

This edition of the newsletter is sponsored by

Dykes Farm Dairy Organic Raw Milk

Dykes Farm, situated on Slough Lane, Stoke St Gregory, sells fresh raw milk on a self-service basis direct from the farm gate.

The milk, which is unpasteurised and unhomogenised, is bottled within a few hours of our herd of black and white British Friesian cows producing it. Two-pint bottles are available to buy every day of the year from the fridge in our roadside dairy room. 8am-8pm.

We accept both cash or card payment.

If you wish to find out more about how the milk is produced and how we manage our farm organically do have a look at our Facebook page.



Dykes-Farm Raw Milk

PC Report: Emergency and Incident Response Plan

A Draft plan is currently being developed by Ian Upshall in collaboration with others for an Emergency and Incident response. This will include an update of the current Flood Plan and also to look at other examples of Emergency/Incident plans. The object is to plan to manage the first few hours of any incident or emergency until external agencies are able to attend.

Liaison with neighbouring Parishes regarding their plans is taking place.

Street Lighting

Residents in Church Close are currently being consulted about a proposed plan for a trial period of switching off the street lights. The purpose of the trial is to look at ways we can protect our natural environment, safeguard wildlife and prevent the waste of energy. The plan will depend on the majority of the residents in agreement. Street lighting is currently in Church Close, Huntham Close and Polkesfield.

The 23/24 budget and precept

The Clerk reports that it would be inappropriate and unjustifiable to increase the precept above the rate of inflation. Costs are increasing across the board and the PC costs are no exception to this. The Clerk circulated a revised budget document to the PC for consideration.

It was agreed by the Council for the 23/24 Fiscal year that the Parish precept would increase by 11.08% from £17,600 to £19,550.

The Clerk recommends with prudent financial management for the remainder of 22/23 a surplus saving of £3,326 can be made. This surplus added to other income (predominately the Burial Ground forecasted from a 5 year average) of £1,508 totals £24,384. The proposed total budgeted outgoings for the PC for 23/24 is £24,384.50.

The average Band D property will increase from £44.69 in 22/23 to £47.60 in 23/24 an increase of 6.5%

Full breakdown of all the Property bands is available from the Parish Clerk

HOTV News

At an HOTV Members' meeting on 13 January in the Royal Oak, the committee updated Members on the current state of the finances, and the Members had an opportunity to ask questions. The minutes may be found on www.hotvssg.org. It was immensely encouraging to sense such a groundswell of support for this vital community enterprise.

- As a result of some serious cost-reduction measures and streamlining of shop stock management, we have arrested, and to some extent reversed, the decline in our financial position. We still face major challenges, but there is a renewed determination to do what is necessary to help HOTV thrive.

- We are actively looking to recruit a cook (or cooks) to enable us to start offering food in the pub again and would welcome any offers or suggestions.

- We also need to expand our wonderful team of volunteers. Questions were asked at the meeting as to what duties volunteers were needed for. The answer is any number of different jobs, from learning to operate the coffee machine to stacking shelves, collecting bread or helping in the pub. Your support would be greatly appreciated, whether for regular shifts or at any time that suits you. Please ask in the shop or pub or contact Ann Woods (07743 601427).

- We are looking at applying for a grant to fund major capital improvements in the kitchen and the rest of the building. There is no certainty of success, but this reflects a revival of confidence. For the good of the village HOTV has to succeed and the only feasible way is up.

- Several Members at the meeting expressed an interest in contributing further funds to help pay down some of the loans which are eating into our revenues. This is a complicated issue, but we have taken on board the suggestions and will be looking at options. In the meantime, if anyone would like to support us by buying shares now in HOTV, there is a Share Application form on the Documents page at www.hotvssg.org

- And please continue to support us by buying stuff in the shop and enjoying a drink in the pub. Tell us what you like and what you don't, so that we can keep improving what we offer.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome:
contact@hotvssg.org.

2022 Poppy Appeal

Donations to the 2022 Poppy Appeal from the Parish Council, the Remembrance Service in the parish church, the charity lunch, the Village School, the Village Stores, the Lemon Tree Café, the Levels Country Store and the King Alfred Pub amounted to £1222.16.

On behalf of the Royal British Legion, I would like to say a very big thank you to everybody who, once again, gave so much of their time and contributed so generously to this worthy cause.

Richard Dobson (Poppy Area Coordinator)

Stoke St Gregory Women's Institute

meets at the Village Hall on the second Tuesday of every month from 7pm.

A varied programme is provided along with a warm and friendly welcome.

Over the coming months we have a life coach speaking to us, a professional singer with a long career on the cruise ships entertaining us and a talk entitled "Trees and all their Wisdom".

Why not come along as a visitor? It's an opportunity to try new activities, listen to interesting speakers and campaign on issues that matter.

The small group of 20 members looks forward to welcoming you!

Amelia Holt (President)

01823 490401 07985 317252

Parish Council Report – Planning

Over the last three months, December, January and February
The following planning applications have been considered:

36/22/0017 Sunnycroft, Stoke Road, Meare Green, Stoke St Gregory Removal of conservatory and erection of a single storey extensions to both sides and the rear

DECISION CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 08/11/2022

36/22/0023 Huntham Farm, Huntham Lane, Stoke St Gregory - Erection of an agricultural building to cover open cattle yard.

The following response was agreed:

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support the application in principle but would like to highlight there are inconsistencies within the 2 documents: the biodiversity and climate emergency checklists. There are water filled ditches /rhynes and an orchard near to the site (within 500m). Within the list it has been ticked 'NO'

Which is inconsistent with the area.

36/22/0021 Willow Farm, Curload, Stoke St Gregory-Demolition of brick out house and erection of a workshop on land

The following response was agreed:

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support the application in principle but highlight there are inconsistencies within the 2 documents: the biodiversity and climate emergency checklists. The site is situated near a rhyne (within 500m) it has been ticked 'NO' it is not near a watercourse on the documents which is inconsistent with the area.

36/22/0010 Dark Lane Farm, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory - Erection of a two storey extension (Application amended)

The following response was agreed:

Stoke St Gregory Parish Council support the application amendments with the original response submitted citing "Stoke St Gregory Parish Council agreed to support this planning application along with the recommendations of the bat survey"

36/22/0026 16 Willey Road Stoke St Gregory

Replacement of conservatory with the erection of a single storey extension to the rear

The Parish Council supported this application

DECISION-CONDITIONAL APPROVAL 25/01/2023

CTIL12723121 Consultation to upgrade existing telecommunications installation at Dykes Farm

The Parish Council support the upgrade and modifications to the existing mast as there is a requirement for improved telecommunications and network coverage throughout the village

36/23/0001/HR Notification of the removal of a maximum of 30 metres of hedgerow (and full replacement)

On land to the North of Curload Farm, Stoke St Gregory

The Parish Council supported this application

36/23/0002/HR Notification of the removal of 20 metres of hedgerow on land to the west of the River Tone, West of Curload Farm and relating to the Hook Bridge Spillway

The Parish Council gave conditional approval to this application on the basis that the hedgerow is fully replaced with older hedging to blend in with existing hedge. The stile be replaced with a kissing gate rather than a standard gate for protection of livestock.

Village History - BBC's 'Man Alive' Visits

Stoke St Gregory

Man Alive was a topical BBC programme which often tackled controversial subjects, perhaps the most memorable being "Gale is Dead", the story of 19-year-old Gale Parsons, who died a drug addict on 11 February 1970, during the making of the programme. Other topics, ground breaking at the time, were the possible decriminalisation of male homosexual acts; and a look at suburban housewives involved with the occult.

However, on Wednesday 20th September 1967, at 8.35 in the evening, BBC 2 gave its viewers a taste of life in rural Somerset, in the programme "**All on a Summer's Day**". Here is the BBC synopsis:

"They are as much a part of the English summer as rain, traffic jams, and school holidays - fêtes. And in the village of Stoke St. Gregory, Somerset, the fête that they have planned, discussed, and argued about for months finally takes place. The organisers organise: their opponents criticise. Feelings flare into the open over the beauty queen competition, and the sandwiches run out half-way through the afternoon. Who gets the credit if it's a success? Who gets the blame if it's a failure?"

Don Boon had rigged up an aerial and had got hold of two TVs with the new 625 line system necessary for the BBC 2 channel. Trevor Boon remembers, as a very enthusiastic 11 year old boy, helping his dad to run the cables around the hall, with a television at each end. The village hall was packed.

More on: <https://www.gregorstoke.org/manalive>

The Coronation

Village organizations are invited to take part in a Celebratory Village Fete to mark the Coronation of King Charles.

The Fete will be on Bank Holiday Monday 8th May from 2pm until 5pm on the Village Playing Field.

A variety of stalls, sports, games and refreshments are planned.

If your organisation would like to take part by having a stall or an activity please contact the Parish Clerk Kelly De Silva ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk
Or Janice Pearce pearcejanice@hotmail.co.uk

The Village Plan

The Village Plan Steering Group would like to thank everyone who completed the survey which closed on the 31st December.

A total of 385 people completed the survey, 309 of which lived in the village. This represents 30% of the population of Stoke St Gregory which has been currently assessed in the 2021 Census as 1,012.

We had responses from all the age groups

At present the Steering Group are analysing all the data and working with the SCC to prepare a completed document of the results.

We will then study the results and identify the priorities and then devise an action plan.

The Action Plan will be for the Parish Council and other relevant groups in the village to act upon.

The document is due to be completed by the 23rd March and will be available to everyone in the village in April.

This document will be revised and updated at least every two years from then on.



Saint George's Day is the feast day of Saint George, celebrated by Christian churches, countries, and cities of which he is the patron saint, including Bulgaria, England, Georgia, Portugal, Romania, Cáceres, Alcoy, Aragon and Catalonia. St George was buried in the Holy Land, and during the Crusades, St. George's Chapel was erected over his tomb. However, his heart was brought to England by the Emperor Sigismund of Germany and presented to King Henry V. The Order of the Knights of St. George was founded at Windsor Castle, and George became the patron saint of England.

Back by popular demand, the Langport Mummers will be putting on a splendid performance of the St. George Mummer's play.

There are regional variations of the St. George Mummer's play, but the plot always involves a sword fight between George and a dragon, or George and a Turkish Knight. The Mummers are women and men wearing costumes of tatters and masks, and may have blackened faces to disguise their identities.

There's a happy sense here of a surfeit of ideas, watching the Mummers perform and a joy – shared with the audience – at bringing this tale daftly to life, which is essentially a sublime celebration of silliness.

A brilliant and amazingly funny, unmissable performance. If you are a fan of absurdist comedy, clown or dark humour, do not miss this one.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to our celebration at our Community Hub on St Georges Day, Sunday 23rd April at 12 noon. Happy St. George's Day

PC News: The Parish Clock

The Parish clock suspension spring has broken. This repair is quite a specialised job and Nick Sloan has been getting quotes for the work. The Parish Council has agreed to pay for the repairs. A quote has been accepted and we await a response.



Our **Multi Award Winning Village Hub @ The Royal Oak, in Stoke St Gregory**, is delighted to announce the return of Saint George to our Community Hub on St Georges Day, **Sunday 23rd April at 12 noon.**

Stoke Environment Group : Springing Into Action!

As I write, the sun is shining and, dare I say, its beginning to feel like Spring is on its way! The water on the moors is receding and the ground is a little more firm underfoot. Whilst many people accept the return of the 'flood' water on the moors each year, it does shine a light on the fragility of the environment in which we live and cherish. Just like the rivers, the rhynes, the pumping stations and the clyses (or sluices) that are interdependent on each other to maintain and control the water levels, so there is an interdependency on the wider environment. If any one element gets out of balance, the whole 'system' becomes vulnerable and unstable.

Our efforts to maintain the balance whilst accepting and adapting to the changing environment are becoming even more important. Man has not witnessed the changes to climate that we are experiencing now – but we have the knowledge and some very clever modelling tools to at least anticipate how things will develop. And there is no doubt that we are in for a long period of changing climate.

Stoke Environment Group has identified a number of projects to tackle this year. Some might seem as though they will have a superficial impact – such as sprucing up the Royal Oak bus stop. "How is that helping us to adapt to climate change?"; you may ask. Well, if we have pride in our surroundings, if we take care of what we have and if more of us can be persuaded to use the bus more often, we can make small changes. And if we all make small changes often enough, they will amount to bigger changes. Supporting biodiversity, reducing waste, recycling more – all these things have an impact. Reducing our carbon emissions in whatever way we can, will have an effect over time. Adapting to change is good – it can stimulate ideas, exploit opportunities and fire enthusiasm. Just as the plants in our gardens and fields and roadside verges start to exploit the warmer weather, so we can make changes which will lead to a bright future.

We are well underway with our planning for Envirofair23 on 3 June at the village hall too. We currently have about 25 organisations and groups joining us – including the Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, Reimagining The Levels, Off-Grid Solutions, Somerset Wildlands, local groups and clubs - and we are confident this will increase to about thirty. We are really happy to confirm that we will be joined by Sharandy's rescue owls again – one of the highlights of last year's Envirofair! Lots to see and to do for all ages with refreshments provided by local suppliers too. Free entry (donations accepted) means everyone can pop in. Please keep an eagle-eye out for more news. This is going to be good!

If you would like more information on working with SEG or just inquisitive, please contact us on envirostoke@yahoo.com or 07837 764367. More information can be found on our Facebook page, Envirostoke.

Check out more events in the Shop,
on the website
www.stokestgregory.org and at
www.facebook.com/StokeStGregory

NOTICEBOARD

Events for June, July
and August by Friday
19th May

TABLE TENNIS - JOIN THE CROWD!

The Wednesday evening table tennis group is flourishing, with some welcome new members, and 2 teams playing in the lower divisions of the Bridgwater League. Come and join us, every Wednesday evening from 7-9pm at the Village Hall for a couple of hours of sociable exercise. All ages (currently 14-70+) and 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.

St GREGORY'S PARISH CHURCH

Routine services are posted on the church and shop noticeboards
Special Easter Services

7th April Good Friday

11am Joint ecumenical service with the Baptists in the Baptist Church

9th April Easter Sunday

6am sunrise service at the Mump

6.30am sunrise service at the Baptist Church car park overlooking the Levels

11am Eucharist service in the Parish Church

Other Events

Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th April. The church is open every day but on that weekend we will hold an Open Days event. We will have the old Church records from the Somerset Heritage Archives which will be available for examining the Church Records. If anyone has personal records or items of local historical interest that could be put on display, please get in touch. We are planning to have live music in the church and there will be refreshments served in the Church Room. We need help in the Church Room and are required to have steward/supervisors in the church while the Records are on display. Volunteers for short shifts would be welcome. Contact Jane 490508 or Alex 490917

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th May (1 -5pm) - Open Gardens at Hillcrest (top of Curload) Charles and Charlotte Sundquist are opening their garden for the National Garden Scheme which supports various national charities. This is an opportunity to walk around one of the loveliest gardens in the Village. The Church will be running the tea and cakes and (we hope) plant sales. Again, volunteers sought for cake baking and serving. Contact Jane 490508 or Alex 490917

Bank Holiday Monday 8th May

*Stoke St Gregory Village Fete to Celebrate the
Coronation*

Playing Field
2pm until 5pm

A variety of stalls from the village organisations, BBQ, Bar, Raffle,
Rounders match for all ages
Five a side football, Supervised Tennis
and more
Family fun for all ages

Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

Dates for your diary:

Messy Church Easter event

Sun 2nd April starts at 10am with breakfast. Crafts, singing, Bible stories – fun for all the family!

Good Friday service – 7th April

Joint service of reflection with St Gregory's Church at 10am at Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church.

Easter sunrise service

Sun 9th April 6.15am behind the Baptist Chapel. Come and enjoy the view and celebrate the resurrection.

Alternatively, if you are feeling energetic, join the sunrise service on Burrow Mump!

Easter Day celebration service

For all the family, Sun 9th April 10.30am.

TWiGS Babies and toddler group

For babies & toddlers and their carers, every Thursday in term time 9.30 to 11.30am.

Luncheon club

Every other Wed 12noon

For more info, please contact Liz on 490828 or Alison on 490380.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Date for the diary:

EnviroFair23

Saturday 3rd June
Village Hall

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