

All items for the
Spring edition by
Friday 22nd February
2019

Stoke News

Winter 2018

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

Stoke Stampede

The Stampede is fast approaching on the 6th January 2019. We already have a full entry of 450 runners. With this in mind we do need the support and help from you to make this a wonderful village event. If you can help with marshalling please contact Tom Duxbury on 07714 696707 and let him know where you can help.

Looking forward to seeing you all in January.
Paul Morse (Race director)

Spread some warmth this winter by donating your Winter Fuel Payment

Somerset Community Foundation has launched this year's Surviving Winter campaign, which encourages people to join the growing number of contributors who donate some or all of their Winter Fuel Payment to help local people living in fuel poverty. This year, any online donations to the campaign made during the week-long Big Give Christmas Challenge - midday Tuesday 27 November to midday Tuesday 4 December - will be doubled!

Last year, over 500 older people living in fuel poverty in Somerset were helped to keep warm and better connected through the winter months, thanks to pensioners and other local donors who gave to Surviving Winter.

Help Somerset Community Foundation to help more isolated and vulnerable older people this year.

To donate to Surviving Winter, visit www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter or call 01749 344949.

North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners

Meetings held 1st Thursday of the month in Greenway Playing Field Pavilion, North Curry, new members and guests always welcome!

Dec 6th "Going wild in the garden" with mince pies and mulled wine at 7.30 before the talk at 8.00pm

No Meeting in January

Feb 7th "On top and almost in control" with Tim Walker as speaker 7.45 for 8.00pm

SOCIAL TABLE TENNIS FOR FUN & FITNESS

The table tennis group gets together on Wednesday evenings, from 7-9pm at the Village Hall for a couple of hours of sociable exercise. All standards welcome. All equipment provided. £3 per evening, or £1 for youngsters 12yrs+, including refreshments. Why not give us a try? After a few sessions you'll feel like you've always been one of the group. And if you are really keen you could play in our new match team, in the Bridgwater & District League. First week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

Parish Council News

[September, October, November]

As was reported in the last edition, the PC now publishes monthly reports on the village website (as well as the parish mag), so this report in **Stoke News** is an attempt to show the **broader picture and update** some of the stories that have moved on, while trying to avoid too much redundancy.

The big issues at this point remain pretty much the same as they were in August, but whereas we then thought the Rose & Crown was going to be sold as a pub, we now know that the sale has fallen through and permission has been granted for a change of use to a dwelling. Sales as a pub is still possible, but with the shop and Oak still unsold, the option of a community shop and/or pub is looking increasingly likely, and the **Heart of the Village group** has continued to meet to gather information and make the decisions necessary to get this under way. (Updates will occur from time to time on their page on the website.)

The other major issue is the **proposal for a housing development** on the allotments field. A public presentation about this was put on by the developers at the village hall on 4 September. This was well attended, with attendees being invited to provide feedback. Apparently 50 people (45 households) expressed support and 33 (15 households) were against. A lot of suggestions were made by both camps, and some of these have been incorporated into updated plans that can be seen on the village website (News: Housing Consultation Update).

These two issues are not unrelated, since many people believe that a moderate increase in housing (especially smaller and affordable housing), would be a shot in the arm for the village as a whole, and would provide more support for shop and pubs in particular. A majority of the PC takes this view in principle, but it is important to make the point that the development is a private one, not directly sponsored by the PC. As soon as the application goes live (which as of this writing it has not) the Planning Department will ask for the PC's comments and it will appear on the agenda of the following meeting. At that point all members of the public are free to come and offer their views before we present a collective response.

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

Parish Council News [continued]

The Police have recently adopted a new policy of sending officers out to do admin work on laptops in village halls around the county. This serves the twin purposes of saving on office space and increasing the visibility of **Police within the community**. They would like it to be known that whenever there is a Police car parked in the Village Hall car park, they are available to the public for drop-in meetings. Everyone is encouraged to use this access to report problems or consult on any issues they may be experiencing.

It should also be more widely understood that any non-emergency issues can always be reported by ringing 101. Calls to 101 are logged and treated seriously. The Police and other agencies often find themselves in a difficult position where they are aware of ongoing problems in the community, but cannot act because the incidents have not been officially reported. If something happens to you that you feel the Police should know about, the only way that they can record and/or react is via a direct report from the "victim". This need be no more than a simple phone call to 101.

A recent incident in the village highlights the need to keep potentially dangerous **dogs under control** on the road and in public areas. All dog owners should be aware that it is their responsibility to control their dogs, and in particular that it is an offence to have any dog off the lead on a public road. More information (including penalties) is available from www.gov.uk/control-dog-public.

Broadband is another issue that is highly significant for some in the village. The relevant page on the website will be updated soon with the latest information, but the main point is that the high speed full fibre network offered by Gigaclear has been delayed by up to two years. It is still the plan to bring it here, but there is no clear schedule. In the meantime Rural Broadband Southwest continues to provide a practical alternative to very slow copper connections for all but a very few pockets where wireless access is difficult.

Finally, a brief explanation of **PC finances**: It is probably not generally understood why the Parish Council needs money and what it is spent on. Our finances are very small beer compared to other branches of local government, but in these times of slashed budgets and reduced services, more and more things which were formerly the responsibility of the District and County Councils are being passed on to us. So as well as keeping the footpaths clear, looking after the burial ground, paying our clerk's salary (all other members of the Council are unpaid), maintaining the clock, paying annual insurance and a host of other outgoings which we have always had, we are now for instance having to maintain the signposts and think about the gritting of icy roads.

This trend is likely to continue, added to which we may well find ourselves with some major expenditure in the near future if we want to support a community shop. Just as the PC helped the new village hall in the early days, and more recently the allotments, any community enterprise would require considerable help before it was able to become self-sufficient. For all these reasons it is important that we try to keep in credit before we too have our wings clipped and are forced to limit what we can do.

The money for the PC "precept" is paid for by parishioners, but considering that it accounts for less than 2.5% of Council Tax, and currently amounts to between £27 annually per household for the lowest band and £82 for the highest, we do not consider it bad value.

Village Fete 2019

I realise that this hints at forward planning, but the date of next year's Village Fete and Fun Day will be on Saturday July 13th. Please put this date in your agenda. This year, in addition to all of the usual attractions it is hoped to encourage more demonstrations (karate, dance gym), and to put particular emphasis on fruit, flowers and vegetables. We will also look to extend the display of vintage vehicles and machinery. Graham Glead.

"He Feeds his Geese at Sedgemoor"

This local 18thC saying refers to anyone who made their money at the expense of others. In particular, the people of Stoke made considerable amounts from grazing their flocks of geese for nothing on West Sedgemoor. It was common land, and was yet to be enclosed and drained. The mass produced metal pen nib had yet to be invented, so goose feathers were in great demand. The flocks on West Sedgemoor were counted in thousands. One Victorian traveller thought he was looking down on an area covered in snow.

A Mr Marshall travelled through the area in 1794 and wrote: *'The myriads of Geese are incalculable. The whole are subjected to the operation of "pulling." They are now (13 September) covered with down only. The operation, I was informed, is repeated several times in the course of the summer; and found very profitable. They are kept on the "Moor" all winter. In long-continued frost and snow, they are fed with Beans.'*

Remembrance 2018

Sue Hembrow writes...

Thank you to everyone who got stuck in and made this year's event such an outstanding success and a truly community event.

As a parish we bravely changed things this year. Many people have commented on the changes. I'd like to know your feelings as to how we should mark this special date in the future.

suehembrow@hotmail.co.uk

For the attention of all parents/carers with a child due to start school in September 2019.

If your child is due to start school for the first time (will be age 4 before 1st September 2019) then it is very important you make an on time school place application.

Deadline for primary admissions 15th January 2019
To download the primary booklet for parents, to make an on-line application and for further information please visit our website www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions. Please phone 0300 123 2224 if you require a paper application form or further advice.

View from The Stores... and all of a sudden we are counting down the days until Christmas! Where did those balmy evenings, the barbecues and drinks in the pub garden go? But there is no denying that we are rolling inescapably towards the log fires, Christmas decorations, mince pies and turkey dinners.

The winter seems to be long in coming after a great summer but undoubtedly the temperatures will drop and the frosts will be a regular experience. Remembrance Sunday is always an important date in my calendar marking the start of the winter and this year it was extra special. I think the format this year, gathering outside in the November sunshine to remember the men and women from our community, was a fitting tribute. I felt it hit the right tone and was inclusive and dignified. I was particularly struck by the contribution made by our young people. And, of course, Gareth's exhibition was first-class.

As we think about Christmas once again, you can be sure that we will do our best to provide you with great foods and gifts. We will be taking orders as usual and the forms will be available from the shop.

Karen and I would like to thank all our customers from near and far for their support of this village shop which has been trading continuously since the early 1900s. Please continue to support us in order that The Village Stores can continue to trade for another 100 years. Its future is in your hands.

Happy Christmas and a fantastic New Year!

1st STROKE ST GREGORY SCOUTS - CHRISTMAS BURSARY APPEAL

Many will be aware of the thriving 1st St Gregory Scout Group. At present this involves over 60 youngsters from the village and surrounding areas. You can see something of their activities on our Facebook page. The monthly subscription is £11 per child - not a lot of money for the value provided, but some families cannot easily find the money, especially if there are multiple youngsters from the same family. To help overcome this problem we operate a bursary scheme, funded by donations. The scheme is kept anonymous - donor's names are not published, and nor are the names of any families being supported by the scheme. At this seasonal time of giving you are invited to consider whether you are able to donate to the bursary scheme. Any amount will be appreciated. If you think you may be able to help and wish to know more, please contact our Treasurer, Paul Fielding, on 01823 490565 or fieldingap@hotmail.com.

Allotments The second growing season has drawn to a close. It has been another successful year with diverse and abundant cultivation of vegetables, fruit and flowers. The communal orchard was planted in late spring and despite the exceptionally dry summer most of the trees have survived. A permanent water supply remains the biggest challenge and thanks must go to Glynn Banks and Peter House for keeping an IBC topped up for allotment use. It is hoped to resolve the water supply before the next growing season. In the meantime, if anyone would like to put their names forward for a plot for the next season please contact Robin Ferrett (07734 752828) or Graham Gleed (07557 654859)

Heart of the Village

In response to continuing concerns around the long-term future of the three commercial enterprises in the village a group called 'The Heart of the Village' (HOTV) was formed to look at all possibilities which could secure a vibrant social centre to the village. How this group came to be formed can be understood at <http://www.stokestgregory.org/businesses/heart-of-the-village>

This group has set out to explore what it would take to maintain at least one of these businesses as a Community Benefit Society; that is a business, set-up and managed by the community, for the community, on a not for profit basis. We have been supported in this with advice from the Plunkett Foundation (a charity specialising in community enterprise), who have granted bursary funds to develop the Heart of the Village Project. Part of this grant has been used, in co-operation with Nicola Berridge, to conduct a business survey of the Royal Oak, prepared by an independent surveyor. The first draft of this survey has just been received. It is comprehensive in its analysis and will take some time to understand the implications of its content.

This will be addressed at future meetings of the HOTV group. These meetings are open to the public, in fact any participation would be welcomed. Notice of future meetings can be found on the village calendar <http://www.stokestgregory.org/eo-calendar/>

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute

This year the village worked together to mark, not only Remembrance Day, but one hundred years since the end of the First World War. In a series of very moving events, Stoke St Gregory's war dead were firstly honoured in a wonderful exhibition at the village hall, followed there by the annual Poppy Appeal charity lunch. The Remembrance Day service held outside the village hall in sunshine, with the poignant sound of the church bells ringing, will remain in our memories.

The WI members who attended the county General Meeting at Westlands in Yeovil were very impressed by the speaker, former Royal correspondent, Jennie Bond, who gave some interesting insights into the Royal Family. Some might question, however, whether she was worth her hefty fee!

Our November meeting was billed as a Fun Evening. It lived up to its billing! In groups of three our task was firstly to construct then decorate a genuine German gingerbread house from a kit. Icing overflowed piping bags, giggles abounded, Smarties and sprinkles decorated the gingerbread, but the finished items looked the part. The lucky few won the houses to take home. A successful sociable evening indeed.

In December we look forward to our WI Christmas lunch and to attending Hatch Beauchamp WI carol service. I am sure that 2019 will bring us an equally lively selection of meetings and outings, with Stoke WI playing its part in village life. **January meeting:** "Seam awareness" with Trudi Henderson. Tues. 8th January

February meeting: "By hook or by crook" with Brian Phelps. Tues. 12th February All welcome to join us! You will be made very welcome- we are a small, friendly WI.

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

NOTICEBOARD

Events for March, April & May 2019 by Friday 22nd February

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Winter Club Sessions continue on Mondays at 10am, Wednesdays at 2pm and Sundays at 2pm (or earlier as light dictates).

Please note that the gate will be locked if the field is wet & it may be necessary to walk across the field to the courts.

Winter League – We have entered the Winter League again this year. Home matches will be played on 5 Saturdays at 1.00pm – see noticeboard by the courts for the dates.

Junior coaching – Natalie, our coach, is planning to continue her coaching sessions during term-times throughout the winter.

Sundays: 5-8 year olds at 10am, 9 years & over at 11am. Cost is £5 per session for non-members, £4 members. New juniors are always welcome – first/trial session free.

Please contact Natalie on 07810 251642.

Frostbite Tournament – Sunday January 13th 2018 at 12 noon. This is a popular friendly event - non-members are very welcome to participate.

AGM Monday January 14th 8pm, Baptist Church schoolroom – All welcome. Come & give us your opinion & hear our plans!

Raffle at Stoke Stamped Sunday January 6th – As is customary, the Tennis Club will be running the raffle during this event, with profits going to the Playing Fields. All offers of raffle prizes will be gratefully received - please contact Kathy to arrange collection.

Kathy Davidson: 490575 or kathryn.davidson7@btinternet.com

WILLIAMS HALL SOCIAL EVENTS

VILLAGE BREAKFAST 03.11.18

Many thanks to everyone who came to the village breakfast. It was very nice to see all our regular customers and to welcome some new ones who we hope enjoyed the breakfast and will come again. It was the most successful breakfasts we have held and are very pleased to inform you that we raised £143 which will be used for the upkeep and maintenance of the hall.

FUTURE EVENTS

SATURDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2018 7pm for 7.30pm

Come and enjoy an evening of festive music with Glastonbury Brass.

Tickets for this event are £5, to include mulled wine and mince pies, and are now available at the Village Stores or by contacting Louise on 07761238933. There will also be a cash bar and raffle

SATURDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2019 7pm for 7.30pm

Following your requests, we will be holding a FUN QUIZ NIGHT so look out for the advertising for this event early in the New Year.

SATURDAY 11TH MAY SOMERSET DAY BREAKFAST 9am TO 11am

Come and help us celebrate Somerset Day with our traditional breakfast

The Royal Oak, Stoke St. Gregory (Tel. 01823 490602)

Friday, December 21st 8pm - Christmas Karaoke/Disco Party

We will be getting into the Christmas spirit so come and join us for a boogie and sing song. Don't forget to wear your Christmas jumper.

December 26th 3pm - Boxing Day Skittles Competition

If you are interested in taking part in our friendly skittles competition please register your name with The Royal Oak as soon as possible. It will be a lot of fun and a great way to work off all the excess turkey and chocolates!

December 31st 7pm New Year's Eve at The Oak

It will be party time at The Oak, come along and dance the night away and join us for our traditional Auld Lang Syne at midnight in the Square.

Please contact Nicola on 01823 490602 for more information on any of The Royal Oak events.

THE PARISH CHURCH of ST. GREGORY

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thursday 20th December -

6pm. Carols in the Square (Guest Appearance by Father Christmas)

Sunday 23rd December -

6.30pm Carol Service in the Church

Monday 24th December -

3pm. Crib Service for Children

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Tuesday 25th December Christmas Day

8.30 am. Holy Communion

The Churchwardens, PCC and Members of St. Gregory's Church wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year in 2019

Dates for your diaries:

Sunday 17 February 2019 - 10.00am -

There will be a United Benefice Service at St. Gregory's Church. The Ven. Simon Hill, Archdeacon of Taunton will be present. There will be refreshments in the Church Room afterwards. Everybody is very welcome.

Shrove Tuesday Supper 5 March 2019

News from

COATES ENGLISH WILLOW

We have a new occupant in unit 2: Pallker Art Glass opened earlier this month. We also have a new small craft workshop for rent, anyone interested in more details should call us 01823 490249

Our Shop opening hours over the Christmas period are as follows:

24th December - 9am-3.30pm

25th December - Closed

26th December - Closed

27th December- 10am-3.30pm

28th December- 10am-3.30pm

29th December - 10am-3.30pm

30th December- Closed

31st December - 10am-3.30pm

1st January - 10am -3.30pm

2nd January back to normal

A Happy Christmas to All, and Best Wishes for 2019