

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

### *Chair's Update*

This month my update will focus on clarifying the facts to all residents regarding our Parish Council's decision to put in a bid for the Methodist Church and use it as a Youth & Family Centre. After extensive consultation with our village our decision continues to be met with hostility from a minority of objectors. The scaremongering has taken many forms, including misinformation about the project and claims of illegal activity.

### The facts:

When the Methodist Church was put up for sale, we lost the provision of facilities for the youth of the Parish. The Parish Council has a duty/responsibility to seek a resolution for that need. The Memorial Hall Committee was approached at the time of seeking alternative accommodation but unfortunately could not accommodate in their current state due to clashes in prime time usage with other user groups. At the feasibility stage of the Methodist Hall project we looked at the option of extending the Hall – this was rejected for reasons extensively discussed within the study including higher costs, and longer timescales. During our research it then came to light that the Memorial Hall does not belong to the Parish Council but to its Charitable Trustees.

*So where are we now in the process?* We are waiting approval of our government borrowing application, and then will make a bid for the Church in June.

*And what will it cost for you and me?* If we submit a bid to buy the Methodist Church up to the maximum value of £150,000 the cost of the project for a Band D property will mean an anticipated increase of £13.90 per year on the parish part of the Council Tax - that's £0.26p a week to cover the fixed rate loan. The building will then belong to the Parish Council as an asset. The Parish Council has received a first class commendation and endorsement from the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) for the project's consultation process and comprehensive Business Case. We have the support of our district and county councillors and the SSDC legal team.

At our recent Extraordinary meeting convened to approve the Resolutions to take the project forward, 77% of the Councillors voted with the resolutions to bid for the Methodist Church and fund the purchase primarily through an increase in the parish precept. This was a fair reflection of the split we had at our two open meetings with fellow parishioners.

It's considered good practice within council /office that once a decision is made, Councillors unite behind the way the motion falls even if individuals do not privately agree with the motion - this is known as collective responsibility.

In a similar way as residents I ask you all to get behind this exciting project and work to make it the successful additional resource the village so rightly deserves. Stoke is a large enough village to support two community facilities, and the Parish Council are keen to continue to support the Memorial Hall as a valuable community venue for adult activities as we have done for many years.

Please contact any of the project team or Hugh and myself, and we will be happy to discuss and dispel any rumours that may be circulating. Let's hope our bid is successful!

Barbara Brooks, Chairman 01935 823894, Hugh Donovan, Vice Chairman 01935 829181

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10 MAY 2016**

This last year has been an incredibly busy one for the Parish Council. I would like to begin by thanking all those volunteers who have stood as Parish Councillors during the year, and our District and County Councillors who have ably supported us with technical advice and moral support. During the year, we have said goodbye to Bruce Wilson, Roger Bevan, Wendy Hall and Paul Spearpoint. Their effort and commitment to the Parish Council has been very much valued over the years, and we thank them on your behalf for all the help they have given.

Five new councillors were co-opted last November, bringing with them a wide range of skills and knowledge, and this has brought us up to full strength at 11 councillors in total. The new councillors are Hugh Donovan, Chris Earl, Brian Evans, Marilyn Hart, and Malcolm Uhlhorn, and they have already proved how hardworking and committed to the village they are.

We have continued to support community facilities as we do each year by providing grants to the Memorial Hall, the Sports and Recreation Trust, the Boys Brigade, the Youth Club, and Hamdon Youth Group towards their operating costs. In addition we provided extra grants for a new boiler and radiators and for roof repairs to the Memorial Hall, and a grant to the Sports & Recreation Trust towards a new Adventure Playground, and sponsored the May Fayre programme. Our major projects this year were the provision of a whole new play area at Stonehill and a new multi-play unit for the Memorial Hall Grounds.

Last October we held a "Celebrate Stoke" event in the Memorial Hall to showcase all the leisure clubs in the village, to encourage new members to join, and it proved to be a great success.

Keen to ensure that we improve health and safety issues in the village, the Council purchased two defibrillators to be located in public places, one up at the Prince of Wales on the hill, and one on the Memorial Hall, together with some training.

After a long fight, and with the support of David Laws, and our Conservation Officer, we managed to stop Royal Mail from removing the old George VI post box in the High Street outside Tomasz the Hairdressers. If this had been taken away it would have affected many elderly people in the village, and we would have lost a part of our village's history.

We were also able to get the overhanging trees at the top of the High Street cut down, as they were in a dangerous condition, severely restricting motorists' view of the corner and pulling on telephone wires. We mediated between the Duchy and Highways, who were in dispute as to who owned the land, and obtained a "one-off, without prejudice" solution so that they were able to work together to remove them. We also removed the trees at the edge of the Recreation Ground on West Street which were in a poor condition and have planted natural hedging in its place, which will be easier to maintain and is more appropriate.

We were concerned to learn of the loss of community meeting space for the younger members of our parish when the Methodist Church was put up for sale for residential development. Following detailed research into the viability of the project, the Parish Council registered a right to bid under the Community Right to Bid rules which has to be made by the 6 July and this project is on-going.

Finally I would like to thank all those individuals in the village who have supported us over the past year. We have been able to build up new and better relationships with organisations in the village to enable us all to work together better and we look forward to continuing to do this in the future for the benefit of all residents.

Contact details below.

Barbara Brooks

Chair of the Parish Council

chairsshpc@hotmail.com Tamarisk, High St (opp Working Men's Club)

### ***Join Us!***

Would you be interested in joining us on the Parish Council? We have two vacancies, and we'd love them all to be filled! It doesn't matter whether you are new to the village or have been here for years, young or not so young, all are welcome to share ideas and make a difference to the village. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.15pm in the Memorial Hall and we are a really friendly group who want to, and will make sure we improve facilities in our village. If you would like more information on what it's all about, please contact either Barbara Brooks, Chairman, on 823894 or Sarah Moore, Parish Clerk, on 822455.

*Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 87 of the Local Government Act 1972 that two vacancies have occurred on the Stoke sub Hamdon Parish Council. Unless a request for an election to be held is submitted in writing to the Proper Officer of the South Somerset District Council, at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2HT by no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June by ten electors for the Parish of Stoke sub Hamdon, the Parish Council will proceed to fill this vacancy by co-option*

## **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

For a number of years we have had a very successful Community Speedwatch team operating in West Street and East Stoke. Unfortunately due to other commitments three members of the team have left so the group has now disbanded. There has been a noticeable difference in the speed of the traffic through the village and at the Parish Meeting the Parish Council were asked to get the Community Speedwatch reinstated.

Please can anyone help as we do need volunteers – the more the merrier - so that the sessions can be set up on a rota basis. If anyone is interested in volunteering then please contact Sarah Moore, the Parish Clerk either by email at [clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk) or by phone on (01935) 822455.

### **SOMERSET WASTE PARTNERSHIP**

Somerset Waste Partnership is offering a special deal on their composting bins. The price remains at £17.98 (RRP £39) for the 220L bin and at £19.99 (RRP £49) for the 330L bin. SWP are also continuing with the 'buy one get one half price' offer which offers a great saving if residents decide to buy bins with friends and family members. For full details see [www.getcomposting.com](http://www.getcomposting.com).

### **DON'T BE FOOLED BY COUNCIL TAX SCAMMERS**

"I can lower your Council Tax banding if you pay me £65" may sound like a great offer, but there are no guarantees that your Council Tax band will be lowered. You can find out if your band can be lowered for free. SSDC is warning residents to be aware of Council Tax scammers who may offer you deals to reduce your monthly payments or reduce your banding. Council Tax scammers are very prevalent at the moment due to bills recently being delivered to residents across the district.

One current scam that has been brought to the district council's attention is from a company claiming to be called 'claimers' who call on behalf of SSDC and ask for £65 to lower your Council Tax banding. Please note this is not a phone call from SSDC. Council Tax bands are set by the Valuation Office Agency and can only be changed under certain conditions. Details can be found at [www.gov.uk/council-tax-appeals](http://www.gov.uk/council-tax-appeals). You will not be charged for the service.

### **ROUTE 60+**

Somerset County Council's Road Safety Team aims to reduce the number of casualties on the county's roads through a programme of education, training and publicity and Route 60+ is one of their most popular presentations and is run for older drivers.

The presentation addresses not only how vehicles have developed over the years, but also how our own driving skills and habits may have changed; it then addresses how we can go about updating those skills. Driving provides independence and is a skill that should be nurtured for as long as possible. If a driver stops driving for a period of time it is, inevitably, much more difficult to try and start again at a later date and this workshop is designed to help drivers keep driving for as long as safely possible. The presentation itself lasts approximately 60 minutes and there are opportunities to talk to members of the road safety team about any driving or road safety concerns. The session is run free of charge and drivers don't even have to be over 60 to come along!

If you think this workshop would be of interest to you please contact Sarah Moore, Parish Clerk, on 01935 822455 or via email at [clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk).

### **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> June 2016*

Today's walk will take us along Bowey then down across Shelves to Matts Lane. We will then follow the footpath to Broadmead Lane and across the field to Manor Farm in Chiselborough, take the footpath up past Chiselborough Church to the Cats head pub and up to the Middle Chinnock road. We will then turn left back towards Chiselborough and follow the footpath to the right along the back of the houses to pick up the Odcombe road, turn left into Chiselborough and back through Manor Farm and across the fields to the Lord Nelson 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**

We are delighted to say that we enjoyed another very successful fashion show to celebrate St Georges Day in the beautiful United Reformed Church on 23 April. All the volunteers worked extremely hard to make the event possible and we would like to thank everyone who helped in any way at all. The church looked beautiful, the models gorgeous and bargains were had! We even made over £500! It wouldn't be possible at all without the help and support freely given by so many people. Thank you.

### **SPORTS AND RECREATION TRUST**

There has been some serious and deliberate damage to the skate park by some young people. This damage will have to be repaired to make the skate board park safe to use and these repairs will cost the Trust. Please be aware that this is criminal damage and, in future, all such occurrences will be reported to the police. If you see or witness any damage or misuse of facilities on the recreation ground then please let me know at sarahskid@hotmail.co.uk

### **STOKE BOWLS CLUB SUCCESS**

Three teams from Stoke Bowles Club took part in the Pair's Competition on Saturday, 7 May which was held at Donyatt Bowls Club, playing against teams from as far apart as North Petherton, Bishops Lydeard and Wiveliscombe. All three teams made it through to the Quarter Final with one team, Sandra Webb and Tony Helliard, going on to win the final, beating Middlezoy 10-8 in a strongly contested game to bring home the trophy. Well Done.

### **MARIE CURIE**

It seemed like the whole village turned out and we would like to express our most sincere thanks to everyone who supported us at the Coffee and Cake morning at The Lighthouse on the 23 April. We raised over £200 which will stay locally to help provide care and support for people with a terminal illness.

Future diary dates: Thursday, 16 June, Travelling Trends Fashion Show at The Baptist Church Yeovil, tickets £6. High street brands on show and for sale afterwards at hugely discounted prices. Refreshments available. Call Pat (826275) or Maria (824064) for tickets/further details.

Christmas Market, Saturday, 12 November in the Memorial Hall from 10.30am – 3pm. For further information/stalls call Maria 824064.

### **MEMORIAL HALL COFFEE & CAKE MORNING**

We had a very successful morning and will shortly be sending our/your donation to the Alzheimer's Society. The committee especially say a very big Thank You to all those lovely people who brought along cakes and then stayed to buy them back. Also thanks to everyone who came along to support us. It was a pleasure to see so many villagers chatting and enjoying meeting up. Thank you everyone.

## **DAMAGE TO MEMORIAL HALL AGAIN**

For the second month in a row we have to report damage to the drain pipes of the Memorial Hall caused by footballs. This problem is costing money the Hall committee would rather spend on improvements to the interior of the Hall. Please, please will parents STOP their children kicking footballs against the hall's walls.

## **SPORT50**

Free sports activities for 50+ year olds from 15 June to 6 July on Wednesdays 2pm – 4pm at the Memorial Hall. Adapted sports include New Age Kurling, Seated Volleyball, Boccia, Table Tennis, Walking Rounders, Walking Football and Badminton. Come along and join us for fun and games. You will get the chance to meet new people while trying different activities. For more information contact Sam Wenden-de-Lira on either 01935 462346; sam.wendren-de-lira@southsomerset.gov.uk or www.southsomerset.gov.uk/sport50

## **GARDENING CLUB NEWS**

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of the Schedule and Entry form for the Stoke sub Hamdon Flower, Produce and Craft Show to be held on Saturday, 6 August. The Committee and members of the Garden Club are indebted to Orchards Estates who have very kindly sponsored the printing of the schedules and entry forms.

Entries can be left at The Shop at The Cross from the 1 July onwards but we felt it was a good idea for everyone in the village to have early notification of the various classes so they can make their entries accordingly. We are looking forward to having a bumper crop of entries, particularly in the children's classes.

The Garden Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month and visitors can be assured of a warm welcome. At our June 22 meeting, Lara Smith will be giving a talk on Growing English Cut Flowers and you are all welcome.

For further information on the Gardening Club please contact either our Secretary Tricia Toosey on 01935 823691 or our Chairman Sue Winwood on 01935 823671.

## **2<sup>ND</sup> HAMDON GUIDES**

Your own local Guide unit has formed! Welcoming girls aged between 10 – 14 years. We held our first meeting with a dozen girls on Tuesday 19 April at All Saints Hall, Stoke sub Hamdon (normally at The Memorial Hall).

On Sunday 8 May four members from our newly formed unit, attended a Somerset Guides Emergency event at Huish Woods near Taunton. They were **joining** 170 other Guides pretending that they were abandoned on a desert island after a boat crash. They had to build a shelter, cook on an open fire, attend to some people needing first aid, and orienteer themselves around the area - a hands on experiment!

On the weekend of 13 – 15 May three girls joined their old unit from Martock in a Youth group weekend camping at Crealy Adventure Park, near Exeter. Where they were introduced to camping, and had an epic adventure in the park in any spare minute of the day! Two members Sophie and Faith, made their Guide promise whilst on the Twister ride!

Forthcoming camps at Somermead near Wedmore in August are planned. As are training in map reading and orienteering, and fundraising amongst others.

As a newly formed unit, we have little in the way of resources and if you have any expertise or such items that you think might be useful and would like to donate them we would be very grateful! Compasses, local O/S maps, ground sheets, camping stoves, fire pits, tents, sticks, elastic bands, buckets and the like, please do not hesitate to contact us!

If you as an adult or girl aged between 10 & 14 years would like to give us a hand or want to give us a trial please give us a call. We meet on a Tuesday generally at the Stoke Memorial Hall from 7.00 – 8.30 pm; currently it is £30 per term for subs /membership.

Jackie Poole - 1st Montacute Brownies and 2nd Hamdon Guides 01935 823606/0777 9354320

## **STOKE BAND NEWS**

During March Sonja Helliard, the training band tutor, resigned from the band. We would like to thank her for her hard work with the training band. If you have any enquiries about training please contact Gill Robins or Jane Herbert.

Stoke band has started a recruitment drive for some new players, yet at this time we are losing our longest serving player, our Eb Bass player Adrian Biggs has had to give up playing after 51 years with the band. His last performance was this year's May Fayre. Although he will be continuing a Secretary we wish to thank Adrian for his years of service to the band.

## **ACORN POP-IN AT OAK TREE HOUSE**

*Thursdays 2 -2.30pm*

Dear Friends of Stoke, we have enjoyed another full month of speakers, games and outings but our numbers are reducing due to people moving to other places where they get more help - such as Yeovil. Hence we are finding it difficult to have too many speakers and not so many outings because of the cost. At present people living at Oak Tree House pay £1 a meeting and from outside £1.50. That covers tea and cakes during the afternoon and our speakers. Having told you a little about ourselves we would now like to invite you to come along and test us! We won't bite!! Bring a friend and your first visit will be on us. Age doesn't matter as everyone is welcome. So to the point; our programme will be as follows:

June 2nd	Airs & Graces (music) & Trade Table
9th	Boccia
16th	Summer readings from Group members
23rd	To be arranged
30th	Talk by Mike Bolton.

For more information please contact Jennifer Kerr (01935 882609)

## **CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL SUMMER FAYRE**

Friday 1 July, 2 – 4pm. Come and join the fun at Castle Primary School's Summer Fayre. There will be lots to see and do including: Coconut Shy, Penalty Shootout, Name the Teddy, tombola, Guess the Weight of the Cake, bouncy castle, stalls, raffle and refreshments.

## **WALKING FOR HEALTH**

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. No walks on Bank Holiday Mondays

**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)

## **FOR THE VILLAGE, BY THE VILLAGE EVENT**

*Stoke sub Hamdon proudly presents*

### **“A Right Royal Do”**

Celebrating our Queen's 90th birthday 12 noon - 5pm on 12 June 2016 in the Memorial Hall Grounds. Family Fun Lunchtime on the Memorial Grounds, bring your own picnic with music from Stoke Band. There will be a bar with beer, wine and soft drinks available. Organised Games - traditional outdoor party games for ALL the family, a Right Royal Treasure Hunt

around the village starting and ending at the Memorial Hall and a Right Royal Birthday Cake Competition - be prepared to donate your cakes to the village celebration.

### **'And Grandsire Went Wrong'**

An historical village mystery! Will be held in The Priory Tithe Barn (NT) in Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6QP. Performances are on Friday 1 July and Saturday 2 July - bring your own picnic from 6pm, the performance is at 7.30pm and; Sunday 3 July 2016 - bring your own picnic from 12 noon, the performance is at 2.00pm. Bar, Soft Drinks and Snacks are available.

'And Grandsire Went Wrong' is a play written by local author Angela Hodges, originally devised for radio but now adapted for the stage. The play's plot centres on a group of present day bell ringers who meet weekly in the church at Stoke sub Hamdon for bell ringing practice and the discovery by one of their members, of a set of initials 'GR', carved into the stone of the bell tower. This discovery sparks an investigation by 'Tricia' who manages to find out that mystery initials belonged to a local resident, George Ralph who lived in the village in the early twentieth century. The story then unfolds into one that through the telling of George's story of growing up in Stoke, then going off to the Battle of the Somme in the Great War as a young man, cleverly links the present day bell ringers to the ghosts of the past, in more ways than they had ever imagined!

The performances will place in the Priory tithe barn (NT) in Stoke sub Hamdon (to coincide with the first day of the Battle of the Somme 1916). They will be held on the evenings of Friday 1, Saturday 2 July and a Sunday matinee 3 July 2016, incorporating a pre-performance picnic, in the Priory grounds whilst listening to wartime songs from the Stoke sub Hamdon Silver Band. Tickets £10.00, Concessions £8.00. Box Office 01935 824784 weekdays 9-5 only or email: [info@stokeperformingartsgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@stokeperformingartsgroup.co.uk) (not really suitable for children under 10 years old). Find us on [www.stokeperformingartsgroup.co.uk](http://www.stokeperformingartsgroup.co.uk) and join us on Facebook

### **HAMDON YOUTH GROUP**

Further information from Youth Worker Lou Chant on 07402 987921 or email [lou.chant@cyp.me.uk](mailto:lou.chant@cyp.me.uk) and also on Facebook @Community Youth Project

### **COUNTRYSIDE EVENTS – JUNE**

*Ham Hill Country Park*

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Bee Homes

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Woodland Crafts

*Yeovil Country Park*

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>

Craft Fair

### **DIARY OF EVENTS:**

#### **June**

7<sup>th</sup> Stoke Active Walkers  
12<sup>th</sup> 'A Right Royal Do' Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration  
13<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health  
16<sup>th</sup> Fashion Show – Marie Curie  
22<sup>nd</sup> Garden Club Talk – English Cut Flowers  
27<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health

#### **July**

1<sup>st</sup> Castle School Summer Fayre  
1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> 'And Grandsire Went Wrong'

#### **August**

6<sup>th</sup> Flower, Produce & Craft Show  
22<sup>nd</sup> Somerset Sight

#### **November**

12<sup>th</sup> Marie Curie Christmas Market