

Our Community Environment – Who Cares?
**Would you be interested in contributing to the
formation of an independent community group
coordinating environmental projects in
Stoke St Gregory?**

The group's aim could be to improve our local environment through a diverse range of projects, such as:

- wild-flower planting;
- litter picking;
- children's recycling projects;
- building wildlife habitats;
- planting a community woodland; and
- identifying opportunities and supporting projects to reduce our 'carbon equivalent' emissions.

The environment impacts on all of us, young and old. It affects our wellbeing and physical health, the wildlife around us, biodiversity and climate. We all have the opportunity to play our part.

**If you would be interested in contributing and making Stoke St Gregory a better place to live and raise our families, please contact Fi McQueen at fjmcqueen@yahoo.co.uk.
Check local social media channels for more information.**

Parish Council Report

The PC met virtually for the last time in May. Starting with the next meeting on June 14th we will revert to **face to face meetings** in the Williams Hall. Meetings will be held in the Main Hall, socially distanced with all necessary safe practice measures in place. Members of the public are, as always welcome to join the meeting.

The most important business transacted during the March meeting, was the **co-option** of an individual to replace Nick Sloan who stepped down at the beginning of the year. As a result of this process Simon Dauncey was elected to the PC. I am sure that all will join in welcoming Simon to the PC; we look forward to his contribution. With the sad passing of David House, a further vacancy has become available on the Parish Council. If you have a strong interest in supporting your community, please ask the Parish Clerk for further details.

There were no significant **planning applications** to consider during the period, however since the May meeting the revised proposals for the buffer zone between Church Close and Broomfield Park have been published by SWTC planning. This is a complex document that will need study before consideration at the next PC meeting.

Parish Council Report (Continued)

Traffic and Parking in the Square, particularly around school times has seen a discernible improvement. This is encouraging, but it is important to maintain this. The support of all road users, particularly at school drop off and pick-up times would be welcome. SCC have apologised for the lack of progress on the 30mph zone in Meare Green. At the time of the May meeting, it was hoped that a full survey with consequent costings would be completed shortly. It was agreed that this cost will be covered by existing reserves rather than CIL funds.

During the last three meetings much discussion has centred upon how to manage the allocation of **Community Infrastructure Levy** funds due to be received by the village. All agreed that a process needs to be put in place that is fair, transparent and considers the views of the wider community who need to be part of a consultation process. The creation of this process will be discussed at future meetings but with the final tranche of funds due in October it was felt that in the period until September ideas could be harvested and a means to take appropriate decisions based on community engagement could be agreed.

So far ideas that have been proposed include.

- Provision of a demountable building to provide extra classroom space at the Willowset
- The 30-mph speed limit at Meare Green
- A petanque court at the Village Hall
- Kitchen equipment at the Royal Oak
- A multi-use games area (MUGA) at the playing field
- A children's play area adjacent to Polkes Field/Willowmead

All these ideas plus any others that are forthcoming in the interim will be the subject of discussion in the community before any final decision on allocation of funds is taken later in the year.

Vacancy

The Parish Council is looking for a part-time paid administrator for the village website, www.stokestgregory.org Knowledge of Wordpress would be an advantage but is not essential, as once familiar, the tool is very intuitive. If you have an interest in this role, please contact the Parish Clerk ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk

Parish Council Report (Cont. from pg 1)

Much concern was expressed that despite a pre-emptive note to farmers and contractors prior to the planting season, several **footpaths** along the heads of fields had been obliterated. Having taken the trouble to remind people of their obligations this was particularly disappointing and annoying to those who use the paths. Equally concerning is the apparent increase in **dog fouling** on public walkways and paths particularly in the centre of the village in areas used by children. Not only is this unsightly but it represents a significant public health hazard. If you own a dog, please bag what it leaves and take it home.

Finally, the widely known and highly successful **Stoke Stampede** had now been postponed twice and it will not be possible to arrange the event this year. As this is the single major source of revenue for the playing field the PC agreed to grant the Playing field management committee the sum of £3000 to compensate for the loss of this income. It was noted that throughout the pandemic the playing field committee have maintained this facility as an open space for exercise and social interaction. Indeed, with the opening up of Covid restrictions it is very encouraging that the Playing Field and new Pavilion are seeing a resurgence of sporting activity on most days of the week.

The Williams Hall

The Trustees of the Williams Hall are pleased to announce that the Hall is now open again for business. All the previous activities are slowly returning to the Hall from table tennis to children's gym as well as external meetings. If you would like to use the Hall for any function, please contact the booking secretary fieldingap@hotmail.com

TABLE TENNIS FOR FUN & FITNESS

The Wednesday evening table tennis group will resume from late May, 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? First week free! Just come along, or for more info call Paul on 490565.

Farmland Fetches Over £200 Per Acre!

A hundred years ago (+1) Windmill Farm, then owned by Mr R H Parker Jnr, was the centrepiece of an auction held in a packed Royal Oak on 3rd February, 1920. The papers reported that "*Biddings were brisk, the property attracting much attention and competition, with the result that every lot was sold at exceptionally high prices, some of the land realising over £200 per acre.*"

Windmill farmhouse, along with the garden, and the orchard of 3 roods 27 perches, was sold to Samuel Barnett (Hazel Patten's father) for £735. The adjoining meadow, 3 acres 2 roods 23perches, was bought by Joseph Patten, carter, horse breeder and farmer at Willments, for £450. The Home Field pasture went to S House at £455 for 3a 0r 18p. William House bought Pine's Orchard, 3r, for £165. Another meadow, Woodhouse Mead, 5a 2r 16p, was bought by Tommy Lee of Plâs Newydd (the house opposite Windmill that burnt down in the 1970s). Pinkey Mead, a willow bed 2a 3r 36p, was bought by H Haskins for £375.

The sale also included various cottages in Churley and Meare Green. One was bought by Arthur Squire, the baker at Ash Grove, for £180 pounds, but the annual rent was only £5 a year. How prices have changed. Windmill farmhouse was sold for little more than the price of three acres of farmland.

Follow the Stoke Sunday History Spot at gregorystoke.org

The Travelling Post Office

The travelling Post Office is now available every Thursday morning in the bar of the Royal Oak from 10:15 to 12:15 to service all of your Post Office needs. Please try to use this service to sustain it in Stoke St Gregory.

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

HOTV Report

It seems a long time since the last Newsletter article in that so much has happened in the past three months. The shop continues to trade strongly with an increasing customer base. The range and variety of goods is constantly under review being guided by feedback from customers.

The Parish Council on behalf of HOTV has successfully applied for a grant to install solar panels on the roof of the function room at the Royal Oak. This money was granted from the Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund for an amount of £15000. Of 136 applications ours was one of 40 selected. These panels will directly offset our consumption from the grid and will also permit us to phase out the use of LPG consistent with our long-term goal of becoming carbon neutral. Final vendor selection has been made and a planning application is being prepared.

Following the end of the first phase of lockdown, we were able to open the pub and the café for outdoor table service. On a chilly but dry opening night over 80 socially distanced visitors enjoyed the first drinks in our newly opened establishment. We have now moved into the next phase of release from lockdown and table service indoors is now available in the café and the pub.

Renovations have continued at pace.

- The bar has been completed; it will be for our customers to determine if it is the welcoming space we hope it will become, with Phil Evans as bar manager ready to greet customers.
- The external space is a joy to behold. To sit in the garden having a coffee on a sunny morning is a special experience.
- The Original Pub Sign from 40 years ago has been restored (thanks to Misha Seelhoff) and remounted. It has been slightly modified to signal that the Royal Oak is both a free house and the site of the Village Shop.
- Work to bring the kitchen up to hygiene standards is progressing with completion anticipated in the coming weeks.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the dedicated contribution of our community of volunteers. From cleaners to shelf stackers, painters to gardeners, and to table servers on chilly windy evenings, so many have helped move us forward to where we are now. It is worth reflecting that it is only eight months since the purchase of the Royal Oak was completed. That is some progress!

Parish Church of St. Gregory, Stoke St. Gregory

We have been delighted to welcome the Rev. Dr. Simon Bale as our new Vicar. He, together with his wife Louise, hope to move into the Athelney Vicarage in the very near future.

It was an especially wonderful Easter this year as we were able to recommence public worship in the Church. Covid restrictions remain, but we are continuing regular worship with all safety features in place. Please join us!

APCM

Our Annual Meeting took place following the morning service on Sunday 16 May.

The following were re-elected:

Churchwardens: Jane White and Will Tilley

Treasurer: Pat Sollis

Secretary: Carolyn Porter

We are very grateful to Robert Dare, who has cleared the Churchyard walls of weeds and ivy.

FUTURE DATES

18 July Songs of Praise with the Baptist Chapel on the playing field. There will be a list at the back of the Church, please add your choice of hymns.

21 August Opening of the new Pavilion. We hope to have a Church Stall.

...AND FINALLY...

Plants for sale are available from Annette Gage's house in Woodhill.

The Church Room is available once more for hire...Children's parties, Receptions etc.

Contact Mrs. Diana Silk on 490348.

Are You Connected?

Those of us who use the internet a lot sometimes think that everyone is connected, and that everyone who has an email address uses it. A few lines posted on a web site, however, do not guarantee that a reasonable proportion of the community has been reached or informed. Stoke News, along with the Church & Chapel printed word, help to fill the gap, and village groups keep their members informed in various ways, but some villagers are still missing out on what's happening tomorrow, or even today. It has been suggested that an 'Email Buddy' system could help.

If you would be willing to telephone or text a neighbour, or print and post something through their door, about stuff you see on social media or the village web site, please get in touch with Dave Evans gregorystoke@aol.com. If you are not an internet user, or would just prefer to have something in writing, please ask a friend to contact us on the above email, or drop in a note with your address and contact details, in an envelope at the shop counter, or through Stoke House letterbox in Dark Lane. Data Protection rules will apply.

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Our new tennis season is now well underway &, with the lifting of lockdown restrictions, we are fully able to play tennis once again. We continue to take sensible precautions of social distancing before, during & after tennis activity. All that is now needed is some fine warm weather!

The Club is open to members & non-members. Club session times are Mondays 10.00am, Wednesdays 6.00pm & Sundays 2.00pm. Less experienced players are always welcome to join in the Rusty Rackets session on Sundays at 10.00am, also open to members & non-members.

Otherwise, you can always book to Pay & Play; courts are available outside of the above session times. This is a good way to introduce yourself to the game, or rekindle past skills, at a cost of £7.50 for a court booking, allowing up to 4 people to play & have fun for an hour. Bookings & payments can be made online at:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/StokeStGregoryTennisClub>

There are 2 tennis coaching sessions on Thursday mornings, one for experienced players & the other for Rusty Rackets/beginners. Both are run by our Club's tennis coach Rachel Apsey, an experienced LTA accredited coach. If interested, please contact the Club as below.

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

or ssgtennisclub@gmail.com

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

WILLIAMS HALL, SSG forthcoming EVENT SATURDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2021

Steve Mitchell brings you his brand new theatre show-
'George Michael Live'.

This joyous new show celebrates the music of one of the most iconic and best singer songwriters of all time, the incredible George Michael.

This ultimate tribute concert features full live band and is a heartfelt and authentic tribute that takes audiences on a musical journey of George's greatest hits and high energy Wham tracks. The show is based on George's 25 Live tour and audiences are treated to stunning musical arrangements and exciting versions of songs such as Fastlove, Faith, Careless Whisper, Outside and Freedom.

Join us for an unmissable evening as we pay homage to one of the most loved artists of our generation.

'Always celebrating the music of George Michael'

www.georgemichaellivetribe.com

www.facebook.com/georgemichaellivetribe

Tickets available now from

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/carltonentertainmentsandeventmanagement/495661/>

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church news

Our Sunday services are mostly in our church building now at 10.30am. We are holding some services outside in our beautiful grounds so that we can sing together. For more details, please check our website: ssgbaptists.com

We are looking ahead and planning towards the restart of Twigs, Messy Church and Lunch club and will send out more details when we have them. We are also planning some community events over the summer which we will advertise soon.

Events planned so far:

June

Saturday 26th June 2-4pm

Strawberry tea and exhibition of creativity and new skills learnt during lockdown. If there is something you would like to contribute to the exhibition, please let us know by emailing ssgbaptists@gmail.com

July

Sunday 18th July 11am Joint churches Songs of Praise event on the playing field.