

All items for the  
Summer Edition by:  
Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May

# Stoke News Spring 2024

Contact:  
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## Stoke St Gregory Meals

### Sponsors of the Stoke News

From fisherman's pie to a pork stir fry. Pears that are poached and potatoes that are roast and much much more.

Twice a week we deliver homemade, freshly cooked, two course midday meals.

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.

Currently the cost is £3.90 per meal (that's for both courses)

The meals are cooked in the village in the cooks' own kitchens and delivered to residents in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry.

We are all volunteers and our cooks have food safety certificates.

If you feel **Stoke St Gregory Meals** could be of help to you, a neighbour, friend or relative in Stoke St Gregory or North Curry or if you would like to volunteer, please phone:

Carole Joll (01823 490077), Vicki Fielding (490565) or  
Judy Blair (490222)

## St Gregory's Church

Mothering Sunday - 10th March 2024 – 3pm

If you are a mother or have ever had a mother, then you are warmly invited to join us at St Gregory's for a service of thanksgiving and to reaffirm our loyalty to Mother Church and generally celebrate motherhood in all its forms on this spring afternoon.

We shall have a very child friendly service starting at 3pm at which posies will be distributed, followed by tea – undoubtedly supplied by a collection of mothers... Come and join us and bring your children, young or old but, with or without children, come along anyway and enjoy the company.

Services at St Gregory's for Holy Week and Easter 2024

For details of services elsewhere in the Benefice please see the Benefice magazine, available in the church or village shop.

25th March (Monday of Holy Week)

6.30pm Compline (lay-led)

26th March (Tuesday of Holy Week)

6.30pm Compline (lay-led)

27th March (Wednesday of Holy Week)

6.30pm Compline (lay-led)

28th March (Maundy Thursday)

8pm Holy Communion, stripping of altars.

29th March (Good Friday)

11am Reflections at the Cross with Baptists

30th March (Easter Eve)

8pm North Curry Benefice Easter Vigil & Fire,  
blessing of Paschal candles

31st March Easter Day

6.30am Burrow Mump Sunrise worship

6.30am Stoke Baptists Sunrise worship

11am St Gregory's Eucharist

## Stoke St Gregory WI

The programme of varied speakers continues:

At the March members meeting we have what sounds like an interesting and educational talk on 'Popular Music in Edwardian Somerset' followed in April with a representative from the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance.

May will be our Annual Meeting followed by a demonstration on wood turning.

We meet at the Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month with the meeting starting at 7pm.

The visitor's fee is £4.50 so why not come along? You will receive a warm welcome from this friendly group!

During this coming year we are looking forward to outings, craft events, a pub lunch and a garden meeting.

If you are interested then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Amelia Holt President 07985 317252

## NGS Open Gardens at Hillcrest, Curload

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th May

The lovely gardens at Hillcrest will again be open in aid of funds for the National Gardens Scheme. Refreshments will be provided each day by the Parish Church. We shall also be selling a selection of plants so please come and support two good causes. If you are able to help out with either of these by donating cakes or plants please contact the Church Warden, Jane White ([janepwhite@hotmail.com](mailto:janepwhite@hotmail.com) or 490508)

## Stoke Stampede

The Stoke Stampede will be run on the 10th March at 11am. After the cancellation of the event on the 7th January we are really looking forward to welcoming 550 runners and spectators to the village on mothering Sunday. Why not come out and support the run then have a roast at the Royal Oak, but make sure you book as spaces are filling up fast. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

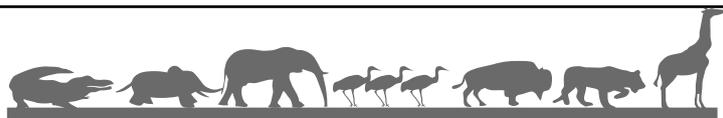
Paul Morse Race Director.

## Stoke Environment Group

Spring already? The growing season is upon us. We are looking forward to seeing the fruits of our labours after SEG volunteers planted about 1000 native wildflowers around the village. Hopefully they will be popping up in some unexpected places!

Highlights of the coming year are:

- The fourth Envirofair is taking place at the Village Hall on 1 June. Lots of 'old friends' are coming but also some new ones. The Otter Group, Sharandy's birds again, and many others. Local food and drink (including local cider), activities for one and all. Please come and support this unique, innovative and local event.
- The Community Orchard is really shaping up. More apple trees have been planted and we are currently preparing the ground for about a dozen soft fruit bushes. Wildlife habitats have been installed and a welcome to everyone is guaranteed. The fruit grown is yours and its free – please help yourselves when the time comes.
- We hope to run a couple of other events – another bat detective evening and a local botany exploration led by a real expert of Somerset Botany. All SEG events are free!
- Work to ensure our footpaths and bridleways will continue when the ground hardens. This is a labour-intensive task so please help the Footpath Group if you are able. SEG would like to thank the team and the landowners for opening up our fantastic paths enabling us to access our countryside.
- One more piece of work outstanding is to complete the refurbishment of the Royal Oak bus stop. It may have been completed by the time you read this. The last task will make our bus stop unique, so I won't spoil the surprise!  
SEG is only viable because volunteers give up their time to undertake these, and other, projects. We would very much like to increase the number of active volunteers so if you are able to help, please do contact us. If we don't fight for, and support our natural environment, then no one else will and future generations will suffer for it.  
Ian Upshall 07837 764367 ian.upshall@gmail.com



### Safari Supper

We are busy planning a Safari Supper to be held on Saturday 29th June to raise funds for HOTV. Safari Suppers are a really fun way to raise money and if you are new to the SSG 'Savannah', it's a wonderful way to meet more people and share dinner, each course being held at a different home. The route for our diners is organised so you can cycle or walk between courses. We will also cater for special dietary requirements and arrange appropriate venues should you need a vehicle. If anyone can help in any way, make a dessert for example, please email [gill99slattery@gmail.com](mailto:gill99slattery@gmail.com)  
Tickets will go on sale in the cafe from May 11<sup>th</sup>.



## Return Visit of the Langport Mummers

Due to popular demand, the Langport Mummers will be returning to **The Royal Oak on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 12 noon**. They have devised a new "play" based loosely around the story of ALFRED.

The play is based on King Alfred and his battle with Guthrum, the Viking. Alfred is known to have been based close to Stoke St Gregory before his battle with Guthrum's Great Heathen Army around the 8th century. You can expect much merriment from this local troupe, who perform traditional Mummings plays with contemporary twists!

It's family friendly, **FREE** and there is no need to book. The Mummers have done some homework on their Alfred and the Viking play, so you will find new lines, rumbustious burlesque and a happy ending.

## Emz Pilates & Yoga

Motivational Yoga Flow class at the village hall on a Monday at 9.30am, suitable for all.

All you need to bring is a mat. 1-2-1 sessions also available. Contact Emily of Emz Pilates & Yoga on 07940276265 or [emzpilates@gmail.com](mailto:emzpilates@gmail.com) to book.

## Coates English Willow Visitor Centre

19<sup>th</sup> February to 27<sup>th</sup> April

A Sculpture Trail with 14 Birds to find + a fun Crossword with a prize at the end!



Only £3 per child



## Willowset Preschool, Wrap Around Care and Holiday Club

Mother's Day Breakfast

Saturday 9th March 9am until 11.30am

Have an amazing all you can eat breakfast with your family to celebrate Mother's Day. All Mum's will receive a gift, followed by fun BINGO for everyone with lovely prizes. £8 per adult and £5 per child (under 1's free)

Ticket only event, everyone welcome. Please e mail [admin@willowset.org.uk](mailto:admin@willowset.org.uk) or call in to the Office.

The Government have announced that they are expanding childcare support. This is to be phased in over 18 months. The first phase is to provide 15 hours free childcare to 2-year-olds from working families from 1 April 2024. If you may be interested in this please arrange to come for a show around. Limited spaces are still available. The next phase is for 9-month-olds from 1 September. Please e mail Sally: [admin@willowset.org.uk](mailto:admin@willowset.org.uk) or call on 01823 491567.

Mouse Racing

Save the Date.....Saturday 27th April 7.30pm

Real Mice, Outrageous Fun. Adult only event  
Please look out for further details on our Facebook Page and on posters around the Village

### **Saint Gregory Players AGM**

We have our Annual General Meeting planned for 14 March 2024 when we will be reviewing the past year and re-electing our committee.

We'd love to see you there – this is open to anyone connected with the group, to anyone who would like to get involved, or simply anyone who would like to find out more about us. Our last production, Tons of Money, was staged in November/December and went down well with our audiences. We are now planning a production for Autumn 2024 and casting the net wider for performers and helpers – anybody who wants to be involved is welcome.

**The AGM will be on Thursday 14 March at 7.30pm in the function room, upstairs at the Royal Oak in Stoke St Gregory.**

### **The Stoke Levellers**

Stoke St Gregory OAP group have evolved!

Now known as The Stoke Levellers we are a lively and friendly group who meet on the third Tuesday of every month at 2.00pm for an afternoon of entertainment, refreshments and good company at Williams Hall, Stoke St Gregory.

During the summer months we have coach trips to various destinations and also enjoy getting together for afternoons such as cream teas.

If you would like to join us and become a member of our group, you would be very welcome.

Our very lovely chairman is Martin Mudie, and if you would like more information, please ring Martin on 01823 490371, Jane Smith, Secretary on 01823 491428 or Jenny Priddle, Treasurer on 01823 490740

### **Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church**

#### ***Dates for your diary:***

**World Day of Prayer service** with local churches in SSG and North Curry 3pm 1<sup>st</sup> March at SSG Baptist Church. Praying for Palestine.

#### **Messy Church Easter event**

Sun 3rd March starts at 10am with breakfast. Crafts, singing, Bible stories – fun for all the family!

#### **Good Friday – 29<sup>th</sup> March**

Joint service of reflection 11am at St Gregory's Church.

#### **Easter sunrise service**

Sun 31<sup>st</sup> March 6.30am behind the Baptist Chapel. Come and enjoy the view and celebrate the resurrection.

#### **Easter Day celebration service**

For all the family, Sun 31<sup>st</sup> March 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!*

### **Heart of the Village – we're in it together!**

There have been some recent changes on the Management Committee. Mike Blair has recently stepped down as Chairman, and is followed in that role by yours truly, Paul Fielding, with Martin Keswick recently appointed as Vice Chairman, Emma Simon as Secretary, and Mary Nash as Treasurer following Graham Glead's decision to step down. The rest of the committee is made up of Ann Woods, Trevor Daniels and Tom Duxbury, and Mike Blair stays with us until the end of business year. Many thanks to those departing, and to the new faces stepping forward.

During Phil's recent time away from the pub, we took the opportunity to refurbish the dining area in the upper bar – why not pop in and take a look?

As always, this would not have been possible without the help of our hard-working volunteers, so many thanks to them. If you would like to join them, to help in any way, you will be more than welcome. Just contact Jo in the shop, or Phil in the pub, or Ann Woods, who will take your details and get you started.

Both the café and the pub spaces are being used increasingly for group gatherings, from both outside the village (eg cycling groups) and within (sewing group, book club, Levellers). If you'd like to use the Royal Oak for your own gathering, be that small or large, please contact Jo or Phil to see what we can do for you.

Did you know that the café can cater for family events? Ask Jo for details.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for our Phase 3 development, with the benefit of grant funding from Valencia, which will give us improved toilet facilities, including disabled toilets, and an enlarged café area, with work due to start in the next few weeks and be complete by early October. There will be a fair amount of disruption while the works are underway, so please bear with us.

Future plans include a ramp from the patio level up to the garden to improve disabled access at the main gate and also provide disabled access to the Function Room. It is encouraging that we are still attracting share investment, both from new shareholders and also from existing shareholders buying more shares. Share application forms are always available on request in the shop.

We have identified the need to agree a new, updated, business plan for HOTV, and the Committee aim to have that in place for the new financial year in April. In addition to an updated financial plan, I'm hoping to foster improved links with other groups in the village, hopefully contributing to a more joined-up community.

Thank you for your support.

Paul Fielding, Chairman, Heart of the Village

## Stoke St Gregory Parish Council Reports

The Council met on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Budget/Precept: Proposals for 2024-25 were discussed. It was agreed that expenditure should align with the precept, and that contingencies would be met from reserves. The PC need to be mindful that cuts in Somerset Council services will make more of a demand on PC funds. This equates to an uplift of the precept of 7%

An average band D home will rise from £47.60 to £50.58 per annum.

There is currently a vacancy for a Parish Councillor as Anne Merritt stepped down in November. Anne was Vice Chair and so this vacancy has been temporarily filled by John Hardy until

May. The deadline for application is 8<sup>th</sup> March. (ssgparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

The first drop-in surgery was held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December for 2 hours at the HOTV Café, the next being between 10 and 12 on 9<sup>th</sup> March.

### Issues raised at the drop in were:

(1.) Tractors speeding in Woodhill

(2.) Parking in and around the square causing problems.

*The Parish Council have asked respectfully if people could park in the car parks at the Church, the Royal Oak and the Playing fields.*

(3.) Village Hall not safely accessible at night for people with mobility problems due to the approach being so dark. *Peter House will check the lighting is working properly.*

(4.) 30mph signage along Meare Green not clear and the issue of speeding along the straight road still a problem. *A speed indicator device was discussed. There is money available to enhance the reduction in maximum speed. Highways have been contacted to approve and advise on the best location in Meare Green*

(5) The bus stop at Woodhill has been badly damaged and the glass panes have been shattered. *The PC are making enquiries with a view to repairing the damage.*

The construction of a replacement Parish Noticeboard is in progress. This has been necessary due to the deterioration of the current board.

A new rubbish bin has been purchased to replace the broken one at the playing field entrance.

The Council agreed unanimously to purchase a defibrillator for the residents of Meare Green and Broad Lane with CIL funding and for it to be installed at the Willows and Wetlands Centre.

The PC are hoping to get a grant to purchase a third defibrillator for Curload. (see February report for good news!)

Danny James was in attendance at the public question time, and he gave an update of progress on Project Play. The final design for the entire play area to include bike stands and planters has been completed. A different material is now part of the design which has resulted in a significantly lower cost.

The total cost of the project will be just under £97,000. The project meets the criteria of many grants, and 15 different

funds are currently being looked at. £30,000 of CIL monies will go towards the cost.

The PC met at its usual time (19.30) at the Village Hall on the second Monday of the month (**12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**).

Parishioners are always welcome to attend and speak to us at the beginning of the meeting, during Public Question Time. The Chair of the Playing Field Committee attended to update us on the erecting of the Youth Shelter. Great news for the Village.

I hope it's enjoyed by users of the Field.

The placement of the defibrillator in Curload has now been established.

Roads have been an ongoing issue with floods and roadworks.

Keeping up to date is sometimes challenging. One recommendation is to use the [one.network](#) website.

As a PC we are looking for people to assist with repairs that occasionally are required around the Village. If anyone would be willing to help with this then please let us know.

Heather Venn

## Curious Tradition

Lent in many church schools brings with it certain traditions. For Stoke St Gregory C of E Primary School, one tradition linked to Shrove Tuesday, and perhaps less common in other schools, is egg shacking. The image below is from 1948 but the tradition dates back to the school's infancy. In 1864 an entry in the schools log book reads:



"February 9<sup>th</sup> 1864: Shrove Tuesday. Holiday in the morning and egg shacking; this is a curious custom kept up in the schools of the neighbourhood. It is this: each child who likes brings an egg. These are put into a sieve and shaken together. As each egg breaks it is taken out and so on until they are all cracked...the two or three remaining until the last getting a prize. I cannot ascertain what give rise to this curious proceeding."

Schools often have traditions, but it is certainly unusual for traditions to last through the generations like this!

Barney Rycroft, Headmaster

## HOTV Shop Mothering Sunday

How about a take away cream Tea? Scones, cream, jam, teabags, cake and an optional prosecco upgrade. Order from the shop for pick up on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March. All from £6.50.