

STOKE ST GREGORY MEALS

Is delighted to sponsor this newsletter.

We deliver homemade freshly-cooked two course mid-day meals to houses in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry. Our customers range from those who are elderly and appreciate the support of a hot meal delivered by friendly local people, to those who have used the service whilst recovering after an operation.

The meals currently cost £3.90 per meal and are cooked by our cooks in their own kitchens. We are all volunteers and our cooks have food hygiene certificates.

If you think we could be of help to you, a neighbour, friend or relative, please phone Carole Joll 490077 or Judy Blair 490222 or Vicki Fielding 490565

STOKE STAMPEDE

A note for your diaries. The Stoke Stampede will be held on Sunday 8th January 2023 from 10.30am. This is always a great event for the village with all proceeds going to the upkeep and improvement of our playing field.

We have capacity for 450 runners. All places were filled in just over an hour when registration was opened. This is a testament to just how popular the Stoke Stampede is within the running community.

As always, this event takes a lot of organising from a dedicated group of volunteers.

We are always looking for extra help either before or on the day with marshalling, registration, running a water station and car parking. If you feel you could help, please contact either Tom Duxbury on 07714696707 or Paul Morse on 07519397133.

Support for these runners is always good, so please come out and give them a wave as they go by. There is always a draw, run by the tennis club, in the square with an array of prizes. Have a go and help us to keep improving our Playing Field and attract more people to use the fantastic amenities that are provided there.

See you all on the day. Paul Morse (Race director).

ROAD SAFETY - SPEEDWATCH

Now that the new 30mph speed limit in Meare Green has been running for some time, the Speedwatch team has re-started sessions. The Speedwatch team is an official group appointed, trained and supported by Avon and Somerset Police, using equipment provided by them. Strict operational guidelines are followed by the team.

We find that 10% of the drivers passing us are exceeding the new speed limit! The limit was reduced from 40mph to 30mph at the request of the Meare Green residents to make the road safer for vulnerable walkers, cyclists and horse riders as there is no pavement and an average of 200 vehicles travel through during each Speedwatch session.

The recently revised Highway code states that **ALL vulnerable road users should be passed at no more than 10mph and at a distance of 2metres.**

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders should **always** wear hi-viz so that they can be seen easily by drivers. Even in bright sunlight, dark clothing cannot be seen against hedges. At this time of the year in the afternoon, when the sun is low in the sky, this is particularly true. A plea to cyclists from a horse rider - when approaching a horse from behind please CALL OUT to let the rider know you are there. The sound of hooves can stop a rider from hearing a bell ring.

Please help to keep our village safe by observing ALL the speed limits ALL of the time. Anyone who is interested in extending Speedwatch to other parts of the village can contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

URGENT

The **Williams Hall** is a much-used village institution, admired by all who use it. It hosts activities ranging from children's parties to events such as the Village Breakfasts to full drama productions by the Stoke Players. Additionally, it is the venue of choice for many organisations from outside the village who come to Stoke specifically to use the Hall.

The Trustees of the Hall who oversee its governance urgently require both a Treasurer and a Secretary. Neither of these roles are overly demanding as the Trustees only meet four times a year. Additionally, there are well established bookkeeping practices in place and the finances are in a comfortable position.

If you feel you can contribute to this key village institution which brings benefit to the whole community and beyond, please contact Graham Glead on 490407 or grahiamglead@gmail.com.

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

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council Report

In the last three months the following **planning applications** have been considered:

36/22/0016 Dene Cottage, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory Erection of a two storey extension to the rear of the dwelling (re submission of 36/22/0002)

This was refused on 30-9-22

36/22/0015 Chatsworth Cottage, Curload, Stoke St Gregory Demolition of garage. Erection of a two storey garden room with annex above

This application was withdrawn

36/22/0017 Sunnycroft, Stoke Road Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory Removal of conservatory and erection of a single storey extension to both side and rear of the dwelling (resubmission of 36/21/0028)

This was unanimously approved.

CIL Update The following applications were successful:

Stoke St Gregory Environment Group (SEG)

£2,500

The Willowset Forest School area. Sensory area development and introduction of sessions to bring together the young and the older generation of the village £7,539.86

The Youth Project

£30,000 towards the provision of identified facilities for the young people in the village

A Steering group has been set up to explore other sources of funding to boost the pot

Further consultations with the youth of the village will continue. Anyone who would like to help with this project please contact Anne Merritt or Danny James who are forming the Steering group

Young people are particularly welcome to join the group.

The Village Plan 2023

The launching preparations are now complete. The questionnaire has been finalized.

The survey goes live on the 28th November and ends on the 15th December. You can ask Gill Slattery or Janice Pearce for a paper copy if you would prefer it.

There will be sessions in the HOTV café from 10-12 On

29th November

30th November

1st December

2nd December

Gill and Janice will be available to assist anyone who wishes to respond on line, but is unable to do so.

We will help.

Village Warm Hub

A very enjoyable event was held on the 7th November in the Royal Oak. It was well attended and lots of ideas were circulated for the development of the group. Another event is planned for Monday 21st November. Ideas for activities and volunteers would be greatly appreciated

Cost of Living Crisis

A village larder has been set up in the Parish Church for anyone in the village to use or donate something.

The Church is open every day until 6pm.

(Please see article elsewhere in the newsletter)

Full details of the Parish Council meetings are on the village web site and on the village noticeboard in the square by the Royal Oak

Stoke History - Constable Hides in Hay Rick

From the Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser - Wednesday 14 January 1931:

ANNOYANCE AT A CHAPEL. LADS' BEHAVIOUR AT STATHE.

Four Stoke St Gregory lads were charged at Taunton County Sessions on Saturday with causing annoyance to persons attending Stathe Baptist chapel . . . The youths were: Herbert Cox, Wallace Pope, Wilfred Loveridge and Jack Keirle. Cox and another lad, Leslie Harding, of Stoke St. Gregory, were also charged with persistently singing near the entrance to the place of worship in such a manner as to cause annoyance. All the lads pleaded not guilty and were dealt with together. P.C. Sparks said that in consequence of a written complaint received from the Rev. Watson, he went to Stathe in plain clothes on Sunday evening. About 5.45 he hid in a hay rick. The service commenced, but at ten minutes past six four lads approached from Stathe corner. Outside the chapel two of them started skylarking with a girl and one remarked "*If you want the girl, take her.*" The young lady then went into the chapel and the four lads started jumping on the steps leading to the porch . . . One of the youths then started singing "*When it's Springtime in the Rockies.*" . . . The service was over about 7.36 and on coming outside Loveridge started singing one of the hymns which had been sung in chapel, in a manner which P.C. Sparks thought was mocking. Before chapel Cox and the lad Harding had been smoking, and coming out after the service Cox started again. . . Harding alone made a statement to the justices. He said "*We were not singing songs or smoking when they were singing hymns in the chapel.*" Mr. Wyndham (presiding magistrate) announcing the decision of the Bench to bind each lad over for six months in the sum of £5. Each youth was also ordered pay 4s costs.

Check out more stories at www.gregorystoke.org

Stoke St Gregory WI

We like to think at Stoke St Gregory WI that we present a diverse programme for members: over the past few months we have had a detailed talk on the Turin Shroud, we've watched Edwina Hansford make some stunning Autumn wreaths and laughed as we attempted origami, struggling with the intricacies of Japanese paper folding. It only costs £3.00 to attend a meeting as a visitor, why not come along? We meet at the Village Hall on the 2nd Tuesday of every month starting from 7pm.

To tempt you, the 2023 calendar of meetings starts with the Christmas meal on **Tuesday 10th January**, being held at The Maypole Inn, Thurloxton from 12:30pm.

We then return to the Village Hall **on Tuesday 14th February** to burn off those extra Christmas calories and dump the New Year blues with "The Great British Shake Off" where Tina Blackwill leads an audience participation class for pom-pom dancing with lots of funky music, cool dancing and the odd shimmy. The February meeting is when we will hold the annual competition for members. For those who are both romantic and craft minded we request you submit your homemade Valentine's card in any form or medium.

Tuesday 14th March is "The Power within You" by Sarah Guest with a positive uplifting presentation on wellness and mindfulness. A warm welcome awaits you!

Amelia Holt President (01823 490401 07985317252)



Our multi- **Award Winning** village Hub, **The Royal Oak, in Stoke St Gregory**, is looking for more volunteers to build on its recent achievements.



Our Community owned hub plays an important role at the heart of our local community. The hub includes the Village Shop, Café and Pub and hosts a visiting Post Office service. The HOTV management committee, who are all volunteers, is aware that it now needs to recruit more volunteers to meet increased demands for its services.

Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” And what better way to give than through volunteering at our Community hub.

Volunteering can help you gain confidence by giving you the chance to try something new and build a real sense of achievement and makes you happy. To quote just one regular volunteer " it's been a lifeline to people – the volunteers helping out in the Shop and Café. It's a different Village now. This Project, HOTV, has brought the community together and I'm so proud."

A recently published study in the **British Medical Journal**, found that those who engaged in volunteering, regularly experienced higher levels of mental well-being than those who never volunteered. Other research has found that being helpful to others has a positive impact on brain activity. In short, the more we give, the happier we feel.

Volunteering is the gift that keeps on giving. The beauty of supporting your community hub, is that it not only benefits others, but it also benefits you as well. As the saying goes, one of the secrets to living is giving. So please take the first step and make contact. For further information, please contact [johndavison52@gmail.com](mailto: johndavison52@gmail.com) or 07836 327926, for all enquiries about volunteering at our community hub. **We look forward to welcoming you to our winning team.**

Stoke Environment Group **In Control of our Future**

As I write, the COP27 conference is about to kick off in Egypt. By the time you read this, I am sure we will have been told that virtually all the nations represented at the conference will be 100% behind initiatives to control emissions and to fund the less affluent countries in their efforts to mitigate the serious impact of climate change. Time will tell if these promises come to fruition.

In the meantime, we in Stoke St Gregory and the surrounding communities CAN do something to make a difference. We have the tools, the knowledge and the skills to make a difference – we just need the will to do it. Recent reports from the UN strongly suggest the earth's temperature is increasing at a rapid rate – we cannot sit back and just say “it's not my problem”. Stoke Environment Group is not going to halt climate change, but we can make a difference to our community – both from the environmental and the physical and mental wellbeing points of view. Climate change is here and there are things we can do, individually and collectively, that will enable us to adapt to the changes as well as mitigate the effects. Ensuring we have plentiful supplies of clean water, reducing our energy consumption, cooling our buildings, reducing our carbon emissions, improving biodiversity to support local food production, supporting a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle. All these things are in our control and seeing through projects that address these initiatives is SEG's remit. We would love you to participate.

The changes we are seeing, the need to become more thoughtful, and the measures to become more resilient and create a sustainable community provide us with opportunities. It would be easy to get depressed – but let's use this opportunity to become inspired to be positive about change!

SEG supporters have recently planted about 500 wildflower bulbs around the village (with more to come), we will do some more coppicing in the Spinney (village hall) to increase biodiversity, we are looking at creating a community resource hub, improving our footpaths and access routes is ongoing, we have started planning for the Envirofair 23 (June 2023), we have ‘adopted’ the telephone box in Willey Road on behalf of the PC. And this is the tip of the iceberg. Please get involved in these projects and more!

To finish, I would urge everyone to engage with the Steering Group who are driving forward the village plan. This plan will be owned by us, the community, and it will provide a framework for moving forward with our community. It is important that everyone is involved – please look out for notices and invitations to participate – we do have the opportunity to be in control of our future!

Ian Upshall (SEG Lead Coordinator)

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club

Christmas Tennis Fun Day

Join us for some Xmas fun and games this December!

Stoke St Gregory Tennis Club - Monday 19th December

 9am - 3pm  £20 per person

- For ages 5-16
- Xmas gift for every participant
- All abilities welcome
- Equipment can be provided
- Qualified coaches
- HAVE LOTS OF FUN!!

How to book Call/email Luke Andrews on:

 07437 404242  Latennis@hotmail.com

Dan is also continuing to provide coaching each Saturday during term time. Sessions at: 1.30pm - under 10 years
2.30pm - 10 years & over

We are able to offer a 50% reduction on the normal rate for a term time block booking, thanks to support from Somerset Community Foundation. Pay & Play for one-off lessons is possible, but will be charged at the normal rate.

Or enquiries to: ssgtennis@gmail.com 07956 981679

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

In the event of bad weather necessitating cancellation of any session, you will be contacted by the coaching team.

Please share and tell your friends and families!

News from Coates English Willow Visitor Centre

Before talking about what we are up to I thought we should mention Malc Musgrove's retirement. After 50 years of willow work here at Meare Green, in December Malc is hanging up his wellies, apron and boiler suit. All of us here wish him a very long and Happy Retirement and want to thank him for all the years of hard work and dedication. He will be missed here, there can't be many people around who have had such a long career in one place.

Cheers Malc!!

Thank you to everyone who came and enjoyed the Pumpkin Trail over the half term holiday.

December is going to be a busy month at the Centre so here is a round- up of what is coming up:

- **Christmas Fayre** – 10th December 10am-4pm. Food and Craft stalls, entertainment and Festive Fairy.
- **Late Night Shopping** -14th December 5-8pm. Enjoy a relaxed evening of shopping and food.
- **Edwinas Flowers -Festive Wreath Making Workshops** throughout November and December, £45 each. Call Edwina for more information and to book 07889 411030.
- **Withies Emporium opening 19th December-** As Santa is so very busy during December getting ready for the BIG Day, Mother Xmas will be visiting the Emporium, so look out on social media for details of how to book your place.
- **Lemon Tree – Christmas Afternoon Teas** 2nd -9th December and Special Xmas menu 10th -17th December. To reserve a table please call Jolene 01823 490929- full details are on the website and social media.
- **Somerset Chocolate Co.** The shop is relocating to Unit 3 early in 2023.
- **Vacant retail unit-** As the Chocolate Shop is moving Unit 5 will be available to rent early in 2023. Please call 01823 490249 for details about renting this space.
- **Willow Shop moving!** But not far. The new shop will be open for the Christmas Fayre, come and have a look at the new look.

Please keep an eye on all our various social media posts and websites for more details and updates on all this information.

SSG WARM HUB

We are pleased to report that the first event in the **Warm Hub** initiative was a very successful soup with bread and cheese lunch at the Royal Oak. Grateful thanks to those who supplied and served the food and HOTV for making the venue available. The Warm Hub group is comprised of people from both of the village churches, the Parish Council and HOTV. As with so many things, more volunteers would be welcome. The thirty or so folk who attended were most appreciative and would like to see more of the same as well as having various ideas for other informal gatherings. Keep an eye on the notice board outside the shop for further information.

In addition to this and in a trial run to help out anybody in the village who is having difficulty with finances at this time, we have opened a **Village Larder**. This is located in the back of the Parish Church – chosen because of its central location and the fact that it is open every day for anybody to enter for whatever reason. If you need any of the goods displayed in there then please help yourself. Equally, if you have any spare “store cupboard” groceries perhaps you would consider donating them. This is all food that would previously have been donated to the Bridgwater Foodbank but is now being made available in our own local community. We do hope that anybody in need will feel able to make use of this.

The Parish Church Stoke St. Gregory

Routine services are posted on the church and shop noticeboards

Special Christmas Services at St Gregory's

Thursday 15th December 6pm – Carols in the Square with a visit from Father Christmas

Sunday 18th December 6.30pm – Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies

Saturday 24th December 3pm – Crib Service

Saturday 24th December 10pm – First Mass of Christmas

Sunday 25th December 10am – Benefice Christmas Eucharist at **North Curry Church**