

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

### *Chair's Update*

#### Methodist Church

Most of our Council meeting in February was taken up with a discussion about the possible future of the Methodist Church in West Street.

As residents will be aware from the posters round the village, the Methodist Church has now been put up for sale at £150,000. Following the results of a Feasibility Study which we undertook together with Hamdon Youth Group show that the project was workable, the Parish Council has registered an interest to make a bid for its purchase. The ultimate aim is that if we can raise the funds and our bid is successful, we develop the 3 hall/room spaces in the Church into a Hamdon Youth Centre, where all our younger club members in the village can meet.

Because we have told the District Council that we wish to have the opportunity to bid, we now have 6 months from the time the property went on sale to raise funds and make a bid, i.e. until August, and the Church authorities cannot sell the property until we have made our bid. We will be researching into the opportunities of raising funds through grants and community funding. We have to be realistic – at this stage we do not know if we can raise the total we need, nor is there any obligation for the Church to accept our bid over another but we all felt that we had to try our very, very best to retain meeting facilities for our youth and playgroups, we owe it to the village. A Project Team has been set up to take it forward. If you would like to join us, please contact either myself or Peter Hulett. Wish us luck! And if anyone wins the Lottery in the next few weeks.....!!

We also set up a Public Meeting on 29 February to ask for your views and feedback, and to encourage any of you who have skills or connections you felt would be useful. We really need to get together as a village on this – particularly as I learnt on the very day I wrote this article in the middle of February that the URC Church have just indicated that 2016 will probably be their last year before they too close their doors, and so Hamdon Playgroup and the Stoke Band are losing their meeting places too. We will be talking to the URC Church shortly to find out more, and exploring other options at the Memorial Hall.

What comes out very strongly from all of this is that we desperately all need to work together as a village, not only to keep meeting places, but perhaps in any event re-work the days and times all groups are looking to meet, to maximize the use of available spaces and avoid clashes.

#### Dog Bins

Those of you who have been campaigning for more dog bin provision in the village will be pleased to know that by keeping on at the District Council over several months, we have finally got them to agree to collect from two new bins each week – not the seven we asked for, but better than nothing! The Parish Council have agreed to purchase and install the two new bins ourselves in return. One will be situated at the junction of Hedgecock Lane and East Stoke opposite Stanchester Academy, and the other in the Memorial Hall Grounds at the edge of the curved drive into the car park.

#### Defibrillator

It has not been possible to have our second defibrillator installed in the old telephone box for technical reasons, and so it has been agreed to place it on the car park side of the Memorial Hall. This defibrillator has been funded by the Parish Council and from a £1000 legacy from the late Bernadette Hutchings who lived in the village, and will bear a plaque to that effect.

### Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

This year many villages across the UK are celebrating this event, and Stoke is no exception. The Parish Council plan to hold a celebration on Sunday 12 June (the official weekend) in the Memorial Hall and Grounds with food and lots of entertainment. Emails have gone round to as many organisations as possible to invite them to take part and help organize it with us so that we have a truly "for the village, by the village" event. Let's make it a brilliant day to remember!

### Congratulations!

Our warmest congratulations to Kath Sharman, who celebrated her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on 14 January. Her house was full of flowers and laughter when we visited her on her special day, and her smile said it all!

Contact details below.

**Barbara Brooks**

**Chair of the Parish Council**

[chairsshpc@hotmail.com](mailto:chairsshpc@hotmail.com) Tamarisk, High St (opp Working Mens Club)

### **VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2016**

Gertrude Stein once said "*Silent gratitude isn't worth very much to anyone*".

With this in mind the Parish Council is holding a celebration on the afternoon of the 4 June for those who volunteer in our village. We know that without the many who give up their time freely our village would be a poorer place for us all. We feel it is right to publicly recognise their efforts and to applaud them. After much debate it was decided that the categories would be as follows:

- Outstanding contribution to the physical environment of our village
- Outstanding contribution to our village community
- Outstanding contribution by a young person
- Outstanding contribution to the health and wellbeing of our village
- Long Service Award

Nomination forms will be available from shops and surgeries, as well as on the village website. This is your opportunity to show your appreciation. Forms should be returned to Barbara Brooks, at Tamarisk, High Street, (opp Working Men's Club) or by email to [chairsshpc@hotmail.com](mailto:chairsshpc@hotmail.com) by 14 May.

We are sure everyone knows someone who works hard for our community so help us to give them the recognition they deserve!

### **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, 1 March*

Our walk today will begin by going along the bottom of Bowey, out along Norton Path and down over Sandy Lane and up to Greenhams Cross. We will then go up Grintley Lane, follow the footpath to join the Odcombe road which will take us down

into Chiselborough. From there we will go past The Cats Head and follow the footpath through the churchyard and across the fields back 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.

### **HAM HILL**

Please be advised that due to the inclement weather recently Ham Hill is very muddy and slippery so please take care when walking on the hill. Make sure that appropriate footwear is worn.

### **LIGHTHOUSE COFFEE SHOP**

Sadly, we will be losing Kathy as our manager at the end of February. We are so grateful for all her hard work and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the church is no longer in a financial position to employ her. Therefore, the coffee shop will close at the end of February but we do plan to open again at the beginning of April. It will then be staffed totally by volunteers. There may have to be small changes to the opening house and the scope of the menu.

Thank you to all our customers and supporters. We hope to see you in April.

*PCC, St Mary's Church*

### **URC UPDATE**

Following our letter sent out in October 2015 there was limited response so it may be that 2016 will be the last year for the life of the church in our building. We are continuing to meet for worship regularly and would very much like to invite you to an Agape event (informal service including Holy Communion) and light supper on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 7pm and our Easter Service on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am.

At the beginning of September we will be marking 150 years of worship in our church (chapel) and it is hoped this will be a celebration for the whole village to share.

### **FRIENDS OF HAM HILL**

There will be a presentation by the Friends of Ham Hill at the Parish Council Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March at 7.15pm that will outline what the Country Park has to offer, what the FoHH do to support its management, what projects are planned and the ways in which the local community can get involved.

### **GARDENING CLUB**

*Speaker from Sir Harold Hillier Gardens*

Stoke sub Hamdon Gardening Club have secured David Jewell - the Head of Collections - at the world famous Sir Harold Hillier Gardens Nr Romsey, to speak to us on Wednesday 23 March. He will tell us about the development of the 180 acres of the Gardens, what there is to see throughout the year, and what the future holds. It should be a most entertaining and informative talk and David will be available to answer questions concerning the Gardens afterwards.

We are inviting everyone to join us on Wednesday 23 March in the Memorial Hall. We will start at 7.30pm, doors open at 7.00pm. There will be a charge of £2 per person. Tea and biscuits will be available.

### *Stoke sub Hamdon Flower, Produce & Craft Show*

Saturday 6 August.

This is to call all those photographers, wood-workers, potters, knitters, needle workers AND CHILDREN to get your creative thinking caps on and start work on your entries to YOUR Village Show.

#### Children's Classes

Under 8 years of age. Create a face on a paper plate. You can use any paints, crayons, collage etc. that you wish. The judge will be looking for imagination as well as artistic flair.

8 - 11 years of age. Decorate 1 gingerbread man & put on a tea plate. You do not have to make the "man". He can be bought. Just get creative with his "outfit".

#### Photography Classes

This year these are--- "An Architectural Feature", "Time", "New Life", "Cobwebs" and of course the Musical Inspiration class on a musical theme to win the Stoke sub Hamdon Band Trophy.

Photos printed on photographic paper. Not to exceed 5" x 7", mounted on a white paper mount no larger than 6" x 8".

#### Handicrafts

These classes are "A hand knitted or crocheted item", "An Article in wood, metal or pottery/ceramic", "An Article in Cross-stitch, tapestry or embroidery", "A single item of hand-crafted jewellery", "A patchwork/quilted article not to exceed 15" x 15".

Photographs & handicraft items should not have been exhibited at Stoke Show before.

So get "crafting" everyone. We expect a bumper crop of entries this year. Keep an eye on future issues of this newsletter for further information of fruit, vegetable & flower arranging classes.

### *A Date for Your Diary - Talk by Air Ambulance Service*

Stoke sub Hamdon Gardening Club have invited the Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance Service to come to Stoke sub Hamdon Memorial Hall on Wednesday 27 April to talk about their vital work throughout the two counties. Take-off is at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome. Come along and hear about their day-to-day activities and their exciting rescues.

There will be NO admission charge for this talk, but don't forget the Air Ambulance Service is run on voluntary contributions, so we hope you will be generous and make a contribution to their funds. Tea/coffee and cakes will be available.

## **MEMORIAL HALL**

Stoke sub Hamdon Memorial Hall is holding another Coffee & Cake Morning on Saturday 30 April from 10.30am to 1.00pm. This will raise money for a charity and towards the Hall's on-going refurbishment. We have chosen a selection of charities which we would like you, the residents, to choose from. These are:

- The Macmillan Unit at Yeovil District Hospital
- Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance
- The Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Meningitis Research Foundation

- Alzheimer's Research UK

Please could you email or telephone Sarah Moore with your chosen charity on either 01935 822455 or [clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clerksshpc@hotmail.co.uk). More information in next month's village newsletter. Donations of cakes will be greatly appreciated.

### **CHARITY RACE NIGHT**

My friend Zoe Merrick (Alan and Ina Laws daughter) is running this year's London Marathon to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis; Ina's great nephew Chester was born with the illness earlier this year. To help her boost funds, we are organising a race night at Stoke Working Men's Club on Saturday 19 March at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 each to include a ploughman supper. If you would like to be the proud owner of a race horse then they are available to buy for £3 each. If your horse wins then you will win a prize. Tickets and horses are available from Anna Davis at 20 Castle Street, Tel 826024.

### **WITCOMBE STREAM PROJECT – HAM HILL**

*The Ham Hill Rangers will be hosting an open afternoon on Thursday 3 March, between 3.30pm – 6.30pm to explain the Witcombe Stream Project.*

This summer the Rangers and volunteers will be working together on a practical project to enhance the habitats, wildlife and heritage in the bottom of Witcombe Valley (part of Ham Hill Country Park). They will be digging out the old medieval pond (with the help of an archaeologist) and then bringing to the surface the piped stream that currently runs underground through to the very bottom of the valley. A series of small ponds and streams will be created, and with new marginal planting, fabulous habitats for wildlife will be created. From February you will see the Rangers starting to pollard the old willow trees that sit in the valley bottom. The project brings plenty of opportunities for practical volunteering and also school visits. We would be delighted to welcome you to a mini exhibition about the project, to see maps and images and timescales for this summer at the Ranger's Office (TA14 6RW) on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. This project has been funded by the Heritage lottery Fund. [countryside@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@southsomerset.gov.uk) Ham Hill Ranger's Office 01935 823617

### **TAI CHI**

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

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

Are forming...

Due to the success of Brownies going onto Guides, we are forming a local unit of our own! Meeting at The Memorial Hall and All Saints Hall, West Street Stoke sub Hamdon on Tuesdays 7.15pm – 9pm. Guides are girls from 10 – 14 years old and have a more hands on approach to organise the programme. There are two forms of recognition either the interest badges, or the Go For It challenge badges. They will get the opportunity of going on camps, day trips to London to see pop groups, jamborees etc. The unit will start on Tuesday 12 April 2016. 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 Claire Kelly a call on 07747846472. (no previous knowledge or experience necessary!)

### **POP-IN ACORN**

### Programme

March	3rd	Butterfly Slides & Talk with Jayne English
	10th	Fish & Chip Lunch at Oak Tree
	17th	Springtime with Terry Whitehead
	24th	Hot X Buns & Chat
	31st	Easter Holiday

Come and join us at Pop-In which is the name given to a friendly group formed 10 years ago as a venue for villagers to meet weekly on a Thursday afternoon at Oak Tree House. We have a programme of a monthly speaker, outings to nurseries etc, and sea side visits for cream teas. Activities at Oak Tree House, which are always followed by tea and cakes, include playing Boccia, quizzes and musical events. We have an annual barbeque and a Christmas lunch.

A warm welcome is given to villagers who would like to join us and participate in our activities. Further information from Paul Speakman (01935 826375 or Jennifer Kerr (01935 882609)

### **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)

### **ST MARY'S CHURCH**

We are pleased to welcome Rev Annie Gurner as the Associate Vicar in the Ham Hill Villages Benefice (licensed at a service at Montacute in January). She has particular responsibility for Montacute and Odcombe, and the shared Pastoral Care of Stoke with our Priest in Charge Rev. Peter Thomas.

Annie is normally available on Sunday - Tuesday (but other times by arrangement), and is based at The Keep, 1 Castle Street (at the side of the Vicarage) in Castle Street. She can be contacted on [revgurner@btinternet.com](mailto:revgurner@btinternet.com) (phone no. 01935 824167)

There are usually services each Sunday at 8.00 a.m., 10.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

#### Worship for Holy Week and Easter at St Mary's

*March 24 at 7.00 p.m.*

Maundy Thursday - a service of Holy Communion recalling the evening of the Last Supper.

*March 25 at 9.30 a.m.*

Good Friday - "Walking behind the Cross" from St Mary's

10.00 a.m. Short service outside the Memorial Hall

*(at 3.00pm there is also a service on Gawlers Hill in Chiselborough)*

*March 27 at 9.30a.m.*

Easter Day - a single service (a Family Communion) for the whole Church - conducted by Rev Annie Gurner the new Associate Vicar.  
(Everyone is welcome to join us in any of these services - more information from the Clergy or Wardens - listed on the back page)

### **Church Roof Work**

We anticipate that work on the replacement of the Copper Roof over the nave of St Mary's church should be starting shortly. This should take about 10 weeks. Normal services will continue on Sundays and over Easter. We are hoping that the work will not be too inconvenient for neighbours and for those who wish to visit the churchyard.

## **DIARY OF EVENTS:**

### **March**

1<sup>st</sup> Stoke Active Walkers  
3<sup>rd</sup> Witcombe Stream Project Talk  
8<sup>th</sup> Friends of Ham Hill Presentation  
14<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health  
17<sup>th</sup> Somerset Sight  
19<sup>th</sup> Charity Race Night  
21<sup>st</sup> Walking for Health  
23<sup>rd</sup> Gardening Club talk with David Jewell

### **April**

11<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health  
25<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health  
30<sup>th</sup> Coffee & Cake Morning

### **May**

9<sup>th</sup> Walking for Health  
23<sup>rd</sup> Walking for Health

### **June**

4<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Awards  
12<sup>th</sup> Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

### **August**

6<sup>th</sup> Flower, Produce & Craft Show