

PARISH COUNCIL

Chair's Update

At our meeting on 9 December we learnt the disappointing news that Hamdon Youth Group have now been given formal notice by the Methodist Church to quit at the end of December. Despite a request to extend the notice period, the Church has declined and is intending to put the property on the market in the New Year. They have withdrawn their planning application for change of use from community to residential. Work is now on-going at HYG to try to find another place to meet in the village.

We agreed a grant of £250 for the coming financial year for the Group, and a further resolution was passed to increase their annual grant from £3000 to £3,250 for the years 2016/17 and 2017/18 to support the Youth Worker and reduction in grants from the County Council. The Group is growing on a steady basis in numbers, both from Stoke and Norton. The four aims of the group – reduction in anti-social behaviour, making a positive contribution to our communities, increased use of the Norton/Stoke Rec facilities, and reducing the “them and us” attitude between young and old – are all being met. Positive engagement in structured activities by an increasing membership of the Group has resulted in a marked decrease in antisocial behaviours.

A representative from Stanchester Academy attended to inform us that the school are now very keen to create better links with the community, offering us the use of recreational facilities, when not being used by the students, and we welcome their new approach. In a village like ours where facilities are limited and are in demand, it is great when all groups/organisations actively work together to benefit each other. It is planned that Stanchester will put a more detailed article in February's newsletter.

The two new play areas at Stonehill and the Memorial Hall grounds have now been installed by the contractors. Thank you to all those of you with children for your patience during the time the play areas had to be closed for the installation process.

We discussed a first draft of our Budget for next year at the December meeting. However, until the precept figures are known from District Council later in the month, we will not be able to finalise figures and the final budget will be discussed and agreed at our January meeting.

One of Oak Tree House's residents, Bill Sunley who is 92, was very much in the news this month. Originally born in Middlesborough, Bill came to Somerset 29 years ago, first living at East Stoke, then Stonehill, and eight years ago moving into Oak Tree House. Bill was one of those brave veterans who took part in the Arctic convoys at the early part of the war, taking arms to Russia who had agreed to help us fight the Germans. He signed up at the early age of 17, and his ship was blown up a year later on one of the very dangerous and icy voyages. On the 10 December Paddy Ashdown came to Oak Tree House to present him with a medal from the Russian Embassy, with a personal message of thanks from President Putin for his bravery. On behalf of the Parish Council and the residents of Stoke I presented him with flowers and a card to thank him for what he had done for our country. It was a lovely afternoon and the presentation was opened to great effect by our Town Crier Bruce Trigger (who of course is also a Stoke resident!).

We have noticed that a notice has been put in the telephone box in West Street, indicating that it will be removed. We have emailed Royal Mail to see if we can keep it in place, and we will let you know what happens. One suggestion put forward is to put shelves inside and use it as a free paperback exchange facility; we'd love to know what other ideas you might have!

Contact details below.

Barbara Brooks

Chair of the Parish Council

chairsshpc@hotmail.com Tamarisk, High St (opp Working Mens Club)

PRESS RELEASE

Passengers in Somerset to have their say on local bus services

As Somerset County Council (SCC) launches a consultation over plans to reduce bus services and subsidies in the region, Bus Users UK is to hold three Your Bus Matters events, giving local passengers a chance to have their say.

In addition to the reductions in the frequency of some subsidised services, the announcements from SCC include proposals to reduce the 09:00 – 09:30 concessionary enhancement currently available to bus pass holders, as well as removal of the companion pass. Alongside the Council's consultation, Bus Users will be running Your Bus Matters events in Yeovil, Taunton and Frome in December.

Passengers will be able to raise their concerns direct with the people responsible for running bus services in their area including local bus operators and representatives from Somerset County Council.

The Your Bus Matters events will be at:

Yeovil Bus Station (Glovers Walk/Central Road) on Friday 18 December from 10am to 1pm.

Passengers using Class 2 mobility scooters will be able to get hold of a 'permit to travel' at the Taunton and Yeovil events. A permit to travel is the only way a mobility scooter can be carried on board a bus and Bus Users, working alongside local operators, is keen to make sure that bus travel is accessible to everyone.

To find out more about these events and the work of Bus Users visit www.bususers.org

P.C.S.O. REPORT

For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: 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, 5 January

Our first walk of the New Year will take us down Bonnies Lane, into Whirligig Lane and up to Cole Lane. We will then go along Langlands and down Matts Lane; from there we will go up Dannings Well, across Shelves and along Norton Path which will take us to Sandy Lane. We will go down over Sandy Lane and follow the footpath up through Norton Covert then down into Witcombe Valley then up to Batemoor Barn and follow the footpath back 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.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Poppy Appeal. The total amount raised this year was a fantastic £2,773.38. Many thanks once again to everyone who gave up their time to help with the collecting. I would also like to say a special thank you to Ian and Carol Mathieson for helping me to collate the donations and to Louise Hann and the staff at Montacute Post Office for helping with the banking.

Jon Moore, Poppy Appeal Organiser

MEMORIAL HALL

A huge thank you to everyone who donated cakes for our 'Coffee & Cake' morning on 7 November and to everyone who came along. We made a fantastic £265.32. Half the money has been donated to CLIC Sargent and half has gone towards the refurbishment of the Memorial Hall.

The Memorial Hall now has a fridge, a welcome addition to our kitchen facilities.

The Memorial Hall Trustees wish to record thanks to Stoke sub Hamdon Gardening Club for their generous donation of HALF the cost of the fridge. We know it will prove a useful asset to all users.

STOKE GARDENING CLUB

A date for your diary - 27 April. Stoke sub Hamdon Gardening Club have arranged for a speaker from the Air Ambulance to talk to us about the work they do throughout Dorset and Somerset. Everyone is invited and although entry will be FREE, we expect to make a substantial donation towards the Air Ambulance Service and know we can rely on your generosity. Tea/coffee and cakes will be on available & all proceeds will go to the Air Ambulance.

TAI CHI

Shibashi Tai Chi Class at the Stoke Sub Hamdon Memorial Hall, Wednesdays 5.30-6.30 pm £4 per per person. Call Martyn Powell 07717 893 749.

BOXERCISE CLASS

A new Boxercise class is starting on Wednesdays between 6.30 - 7.30pm at Stoke sub Hamdon Memorial Hall. The first session is free.

Boxercise is a class using boxing pads and gloves (No Body Contact) to do exercise. The class will be a great workout for those who what to get fit fast at a fun and sociable class. For more details contact Martyn on 07717 893 749.

POP- IN ACORN

January 7 Quiz by John

14 Airs & Graces

21 AGM & Trade Table

28 10th Birthday Luncheon. Celebrating 10 years of the POP IN. It is open to all past members & helpers. Venue to be arranged

Contact Jennifer Kerr (01935 882609)

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

HAMDON YOUTH GROUP

Hamdon Youth Group has been going from strength to strength with numbers much increased. However our meetings at the Methodist Hall are coming to an end as the building is to be put up for sale. The HYG committee have been searching for a suitable venue but as yet have been able to secure one for sure. However, we are urgently looking at options and hope to be able to run the Monday Youth Club after the Christmas break. All young people from 11 years old are welcome. **Please contact Lou to find out the latest on this.**

Youth Voice, the group of young people who make the voice of younger residents heard in the villages, meets fortnightly in Norton Meeting Room. Contact Lou if you would like to join. They will be meeting on the **14 and 27 January.**

Youth worker Lou Chant can be contacted on 07402 987921 or via lou.chant@cyp.me.uk

A great New Year to all our young people!

9TH ANNUAL POTATO DAY

Clapton, Wayford, Drimpton and District Horticultural Society are holding its annual potato day on Saturday 6 February 2016 between 10.30am and 2.30pm at Drimpton Village Hall, West Dorset.

Plenty of Potatoes, food and fun, plus ...

- Onions, Shallots, Garlic
- Heritage Seeds
- Fruit trees and soft fruit
- Kitchen garden plants
- Advice, information and tips

Potatoes can be pre-ordered to collect on Potato Day, see: www.pennardplants.com

Excellent Drimpton food: all day brunches, lunches and cakes, as well as warming drinks. Potato print fun for all the family, as well as Potato Growing competition (for young people and adults sections) – weigh-in on Show Day, Saturday 13 August.

Whether you are an experienced grower or just starting out on veggies, you will find this a friendly and useful event. There is no need to book; there is a small entry fee of 50p, which includes a tea or coffee. Parking is available at the village hall and nearby.

We are on Chard Road (B3162), Drimpton, between Chard and Beaminster. For SatNav: DT8 3RF

DIARY OF EVENTS:

January

5th

Stoke Active Walkers

11th Walking for Health
25th Walking for Health

February

6th 9th Annual Potato Day
8th Walking for Health
22nd Walking for Health
25th Somerset Sight