

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

### *Chair's Update*

At the January meeting, the Parish Council agreed the budget and precept for the coming financial year starting April 2016. When coming to our decisions, we took into account the fact that the Support Grant subsidy that the District Council have in the past given us towards the cost of providing services in the village is being phased out by Central Government. Last year's amount of £4,125 been reduced to £3,870, a reduction of 6%. This subsidy is being further reduced down to £1,280 in 2017/18, £430 in 2018/19 and gone altogether in 2019.

For the coming year, we are increasing the precept from £49,195 to £53,000, to take into account the lower subsidy, and some unexpected extra costs of installing broadband in the Memorial Hall. (A Parish Council gets its funding by receiving a small amount of the local Council Tax. This is referred to as the parish precept. This is how we pay for things we do round the village each year). What this means to each of us is that the portion of the Council Tax bill for the parish precept, assuming a Band D charge, will be £ 76.79, an increase of 5.4% p.a. This is the first increase we have made over 3 years.

So what do we spend our money on?

*Village environment:* Making sure that the village is maintained in a clean and tidy state by grass cutting in the Memorial Hall grounds and at Stonehill playground, and some grass verges and hedges that are our own responsibility. Next year we will include the grass banks at the top of the High Street opposite Sea Wall where the trees were recently felled, and the bank outside the Recreation Ground in West Street where we have planted new hedging. We provide and top up each year the grit bins and waste bins, provide and maintain gates to some footpaths, some seats and signs, and organise an annual litter pick round key village streets. The War Memorial on top of Ham Hill and the clock at the URC Church belong to our village, so we look after and maintain these. We also give an annual grant to St Marys Church towards the upkeep of the churchyard.

*Recreation facilities:* We maintain all the playground equipment to ensure it is safe for our children to play on and provide new equipment when necessary, like we did this year. We give grants to the Sports and Recreation Trust to support them in their work for us, and to pay their insurance, similarly to the Memorial Hall Committee. We set aside £8,500 each year towards the long term repair/ replacement of the Memorial Hall, Pavilion and URC clock. Currently this totals £47,544, and although in our bank accounts, cannot be touched as it is classed as "Reserve Funds". We give annual grants to the Boys Brigade and the Hamdon Youth Club and £3,000 to support a Youth Worker to work with young people. We provide grants to the May Fayre each year and occasional village events like "Celebrate Stoke" this year. In June we will be hosting a Volunteer Awards ceremony and celebrating the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with a village event.

*Health and Safety:* we provide grants for exercise classes, and have installed a defibrillator at the Prince of Wales on Ham Hill. We are hoping to install our second defibrillator in the old telephone box in West Street – failing that, outside the Memorial Hall.

And lastly there are necessary expenses in managing the parish council, like audit fees, salaries and expenses, other professional fees etc. and providing the monthly newsletter to share information round the village. We also have the power to award small grants under what are called "Section 137 grants" to organisations whose work

benefit people who live in Stoke and these are organisations like the Royal British Legion, Shopmobility and the Air Ambulance etc.

At our meeting we also confirmed our continuing grant to the Sports & Recreation Trust for £2,000 towards operating costs and £775 for insurance, and reviewed their Facilities Plan for the coming year. We also noted that BT requires an extra £1,000 to install a new telegraph pole for the broadband in the Memorial Hall.

We also discussed our grass and land maintenance contract which is up for tender in the Spring. We are changing the format of the contract to a performance-based contract which is results orientated and will work towards introducing a 3 year term contract. One of our new councillors has professional landscaping experience, so is helping us move towards a contract based on quality and value for money.

*Bus Consultation:* We have finally received a response from South West buses on the potential impact of County Council subsidy cuts to the No.81 service. There are two services a day that are subsidised: the 9 a.m. from Stoke returning from Yeovil at 10 a.m., and the 12 midday from Stoke, returning from Yeovil at 1 p.m. This latter service does not run on Saturdays. They will review these once the subsidies are withdrawn and see if they are commercially viable. At present they do not intend to withdraw them immediately.

Contact details below.

**Barbara Brooks**

**Chair of the Parish Council**

[chairsshpc@hotmail.com](mailto:chairsshpc@hotmail.com)

**Tamarisk, High St (opp Working Mens Club)**

## **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, 2 February*

To start our walk today we will go out through East Stoke and up Church Lane to Hedgecock Woods, along to the Quarry Works and follow the ridge along to Batemore Barn. We will then go down Ladies Walk, across to Abbey Farm and then up the footpath and around the bottom of St Michaels hill. From there we will go back through Hedgecock Woods, along Double Ditch and across the bottom of Ham Hill to the Fleur de Lis 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.

## **VILLAGE ARTISTS**

Herewith news of the first special event of our year which will be a whole day watercolour workshop entitled 'Quirky Houses - a Village Scene', at the Memorial Hall Stoke Sub Hamdon on Saturday 6 February between 10am and 3.30pm. We are delighted to welcome a return visit of the popular Artist Michael Jackson who will

be showing us how we could depict a scene of our local village in surprising, imaginative yet simple ways. Bring watercolour paints and paper approx. A3 size plus 'try out' paper. He will demonstrate in particular the uses of Flat Watercolour brushes and advises we bring 2 flats - one half inch and a smaller size 8, plus a rigger and a round wash brush. Or improvise as necessary! This is sure to be great fun so all are welcome. Cost: Members £20, non-members £25. Booking is strongly advised. For more information please contact Lee Allen on 01935 472675

### **MEMORIAL HALL**

The Trustees of the Memorial Hall are organising a Craft & Table Top Sale to be held on Saturday, 15 October 2016. If you are interested and would like more information please contact either Lynda 07790242176 or Jill 07896299340.

### **STOKE SUB HAMDON SPORTS AND RECREATION TRUST**

#### *AGM 2 FEBRUARY 2016*

All are welcome to attend the Trust's AGM and hear what has been achieved for the village in 2015; this includes the Charity Shop and May Fayre. Also the exciting projects which are scheduled to commence in 2016. The Trust through the Charity Shop, May Fayre and football clubs raise money for all ages for activities in the village. We always need your support and ideas so please come on the 2 February to the Working Men's Club at 7.30 pm.

#### *ADVENTURE PLAY AREA*

There is a plan to put an Adventure Play Area on the Recreation Ground, West Street. We are having an exhibition showing the layout and the equipment on 24 February between 2.00pm and 7.00pm at the Lighthouse. Come along and see what we are planning and let us know your views. Peter Hulett, Chairman.

### **THE STOKE CHARITY SHOP**

Stoke Charity Shop's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 29 February at 7.30pm in Stoke Working Men's Club. If you would like any further details please contact Maria on 824064.

### **TAI CHI**

Shibashi Tai Chi Class at the Stoke Sub Hamdon Memorial Hall, Wednesdays 6.00pm – 7.00pm £4 per person. Call Martyn Powell 07717 893 749.

### **1<sup>ST</sup> MONTACUTE BROWNIES**

Are on the move!

As of January 2016 your local Brownie unit has moved venues to The Memorial Hall, Stoke sub Hamdon. The additional parking for parents and outdoor space for the girls are proving to be quite a hit already! We meet every Tuesday during term time between 5.45pm and 7pm. We currently have 22 girls aged between 7 & 10 years old and deliver a programme around learning more about ourselves, the community and the world. The topics are girl led. This term we are looking at the Wildlife explorer interest badge, Gymnastic session at Stanchester School, World Thinking Day on 22 February, Chinese New Year and a First Aid course in the Easter Holidays. If you are interested in either volunteering or for your own daughter(s) please register your interest online at [www.GirlguidingUK](http://www.GirlguidingUK) or give Jackie Poole a call on 01935 823606. (no previous knowledge or experience necessary!)

## **WALKING FOR HEALTH**

Can there be anything nicer than walking and talking and appreciating the beautiful autumnal colours around Stoke? Why not come and join us, there are two walks on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, starting and ending at the Lighthouse café.

**The Every Step Counts walk** begins at 9.30am and is a lane and pavement walk with one slight incline, lasting 30 to 40 minutes.

**The Health Walk** starts at 10.30am and use, lanes, fields and footpaths within a 3 mile radius of Stoke and last 90 to 100 minutes.

These walks are open to everyone, friendly, free and have at least two walk leaders, so if someone feels they can't make the whole walk they can return via a shorter route with a leader. Please wear appropriate clothes and footwear for the weather conditions. We look forward to seeing you and if you require any further information please contact Penny 01935 822208 or Mark and Jane at [jane.gooch@tesco.net](mailto:jane.gooch@tesco.net)

## **SOMERSET SIGHT**

Happily, the Somerset Sight van is calling at the Memorial Hall car park on the following days in 2016:

25 February, 17 March and 17 November which are all Thursdays and, 16 May and 22 August which are Mondays.

## **HAMDON YOUTH GROUP**

Hamdon Youth Group is still there for our young people despite our lack of a permanent home. Contact our Youth Worker, Lou for details of our weekly meetings. Youth Voice, the group that brings the views of young people in our villages to authorities, meets every second Wednesday in Norton Village Hall meeting room.

Youth worker Lou Chant can be contacted on 07402 987921 or via [lou.chant@cyp.me.uk](mailto:lou.chant@cyp.me.uk)

## **DIARY OF EVENTS:**

### **February**

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Stoke Active Walkers
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sports & Recreation Trust AGM
6 <sup>th</sup>	Village Artist Group – Watercolour Workshop
6 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup> Annual Potato Day
8 <sup>th</sup>	Walking for Health
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Walking for Health
24 <sup>th</sup>	Adventure Play Area Exhibition
25 <sup>th</sup>	Somerset Sight
29 <sup>th</sup>	Stoke Charity Shop AGM

### **March**

14 <sup>th</sup>	Walking for Health
17 <sup>th</sup>	Somerset Sight
28 <sup>th</sup>	Walking for Health