

All items for the  
Spring edition by  
Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February  
2020

# Stoke News

Winter 2019

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

## Heart of the Village: Shop & Pub



**HOTV:** our community shop and pub. We now have over 150 members, and we are getting ever closer to our share offer target. We are very confident that **HOTV is going to be a great success**, but this will happen **quicker and better** the more support we have. Please join us now, to be part of something unique in Stoke St Gregory. See our News page and learn more on the website [hotvssg.org](http://hotvssg.org) or phone John Davison on 07836 327926

## Stoke Stampede

Christmas is fast approaching and with it the New Year and the Stoke Stampede on Sunday 5th January. A real bright spot for the village in a long winter. Everything is on track for our 450 runners and we want to make the race a memorable experience for them all. So we need all of you in the village to come out and support, whether it is by volunteering to become a Marshall or just turning out to cheer the runners on. Please give us your support. We also need to appeal to the village to see if anyone has a Chapter Eight qualification to help us out with the road closure. If anyone has this qualification could they please contact Paul Morse on 07519 397133. Anyone wanting to become a Marshall please contact Tom Duxbury either by email on [duxburytom@gmail.com](mailto:duxburytom@gmail.com) or phone him on 07714 696707. See you there Paul Morse (Race Director)

## TABLE TENNIS FOR FUN & FITNESS

The table tennis group continues to flourish. We get 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've got to do something to keep you active on those chillier winter nights! First week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

## Wanted – Stoke News Sponsors

If you would like your business featured in the next edition, please get in touch with Jean House; or Kelly de Silva, Parish Clerk, at [ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

## Parish Council Report

The last quarter has been a quiet period for **planning applications**, with only several low key and non-controversial applications

The September meeting of the Parish Council was prefaced by a discussion on the extent and nuisance of irritating and **unpleasant smells during the summer**. While it is recognised that we live in a rural area and smells associated with farming activity are inevitable, the opinion was expressed that some of the occurrences during the summer constituted more than a nuisance. If we are to address this concern, better evidence needs to be gathered. However, the PC followed up on the complaint with Wessex Water. A reply received from them acknowledged a problem which has now been corrected. Co-incidentally it has been observed that the nuisance has significantly decreased. As a further follow-up a short comment form has been produced which will be available on the village website and in the shop so that future occurrences can be more formally noted. During the regular planning application visits, the opportunity was taken to visit the **new pavilion**, which is being constructed by the developer of the houses in Willey Road. It is an impressive building and something that the village can be proud of. It will provide a springboard for the organisation of many activities which for years have been inhibited by the state of the existing structure. At the PC meeting it was agreed that some of the funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which are due to the PC would be allocated to support the whole project which includes a new access and parking, improved services and an equipment store.

## Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute.

It has been a very heartening year for us, with new members swelling our numbers, but we would welcome even more! The last quarter of 2019 has also brought us lively, stimulating speakers to our village WI. We were told about the effects of climate change on nature in Somerset one month, followed by the history and creativity of driftwood art. In November it is "Comic Verse and Comedy" with an enigmatic F. Phelps- could be stand up or singalong? Wait and see... In December we look forward to our members' annual Christmas lunch. We are fortunate again to be going to The Lemon Tree at Willows and Wetlands, where last year we enjoyed delicious home-cooked food.

This year we have enjoyed outings, visiting other local WIs for meetings, craft displays, quizzes and sport- short tennis (look it up!) was particularly enjoyed. Members support all kinds of village charity/ voluntary initiatives as well as walks, the arts and sport. We now look forward to local W.I. carol services and to 2020!

Next year: Meetings are held in the Williams Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Come along and give us a try.

## Parish Council Report (continued from page 1)

Consideration is being given to installing an **electric car charging point** in the village. This is at a very early stage with information being sought on how and at what cost, but with grant funding currently available it is felt that this does merit serious consideration.

The main discussion at the November meeting centred on the **precept for next year** and agreement on the details of the costs that contribute to this. One particular item of relevance was consideration of a mechanism for offering small grants and donations to causes within the Parish. Under the Local Government Act, it is within the remit of the PC to offer grants up to a predetermined total which is calculated per capita for the Parish. This is not a large sum, but we will try to ensure that it is distributed equitably. At the December meeting the PC will review a policy and grant application process for local groups for the coming financial year. Even including this amount little change is anticipated in the overall budget

While it is not within the remit of the PC, concern was expressed about **financial support for the school** from local government. Stoke St Gregory Primary School is a successful and integral part of the community that provides the long-term foundation for relationships within the community. Failure to maintain the School consistent with the needs of the community will have a long term adverse effect. For this reason, strong representations are being made with Somerset County Council, the responsible elected body.

With the work on preparing the site for the **new houses on Willey Road** advancing rapidly, questions were raised around the process by which local people can be assured of taking advantage of this development. While a list of individual needs was prepared to justify the planning application, it was agreed that this position would be reinforced through contact with the SWTC housing officer.

May next year will mark the **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day**. It is planned that several village events will take place to commemorate this date. As well as a village breakfast several other community events are being planned. If you would be willing to help with organisation of these events, please contact Sara Sollis or Janice Pearce.

It has become a regular occurrence that part of the PC meeting is allocated to **surveys and questionnaires**. This month we were asked to comment on our relationship with the local PCSO(s), via an on-line survey. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to offer meaningful comment. Continuing the legal theme, it was noted that some owners allow their dogs to roam free on the roads in the village. This is against the law as all **dogs must be kept on leads if on a public highway**.

Finally, there was discussion around potential PC support for the **HOTV project** which is widely seen as essential for the future wellbeing of the community. This item will be added to the agenda for the December meeting.

## The View from The Stores .....

This is the last time we write a column for Stoke News. As we have said, we will be closing the doors for the last time on this old established business on 31 December 2019. A sad day for us and one that we have tried our utmost to avoid for a number of years. But, unable to sell The Village Stores as a going concern, we had to make the very tough decision to close. A great shame nonetheless. This column allows us to make one final request to ALL our past and present customers to support the new venture – Heart Of The Village - in its quest to establish a successful community-run project which has the opportunity to ‘re-invent’ both The Village Stores and The Royal Oak. Evolution is a natural phenomenon and the change we will shortly see with these two long-standing businesses is no exception. A step-change it may be, but Karen and I believe there is a clear desire for their development, growth and diversification into exciting new ventures that will be valued for years to come. In fact, this village is going to experience a number of changes in the next twelve months and they will all contribute to the progression towards a thriving, caring, forward-looking community that will be better positioned to attract inward investment and support in a period of time where rural communities are becoming increasingly isolated and starved of external finance and services. Villages need an identity and this often stems from community-led enterprises whether they be a church, pub, shop, or any other number of activities. A well run shop and pub will reflect positively on our community and give it that identity. I think we all want to live in a caring and inclusive community that takes pride in itself and its people – not one that exists simply as a ‘green dormitory’ on the fringes of a soulless urban sprawl.

In the last few weeks Karen and I have been personally affected by the negative comments that some members of our community have unilaterally relayed to people looking to purchase in the area. Not only does a negative reaction reflect badly on our entire community, it is also disrespectful to those who have, and are, working so hard to make this a great community. I am sure we want to be part of a caring, welcoming and vibrant community and this project has the potential to deliver on all three. So please don't be negative – be positive and support HOTV by purchasing shares now! Negative criticism, apathy and ‘put-downs’ from the side-lines will ultimately affect the wellbeing of us all. We are currently working with HOTV to ensure the transfer of the business to the new management as seamlessly as possible. There may have to be a ‘temporary arrangement’ put in place until the new location is up and running. We would ask that customers support the business during this time, but also understand that there will be some short-term differences in services and stock.

So, to finish, Karen and I would like to thank you all for your support over the (almost) nine years we have had the pleasure to run The Village Stores. Without you Stoke St Gregorians this business would not be here now – or have served the community over the past 100 years. We'd like to thank all our suppliers and advisors too – some small and local, others national. We have had some laughs and one or two tears, but our aim was always to provide a happy place to come and shop, chat, gossip and moan whilst being safe and welcomed! We hope we have been successful in that. A Happy Christmas to everyone and an exciting New Year full of friendship, community spirit and positivity!

### Local History: Quaker Roots

Did you know that Stoke was once a hotbed of Quaker activity, with a certain Alice Roman of the village being one of the first ‘Perceivers of the Truth’ in the county? It had its own meeting house and burial ground - the Society of Friends’ minutes record a discussion about *“the great Meeting Houses that were built at Gregory Stoke and Ilminster, about the year 1670.”* Although no longer used for meetings, the 1840 Tithe Map shows the most likely location - a field called ‘Pit Acre’ in Lamley, reached by a track to the side of Wilments Farm. The burial ground is now part of the large field beyond Sharpham Lane. Between 1690 and 1724, thirteen people were buried there. Both these locations are on private land.

Life was not easy for the Quakers of Stoke. In 1683, *“There were twelve more committed to prison, from Gregory Stoke meeting, by Henry Walrond, who, with his assistants, broke the windows, benches, gallery, &c. of the meeting-house, and carried out the materials, with the windows, doors, forms, &c. on the green, and there burnt them, carousing and drinking about the fire the meanwhile.”* The meetings in Stoke were discontinued in 1764, the building being converted to a dwelling. This was leased in 1766 at a yearly rent of 30/-, but annoyingly we don't know the name of the tenant! Would anyone like to look into this further?

### Christmas and New Year Waste Collections (SWP)

Normal collection Wed. 25<sup>th</sup> December > Revised collection two days later: Friday 27<sup>th</sup>

Normal collection Wed. 1<sup>st</sup> January > Revised collection one day later: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Usual collections resume w/b 6<sup>th</sup> January.

## On Behalf of Ian & Karen's Customers

By the time you read this Karen and Ian will be in to their last month running our village shop. In the time they have been here they have shown us what it means to be the 'Heart of the Village'. It's not the shop, the pubs, the school, the churches, the hall, that matter - it's the people who are involved there that make the difference. Karen & Ian are wonderful examples of this.

Yes, they run a clean, well-stocked shop, and will always try and source anything else we ask for, but Karen is not just a shopkeeper. She's a people person. She remembers people's names, remembers if a member of their family is ill or on holiday and remembers to ask after them. She remembers what people usually buy and reminds them if they may have forgotten it. She cares.

And, when we lose them, who will do all the 'extras' we take for granted? Who will make coffee for the postman, pass him parcels that are too big to go in the box, hang on to parcels for people to collect if they are out when the postman tries to deliver, receive people's post if they don't have a letter box, etc? Ian checks on the defibrillator regularly and both have basic first aid training for emergencies. They introduced the book for people to swap things or pass them on, have notices in the window for classes, things for sale, act as an information centre re road works, road closures and so on and give people directions as needed, etc. They also have a list of useful people - builders, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, handymen, etc. Ian does deliveries and often gives a helping hand to folks who have got into difficulties - power failure, getting someone on their feet after a fall, needing something moved, collecting prescriptions from the surgery, and endless other things. They sell tickets for village events, have sponsorship forms prominently displayed, sell poppies, have free papers - Food Lover, Langport Leveller - and have free brochures for Somerset events. You will know of similar examples around the village, be it school/pre-school, pub, Place of Worship or Stoke Meals; together with individuals who help others in their own ways. However, the Ian & Karen team will be a great loss. As villagers commit their time and energy to new community ventures, let us not forget that it is the people who do things for others who are the real 'Heart of the Village'.

Sarah & Dave Evans, Stoke House

***P.S. If any of you want to show your support for a community shop, place a Christmas order at your Village Stores.***

## Playing Field Update

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you that came along to the village bonfire, given the recent weather we were really pleased to be able to go ahead and to see so many people there. A huge thank you to the Scouts for providing hot chocolate and goodies for all and to the volunteers who manned the bar and kept the supplies of mulled wine and cider flowing. I'd also like to thank the Hembrow and House families for all their assistance with manpower and equipment.

Thanks to everyone for their patience during all the ongoing works. The pavilion is taking shape and is going to be a great facility for all the community. Once up and running it will be available to rent for sporting and other events 12 months of the year. If you have any ideas on how you think we can use this great facility, please let us know?

As you will have also seen the tennis courts are currently being resurfaced and work is progressing well. Another great facility for those that live in the local area. If you interested in playing tennis, then please contact the tennis club.

On a less, positive note we are seeing a return of leftover food and meat being fly tipped just over the wall of the playing field and under the trees by the entrance. We're not sure of the motive behind this but would ask whoever is doing this to please stop? Leftover food and bones are dangerous to all animals and we'd hate for a pet or any local wildlife to end up in distress with a visit to the vets, let alone the cost. Waste food should be recycled in the brown food waste bins. If this continues we may have no choice but to contact the police.

**Thank you all and we'll see you all on the 5<sup>th</sup> January for Stoke Stampede.**

## THE PARISH CHURCH of ST. GREGORY

We will be running a stall of Christmas Treats at the Friends of St Gregory's School Christmas Fayre on Saturday 7 December. Please support us and the other stall holders.

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thursday 19 December - Carols in the Square with the Baptist Church

Sunday 22 December - Carol Service in the Church

Tuesday 24 December - 3.30pm Crib Service in the Church

Tuesday 24 December 1130 - Midnight Mass

Wednesday 25 December - 0830 - Christmas Morning Holy Communion

### CHARITY LUNCHESES

27 January 2020 - Hosted by the PCC in aid of ARC Taunton

24 February 2020 - Hosted by Annette Gage in aid of the RNLI

### SHROVE TUESDAY - 25 February 2020.

Supper in the Church Room. 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets: £10.

Speaker from Somerset Sight.

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

6 March 2020 - to be held at North Curry in conjunction with the Methodist and Baptist Church.

**THE CHURCHWARDENS AND CONGREGATION OF THE PARISH CHURCH WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYBODY A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## November HOTV Report

Fund raising continues, and as can be seen on the yard of ale at the Royal Oak the total is rising steadily with the full anticipation that we will meet our target. The share offer remains open so if there are some among you who have been reticent to invest take reassurance from the certainty that this project will proceed: the more investment we can raise the lower the funding we will need to seek from other sources. While the original objective of purchasing the Royal Oak by early 2020 to ensure continuity of the village shop will be now near impossible to achieve in time, the importance of maintaining a shop presence is crucial to the long-term success of the HOTV project. In order to achieve this, we have had the good fortune through the Plunkett Foundation, to be offered a ready-made 'shop in a box' (a 30' container) that is purposely been fitted out for this purpose. It is available from the village of Broughton (Hampshire) consistent with our deadline for the shop closure of Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, as they will be moving into new permanent premises before Christmas. This is a temporary measure. We anticipate being able to complete purchase on the Royal Oak, and move the shop in, during the first quarter of 2020, or soon after this. We do still need some more investment to achieve this please! Details and costing are currently being developed, but it is anticipated that this interim objective can be delivered without drawing on the capital funds that have been invested in HOTV. Furthermore, the current owners of the Village Stores have generously offered to manage the transition to the new facilities while their property remains on the market. However, we are now actively seeking volunteers to support this transition. If you are willing to help please contact any member of the HOTV team or e-mail [HOTVSSG@gmail.com](mailto:HOTVSSG@gmail.com) Following this transition, the shop will serve as a source of revenue generating funds towards the overall HOTV objective as outlined in the business plan.

## HOTV Volunteers Needed

With the imminent arrival in the village of the 'Shop in a Box' to provide the community with this essential service your help is needed. For the installation, anyone with skills in carpentry, plumbing or a qualified electrician can contribute.

Once we are operational early in January, we will be looking for volunteers to work in the shop under the guidance of Ian and Karen. It is not anticipated that this work will be too demanding, but the more people that volunteer the less demanding it will be. If you can help, please contact Mike Blair (490222), Graham Gleed (490407) or any member of the HOTV team

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

# NOTICEBOARD

Events for March, April  
and May 2020 by  
Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February  
2020

## Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

By the time you read this, resurfacing of the 2 outside courts at Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club will have been completed. Over the winter, the courts will have to remain black, but still able to be played on, with the colour painting added in the Spring when the weather has improved.

This is only part of our ambitious project to improve & extend our facilities for the benefit of the local communities. The next stage is to apply for planning permission for floodlighting of the courts. This will necessitate the raising of new funding. To assist us in this we would ask you to complete & return, to either the Stoke or North Curry shop, the enclosed leaflet. Thanking you in anticipation.

### Advance notice of future events:

**Sunday 12 Jan at 1.00pm – Frostbite Mixed Doubles, all welcome.**

**Monday 13 Jan at 8.00pm – Tennis Club AGM in the Baptist Church, Stoke St Gregory, open to all.**

**New Year – junior tennis coaching to restart.**

For more information please contact Stuart Mark 490541  
[stuart.w.mark@btinternet.com](mailto:stuart.w.mark@btinternet.com)

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

### WILLIAMS HALL SOCIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**  
**CHRISTMAS FUN QUIZ 7pm for 7.30pm**  
Tickets £5

**Teams of 6 or join up on the night with other people to make a team**  
Tickets £5 (Includes mince pie & mulled wine) now available from Village Stores, Withies Deli or phone  
**Louise on 07761238933**  
Cash bar and raffle

**SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 7pm for 7.30pm**  
**My LIFE IN ANTIQUES with ADRIAN HOLT**  
Bring along your items to discuss  
Tickets £5 (Includes glass of wine and cheese and biscuits)  
Cash bar and raffle

**SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020**  
**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

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020 Children's Easter Crafts 10 am to 12 midday**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020 VE Day Breakfast**

More details on these events will be advertised on the Village Hall  
Website [www.williamshall.org.uk](http://www.williamshall.org.uk) and on posters around the village.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and wish you all a  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## Stoke St Gregory Christmas Cracker

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December

2-4pm in the Village Hall

- Christmas gifts, crafts and food
- Free craft activities for children from the Messy Church team
- Festive refreshments

Raising funds for the Friends of Stoke  
St Gregory School

## Christmas at The Royal Oak

**CHRISTMAS KARAOKE DISCO PARTY**  
**Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 8.30pm**

You know it will be a fun night and don't forget to wear your Christmas jumper!

**BOXING DAY SKITTLES**  
**Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**Open at 12 noon.**

Join us on Boxing Day for a friendly skittles competition. We aim to get the games started for 3pm. Let us know if you want to join in or just come along on the day.

**NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE OAK**  
**Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup> at 7pm**  
Come and party the night away and join us for the traditional Auld Lang Syne in the Square at midnight.

## NHS: Choose well this winter

If you or a family member feels ill this winter and it is not an emergency, remember that NHS111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls from landlines and mobile phones are free.

You can also use the NHS111 online service to ask questions about your symptoms, find out where to get the right healthcare in your area, get advice on self-care, get further advice from a nurse or doctor on the phone or during a consultation.

If you need help at a time when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



## Christmas in North Curry Square

Continuing the tradition of local people getting together just before Christmas.

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December 4.00 – 6.00pm Festive Fun for all ages

Christmas Tree in NC Square with switching on of the lights

Hog Roast from Pyne's of Somerset Licensed bar Guest singers and musicians

Children's Games, Hot Dogs, Mulled Wine, Mince Pies, Hot Chocolate, 'Rhum au Chocolat' and Raffle

Father Christmas, if we are all very good.....

All proceeds to Playing Fields in North Curry and other Local Charities

