

All items for the
Summer edition by
Friday 22nd May
2020

Stoke News

Spring 2020

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

Shop in a Box/HOTV

We will shortly be advertising for a

Part time Manager

for the successful Shop in a Box

Up to 25 hours per week

Previous Retail experience desirable

This role will manage the interim premises at the
Williams Hall

And in the longer term the likely transfer to HOTV at the
Royal Oak.

If you are interested contact any member of the HOTV
Team

Or e-mail to HOTVSSG@gmail.com

Stoke Stampede

On the 5th January 400 runners lined up to run the Stoke Stampede in ideal conditions. We have all abilities running the race, including elite club runners, good club athletes and those just wishing to run for fun including a lot of local people.

The race was run in an incredible atmosphere generated by our wonderful volunteers, Marshalls and the many of you who turned out to support all round the course.

The feedback from the runners after the race was amazing. All of them wanted to thank the organisers and the support they received.

So I pass on their thanks and would like to add my thanks to the wonderful committee we have; to all the Marshalls, the people on our water stations, the girls in the hall at registration; to the ladies who handed out medals; to the Royal Oak for providing tea, coffee and snacks. Also thanks go to the two mini bus drivers, the Tennis Club who ran the draw and a special thank you to all of you who turned out to support.

We all look forward to next year's event and long may it continue. Thank you to everyone involved.

Paul Morse (Race director)

VE Day 75th Anniversary Celebrations, 8-10 May

This year is the 75th anniversary of VE Day, and we aim to mark the occasion with a number of events, timed to fit in with the national programme of celebration. There will be events at the Playing Fields on the afternoon of Bank Holiday Friday 8 May, featuring Kingsbury Episcopi Band, and also including the official opening of the new sports pavilion. At the Village Hall on Saturday 9 May we have a VE Day village breakfast and an exhibition of historic material from the era. And there will also be a special church event on Sunday 10 May.

We would welcome involvement from individual and groups, from initial ideas, through to organising or just participating.

Watch out for more information about the events nearer the time, and if you have any suggestions or queries please in the first instance contact Janice (490545), Sara (490069), or Paul (490565).

What Katy did next.... Hi everyone, my name is Katy and I live in Stoke St Gregory, if you have a few minutes to read on I'd like to tell you about my 'latest misadventure' ...! On the 26th of April I'll be running the London Marathon. I should probably mention at this point that I'm not a runner, having never jogged for more than 10 minutes previously, so this is quite the challenge! I'll be running in support of local charity, Somerset Star. Star is a charity for Somerset children and young people in need. Their aim is to provide opportunities through music, art & recreation to some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Many disadvantaged children and young people typically have lower self-esteem, fewer social skills and are at higher risk of social exclusion from their contemporaries. Star provides access to resilience building opportunities which we know help young people to overcome the effects of adversity in their lives. If you see me running the lanes, please give me a toot or a wave of support! Better still, if you can, please pop some coins in one of my fundraising boxes located @ the Rose & Crown, the Royal Oak, Shop in a box or Wrantage Mills Feed shop. You can also donate to @ <https://virginmoneygiving.com/kateribton2>. Somerset Star relies solely on fundraising to support its activities- so every penny raised will make a huge difference. It takes a community to raise a child..

Thank you for reading this & wish me luck- 26.2 miles.... I'm going to need it!!

Parish Council Report

The last three months have been relatively quiet regarding new **Planning Applications**, with relatively few new applications, none of which have caused any particular controversy. However, the resubmission of the four applications to build a single large agricultural structure on the ridge above Lower Huntham Lane provoked an animated debate. Strongly stated representations against the applications were received from the public prior to the formal opening of the December meeting. Having studied the supporting documentation, the PC took the view that this information was both inconsistent and in some cases contradictory. Pending clarification, the PC offered no comment. It was felt that these four applications for a single contiguous building should be presented as a single application.

The major theme running through the last several meetings has been how to release funding for **school improvements**. Although the PC has no executive authority in this process it is clear that the residents of the Parish are concerned and as such the PC is motivated to try and help resolve the situation. The challenge is at multiple levels. While the discussion initiated around the provision of places for children of residents in the new Willey Road development, it also served to highlight some of the fundamental issue that challenge the day to day functioning of the school. In reality it is the highest priority to resolve these issues first. The school dates from the Victorian era and, while it is a cherished institution in the village, its fabric and structure are challenged by 21st century demands. The PC is working with the school governors and the local authorities to try and reach a satisfactory outcome. The issue is further complicated by the non-availability of CIL money paid by the developer of the new houses in Willey Road. Apart from a small proportion that will be allocated directly back to the PC this money is being paid into a central fund from which recovery seems impossible. The struggle continues.

PC expenditure over the past year was reviewed in December. Spending has been in line with budget when exceptional items are separated. The precept for the past two years has remained unchanged. However due to the considerable uncertainty going forward it was agreed that a small increase to £16,000 was justified for the year 2020.

Parish Council Report (continued from page 1)

As part of the effort to maintain a shop and at least one Pub in the village the PC agreed to support the 'Shop in a Box' as the interim arrangement pending success of the HOTV project. Agreement was reached for its delivery and installation at the Williams Hall. The Village Stores which closed its doors for the last time on the 31st December 2019, successfully relocated to its new premises and opened for business as usual on Jan 6th 2020 (for more details see the HOTV report).

Climate change and the role of the PC was also a strand which wove its way through several topics, at the February meeting. At the Annual Parish meeting on May 4th, the Guest Speaker will be Steve Mews of Somerset Wildlife Trust, Steve also spoke at the AGM of what is now Climate Action Athelney. It was agreed by the PC that we should engage further with this group. SWTC has also started a consultation on Climate Emergency. The consultation document on-line is well worth individual input and can be found on the village website <https://www.stokestgregory.org/climate-emergency-plans/>

Do you like the outdoor life? Are you a regular user of the **footpaths** that criss-cross the village? Then there is an opportunity for you. Following many years of service Cecil Boobyer is standing down as Footpaths Officer. The PC would like to thank Cecil for his work over the years in this important but unsung role. If you or anyone you know would be interested in taking this on, please contact the Parish Clerk, Kelly de Silva. Finally, the PC would like to pass on its thanks to Paul Morse and the Organising Committee of the **Stoke Stampede**. This event is extremely highly regarded is the running community and is recognised for its first-class organisation and welcoming support. It is an event that really puts Stoke St Gregory on the map.

HOTV February Update

Firstly thank-you to all who have invested both for the first time and also to those who have contributed in addition to their original contribution. The total invested continues to increase with some 220 individuals contributing around £190,000. We still need the final push to close the gap to £200,000, but confidence is high that we will achieve our target. Crossing this threshold will release funding of £220,000 in the form of £103,000 in grants and £117,000 in loans. Further sources of funding are being actively worked. On this basis it is anticipated that an offer will be made for the Royal Oak in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, the interim solution of a Shop In A Box (SIAB) located at the Williams Hall has been a fantastic success. While having a smaller footprint, there has been virtually no compromise on the range of goods sold. So far, some 50 people have volunteered to help in the shop prior to it becoming a community run venture at the end of March. Training is progressing well thanks to the dedication, energy and enthusiasm of Ian, Karen and Marilyn. If you have an interest in volunteering, we would be very glad to hear from you. All who have participated so far have commented positively on the experience. One thing that has become increasingly apparent is the need for a part-time manager at the shop. While most of the day to day tasks can be managed by volunteers there is a need for an overarching responsibility which provides a strategic view. We are optimistic that this role can be in place by the end of March.

To finish it is worth emphasising that the next four weeks will be critical. Firstly, to cross our Community Contribution threshold, then to enter into the purchase of the Royal Oak, while at the same time continuing to develop our pool of talent with a view to transitioning to a community run shop at the end of March. Exciting times for the village.

Local History: More about Quaker Roots

With reference to the article printed in the winter issue of the newsletter, a reader has suggested that for anyone interested in finding out more about Stoke St Gregory's Quaker history to visit the Somerset Record Society and consult

THE SOMERSET QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS 1668-99 SRS lxxv G.L.TURNER

(ED.) George Fox 1624-191

Founder of The Society of Friends.

Local History - What's in a Name?

The original name for what is now Willey Road was Wells Hay Lane. The field where the new houses are being built was Wells Hay, which extended from Slough Lane to the rear of the Royal Oak. Opposite was Upper Wells Hay, from half way up Griggs Hill, up to and including the playing field.

Hay field with wells in it? No. Hay is the Anglo Saxon for hedge or enclosure (from where we get the names Haywarden and Howard - someone who looks after the hedges) and Wells refers to the Lords of the Manor - the Dean and Chapter of Wells Cathedral. Before King Henry gave the manor to Wells this would have probably been part of his personal demesne, as opposed to the land that was farmed by the various tenants. 'Wells Hay' - a good name for the new estate?

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute

2020 began well for us with two local speakers giving equally lively, interesting talks. In January, Adrian Holt told us all about the Arts and Crafts movement, his particular area of expertise and interest. With his experience of antiques as an auctioneer, a dealer and restorer, alongside his wife, Amelia, it was a very lively meeting. We were shown beautiful examples of the Arts and Crafts movement and Adrian answered many questions. It was heartening to hear of Adrian's success again in February at the Williams Hall talking about his life in antiques and discussed items brought in.

In February Lu Lloyd spoke to us about the glass artwork which she makes and sells at her shop at the Willows and Wetlands. She described how she made stained/ leaded glass, fusion glass and kiln- melted glass, then demonstrated the creation of a lovely example using a combination of lead strips, nails, hand- cut glass and soldering. Making it look easy, we realised though that years of experiment and practice were needed to reach her standard. Lu had brought along a range of her work for us to see and possibly buy. Two very enjoyable evenings!

Next meetings:

Tuesday 10th March: Dr Burroughes 'Illegal Immigrants!'
(Not the human kind!)

Tuesday 14th April: Jill Perryman '57 Cathedrals'
(A quirky perspective)

Tuesday 12th May: AGM and Social Evening.

Meetings begin at 7pm in the Williams Hall.

Visitors always welcome.

Basket Makers in the Family?

Having published their book "Willows, Wetlands, Weaving and More ..." Chris & Anne Coate are now recording the history and heritage of other basket making families in the village. Many readers will be living in the homes of old basket makers and may even have found old tools in a shed. Others will remember relatives who were involved in the trade, either making and selling baskets themselves, or working for one of the local basket making firms. This may be the last chance for us to record such memories of a craft that has always been central to the wellbeing and development of the village. It would also be a great shame if newer residents (and those to come) were not given the chance to feel a part of its wonderful heritage.

If you have any photos, records, or memories relating to basket making, please make them part of this important project, and telephone Anne on 490301.

View from 'The Box'

On 6 January we opened The Village Stores at its new, temporary, home in the 'Shop in a Box'. Having taken a little time off at Christmas and New Year, the move was made with minimal disruption. However, it was only possible with the efforts of a small team of willing volunteers. Karen and I would like to publicly thank those who took the challenge to move refrigerators and miscellaneous equipment from The Square to the Shop in a Box in Dark Lane.

The willingness of volunteers to take on new challenges was always going to be the theme from January 2020 onwards. Our task now is to guide and train a small army of volunteers to the point where they have the skills, competencies and confidence to run our community shop from 1 April 2020. This is no mean feat and we must all pay credit to those among our community who have signed up as shop volunteers. We currently have about 50 volunteers on the books but we need more – about 60-70 in total. So I would ask everyone to think about coming on board and making a difference to this community. There are many benefits to volunteering, but if you are in any doubt, speak to one of our current team. I would particularly appeal to younger people to consider volunteering – just a few hours here and there will result in a significant contribution to the vibrancy of our community. Please contact Marilyn Clarke for more information (clarkemarilyn@icloud.com).

Now that we are settled in 'The Box', I'd like to reiterate the fact that we sell the same range of foods, newspapers, beers and wines, tobacco, household goods, stamps, confectionery, fresh dairy, fruit & veg, bakery, etc. that we sold in our previous location. Whilst we are smaller in physical size, nothing else has changed and we would really like you to continue using your village shop.

We are now six weeks away from the first day of our community shop and there is much to do – much of it 'behind the scenes'. It is a very busy time as the Heart of the Village project team approach a critical point in our vision for the future. As I write this, we are within sight of our £200,000 target – an unbelievable achievement in such a short space of time. There were those who said it could never be done – they are about to be proved wrong. We are relentlessly moving forward and it is important that our community works and benefits together both for our own wellbeing and for those who will follow us. Three cheers for Stoke St Gregory!

WANTED Unit helper For

North Curry Brownie Unit

Are you enthusiastic, fun loving, and could work with 7 to 10-year-old girls?

You are just the person we are looking for.

For more information

Phone Louise Grinter 07761238933.

This could be a weekly commitment or as little as once a month, term time only. We meet on Monday evenings.

Let girlguiding challenge you to make a difference.



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 get away from the TV! First week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565 or Terri on 490671.

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Annual Open Day: Saturday April 4th 2-4pm

Whether you're an adult or junior, a beginner or experienced player, our Open Day is a chance to:

- Come & see our newly resurfaced courts & the new sports pavilion. These first class facilities offer an improved tennis experience within a warm & friendly club atmosphere where all ages & abilities are welcome.
- Find out more about the Club, including coaching on offer for both juniors & adults.
- Play some tennis.
- Join or Renew Membership for 2020/21.
- Enjoy some light refreshments.

Membership fees have previously been kept artificially low to reflect the condition of the court surface & old clubhouse. It is now necessary to make changes to our membership subscription format & pricing structure to ensure sustainability for the future. Please come & check out our annual subscription rates.

*If 4th is very wet, or you are unable to make it on that day, we shall also be having an **Open Afternoon at our Club session on Sunday April 5th 2pm – 4pm as an alternative date.***

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

Facebook:

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

2040, an Inspirational Film

On Thursday, 26th March we will be showing a new film, "2040" in The Williams Hall, Stoke St Gregory at 7.30. It's made by a young Australian in the form of a visual letter to his four-year-old daughter as an optimistic guide to how he believes the world could be in twenty years. He says that we simply need to embrace the best solutions, which are already available to us now, to combat climate change and promote a sustainable environment. We already have the means to avert a disaster but it needs an enormous effort from everyone to achieve it. In other words, there's no need to wait for all those technologies which might never materialise such as Carbon Capture & Storage or Nuclear Fusion; it can and should be done now.

Do come along, watch the film and join the discussion afterwards. **FREE ENTRY.**

Calling all gardeners! We are running a **seed and plant swap** in the **King Alfred, Burrowbridge** on **12th March** from **7pm**.

Do any of you have an idea for addressing Climate Change, Sustainability or the Environment and need a modest injection of money? If so, then please apply for a grant from our **Community Project Fund**.

Find out more on these topics and lots more besides on our new website www.climateactionathelney.co.uk or look for us on Facebook.

Contact: Brian on 490623 or email climateactionathelney@gmail.com

WILLIAMS HALL SOCIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 29th 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, socialize and let us cook your breakfast for you

Tuesday 7th April 2020 Children's Easter Crafts 10 am to 12 midday

A morning of activities for the children with an Easter Theme.

Refreshments. £2 per child Adults free

Children must be accompanied by an adult

Saturday 9th May 2020 VE Day Breakfast 9am to 11am

Adults £6

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

NB All children must be accompanied by an adult
Come eat, socialize and let us cook your breakfast for you

Saturday 23rd May

Rock n Roll evening

Tickets £10 on the door Cash bar and Raffle


Doors open from 7.30pm

We look forward to seeing you at these events

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

THE PARISH CHURCH of ST. GREGORY UNITED LENTEN BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Rev. John Tyler will be leading a Course entitled "What do we find in the Bible" for 5 weeks beginning Monday 2 March in the Church Room.

All welcome. NC Church 4-5pm; SSG 6-7pm.

EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday: 4 April.

Good Friday: 10 April. Ecumenical Service 10.30 at The Baptist Church
Easter Sunday: 12 April Sunrise Service @ 6am in Baptist Church grounds.

Also Sunrise Service at Burrow Mump at 6.15am.

Sunday 26 April: Visit by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath and Wells. United Benefice Eucharist. 11am.

Friday 8 May: VE Day Bank Holiday.

10 May: Ecumenical Service in Parish Church to commemorate VE Day

9 & 10 May: Open Gardens at Hillcrest, Curload. Teas and plant stall.

17 May: Rogation Sunday. Walk around the Benefice with Rev. John Tyler. Further details will be in the Church Mag.

APCM 29 APRIL 2020

The APCM will take place at 7pm on 29 April 2020 in the Church Room.

BRIDGWATER FOOD BANK

Please see the notice in the Parish Magazine. There are some suggested items for which the Food Bank would be very grateful.

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

Dates for your diary:

Messy Church: Sunday 8th March
starting with breakfast at 10am.
Crafts, singing, Bible stories and food
– fun for all the family!

Maundy Thursday – 9th April
7.30pm Tenebrae service – readings
and reflections following the
crucifixion story

Good Friday – 10th April:

10.30am ecumenical service

Easter Sunday – 12th April:

6am sunrise service outside at the
back of the Baptist Church

9.30am Easter breakfast

10.30am Easter Sunday celebration
service

Messy Church: Sunday 3rd May
starting with breakfast at 10am.
Crafts, singing, Bible stories and food
– fun for all the family!

TWiGS Babies and toddler group
Every Thursday in term time 9.15 to
11.30am.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

AGM

Stoke St Gregory Playing Field Management Committee March 24th 2020

7:30pm in the Church Rooms

The Start of a New Era

Come and join us.

All Welcome.

Events at Willows and Wetlands (Coates English Willow)

21st March Mother's Day Event

6-9th April - Activities Week. A week of mini workshops for children and adults. Each shop will be offering a different activity every day. Booking is essential. Look out for further details.

8th May VE Day Street Party. Fun and games for everyone with a 1940s theme.

The new Willow Sculpture Trail will be up and running for the Easter Holiday.