

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

Stoke News

Winter 2016

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

This issue of Stoke News has been kindly sponsored by
St Giles Animal Centre.

Welcome to St Giles Animal Centre - in June 2010 the Linnell family purchased the kennels and cattery. Since then they have expanded the services now offering more than just animal boarding and rescue facilities.

The Centre now offers a fully functional veterinary clinic, doggie day care including collection and delivery service, pet crematorium, pet shop and dog grooming amenities. Although the business has expanded the centre still offers that personal touch, from a family that cares.

More about the Veterinary Clinic

We pride ourselves on listening to our clients and are continually investing in our practice to provide the highest standard of veterinary care and treatment, in an environment that is welcoming, supportive and compassionate. If you would like a price for any of our services please do not hesitate to ask.



RESCUE GROOMING
BOARDING DOGGIE DAY CARE
VETERINARY CLINIC INDIVIDUAL CREMATIONS

www.stgilesanimalcentre.co.uk
01823 490333
Vets 01823 490433
Wrantage, Taunton TA3 6DJ

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 ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk

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 from 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 an amazing £322.01 for Macmillan Cancer Care

Special thanks to Alan Baker, Ann Jackson, Pat Sollis, Betty and Dorothy, Phil Lawrence, Karen and Ian at the Village Shop.

Also to Morrison's, Bridgwater; Sainsbury's, Bridgwater; Ministry of Cake, Taunton; Maisey's Bakery, Othery

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 the need for a transport connection to Langport. As support for this connection 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 further 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.

Parish Council News: September–November 2016

For those in Curload, 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. It is hoped that this will be also be available in Stathe very soon, with Meare Green and Huntham 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 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 active, 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 real progress in time for next year's growing season.

The two **telephone boxes** in the village may shortly be removed by BT. The scouts are keen to take over the one by the Playing Field, and if anyone has any bright ideas for the one in Woodhill, they should refer to Graham Gleed. It is understood that if the village acquires them, they have to be used in place.

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 also bought a number of **wheelie bin stickers** 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 issue of a proposed volunteer drivers 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 the same amount to their Surviving Winter 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 many people may not be 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 later 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 national 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 pleasing to report that the 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 will to help or to offer a donation to the bursary please contact Mike Long (07917552118), Graham Gleed (07557654859) 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 on-line 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. Currently events planned include a cheese and wine tasting and quiz night.

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 most days, perhaps someone recently retired or with time available. Duties include taking bookings over the phone and by email, showing prospective hirers over the hall and its facilities, and sharing in the opening up and locking up duties. This does not need to be a role invested in a single person in fact several volunteers working to a mutually acceptable rota is in many ways a preferable solution. If you are willing to consider this, please contact, Graham Gleed, on 490407

Village Calendar

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 (grahiamgleed@gmail.com)

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute

This month we were pleased to hear that the number of WIs in Somerset had increased, reflecting a national growing trend. We also heard from members who enjoyed the Abba tribute evening as well as those inspired by speakers at a Speakers' Forum.

November's lively speaker, Rachel Hardy, enthused us all with "Pins, Needles and Sewing machines." A scandal-ridden history of the development of the sewing machine was followed by her own story as a needlewoman, illustrated by beautiful examples of her craft. In December we finish our year with a Christmas lunch at the local "Royal Oak."

January will bring us a guest speaker to tell us about Textiles and in February we have the return of Dr Karen Stead- Dexter. This time she will talk to us about using natural beauty products. 2017 promises to be lively with visits planned and even a Treasure Hunt scheduled.

All welcome at the

School Christmas Performance

at the Village Hall on Friday 9th of December.

Open to the community at 1:30pm

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 put their cosy calf jackets on ready for the colder nights and soon to be colder days and they are happy in their houses. And what can be said for Brexit...we will all have to wait and see. As with everyone, we have concerns as to the uncertainty, but are equally thinking that there may be opportunities too, so we will plan ahead for next year and see what 2017 brings.

Most people in our small community will know that

The Village Stores has been on the market for over two years. Unfortunately we have been unsuccessful in finding someone willing to take on the challenge and Karen and I have been forced, with great regret, to seriously consider the option of permanently closing the shop. We are very upset having to even consider, let alone undertake, this action. Stoke St Gregory has had a shop in this location for well over 100 years during which time it has been an indispensable feature of the community. However, times change and people's needs, lifestyles and expectations are different.

Many people are more mobile now and able to shop in the larger stores or have their goods delivered. As with thousands of village shops throughout the country, these trends lead to one consequence.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to reverse what we see as the likely outcome, please speak to us as soon as possible or visit our agent's website (address below). We currently have no timescale in place and we will remain open for the foreseeable future. Please support us - it is the community support which will make The Village Stores an attractive proposition to a prospective purchaser. Thank you and have a good Christmas and New Year. www.humberstones.co.uk/business-detail/3292

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 well 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 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 10am, Wednesdays at 2pm and Sundays at 2pm (or earlier as 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 07341826633.

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 raffle 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

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 they 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 if you've never been involved before but have a charity 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!

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 etc and offers space to seat approximately 40 for a meal. For further details and availability please contact Joan Tipping on 01823 490301.

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 3rd December 9am-12noon.

Drop-off also available in Curload 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 Christmassy 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
If you would like to help by marshalling this year's run please contact
Tom Duxbury at duxburytom@gmail.com or tel 690116

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 the Saturday at 2pm. So to put you in the mood for the festive season bring your friends and family along to North Curry Village Hall and enjoy music, laughter and a whole lot more.

Tickets are £8 adults and £5 for under 12s, available from Stoke St Gregory Village Stores or from Greg on 01458 251773.

Come and Boo and Hiss at the Nasties and Cheer the Good Guys.
Good Family Fun! See you there!

Parish 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	Carols in the Square - 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)

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 sing 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!

Saturday, December 31st at 9pm - New Year's Eve Disco Party - Free entry - Dance the night away and then join us for Auld Lang Syne in the Square at midnight.

Williams Hall Social Events Committee

Dates for next year's diary

Coming up in February a Cheese and Wine tasting evening.

Saturday 11th March Quiz night.
Saturday 22nd April St Georges Day Breakfast.

The Committee would like thank you all for your support this year and look forward to seeing you next year.

VILLAGE STORES CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES 2016/17

Saturday 24 December 2016	Christmas Eve 8.00am – Midday
Sunday 25 December 2016	Christmas Day CLOSED
Monday 26 December 2016	Boxing Day CLOSED
Tuesday 27 December 2016	CLOSED
Wednesday 28 December 2016	7.30am – 6.30pm
Thursday 29 December 2016	7.30am – 6.30pm
Friday 30 December 2016	7.30am – 6.00pm
Saturday 31 December 2016	New Year's Eve 8.00am – Midday
Sunday 1 January 2017	New Year's Day CLOSED
Monday 2 January 2017	CLOSED
Tuesday 3 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!