

All items for the
Autumn edition by
Friday 23rd August
2019

Stoke News

Summer 2019

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

Parish Council Report

The May PC meeting was prefaced by the Parish Council AGM. Coming after the local elections, it was a significant meeting despite unfortunately not introducing new Parish Councillors. Nick Sloan, as previously announced stepped down from his role as Chairman to be replaced by Graham Gleed. The Parish Council is indebted to Nick for his service to the Council and indeed to whole community over the past four years. Nick's achievements have ranged from championing the installation of broadband for non-fibre areas of the village, developing and maintaining the hugely impressive village website, replacing our cherished finger signposts, as well as steering the PC through some of the more challenging topics facing our village, with diplomacy and wit. While not occupying the Chair in future meetings, Nick will continue to contribute as a Parish Councillor for which we are all grateful.

In a further change Kelly de Silva formally took up the role of Parish Clerk. We are extremely grateful to Becky who stepped down at the end of April having done an excellent job for seven years. There were three very strong candidates to replace Becky and we appreciate the trouble taken by all of them.

As already mentioned, it was with disappointment that only eight candidates declared for election to the Parish Council; insufficient to trigger an election. All are existing Councillors. We now have a vacancy for one Parish Councillor who we hope to recruit at the June meeting.

Planning Applications continue to be a major topic at every PC meeting. Among these, formal approval has now been given by Somerset West and Taunton District Council (SWTC from now on) to the change of use for the village stores. This places even higher emphasis on the Heart of the Village Project (see separate HOTV report)

The April meeting was challenged with a record eight planning applications, which were illustrative of the challenges that the village faces. Three of these were for house extensions which in itself is not remarkable. There was no inclination to reject any of these, but they reinforce a clear trend. Since 2014 there have been 38 house enlargements approvals adding on average a bedroom apiece. There have also been 10 barn conversions. Houses in the village in general are getting larger and consequently less affordable. During the same period no new houses have been built, which is a very convenient introduction to the next paragraph.

The planning application for the housing development remains unresolved, delayed principally by the local government elections and the consequent need to create a new Planning Committee. At the time of writing it is confirmed that it will be included on the agenda for the first meeting of the new committee on May 30th. The recommendation from the Planning Officer is that it be approved.

The PC did not object to the approval of a major agricultural building off Huntham Lane but with some

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reservation around its impact on the Skyline above West Sedgemoor. Mitigation suggested included screening with trees although the structure is tall, or even lowering the floor level. A concern was registered generally around the continuing proliferation of such installations and the corollary impacts on vehicle movements and waste disposal.

One of the many attractions of Stoke St Gregory is its network of footpaths many of which afford far reaching views of some of Somerset's finest scenery. It has become a topic which has received considerable attention during recent meetings. Concern has been expressed around the state of footpaths along with their stiles and gates and keeping them maintained. Several examples were noted where there is an actual hazard. The responsibility for maintaining footpaths including gates and stiles, rests with the landowner. Anyone who wishes to report a defect or hazard can do so on-line at <https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam>.

The comments go directly to the responsible authority who make contact with the landowner. Failure to remedy serious breaches of the 'right to roam' can ultimately result in legal action by the local authority.

Thanks to all who turned out for our Village Spring Clean in March. While not quite as well attended as last year it was gratifying that the quantity of litter collected was well down compared with our previous experience, although its diversity was surprising from wheel trims to TV aerials. Special thanks to Sue Hembrow for segregating the waste and disposing of what could be recycled.

Due to the patience and persistence of Ann Finn we are looking to restart the Speed Watch programme. Potential locations have been agreed with Jake Edwards, local PCSO.

ST GREGORY PLAYERS

Our next production will be an adaptation of

The Canterbury Tales

by Nick Warburton

which the BBC have kindly allowed us to use.

Auditions will be on Sunday 23rd June from 2pm to 5pm in the Williams Hall main room.

Rehearsals on Thursdays 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th July from 7pm to 10pm for blocking.

Then Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5th September through to Performance week beginning Monday 4th November.

If you missed the Reading in May and would like to read the script please contact 01823 490155

There are lots of small parts!!

The View From The Stores....

Here we are again looking forward to another summer and hopefully some more 'El Scorchio' weather! We will be gearing up with plenty of lovely summer food and drinks and ice creams. Plus, of course, the instant barbecues and briquettes. Our Jon Thorne products have been selling very well and they put together some great barbecue packs so pop in and we can show you what they do – all good locally produced foods.

This summer, we will be closing for a week just as we did last year. We realise that this can be inconvenient for some so we will do all we can to ensure the impact is minimised as far as possible. If you are concerned about charging electricity keys or paying important bills via PayPoint, please speak to us and we can advise you. We will close, as usual, at midday on Sunday 21 July and re-open again at the normal time on Monday 29 July. Don't worry – we will put out reminders on the counter so you don't forget.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter, you will find a report for the HOTV group who are making great progress on the community pub/shop project. We continue to work with them to ensure a seamless transition of the shop from our ownership to community ownership. We urge you to support the project – our objective has always been to ensure our community retains the use of a good village shop and this project will do just that. Community support (that's you!) is absolutely essential to the viability of any village shop, irrespective of ownership. The more people who spend money in the shop, the more the owners can support the community. It really is that simple. As we have done before, please consider how you can make a real contribution to the life of the community by supporting local business.

(Continued at top of next column)

Village Fete

Planning is well in hand for the Village Fete which will be on

Saturday July 13th.

Stalls and Activities planned include:

- A bouncy castle
- Children's crafts and entertainment
- BBQ and beer
- A family 5-a-side soccer tournament (each team must have at least two females and three children)
- Vintage vehicles
- All the usual stands you know and love: produce, bric-a-brac, crockery smash, books tombola to name a few.
- Music with the magic Mrs Mickle
- Tennis
- Somerset Wildlife Trust

We are looking forward to a fun day, and hopefully not too windy this year.

So whilst most people are looking forward to some nice weather and a rest after a busy start to the year, or recovering from those examinations, Ian is pounding the lanes to prepare for an ultra-marathon on 13 July. 100km (62 miles) in Oxfordshire/Wiltshire and raising money for the Help for Heroes charity – if you would like to sponsor him, forms are available in the shop.

Finally, we would like to say "thank-you" for your continued support and do all you can to support the HOTV project. Have a great summer period and enjoy your holidays in the sun. I'm actually hoping for cloud and light drizzle on 13 July! Sorry!!!

Stoke St Gregory History: Snippets from Parish Records

1703: Disbursed to the poor in this year: £120.18.2d

1704: Paid Will Greene for burying of Rachell Curry: 2s 6d. Paid for taking her out of the well 1s. Paid for a man and horse to fetch the Coroner: 7s. Expences upon the Coroner and Jury: 16s. For carrying her to the grave: 2s 2d. For watching with her: 1s. The Coroner his fee: £1 5s. [How did she get in the well to start with?]

1705: Paid for ye badges for ye poor people: 5s 6d. [It was customary for each person in receipt of regular relief to wear a badge]

1720: Paid repairing of Ringing Well councillors fees and expences: £2.17.5d. Mr Pilemans fees about repairing Ringing Well: £1.3.6d. [What and where was the 'Ringing Well'?]

1728: Paid Anne Booby for cureing Edward Lea's Knee: 10s 6d. [Anne Booby appears frequently as the doctress]

Stoke St Gregory Walking Group



The summer walks are on the first Tuesday of the month. Start time 5pm.

Our last walk to West Monkton was 3.5 miles passing two old slate quarries we climbed up to Burlinch where we had panoramic views. We were joined for part of the route by some inquisitive young ponies. We finished with an enjoyable meal at the Monkton Inn.

Our summer walks will be on Tuesday 4th June, 2nd July, 6th August & 3rd September. Please note we now start at **5pm**.

Meet outside the Shop to share lifts. Just turn up if you'd like to join us. Dogs on leads are welcome.

Liz Hembrow 490828

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. Pay on the door, £3 per evening for adults (£1 for youngsters 12yrs+), including refreshments. Younger players particularly welcome. Why not give us a try? You might surprise yourself, like most of us did. After a few sessions you'll feel like you've always been one of the group. If you're nervous, why not bring a friend too? First week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

Heart of the Village Report

Since the last Newsletter and the announcement of the closure of the shop there has been a rapid acceleration in the project to maintain the Village Stores and the Royal Oak. At a well-attended public meeting the vision for the project was outlined including a preliminary financial assessment along with some of the challenges. The tone of the meeting was overwhelmingly positive, but that is not to say there were no concerns expressed.

The outcome of this meeting was to formally start project activity with a view to maintaining continuity of the Village Stores albeit in a different location before the end of the year.

A Community Benefit Society has been formed, called Heart of the Village (Stoke St Gregory) Ltd. This is a recognised legal entity created solely for community benefit, in which members are created by buying shares in the venture.

A business plan is in the final stages of preparation as is a share prospectus, which provides considerable detail around HOTV Ltd, and the implications of investing it; and our best estimate of the financial forecast. It is planned to raise at least £200,000 through a community share offer with shares going on sale during July and August. This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for everyone (over 18) in the community to contribute to the long-term welfare of our village

We have received considerable publicity not least through BBC Somerset who seem to have adopted our project as a significant item of public interest.

Considerable momentum has been created and there is no doubt this project is going to happen, but as we get further into the detail, the more we will be looking for diverse contributions from all parts of the community. To keep up to date please refer to

<https://www.stokestgregory.org/businesses/hotv-2/>

One challenge we will face soon, will be the appointment of managers to run each of the shop and the pub. If you have or know anyone who has an interest and has the necessary skills, experience and not least enthusiasm, please look out for further announcements.

Scouts thank donors

1st SSG Scouts wish to acknowledge a number of kind donors, who shall remain nameless, for recent contributions towards our Bursary Scheme, to support membership for youngsters whose families may struggle to afford the subscriptions. If you would similarly like to donate, whether a one-off amount, small or large, or perhaps a monthly sum, please contact our Treasurer, Paul Fielding on 490565 or fieldingap@hotmail.com.

THE PARISH CHURCH of ST. GREGORY

With summer on its way, we want the Churchyard to look beautiful. There will be a **Clean-up on June 17th**. Please try and come and help us...no skill required, just enthusiasm!

13 July - The Village Fete.

We will have the following stalls:

Cakes and Preserves; Bric a Brac; Raffle

We would be grateful for donations. Please contact Jane White (490508) or Pat Sollis.(490750)

The following day **14 July** sees our **Annual Songs of Praise on the Playing Fields**. This is held in conjunction with the Baptist Church.

If you have a favourite hymn you would like to sing, please add it to the list which will be in the Parish Church nearer the date.

Have a wonderful summer!

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute

From garden conveniences to perfumes to exercising with glittery shakers, our recent sessions have been nothing if not varied! An excellent day outing also continued the variety. We visited both the Royal Mint in Cardiff and St Fagan's History Museum. At The Mint we followed the history of coins, medals and awards from the first Alfred the Great coins to today's, over a thousand years later. St Fagan's is a wonderful collection of historic buildings from all over Wales- from chapels, dwellings, to agricultural and small scale production buildings. Both were fascinating. Thank you Kathryn for organising such a good outing.

Members enjoyed attending North Curry's Group leader exhibition of competition entries in art, craft, literature as well as some drama. Vicki Fielding again won a prize for her wonderful quilting- a beautiful, quilted hen sitting on her eggs. Two members joined the UCWW walk organised by NC and our quiz team is geared to do battle there too.

Next Meetings

Tuesday 11th June. Angie on "Flowers from the Garden." 7pm

Tuesday 9th July. Our annual Garden Meeting.

Tuesday, 13th August. Our annual Coffee Morning Meeting.

Tuesday 10th September. "Somerset Nature and Climate Change." Steve Mewes. 7pm.

**All are welcome to our speakers' meetings. Our numbers are increasing- why not increase it further?
The W.I. is what members make it!**

Somerset Waste Partnership: New collections contractor: Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) has selected SUEZ recycling and recovery UK (SUEZ) to collect kerbside recycling and rubbish across Somerset. The new contract will see SUEZ deliver SWP's new Recycle More service, operating new vehicles and collecting a far wider range of recycling every week, including far more plastic packaging.

In addition to the dozen or so materials –including food waste- already collected, Recycle More will pick up a wide range of new items: plastic pots, tubs and trays; Tetra Paks and other beverage cartons; small electrical items and household batteries.

By taking far more recyclable household material each week, Recycle More will help reduce the amount of waste put in rubbish bins, which will be collected every three weeks. The new service will start rolling out across Somerset in 2020. For more information visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

An Update on Tennis Coaching at the Club

Good news, the Tennis Club has secured the services of Rich, a highly experienced LTA approved Level 4 coach to work with both the junior & adult players.

- For juniors there will be two sessions every Saturday afternoon (excluding half term), between 2 & 4pm, with 4-8 year olds in the first session, followed by 9-13 years in the second.
- Adult coaching will take place afterwards at 4.15pm on Saturday afternoons. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner, rusty racquets or an experienced player.

Why not come & give it a try – all are welcome.

Advance Notice of NVBTW

Our Nature Valley Big Tennis Weekend event will take place at the Tennis Club on Sunday 23rd June 12.00pm – 5.00pm.

Our courts will be available for free play, including for families. Members & a tennis coach will be on hand to help & advise. Balls provided & racquets available. There will also be a barbecue.

For more information, contact Stuart Mark 490541 stuart.w.mark@btinternet.com

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

WILLIAMS HALL SOCIAL EVENTS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 13TH JULY

Book stall at the Village Fete

SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER

ELVIS 56 WILL BE IN THE BUILDING

Music and dancing. Bar and raffle.

Tickets £10

SATURDAY 2ND NOVEMBER

VILLAGE BREAKFAST 9am to 11am

Adults £6

*****CHILDREN UNDER 12 EAT FREE*****

NB All children must be accompanied by an adult

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

FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER

Christmas Fun Quiz

Tickets £5

More details on these events will be advertised on the Village Hall Website www.williamshall.org.uk and on posters around the village.

Follow us on social media



@williamshallevents



@williamshallevents

We look forward to seeing you at these events

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT THROUGH THE SUMMER

**Friday, May 31st - Summer Skittles
starts at The Royal Oak!**

**Come along and join us for a summer of
fun Friday nights.**

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

Dates for your diary

Big Lunch - Sun 2nd June 12:30

**Bring and Share Salad or Sweet
BBQ meat and veggie alternative
provided**

RSVP: alikatt123@gmail.com

**Messy Church – Fri 14th June 3:30 –
6:00pm**

**Craft, Singing, Stories and a Meal.
People think Messy Church is just for
Children ...it's actually for everyone!**

**Strawberry Tea – Sat 29th June 3 –
5pm**

**Come and meet with friends and enjoy
an afternoon tea, donations to go to
#Raft (Refugee Aid From Taunton)**

Café Church

**Come and join us for a more relaxed
and interactive church service with
coffee, fruit and cake on the 2nd Sunday
of every month.**

Quiet Church

**Church open for prayer and quiet time
on the 2nd Monday of every month 9am
to 5pm.**

**TWiGs Babies and Toddler Group
Every Thursday in term time 9:15 to
11:30am.**

We look forward to seeing you soon!

ST GREGORY PLAYERS

**Auditions for
The Canterbury Tales**

By Nick Warburton

Sunday 23rd June

from 2pm to 5pm

Williams Hall

All Welcome!