

All items for the
Winter edition by
Friday 24th November
2017

Stoke News

Autumn 2017

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

West Country Firewood

are pleased to sponsor the Autumn edition of the Stoke News. We process and supply seasoned hardwood and softwood for wood burners, stoves, open fires and more recently fire pits and pizza ovens too.

We cut our logs to a standard 25cm / 10", which suits most Customers; we also cut some logs to 20cm/ 8" for smaller wood burners and 37.5cm / 15" for larger fireplaces. Our logs are all seasoned/dried naturally and tested to ensure a low moisture content. Our timber is sourced locally from FSC certified woodland, which is responsibly managed.

Logs are supplied and delivered throughout the year in various quantities to suit customer's needs. We also offer a stacking service for an additional charge for those times when you may need or simply want the job doing for you.

We now stock Log stores, smokeless fuel, house coal, kindling, natural firelighters and hardwood chopping blocks.

We aim to provide a quality product, with a high standard of service at a reasonable price to all our customers, due to this we are pleased that the majority of our business is repeat custom and recommendations.

Our **special offer** for September Stoke News readers is:

One cubic metre of hardwood logs.

10kg bag of coal

One pack of kindling

One pack of natural firelighters for £99.

Please call Keith or Alison for more information or to place an order on

01823 490351 or 0796 9620 297

or email wcfirewood@aol.com

Lots of additional information can also be found on our website
www.westcountryfirewood.co.uk

STOKE ST GREGORY BRIDGE CLUB

The Bridge Club will be starting our weekly sessions again, after our summer break, on Wednesday 13th September in the meeting room of the Williams Hall, 6.45-9.15p.m. The charge is £3.00 per session attended which includes tea/coffee and biscuits in the mid-evening break.

There will be a warm welcome for anyone who has ever played Bridge at whatever level.

Stoke St Gregory Women's Table Tennis

This year again, we have continued through the summer months. However, we invited the evening table tennis club to join us until the autumn, as they were having a break. We meet at 10am on Wednesday mornings at the village hall. Cost is £3 including refreshments and equipment. All welcome. Just turn up.

Williams Hall Events I expect that many of you were as disappointed as we were in being forced to cancel the last three social events planned for the Williams Hall. I am sure you appreciate that the hall is now well established and able to generate its own income, therefore we have changed from having fund raising activities to entertainments that enable and encourage village 'get togethers'. However, such events need to at least break even. The last three events were cancelled due to insufficient ticket sales; catering and bar stock have to be ordered in advance and regrettably, we cannot plough ahead assuming that there will be lots of last minute ticket sales only to find that we have totally underestimated demand or have a significant loss on our hands. So my plea to you is that you come and support the Hall events but ensure that you buy your tickets at least a week in advance. A. Elfick (S.Events).

Barbara & Bill

Two very special people who..... from the moment they arrived at the Baptist Church, generated new energy into our community. During their time in Stoke, they've transformed the Church into a modern, flexible space. Given us TwiGs, SUPA Club, Cafe Church, Messy Church, Beavers, Cubs, trips to Iona and Lee Abbey. Barbara has been an asset as Chairman of the School Governors caring passionately about the education of our children. Bill has been a Parish Councillor, entertained us in pantos etc, helped with the village fete and participated in the Stoke Stampede.

Through it all they've demonstrated total commitment, offering first class ministry, support, wisdom, humour, love, encouragement and hugs. Always up for a new challenge and a slice of cake!

As a community we thank them for their contribution and wish them well in the next chapter of their lives at Lee Abbey. They will be hugely missed.

Luncheon Club

At Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church every other Wednesday 12 midday - 2.00pm. We provide a home cooked, two course meal with tea at a very reasonable cost.

Older people living on their own are especially welcome and we can provide transport for those in need.

If you would like to join us, or know anyone who you think might appreciate a good meal and some company, please contact Liz Hembrow 490828 or Alison White 490380.

Parish Council News (June - August 17)

The visit from the Chief Constable to the April Annual Parish Meeting seems to have provided the fillip needed to get our **Speed Watch** programme off the ground. The core group has now been trained and equipped, and is only waiting for the approval of sites. Among other things, this should help in gathering more information about tractor movements and speeds. If you would be interested in having your corner of the village watched, please contact Ann Finn.

A fresh look at **Neighbourhood Watch** also grew out of the APM. It appears that this is organised differently from how I had supposed: there is not a single village scheme but several local schemes, each with its own co-ordinator and members (from 6 to 24). When there is crime in an area, the Police inform the co-ordinator by text or email, and the warning should be propagated immediately to the other members. The schemes are live, but they may appear dormant because there is fortunately so little to report. There is more information about Neighbourhood Watch on the website (under Services/Police), including how to join or form new schemes.

On the subject of the **website**, this is now fully operational but still filling up with new content. Graham Gleed has a separate item in this edition encouraging everyone to keep the News and Events pages up to date.

The **wireless broadband** network continues to expand, and the deadline for redeeming CDS vouchers has been extended to the end of September, which will be of help to those with vouchers who still have not joined the Rural Broadband Southwest network, or any other alternative to slow copper.

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute.

Members have recently enjoyed an interesting talk about the history of Somerset's coastline, with its smuggling and sea based industries. It meant a welcome return for us of Emma Duke. We also enjoyed our August coffee morning, held at Dare's Farmhouse, with an indoor version of our fun treasure hunt, due to wet conditions.

Our September meeting is on "Edible Crystallised Flowers" with Jill Fade on Tuesday, 12th September at 7pm. Then we have "Sweet Making" with Sarah-Jane Track on Tuesday, 10th October at 7pm. The November meeting talk on the 14th has the title "Moonlighting" with Michael Brown, again at 7pm. Who knows what to expect from Stoke WI? All are welcome at our meetings. Why not join us?

Parish Council News (Jun- Aug 17 Continued)

We have accepted an offer by **NHS Health Checks** to come to the village hall on Tuesday 17 October to conduct free health checks for anyone aged between 40 and 74. More details of this will be posted on the website. We would encourage anyone within the age range to take advantage of this. It will probably be advisable to book. There will be more information provided on the website, or at the shop. (Please see also the separate item in this edition about first aid classes.)

The Parish Clock, in anticipation of the silence of the Westminster clock (with which in fact it shares a design of escapement) has been going through a bad patch, for which I apologise. Although it was recently serviced, it was not noticed that the cable holding the weight for the striking autowinder had frayed badly, and was snagging in the weight shaft. When this came to be replaced, it was further discovered that the cable had tangled with an autowinder gear, and damaged a couple of teeth. The relevant autowinder (one of three) has now been in the workshop of Cumbria Clocks for some weeks, but I hope that it will soon be replaced so that the clock can resume striking.

In the 1960's, the Ministry of Transport required county highways departments to remove old **cast iron signposts** and replace them with standardised direction boards. Somerset was one of three authorities that declined to comply with this directive, which is why we still have so many beautiful old fingerposts in the county. Until recently, these were regularly maintained by SCC Highways, but budget cuts have obliged them to cease, so that the responsibility for the survival of the posts has now devolved onto parish councils. We have four fingerposts in the village, and we are intending to restore all four over the coming year. Three of them have broken arms. The Meare Green/Huntham one survives, but the other two (to Bridgwater/Athelney at Lane End and to Stoke St Gregory at Churley) were replaced many years ago with inferior versions made partly of plastic. We would be grateful if anyone could find any reference to how these arms might have looked originally, perhaps in the background of an old photo.

Before the July meeting, a member of the public complained about the **noxious smell of slurry** being spread on fields. We had a brief discussion about whether advice to mitigate this was being followed, and the subject was further discussed at the August meeting. The issue is a complex one, and ties into wider considerations of intensive farming and excessive traffic movements. We felt that it could be helpful to publish an extended account of the issues involved for the mutual enlightenment of farmers and others. Something should be appearing on the website soon.

Finally, we are sorry to be saying goodbye to **Bill Carpenter** as he and Barbara set off to a new life at the community of Lee Abbey in Devon. Bill has been a valuable member of the PC, whose particular approach, accountancy skills and inspired contributions on all matters will be much missed. Thank you Bill, and all the best to both of you for the future. We will be looking for a replacement councillor in due course. Notices will be posted and details will appear on the website.

Tesco Selects The Allotments.

Notification has been received that the Tesco charity, 'Bags of Help' have selected Stoke St Gregory Allotments for a potential grant award. The allotments have been nominated along with other local projects and shoppers are invited to vote for the most worthy. It is not yet known in which Tesco stores the project will be displayed but if you are shopping in Tesco look out for the notice and cast your vote on behalf of the village during the months of September and October. When the stores that will display the project are known the news will be posted on the Village web site. At the allotments we now have full occupancy of the site and a short waiting list. Produce is being harvested every day. We are now turning our attention to the autumn planting of the communal orchard and the transition zone backing on Church Close.

First Aid Classes

In response to a recent emergency, the PC has agreed to organise first aid classes in the village. The aim is that at least one person in every village organisation should be familiar with basic first aid, and as many individuals as feel it would be valuable for them and for those around them.

No date has yet been set. We are first inviting expressions of interest before booking either the Red Cross or St John Ambulance to hold a two to three hour session in the Williams Hall, probably early next year. Places will be limited, though if there is enough demand, we would organise further classes.

Attendance would be free for individuals, but we would be inviting contributions from organisations. If you would be interested, please contact any parish councillor, or send an email to ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk. More information on the website.

SOCIAL TABLE TENNIS - GET ACTIVE AND MEET FRIENDLY

NEW PEOPLE Nights drawing in! You know you should get away from the TV. 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. Pay as you play, £3 per evening 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.

Village Web Site The new Village Web site has now been on line for several months. Nearly all who have visited the site are complementary about the site layout and ease of navigation however there is considerable scope to add more content. Thanks to the configuration of the site, the addition of new content is extremely straightforward. So if you represent a club or society or there are specific areas of content to which you would like to contribute - Please contact Nick Sloan (nick@curloadfarm.co.uk) or Graham Gleed (grahamgleed@gmail.com). This is your website representing your village so please do not hesitate to suggest content.

Help Needed for Scouts

Stoke St Gregory Scouts continue to enjoy great success with participation from the young people of the village at or near record levels. While the rewarding work is organising activities for beavers, cubs and scouts, there is a considerable administrative burden which needs to be managed. We are in need of a treasurer and a secretary for the start of the new school year. Failure to fill these roles will put the group at risk, as despite the success we will not be able to fulfil our statutory obligations. If there is anyone who would be willing to take on either of these roles - Please contact either Graham Gleed (grahamgleed@gmail.com) or Mike Long (mikekathlong@yahoo.co.uk)

Farming News –

A seasonal look at what has been happening on farms in Stoke St Gregory
Over the past month the weather has been challenging for local farmers. With the hot sunny spells in June and early July giving a great opportunity for to make silage and hay, the past month has been much more difficult. With combines wanting to be tackling the good Wheat and Barley crops, the weather is proving problematic for them also.

For the arable farmers August is a busy time of the year trying to get the crops off the field and in the barn, muck on the land, before cultivating it ready for next year's crops.

The local livestock farmers are trying to finish making their winter forage reserves to feed the cattle and sheep from when they come into the sheds until next year. The timeliness of these operations are really important to making good quality nutritious over winter food to keep the stock thriving. Some of you will have heard of Tuberculosis. A disease that is carried by cattle as well as some wildlife species. Because of the risks to humans, cattle need to be tested every year for the disease which is a stressful time for both cattle and farmer. Each individual animal needs to be handled so that the vet can give the animal 2 injections, the animal then needs to be handled again 3 days later to see how it responded to the injections by measuring the skin thickness to determine if the animal has TB or not. This month has seen some farmers in the parish come through the test with no problems which is great for the cattle and the farmer.

If there are any other farmers in the village who would like to contribute to the newsletter please contact Jean House on the email address on page 1.

From The Village Stores....

Following on from our request in the last newsletter, we would like to remind customers, visitors and school Mums and Dads to turn off vehicle engines when they park outside the shop. Please think of the environment, the waste and the noise – the latter being particularly annoying to people who live here. Furthermore, it is an offence to leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily whether the vehicle is occupied or not. Your consideration is much appreciated.

We would also like to remind customers that we do not routinely provide plastic shopping bags. The ones we do have on occasions are donated – for which we are grateful (clean and dry please!). We do have boxes for your groceries but we suggest you arm yourself with a re-useable bag when visiting the shop. Thanks.

Starting on 2 October 2017 we will be changing our opening hours. We have not revised our hours in the past five years but it is necessary to do so now. We will have flyers in the shop with the new hours and will display the new times on the door and in advertisements. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you but hope that we can rely on your continued support, nonetheless. The new opening times are as follows: >>>>>

Wanted – Stoke News Sponsors If you would like your business featured in the next edition, please get in touch with Jean House; or Becky Goodchild, The Parish Clerk. on 690235 or at ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk

Stoke Walking Group

Despite threatening rain we set out for our August walk from Langport car park and were led to Drayton at a brisk pace and back along the Parrett in time for supper at the Langport Arms. We have been happy to welcome new walkers this year and are always pleased to have more people join us. All are welcome, no need to book, just turn up. For the last two walks of summer meet outside the shop:

Tuesday 5th September 6.00pm

Tuesday 3rd October 5.00pm



Please note the earlier start time for the October walk of 5pm

Transition Athelney -Apple juicing

This year we are **NOT** pressing apples in the Williams Hall, Stoke St Gregory; this is a decision which we have somewhat reluctantly made as we have always greatly appreciated the welcome we've received there over the years. Instead we will be doing it from time to time at Knappwoods Farm, North Curry according to demand; in other words as the crops ripen and people need the service. Please make contact as soon as possible if you think you're likely to want to take part so that we have an idea of demand and so do our best to accommodate everyone's needs. The kit can also be hired for a modest fee for people who wish to do it themselves, either individually or in small groups.

Contact: Brian on 490623 or email ta@bkjeanes.co.uk

VILLAGE SHOP OPENING TIMES (FROM 02/10/17)

Sunday & BH	0900 – 1200 (no change)
Monday	0730 – 1730
Tuesday	0730 – 1730
Wednesday	0730 – 1300 (half-day closing)
Thursday	0730 – 1730
Friday	0730 – 1730
Saturday	0900 – 1430

What Future for Stoke St Gregory?

Your Parish Council is elected to serve the best interests of the village, and while many are content to leave the course of village business to manage itself, it is also the responsibility of the Parish Council to engage the whole community in matters of importance. While there is no single issue which warrants a public forum, there are many lesser issues which taken together suggest a significant challenge that the village needs to address. This is outlined below.

- ▶ Stoke St Gregory is a village with a stable population of just less than 1000, in around 330 households. However the average age of the population is increasing and the number of children in the school and Willowset have declined this year.
- ▶ The school is also vulnerable not only from an absolute decline in numbers but also being well below the critical mass suggested for effective resource allocation.
- ▶ Other than agricultural buildings virtually all planning applications during the past five years have been for house extensions and barn conversions with the resulting trend in 'gentrification'.
- ▶ The village envelope (land where development is permitted) is almost entirely occupied save for a small parcel below Willow Mead.
- ▶ A recent housing needs survey failed to identify a strong need for affordable housing, somewhat to the surprise of all involved. However there was no estimate of needs external to the village.
- ▶ The capacity of current services is questionable and possibly requires upgrading.
- ▶ Both public houses and the village shop are currently on the market and must be considered vulnerable.
- ▶ While the village has a recreational space, there is no football team and the cricket team struggles for numbers. While there has been success in fund raising for new play equipment, satisfying the overwhelming need for a new pavilion is a distant objective.
- ▶ At every TDBC cost review the viability of the bus route (No. 51) is challenged. It has been maintained only through successful lobbying on the village's behalf.
- ▶ The Village Hall is a much admired asset which is used widely by local groups however several recent social events have been cancelled due to lack of support.

If you have a view on any of the points made the Parish Council would like to hear from you. You can do this either by writing to or talking to a member of the Parish Council or joining the open session at the start of the next PC meeting on Sept 11th, in the Village Hall.

Check out more events in the village Stores, on the website www.stokestgregory.org and at www.facebook.com/StokeStGregory

NOTICEBOARD

Events for December 2017, Jan and Feb 2018 by Friday 24th November

Stoke St Gregory Village Fete and Fun Day Saturday 16th September

Starting at 12 noon on the Playing Field



BBQ
Beer Tent
Coffee, Teas, soft drinks
Races for all comers
Live Music from local bands
Bouncy Castle Tug of War
Paint a Plant Pot Competition
Scarecrow Competition



And all the usual sorts of stalls for games and sales of goods
Come early and enjoy some lunch before the action starts!
for information and to make donations
to the following please contact Jane White 490509
bottle stall, bric-a-brac, preserves and plants, cakes

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

Leaving gift for Barbara & Bill

If you would like to contribute please leave donations at the Village Shop

Saturday 2nd September - 2pm *Don't miss....*

Barbara & Bill's **Downsizing Sale**
Baptist Church Grounds

Your chance to bag a memento of these guys!

Friday 8th September - 3:30pm Barbara's Last Messy Church
Crafts, stories, fun, singing, worship and we cook your tea!

Sunday 10th September 10:30 am Join us for Barbara's last service
Everyone is invited to a Bring & Share lunch after this service

Sunday 24th September 10:30 am Celebrate the Harvest
John Courtie will lead our worship Bring & Share lunch afterwards

Sunday 12th November 10:50 am We are honoured to host this year's Parish
Remembrance Service Details will follow

Friday 29th September from 6:30 pm

Your opportunity to thank Barbara & Bill for 8+ years of first class
ministry friendship and love

**EVERYONE and that means EVERYONE 0 - 100 IS INVITED to a
FAMILY BARN DANCE in the village hall**

Bring and Share Supper - Cash Bar.

Wear something pink if you can. Fairy wings encouraged.

Williams Hall Social Events - Future Plans

Bingo – The hoped for date in September cannot be met but we are looking
at the possibility of a date in the coming months

Pudding Evening – Friday 6th October. 7pm for 7.30pm

Come along and taste a variety of homemade puddings. Bar and raffle

Bonfire Breakfast – Saturday 4th November. 9am – 11am.

£6 for adults, £4 for Children over 12 and FREE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12

ST GREGORY PLAYERS PRESENTS THE FLINT STREET NATIVITY

A comedy by Tim Firth
**THURS 30TH NOVEMBER –
SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER
7.30pm
Williams Hall**

**THE PARISH CHURCH of ST. GREGORY
RECITAL:** A most enjoyable and well-
attended recital took place in the Church
on 14 July. Refreshments were served in
the Churchyard on a warm, sunny evening.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VILLAGE FETE: This will be held on
September 16th. Church stalls will include
Cakes; Produce and Plants; Bric a Brac;
Bottle Stall.

HARVEST FESTIVAL: The Harvest
Festival service in Church will take place
on October 1st. The Harvest Supper will
be held in the Church Room on October
2nd followed by the Auction of Produce.
Further details will be in September's
Church Magazine.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES: Details of our
traditional Christmas Services will be in
the November Magazine.

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Junior Coaching

We are very sad that Charlie has had to give up
coaching the juniors on Sunday mornings. We're
extremely grateful to him for the 5 years of
coaching he has provided – he will be missed!
We are looking for a replacement coach, so
please bear with us.

For any juniors (& their families) who wish to
keep playing on a regular basis, but are not yet
members of the Club, the winter subscription
rates (half price) will apply from the beginning of
September.

Keep playing tennis!

The opportunities to do so don't end with the
departure of summer.

Club sessions continue all year & non-club
members may hire the courts via the Village
Stores.

Club sessions - Visitors welcome.

Monday mornings from 10am

Wednesdays from 5.30pm, while the light still
allows, 2pm thereafter

Sundays from 2pm

For more information, contact Kathy 490575 or
kathryn.davidson7@btinternet.com