘Road to encourage speeding. If anyone on a 30mph-limited road would like to display one of these on their bin, they should contact Becky, the parish clerk. See details elsewhere in this newsletter for other suggestions. This volunteer scheme is to help people with transport problems.

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After many years of selfless service to the Hall David House will be stepping down from his role as booking secretary in the spring. While it is our intention to automate some of the role of booking secretary we remain to resolve how to handle manual bookings and security particularly the timely unlocking and locking of the hall. This role would probably suit someone who is around the village more regularly if this is something they would enjoy.

A recent article in a national newspaper described with the same amount to their Surviving Winter campaign. Find out more: http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter

**Village Hall - The Village Stores**

Did you know that every month a Village Calendar is published which shows all of the known events in the village for both the current month and the three following months? The purpose of this calendar is both to inform, but also to avoid overlapping events thereby maximizing the potential participation. If you would like a copy of the calendar please let me know via e-mail (grahamgleed@gmail.com)

**News from the Parish Church**

**(Dates for your Diary on page 4)**

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Annette Gage has kindly taken on the task and can be contacted on 01823 490297. There is always space for another lunch or for a charity you are involved with before but please let or a good cause you would like to support in this way then call Annette and she will explain how EASY it is to organise!

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WANTED – STOKE NEWS SPONSORS
Are you a local business? Would you like to sponsor a future edition of Stoke News and have your business featured? For further details, please get in touch with Becky Goodchild, The Parish Clerk, on 690235 or at sgsparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk

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Mese Church dates for your diary
Fri 16 Dec School end of term service - 9.15am
Sun 18 Dec Church Carol Service - 6.30pm (followed by mulled wine & mince pies)
Mon 19 Dec Carol service in Church - 6.30pm with a visit from Father Christmas and hot soup in the Church Room
Sat 24 Dec Crib Service - 3.30pm
Midnight Mass 11.30pm
Sun 25 Dec Christmas Day – Holy Communion - 08.30am
Tue 28 Feb Shrove Tuesday Supper & talk (subject and speaker to be announced)

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