

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

### ***Chair's Update***

#### Combating crime

The recent vandalism at the new play area in Stonehill and a spate of burglaries in West Street triggered a discussion at our meeting earlier this month, and we discussed ways of reducing/preventing crime in the village. One of the challenges we face as a village is the lack of police presence because there simply aren't enough resources. One suggestion was to set up a number of neighbourhood watch schemes village-wide, so that we all look out for each other and provide a visible deterrent. We know that in other villages and towns these schemes can prove quite successful. Schemes would be set up in different streets – there is already one in North Street – with one person in each street as a co-ordinator. In addition we understand that we need to have one overall 'Village' coordinator. Please contact our Parish Clerk or myself if you or your street would like to get this set up, or get involved in any way and we can go from there.

#### Do you know the phantom grass cutter of Ham Hill?

There is a lovely kind person who is regularly cutting the grass round the fountain seat at the top of Ham Hill at the turn off to the Prince of Wales and the Rangers Centre. Do you know you this is – or are you that person yourself? Is it done in memory of someone? We are very grateful for this kindness and the Rangers have asked us to find out so that they can contact him/her. If you have any information, please contact me – details below. Your privacy will be respected; we just need to know who you are.

#### Stoke Performing Arts Group

We were pleased to support another community event by awarding a grant of £282 to SPAG towards the cost of rehearsals and performances for this year's village play, "The Charity Shop", which will be held on the 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April at the Memorial Hall.

#### St Marys Churchyard

We also approved a grant of £824, which we give annually, to St Mary's towards maintenance of the churchyard.

#### Ground Maintenance contract

We approved a new 3 year contract for all the ground maintenance round the village which will start from February. The contract has been awarded to Countrywide Maintenance following a rigorous tendering process and will be based on a new quality performance basis.

#### Budget

We approved next year's budget and precept for submission to the District Council at our meeting. More details below from the Chair of the Finance Committee.

#### Planning

As at the time of writing (mid-month), no further decisions on any of the three ongoing developments. However, there has just been a new application from the Southcombes developers, Blue Cedar, for two extra houses on the adjoining triangle of land (where the electricity sub-station is). The Committee will review this over the coming week and make recommendations to the parish council for onward transmission to SSDC. The potential developers for West Street have not yet submitted a formal planning application, but are still in the consultation phase.

**Contact details: Barbara Brooks, Chair of the Parish Council**

**Tel: 824432; Email: [chairsshpc@hotmail.com](mailto:chairsshpc@hotmail.com)**

**Tamarisk, High St (opp Working Men's Club)**

### ***Finance Update***

At January's meeting, the Parish Council agreed its precept for the coming financial year. The Parish Precept is the "proportion" of your council Tax that is managed by your Parish Council and represents a small proportion of your overall council tax charge.

This coming year despite a cut of £2,680.00 to the grant we receive from District Council and our plans to purchase the Methodist Church in West Street for community use: we've

decided to freeze our fraction of the levy that makes up your Council Tax Bill. The levy is expressed as a Band D equivalent; put simply the Parish Band D charge for 2017/18 will remain the same. Any Increase in your Council Tax will be a result of any changes at County and/or District level. With the increase in charges we feel households will be anticipating or experiencing; the uncertainty of our economic environment and the effect that has on our cost of living, we hope this reflects the council's ongoing commitment to be as efficient and professional as possible.

The Parish Precept (the money we get in on your behalf) will rise from £53,000 to £53,722: this is due to **a change** in the tax base of the Parish - that is, **the amount** of Taxable Properties minus the amount of Council Tax Allowances those properties receive.

So what do we spend our money on:

Salaries, Affiliation & Administration	16%
Annual Grants	25%
Section 137 small one off grants	6%
Insurance	5%
Land Maintenance	12%
Property Maintenance	5%
Rent	2%
Asset Management & Maintenance	15%
Major Projects & Contingency	14%
	100%

*Projects that feature prominently this year include:*

- *The purchase of the Methodist Church. At the time of print we are still awaiting final confirmation from the Methodist Trustees that our bid has been approved*
- *A new 3 year Grounds Maintenance Contract, based on quality performance*
- *Refurbishment of the Memorial Hall, including Broadband costs already reserved.*

**Hugh Donovan – Chair of Finance Committee**

## **P.C.S.O. REPORT**

For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk). If you are a witness to or the victim of a crime then it is imperative that you report it to the police immediately whether it is during the day or at night. When reporting an incident please telephone either 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies only.

## **STOKE ACTIVE WALKERS**

*Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

Today's walk will take us along Bowey and down across Shelves to Matts Lane. We will then follow the footpath towards Norton, cross into Broadmead Lane and take the footpath into Little Norton and up past the Mill following the path towards Bagnell Farm. From there we will take the track back towards Tinkers Bubble, then go along to the bottom of Witcombe and up to Batemoor Barn. From Batemoor Barn we will go down across the field to Abbey Farm, around St Michaels Tower and across the top of Hedgecock Woods to the Prince of Wales for lunch.

We meet at 10.30am at Sea Wall, about 50 yards on the Montacute side of Bonnies Lane. Please wear suitable boots or shoes and clothing according to the weather. All our walks are free and we welcome new walkers to our friendly group. Well behaved dogs are also welcome. ALL WALKS ARE UNDERTAKEN AT THE WALKERS OWN RISK. For more information please contact Norman on 01935 822792.

### **STOKE CHARITY SHOP AGM**

The AGM for the Stoke Charity Shop will be held on Tuesday the 14th of March at 7.30pm in The Lighthouse. All are welcome to attend.

### **SPORTS AND RECREATION TRUST**

The AGM for the Sports and Recreation Trust will take place on February 7th 2017 at 7.30pm in the Working Men's Club. Come along and hear what the Trust achieved in 2016 and the exciting projects for 2017. Everyone welcome.

### **NEW TAI CHI CLASS IN STOKE SUB HAMDON**

Tai Chi for Health. A new Tai Chi - Shibashi class will be starting on Thursdays in the Memorial Hall. Commencing Thursday 12 January 2017 from 4pm - 5pm weekly. For more details contact John on 01935 509593 or 07721 060901.

### **STOKE WORKING MEN'S CLUB**

#### Open Weekend

We would like to invite you to our Open Weekend at Stoke Club from Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February when non-members will be welcome to come and see what the club has to offer; you are sure of a warm welcome from the committee and members. The club was gifted to the village community in 1923 by the Southcombe Brothers – so it belongs to all of us and we are working hard to improve the facilities and to make the club the place to be in Stoke sub Hamdon – do come and join us.

#### Thank You

The committee at Stoke sub Hamdon Working Men's Club would like to say a big Thank You to the Sports and Recreation Trust for their kind donation towards our club refurbishment.

We also wish to express our gratitude to the Avon & Somerset Police Community Trust for their recent grant which will go towards upgrading our CCTV both inside and outside the club. Not only will this provide extra security for our building, but will also benefit the residents of the High Street and Ham Hill Road. *June Carty on behalf of the committee*

### **THE VILLAGE ARTIST GROUP**

Are you interested in Art or just wanting to take up a relaxing hobby? We are a small friendly group who meet in the Memorial Hall on Monday and Friday mornings between 10am – 12pm and Thursday evenings between 7 - 9pm. You can attend any number of sessions for just £20 per term. Why not call in? All abilities are welcome.

If you are interested you can find out more by visiting our website [www.yeovilarts.co.uk/villageartists/index.html](http://www.yeovilarts.co.uk/villageartists/index.html), or visit our new Facebook page - The Village Artists Group Stoke-sub-Hamdon or just come along for a trial session.

We also have a variety of visiting artists throughout the year. On Saturday, 4 February we will be holding an oil painting workshop with Brian Dicker between 10am and 4pm. Non-members are welcome! For more information please contact Diana on 01935 881647.

### **WALKING FOR HEALTH**

If you enjoy walking or would like to start walking with other people, then a warm welcome awaits you on the following walks, which are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month. The walks start and end at the Lighthouse café in Stoke sub Hamdon.

Every Step Counts starts at 9.30 am and is a 30 to 40 minute walk around the village, with drinks available at the Lighthouse after the walk.

Health Walks begin at 10.30am and the walks last 1.5 hours. Lunches and drinks are available after the walk.

February dates 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

Please contact Walk Leaders, Penny on 822208 or at [pennyatrapnell@aol.com](mailto:pennyatrapnell@aol.com)

Mark and Jane on 07496 148756 or Anne on 826256 if you would like any more information.

## **SOMERSET SIGHT**

Happily, the Somerset Sight van is calling at the Memorial Hall car park between 1.30pm – 3.30pm on the following days in 2017:

Thursday 2 February, Tuesday 13 June, Wednesday 6 September and Thursday 16 November.

## **STOKE BAND NEWS**

December was a successful month for the band and we would like to thank the village for its support. The Christmas Concert was well supported and at Prince of Wales there was such a response that the event has already been arranged again for December. On Christmas Eve during the carolling and parties in Stoke we raised £373.45. Thank you all once again.

## **HAM HILL EVENTS**

Event Booking is via [www.southsomersetcountryside.com](http://www.southsomersetcountryside.com) or 01935 462282

Storytelling at Ham Hill between 3.30pm – 5.30pm on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> February. Ancient places all have stories to tell – some happy, some sad, some spooky and some are just weird! Ham Hill has thousands of years of folklore surrounding it and we would like to share some of it with you. Sit around the fire with hot chocolate and toasted marshmallows and listen to Caroline regale some of Ham Hill's secrets.

Booking is required and will cost £5.00 per child, children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult, accompanying adult free. Please wrap up warm and wear sensible footwear. There will be places for a maximum of 30

## **ST MARY'S STOKE**

In recent months we have reviewed the times of Worship at St Mary's on Sundays. This is because we are moving towards the creation of a 7-parish Benefice and, in particular, looking at opportunities of worshipping together.

At 8.00 a.m. there are Prayer Book communion services at Stoke on the first 3 Sundays of the month, and we join Norton (at Norton) on the 4th Sunday.

At 11.00 a.m. we have an informal service at All Saints Hall on the first Sunday (described as Cafe-Style - it gives an opportunity to discuss some matters around a table), on the 2nd Sunday there is a communion service at St Mary's, and on the 3rd and 4th Sundays Morning Worship.

At 6.30 p.m. there is Evening Worship on the first 2 Sundays of the month. On the 3rd Sunday evening we join with the two churches in Montacute (St Catherine's and the Baptists) - and the service moves on a rota around the churches. The 4th Sunday of each month there is an evening communion service at St Mary's.

Things are different on the 5th Sundays (usually 4 times a year) when the parishes of Montacute, Odcombe and Stoke have a single mid-morning service (as do those at Norton, Chiselborough, West & Middle Chinnock).

During Lent and Easter there will also be some other special services. A poster with all the Worship Services in the 7 Parishes across the Ham Hill Churches is posted at all the churches and outside All Saints Hall (the Lighthouse Coffee Shop).each month.

## **DIARY OF EVENTS:**

### **February**

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Somerset Sight
4 <sup>th</sup>	Village Artist Group Workshop
7 <sup>th</sup>	Stoke Active Walkers
7 <sup>th</sup>	Sports & Recreation Trust AGM
13 <sup>th</sup>	Walking for Health
16 <sup>th</sup>	Storytelling on Ham Hill
27 <sup>th</sup>	Walking for Health

### **March**

14 <sup>th</sup>	Charity Shop AGM
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