

All items for the  
Summer edition by  
Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017

# Stoke News

Spring 2017

Contact Jean House  
[jeanhouse@btconnect.com](mailto:jeanhouse@btconnect.com)  
For more news look at  
[www.stokestgregory.org](http://www.stokestgregory.org)

This issue of Stoke News has been kindly sponsored by

## STOKE ST GREGORY MEALS

Twice a week we deliver *homemade, freshly-cooked* two-course midday meals to homes in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry. Our customers range from those who are elderly and appreciate the support of a hot meal delivered by friendly local people, to those who have used the service whilst recovering after an operation. We are all volunteers and our cooks, who cook in their own kitchens, have food safety certificates. The meals cost £3.50 each

If we could be of help to you, a neighbour, friend or relative or if you're interested in having a chat about joining us as a volunteer cook or driver (you would only cook or drive once a month) please phone: Carole Joll 490077 or Vicki Fielding 490565 or Judy Blair 490222

### 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](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

### Poppy Appeal 2016

The house to house poppy collection and donations made during the Remembrance Service at St Gregory's Parish Church and from the school; the charity lunch; local pubs; the Village Stores; and the Parish Council, this year amounted to £2320.15. This is a very impressive sum which is even larger than the record amount raised in 2015. A very BIG thank you to everybody in Stoke St Gregory, Burrowbridge, and Lyng who contributed so generously to this most worthwhile cause. I would also like to thank the band of gallant volunteers who go out collecting in every corner of the parishes come rain or shine. Without them this terrific result would not have been possible. If anyone would like to join us next year please get in touch with me (491601).

Richard Dobson (Poppy Area Organiser)

## Parish Council Notes: Break-ins

There has been a spate of break-ins and petty thefts in the neighbourhood over recent weeks. Everyone is encouraged to lock up carefully, to keep a sharp eye out for unusual activity, and to report any suspicions to the police. In emergency dial 999, otherwise dial 101 to be put through to the PCSO on duty, or email [claire.escott@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:claire.escott@avonandsomerset.police.uk).

## Allotments

The lease agreement for the allotments has now been signed and permission has been granted to start work on the site. The initial activity will be to mark out the boundary of the site according to the plans agreed. All who are interested in participating should plan to attend a meeting on March 9th at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall, where next steps will be discussed and an agreed plan of action will be established.

## Stoke St Gregory Walking Group.



*It's time to polish your boots and get ready for the summer evening walks.*

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm outside the shop for a walk followed by a pub supper. Everyone is welcome. The first walk is on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

## New Pavilion

Planning permission for a new pavilion to replace the current 100+year old wooden building was granted over two years ago. With the need to start work before the permission lapses a project team has been formed to move this forward and to start the process of applying for grants. What the project team will be looking for are skills that are available in the village to assist with the work associated with the preparation and building of the new facility. If you feel you can contribute please contact any of the following individuals:

Mike Blair (490222), Tom Duxbury (690116), Paul Morse (698321) or Graham Gleed (490407)

**Stoke St Gregory Women's Table- tennis.** A regular group of women continues to meet to enjoy games of table-tennis most Wednesday mornings. The sessions begin at 10am, with a coffee break in the middle, and finish at 12 noon. The cost is usually £3, depending on numbers. This includes refreshments and the use of all equipment. We vary in ability, but we like to feel that we are all improving, however little, after playing for about two years now. We are, in fact, about to enlist the help of some more expert players who might come to teach us some of the finer points of the game. Why not join us one Wednesday, ladies? You would be made very welcome. Any queries: Phone Linda on (01823) 490412

## **Parish Council Notes** (Dec 16-Feb 17)

### **Broadband**

About 30 people came to a meeting at the Willows & Wetlands conference room on 9 January to discuss the wireless broadband network which is now active in the village. It is currently being extended from Curload to cover Stathe and Meare Green, with other areas to follow. The period for obtaining connection vouchers from Connecting Devon & Somerset is over, though any valid applications sent before the end of November should be honoured. If you do not have a voucher, you can still join the wireless network, but the installation cost will be about £150. The speeds immediately available are a minimum of 10mbps, but this should be rising as new capacity comes on stream. To learn more or apply, go to [www.ruralbroadbandsouthwest](http://www.ruralbroadbandsouthwest), or email [nick@curloadfarm.co.uk](mailto:nick@curloadfarm.co.uk).

### **Website**

The new village website is making good progress at last. Development has been taken over by Teapot Design in Hambridge, and we are nearly at the stage of transferring content. We now hope to have a streamlined version of the new site up and running by the end of March, at the same address as the existing site. We are extremely grateful to Tom Fyfe for his work over the last year, and for holding the fort with the current site while the rebuild takes place.

### **Village Shop**

A public meeting was held at the village hall on 23 January to assess support for schemes to save the village shop in the event that a buyer should not be found. An encouraging number of people attended and demonstrated the variety of ways in which the shop is essential to the community. The shop is currently profitable, and the potential for a sale remains, but it is reassuring to see the strength of feeling that could be drawn on if required. In the meantime I am sure that we would all like to thank Karen and Ian for the huge contribution which they have made to the village, and wish them luck in finding someone to follow them.

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## **Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute**

In January we heard about the damage from toxins added to beauty products from Dr Karen Stead-Dexter. She tried to guide us towards more natural, harmless products. There was certainly plenty of food for thought here, especially when we considered the safety of the environment.

Our February meeting brought us local woman Fran Tecks, who gave an instructive and inspirational talk about Reflexology and her voluntary work using it at St Margaret's Hospice. Fran is about to move from the village and she will be greatly missed. As well as her volunteering at St Margaret's, she has helped to run Stoke St Gregory Meals for many years. We wish her luck in her new ventures!

**Next meeting: Tuesday, 14th March at 7 pm. "WI Adventures" Veronica and Sheena.**

### **Housing**

In response to numerous comments about the shortage of small houses in the village, and concerns that if it is to thrive and maintain the full range of facilities currently available the village needs to cater for more young people and for those looking to downsize, the PC is looking into ways of encouraging a limited amount of new building.

### **Council merger**

Taunton Deane Borough Council is proposing a merger with West Somerset District Council, and is holding a consultation of residents and Parish Councils to inform the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who has the final say on this. On a majority vote, and with some reservations, the PC chose to support the merger. More information may be found at [www.yournewcouncil.org](http://www.yournewcouncil.org).

### **Dog bin**

A bin for dog bags is to be installed, at considerable cost, at the Dark Lane end of the Polkesfield footpath to help dog walkers dispose of mess safely, and to prevent the pollution of the bin near the bus stop. It would be much appreciated throughout the community if dog owners could ensure that they dispose of bags either at home or in one of the bins especially provided.

### **Footpaths**

Somerset County Council is operating an interactive website where walkers can directly report problems with blocked footpaths and broken stiles etc. If you would like to do this, go to [www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway) and click on Report an Issue on the Network

## **Annual Parish Meeting—come and see what a Chief Constable looks like!**

As well as the annual reports from the Parish Council and other village organisations, we always have an outside speaker at our annual parish meetings. This year, following a short correspondence on tractor driving, and having been recommended as an entertaining public speaker, Andy Marsh, the Chief Constable of Avon & Somerset Constabulary has agreed to come and talk to us. Keep the date: Tuesday 25 April at 7.30 in the village hall. Everyone welcome, wine and nibbles to follow.

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## **SOCIAL TABLE TENNIS**

Need some exercise? Need something to get you away from the TV these dark evenings? The table tennis group gets together on Wednesday evenings, from 7-9pm at the Village Hall. All standards welcome - we have players from teenage to 70+, from beginners to slightly more experienced. £2 per week for adults (£1 for youngsters), including refreshments and use of equipment. We're a sociable group, so why not give us a try - first week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

## Farming News –

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

Winter is a busy time in the withy year as it is harvesting time. Unlike other crops which are harvested in the summer or autumn willow is harvested when it is dormant in the winter. So far this year the harvesting is going well, the dry spell over Christmas and into January enabled us to get well ahead before the ground got too wet. The absence of floodwater means there have been no interruptions, as when the fields are under water everything grinds to a halt.

Once spring comes and the willow begins to burst into leaf the harvesting should be finished. Over the last 30 years or so the harvesting window has shrunk noticeably. The cold weather that triggers the leaves to fall and the beginning of harvesting time comes later and later and spring comes earlier and earlier.

The cattle have been housed over winter and as soon as the grass begins to grow they will be back out in the fields grazing. The day they get let out is a real highlight of the year as it marks the start of warmer weather. To watch the cattle run around, buck and kick with excitement and eventually get their heads down to eat the new grass is delightful and really lifts the spirits.

*Thank you to the Coate family for sharing their news with us – if there are any other farmers in the village who would like to contribute to the newsletter please contact the editor!*

### **A request from Caroline (Lollipop Lady)**

Please could dog owners pick up their dog poo, especially along the pavement between the Royal Oak and the school. In recent weeks there has been a problem with children walking to school and unfortunately picking up the mess on the soles of their shoes. This is then carried inside the school and, with the children sometimes sitting on the carpeted floor, there can be some unpleasant occurrences. Please remember to carry 'poo bags' with you, in order to clear up after your dog. Take it home or put it in an appropriate bin.

## **STONE DANCE PAMPER DAY**

On Mother's Day weekend, there will be a **Pamper Day**, run by Stone Dance, at North Curry Village hall on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March, from 10.30 -3.30.

There are lots of fabulous treatments: face, hands, massage, dance, yoga, mindfulness, a beautician, a Neal's Yard consultant, and even laughter yoga. Also including lunch and a goodie bag, all yours for £15.

What a great Treat for someone special and yourself!

**Stone Dance** is an over 50's Dance Group, for people from villages around the River Stone. We meet every Thursday in term time for a class from 10.30 -12.00 at North Curry Village Hall followed by coffee and a chat. Our teacher Sue Way is an experienced, fun and inspiring community dance tutor. She uses a wide variety of music and dance styles. Come for a free taster session, all welcome, no partner necessary.

Our partner organisation, Life Circles, takes music and dance workshops into residential homes around Somerset. We also go to Dance Performances around the South West, and run dance parties, any friends also welcome to both of these.

Pamper Day tickets at £15 available from Stoke Shop, North Curry PO, Joanne 491083, or Olivia 698283

## **North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners**

March 2<sup>nd</sup> "Japan – Cherry Blossom South to North" – David Burgess

April 6<sup>th</sup> "Besoms and Gypsy Flowers" - Carl Sadler

May 4<sup>th</sup> "Ferns and Shady Friends" – Andrew Tolman

Meetings are held in the **North Curry Playing Fields Pavilion 7.45 for 8.00pm**. Only £10 annually to join our friendly group and guests always welcome! Don't forget our **Plant Sale and Afternoon Tea** at the Pavilion on **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May at 2.00-4.00 pm**

## **WILLIAMS HALL SOCIAL EVENTS.**

How many of us realise just how different the fermented juice from the same grape variety can taste!

On Friday 10 February, nearly 50 people came to the Williams Hall to taste wines from around the world. The Manager of Majestic Wine in Taunton brought 4 different white wines to taste as well as 4 reds. All the white was produced from Chardonnay grapes whilst all the reds came from Cabernet Sauvignon. The whole point of the tasting was to demonstrate that it is the skill of the winemaker, influenced by the climate in which the vineyard is set as well as the altitude and soil in which it is grown that makes the difference.

A small sample of each wine was tasted in turn whilst our expert explained its detail. Biscuits and nibbles of cheese were on hand to refresh people between wines. Our thanks to Ian and Karen in the Village Stores for supplying the cheeses (if you have not tried the Wookey Hole cheddar yet, it is wonderful!)

As you would expect, there were as many different views over the wines as there were people in the Hall, but all came away knowing a little more about the production and the enjoyment of wine; some knowing what they will buy when next in Taunton as well as knowing what does not suit their taste.

The next event in the Williams Hall will be a **Quiz on Saturday 11 March from 7.30pm**. We had a "full house" last year and expect the same again, so do make up your team of a maximum of 6 people and get your tickets (£5.00 per head) from the Village Stores now.

Check out more events in the village Stores, on the website [www.stokestgregory.org](http://www.stokestgregory.org) and at [www.facebook.com/StokeStGregory](https://www.facebook.com/StokeStGregory)

# NOTICEBOARD

Events for June, July and August by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May

## Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

### Annual Open Day: Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> 2-4pm

This is an opportunity for anyone, adult or junior, beginners or experienced, to come along to the courts to:

- Find out more about the Club & plans for the year ahead, including coaching
- Play some tennis
- Join or Renew Membership for 2017/18
- Enjoy some light refreshments

Annual subscriptions have been kept the same for the next year:

Family membership: £55, Single: £40, Junior: £20

*If 8<sup>th</sup> is very wet, Open Day will be held on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>*

**Coaching** Junior coaching is ongoing on Sunday mornings, in 4 age-group sessions. Adult beginner coaching, team practice sessions & cardio tennis are all planned for this summer.

Contact Charlie 07341 825533 for further information

[charlieleetennis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:charlieleetennis@hotmail.co.uk)

**Public bookings:** The tennis courts can still be booked via the Village Stores (during shop hours), if you prefer to "Pay & Play".

For more information, contact Kathy 490575

[kathryn.davidson7@btinternet.com](mailto:kathryn.davidson7@btinternet.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Stokestgregorytennis>

**ST GREGORY PLAYERS AGM. Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March.**  
**Village Hall Meeting Room. 8pm. All Welcome.**

## *Too much stuff? Like a bargain?*

Either way, load up your car and come to Transition Athelney's

## **Car Boot Give and Take**

**at North Curry Pavilion car park  
on Sunday 2 April at 9 am.**

The idea is to make sure the stuff we have gets used.

**Just turn up, open your boot, have a peek in everyone else's and take what you fancy. It's all free, including tea, coffee and cake (small cash donations welcome).**

**Call Mike on 07768 704466 for more information.**

## **WILLIAMS HALL EVENTS**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March - QUIZ NIGHT**  
**7pm for 7.30pm**

Teams of 6 or join a group on the night Bar and Raffle  
Tickets £5 per person (including light supper) from The Village Stores or phone Louise on 07761238933

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**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April – EASTER CRAFTS FOR THE KIDS**  
**Coffee and cake for the young at heart**

10am to 12 noon £2 per Child

Children must be accompanied by an adult

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**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April - ST GEORGES BREAKFAST**  
**9am to 11am Adults £6 Children over 12 £4**

**\*\*\*CHILDREN UNDER 12(accompanied by adults) EAT FREE\*\*\***

Come eat, socialise and let us cook your breakfast for you

\*\*\* This is a new idea so if you have never been before then we look forward to seeing you\*\*\*

**Stoke St Gregory  
Playing Field AGM**  
**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March**  
**7.30pm in the  
Church Rooms.**

**Mothers weekend Pamper Day,** organised by Tone Dance. Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup> at North Curry Village Hall. 10.30-3.30. Lots of fab treatments, beautician, Neal's Yard consultant, massage, dance, yoga, etc. Lunch and goody bag included. Tickets £15.00 from Stoke Shop, North Curry PO. Joanne (491083) or Olivia (698283)

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**  
**7.30PM VILLAGE HALL**

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT PARISH CHURCH:**

28 Feb - Shrove Tuesday Supper in Church Room. 7 for 7.30. Speaker: Julian Comrie. "Travels with a Camera" £10. Supper.

3 March - Womens' World Day of Prayer - Joint Service in Parish Church at 7.30. Refreshments to follow.

26 March Mothering Sunday. `1100 Holy Communion. Posies will be distributed. All very welcome.

6/7 May - Open Gardens by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Charles Sundquist. Plant Sales and Teas.

13 May - Coffee and Plant Sales at the Church Room.

21 May - Rogation Sunday. 4pm. Service followed by tea at Walkers Farm. (Kind permission of Mr and Mrs W. Tilley.

Midsummer Concert in Parish Church - date to be confirmed.

16 September - Village Fun Day