

South Stoke Parish Annual Meeting
Thursday 12 April 2018
Annual Reports

St Andrew's Church

This year has been overshadowed by the serious illness of the Vicar, the Rev Paul Boughton and his subsequent death on the 31st January. Paul's attitude to dying, once he had accepted the shock of his diagnosis, was to re-affirm his trust in Jesus Christ for his personal salvation and to look forward to getting to heaven when it was all over. St Andrew's Churchyard became his final resting



place after a private family funeral on 16th February. This was followed by a public farewell service at St Thomas', Goring. Paul's wife, Liz and their daughters, Sophie and Alice will welcome your love and prayers as they experience this great sorrow.

The big effort of 2017 has been the Installation of an Automatic Clock Winder and Time Adjuster in the Clock-Tower. Rob Small has been a great leader of this project, the works being done by Smiths of Derby at a cost of £6,705.60, The Open Gardens Festival made an outstanding contribution of £3,342.50 to the Fund in one day and I thank the people who opened their gardens and the organisers for a lot of work. Have you noticed how good the time-keeping of the clock is these days?

The tall trees in the Churchyard are to be trimmed this year; those adjacent to the School have been done already. The mowing of the Churchyard gets done regularly by George Druce and I am grateful for the help of the Parish Council with the costs. We all like the simple beauty of the Church and its setting in this lovely village.

The Coffee Mornings on the third Wednesday of the month, with cake and cheese scones, brings lots of South Stokers together in a warm Church. The United Benefice Alpha Course has been run again this year as a simple introduction to the faith. The Ecumenical Lent and Advent Courses have also been held with our friends in Goring and Streatley.

There is continuing need for people to play the organ or piano for St Andrew's Sunday Services and there is scope and a welcome for all of us in this village to join in worship, week by week and be part of the life of our parish church.

Harry Hogg, Churchwarden

Amenities Charity Report 2017/18

VILLAGE HALL

This continues to be well used and we maintain our brief of continuing to keep it functioning effectively. Developments with regards to a new building are elsewhere in the full report

New cupboards have recently been put up in the kitchen providing much needed storage space. Many thanks to Robert Small. The WI have very kindly purchased a fridge as the previous one was no longer working.

We recently had a thorough electrical survey carried out. Unsurprisingly, there are quite a few 'advisories' which we will need to act upon but fortunately nothing that puts us in imminent danger of closure! These will be addressed during the next few months.

Thanks to the generous support of the WI – 100 years old in 2018- we are embarking on re-decorating the main hall at some point in the not too distant future.

All users are asked to take particular heed of the various notices referring to the heaters in order to ensure that the correct on/off switches are used.

Thanks to Lin Wooldridge for keeping an old building ship-shape with the weekly clean.

RECREATION GROUND

Thanks to the patient efforts of Mark Hathaway the Recreation ground is currently free from moles. The rabbits still pose a constant nuisance and long-term correspondence with Network Rail has yet to achieve anything. We will be importing a pile of soil soon which can then be used to fill the most hazardous holes as they appear.

Green Gym put in some nice poles round a section of the car park which will soon be linked with rope. They also did a great job of pruning a substantial section of the overgrown privet hedge

The funds for a new swing have been raised and it should be installed in the next few months- hopefully before the mending of the old one fails again!

The school and some parents have planted a lot of new trees in the far corner and we hope they survive rather better than the earlier plantings

As from this summer we will have a new recreation ground steward. Mark Chadwick has kindly agreed to take over.

LOOKING AHEAD

In the future we will have to consider a change of our current management structure to one which limits liability. This is in order to deal with the development of the Community Hall on the rec and with the legal implications of our position vis a vis the Parish Council and the Charity Commissioners.

Chris Bertrand, Acting Chair of The Amenities Charity

The school has been flourishing continually with our numbers remaining steady and looking to increase further in September. Our small school is weathering the political upheaval with its usual aplomb. Despite cuts in budgets and the ever-increasing expectations of schools we have continued to maintain our high standards. The Parents' Association have continued to support the school in a variety of ways; from supplementing trips to providing additional equipment to enrich our curriculum. Volunteers from both the village and outside continue to take time out of their busy lives to listen to children read and to be part of our school. We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone involved with the school; no matter how small your input is.

The most important adverts for the school are the children in our care. We could not have wished for better representatives of the future. The children who attend South Stoke Primary School take pride in their achievements, they value each other and epitomise the values we all hold dear.

Our school playground continues to be an inspiration for sport and games. Some of the current equipment is to be replaced and we have a planning application (P18/S0991/FUL) which is being processed by SODC and should be on the SODC website by the end of April. The school has gained permission from both of the church wardens to replace the condemned equipment with a 'Spiders Web' for the younger children and pictures will be sited in the village as part of the planning consultation process. If you wish to make direct comment to the school please contact either myself, Amanda Rogers (Head Teacher) or to Mrs. Barbara Taylor (Chair of Governors).

The May Fayre is the schools next community focus and, as always, will be high on the community social calendar. Mr. Phil Wortley is the Chair of the PA and is more than happy to welcome donations or volunteers. The PA do an amazing job and we all appreciate their hard work. We would also like to thank the villagers for their understanding and continued support of this annual event which puts South Stoke on the map.

Everyone at the school wishes the community another successful year.

**Miss Amanda Rogers
Head Teacher**

South Stoke Community Shop

Once again, the village shop enjoyed a relatively successful if challenging year. We were not blessed with balmy weather at crucial times and regular turnover, as a result, struggled to maintain previous buoyant levels. It is noticeable how much fine weather during school holidays and bank holidays has an uplifting effect on sales. Nevertheless, trading was still resilient, and we fully expect the annual accounts to show acceptable results.

As has become the norm in recent years, turnover was augmented by returns generated by the frequent events organised to support our venture. These included the six nations rugby programme, a car boot sale, two Christmas events and participation in the Summer Fair. The cash generated is much appreciated, the goodwill generated is priceless.

Much of the management board's time has been consumed by the new premises issue and we are sure that this item has been more than widely aired within the PC's general meeting. From the point of view of the shop's board we commend the tireless efforts of Geoff Ward and David Kennedy, our representatives on the villages working party. Despite obstacles, both foreseeable and unforeseen, they have powered on with the required resilience and optimism and have faithfully represented the unanimous viewpoint of our board. We would also like to thank both the Parish Council and the Amenities Committee for their support and backing for this venture. The desired outcome will not be secured without this unswerving dedication and we are grateful for it.

The year also turned out to be an expensive one. As with all technology, our electronic till system finally began to outlive its usefulness and was replaced some months ago. Despite the almost obligatory 'bugs' the adoption and acceptance of the new system was well received and relatively smoothly bedded in. Maintenance costs on an ageing infrastructure have risen and we took the opportunity to redesign our office space to make working conditions a little more accommodating. This all costs money and we have been depleting our capital reserves slowly but surely. They have seen us through five years of trading but were in need of significant topping up. As a result, the board recently took the decision to launch a fundraising programme aimed at expanding the current shareholder base by both attracting new shareholders and securing further investment from current shareholders. It is pleasing to report the early success of this campaign and we would like to thank villagers for the investments and contributions already secured.

We hope soon to be able to launch a new running account programme for shoppers which can be funded by means of a regular monthly standing order payment.

Finally, as ever, we would like to thank our legion of supporters and volunteers without whom there would be no shop. Jules Costello, our shop manager continues to organise a tightly run ship and we are also indebted to her.

Mick Woodall

Community Hall

The village shop is in a temporary building and our planning consent runs out in March 2019. We were well into planning for a new building when it became clear that we needed a new village hall as well. Consultation events around the village gave strong support for a combined building on the Recreation Ground near to the current shop. We tend to call this combined building The Community Hall for convenience.

Over the last year we have finalised the consultation results. We have finalised the hall and shop requirements and combined these into the Community Hall requirements document. We developed a project plan to take us through design, planning, build and fit out. Then we pulled all our thinking together into a planning pre-application request to SODC.

The response from SODC was positive and encouraged us to move forward and gain agreement from the Parish Council that they would fund the first phase of architectural services. We developed a tender document and sought responses from five local architects. We got three quotes back and, through the Parish Council, have employed Owens Galliver of Pangbourne.

We have completed a site survey and a tree survey and are currently working with Chris Owens developing outline layouts for the building. We will use these to obtain a realistic cost estimate from a quantity surveyor and then publish the results around the village to gather responses and ideas. Once we have taken that into account we will finalise the full design and drawings and then go to a full consultation in the village before we go to SODC with a planning application.

There is concern that a potential primary source of funds may be more limited than originally expected, so we are now pulling together a small team to explore other funding sources to meet the costs. I am positive that there are grants out there to fund the project, but we need a team to plan and drive through the fundraising activities. If you can help, please call me on 873342.

Throughout the project we have kept the Parish Council, the Shop Board and the Amenities Charity informed of and involved in our progress, with a representative from each in the Working Group as well as regular reporting.

Geoff Ward

South Stoke Housing Development Project

At this meeting last year, we had just held the Open day presentation in the village hall and were in the process of seeking further views from Parishioners who had been unable to attend or express a viewpoint.

In the May 2017 Newsletter, we published the results of this second housing development parish-wide consultation – which showed a strong preference in favour of a 25 home Glebe field development, that would also enable a substantial contribution

towards the building cost of the proposed new Community Hall on the Recreation Ground.

In July the Project Group commissioned and undertook another parish-wide consultation to identify the need for all types of new housing in the village for families with South Stoke connections. The major results of this survey were:

- Just under half of South Stoke households responded, of which about half declared their interest in affordable housing, downsizing or upsizing.
- The main reasons given for wanting affordable housing were; an inability to afford a new home, a lack of suitable housing in the village to meet their needs and a lack of social or affordable private rented accommodation.
- Of those with South Stoke connections declaring an interest in affordable housing there were 14 individuals not currently living in the village, 7 individuals currently living in the village and 6 whole households.
- The most wanted affordable housing is privately owned followed by Housing Associated rentals, with a mixture of detached, semi-detached and bungalow styles. The results of both these consultations were then discussed with the Parish Council and it was agreed that the Project Group should engage again with the owners of the Glebe field – the Oxford Diocese - with a view to them submitting a Pre-application request to SODC Planning for the proposed 25 home development. The Diocese undertook to do so once their final supporting surveys had been completed – their submission was subsequently made on the 9th of August.

After a meeting with the officer assigned to handle this Pre-app on 22nd November, we received a copy of his report on 28th November – this focussed on issues with the size of the proposed development regarding current planning legislation and the AONB, but he also discussed several mitigating circumstances, and along with the Diocese representatives it was agreed that we should push ahead on the path towards a full planning application.

However in January this year, the Diocese advised us – after consultation with their Glebe Committee and land agents – that they were having second thoughts about the probability of getting planning permission for a development of this size in an AONB and that they could not now envisage a mechanism, that satisfied their Charity Rules and Planning Legislation, to enable them to make a substantial contribution towards the proposed build cost of a new Community Hall.

This somewhat surprising turnaround in their position caused us to discuss the matter once again with the PC and following this, we called a further meeting with the Diocese's Director of Glebe, and the Chairman of their Glebe Committee – this was held on 20th March. They explained the factors involved in coming to their new position but agreed that we should go forward as a group to explore these issues further with SODC's Planning Department. The Housing Development Project Group representatives supported by Cllr Andrew Scrivener agreed with this approach but asked for more clarification on how the Diocese might contribute to a Community Hall through alternative mechanisms and at what level this contribution would be. The Diocese is evaluating these factors and will respond shortly prior to us setting up a joint meeting with SODC.

We will, as usual, update Parishioners with further information by way of the monthly Newsletter, just as soon as we know it.

Roy McMillan, Chairman, SSHD PG

RAG – Rail Electrification in the Goring Gap

2017 has been extremely frustrating with regards to any progress on mitigating the visual impact of the electrification works on the landscape surrounding South Stoke and Goring. The agreed Public Consultation to be held in Feb/March 2017 was postponed at the last minute by Network Rail as the Design Advisory Group (Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs Conservation Board and other statutory bodies) and the Railway Action Group (RAG) concluded that the proposed new gantry designs that were to be shown, were too limited in choice and were not sufficiently different enough to those we already have to make any meaningful difference in terms of the impact on the landscape. Plans for a new consultation exercise were proposed for later in 2017.

On 19th October at a meeting in Goring chaired by John Howell MP, senior Network Rail managers told RAG that they were once again delaying local consultation meetings they had originally planned for earlier this year and that any new consultations would not be before spring 2018; recent communications imply that these will not now take place until the end of 2018.

The only good news is that meetings are still taking place between Network Rail and the Design Advisory Group and a programme is in place to mitigate the impact of the gantries. These discussions include changing out some of the gantries for sleeker versions, structural changes to 'declutter' the gantries eg lowering some of the wires and shortening the upright stanchions, screening them with planting and tinting the metal work.

In terms of the overall progress of the electrification of the Great Western Railway in the area then the wires went live in mid-2017 and the first slow trains (EMUs) came into service between London and Didcot in early 2018. These stop at Didcot as the onward section to Oxford has not been electrified (and there is no current timetable for doing so). However, there are a limited number of through diesel services from Goring to Oxford at peak times the fast trains ie IETs, are all hybrids with some running in electric mode to Didcot and then onward to Bristol and Cardiff in diesel mode. This will continue until late 2018 at least when electrification from Didcot to Bristol is scheduled for completion.

Ian Haslam

South Stoke Parents' Association

South Stoke Primary School Parents Association has had a fantastic year fundraising and providing resources and additional activities for the children at the primary school. The May Fayre in 2017 was a great day as the rain held off. The usual May Pole dancing and Morris dancing took place with this being the 30th year that the Kennet Morris men had performed for us. We held an art exhibition in St Andrews Church along with bell tower tours for those interested and the Perch and Pike provided entertainment into the evening. We had a large number of craft stalls as well as the school stalls and the day was very well attended with an estimated 2000 people. In addition, other village organisations were able to benefit from the day with the village shop, amenities charity, church and pub also reaping the rewards of so many visitors to the village.

Our other main fundraiser, the Bonfire and Fireworks Night was another success. Again, the weather held off and the display was bigger and better than ever before with many commenting that it rivalled much larger displays elsewhere.

We have also been taking part in recycling schemes such as Tassimo coffee pods (which has unfortunately been discontinued), clothing and plastic pens.

The whole purpose of these events (in addition to putting South Stoke on the map) is to raise funds to supplement the education of the children who attend South Stoke Primary School. We have aimed to ensure the activities we have funded have had a broad range to provide the maximum benefit to the children. This year we have funded the following:

Physical wellbeing: Lunchtime sports clubs and swimming lessons
Cultural experiences: Bollywood and African dance workshops
The Arts: Participation in a multi-school choir and performing at the Genting Arena, Birmingham and a trip to watch The Lion King at the theatre in London.
Psychological wellbeing: Relax Kids workshops
Social Science: After school cooking club
Other: coaches for school trips, Christmas party, end of school year disco.

We look forward to another successful year of fundraising and organising excellent events for the village to benefit from and for the children to benefit further. In addition to the above, this year we will be providing funding for a weekend residential trip to a PGL activity centre for years 5 & 6.

Phil Wortley, Chair

South Stoke & Woodcote Charities

This charity benefits students who attend one of the two village primary schools and who live in the ancient ecclesiastical parish of South Stoke cum Woodcote and eventually, supports students as they progress through the state system of education.

For the benefit of those new to our two villages, the Rev Dr. Higgs was born in South Stoke in 1589; his memorial is recorded in the church of St. Andrew at South Stoke. In his will of 1659 he bequeathed various sums of money to the village and church of South Stoke. From these bequests the Educational Charity was gradually formed. Land was purchased in Woodcote, known as School Piece, for which we receive an annual rent of £1,800 from the Woodhouse Farm Partners of Upper Cadleys, Woodcote Road. Other money is invested with the Charity Commissioners.

This year, through the generous donation of the Co-op Community Fund we were able to invest a further £1,000. This means we now hold shares to the value of £14,450, and this year received the good return of £450. We also received a generous donation of £600 from the Woodcote Charitable Association, part of their proceeds from the Woodcote Rally.

2017/18 has been a successful year, and we were able to make 73 awards for a total of £2,785. We gave 27 book tokens for the value of £25 to all students leaving their primary school at either South Stoke or Woodcote; 22 book tokens for the value of £35 to all those students reaching 6th form standard; 6 cheques for the value of £60 to all 1st year college students, and 18 cheques for the value of £50 to all 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students.

We received many letters of 'thank you' for which we are always very grateful. Several 6th form students indicated they may be going to a college of further education in the near future. These will be contacted in two years' time to ascertain if in fact they do go to college.

We are reluctant to decrease the amount of awards given to students, so we may need to augment our funds from other sources.

The Trustees of the Charity are Mrs Patricia Solomons, appointed by Woodcote Parish Council; Dr Geoffrey Botting, appointed by Reading University; Mrs Lucinda Phipps, appointed by Oxfordshire County Council and Mrs Maureen Palmer.

The Small Charities have had to be held in abeyance owing to the illness of the Revd. Paul Boughton, and sadly his death on the 31st January 2018. These Charities are very small but as soon as we have a new Vicar of South Stoke, we hope to make a few awards in our two villages.

Maureen Palmer

The past year has been another busy one for South Stoke W.I. with a packed programme of speakers, and events. We meet in the Village Hall on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Two members did not renew but we have been pleased to welcome 3 new members and our membership now stands at 39.

We have had a variety of speakers during the last 12 months on various subjects including, Chris Lowe from the RNLI. Christine Wallace, a contestant on the Great British Bake Off. David Greenaway on his involvement in Kamuli, a village in Africa he had become involved with. Members and friends have made dozens and dozens of the little 'fish and chip jumpers' some with matching hats, which David takes out every time he visits. These are for the babies in the local maternity hospital, so called 'fish & chip jumpers' as without them the babies would be wrapped in newspaper. Sadly, David died last year.

One particularly interesting speaker was from OXSAR Oxfordshire Search and Rescue, an organisation run by volunteers who assist the police when looking for missing people.

In March several members attended the O.F.W.I. Annual Council Meeting at the Oxford Town Hall.

Members have supported various County events throughout the year including trips to the Alexandra Palace,

Ware & Knebworth House, Secret London, The World War I Day and the Music Taster Day's at Benson. One popular event was the Murder Mayhem Day at Didcot when we had two interesting talks, one from a Forensic Scientist and the other from Val McDermid a crime writer. We have attended the Speakers Selection Days and the Resolution Meeting at Cholsey in April.

Once again weather forced us indoors to the Village Hall for the President's Lunch in July, but

this still proved to be a very enjoyable afternoon with a delicious lunch provided by the Committee.

In August we again supplied teas at the South Stoke Open Gardens. This event was well supported

and a number of people came to visit the gardens and enjoy tea in the Village Hall, We were able to make a donation to the Village Hall.

In August we had a great evening at the Springs Golf Club with a meal and a game of skittles.

Our 'afternoon garden party' also had to be moved from a member's garden to the Village Hall due to our wonderful British summer.

There have been two Thames Valley Group Meetings this year the first hosted by South & North

Moreton in May when Dan Allen gave an interesting talk on 'Women in the First World War'.

And our Autumn Meeting held in South Stoke when Brian Greenan gave an entertaining and humorous talk on being a Toastmaster to Celebrities and Royalty. The talk was followed by a Ploughman's Lunch served by members from South Stoke. In early October we also provided afternoon tea for a large group of visiting Bell Ringer from Pinner, They had rung at Dorchester Abbey, East Isley, & Benson before finishing at South Stoke. They so enjoyed their visit they plan to return during the summer months.

This year we were pleased to have given cash donations to two local charities, Wallingford Emergency Food Bank, and Homeless Oxfordshire. We gave a donation to the RNLI, and also supported ACWW with a donation to the Shea Butter Extraction Machine and pennies for friendship.

We continue to enjoy our WI and we look forward to celebrating our 100th birthday in November.

Rita Mann

Bell Ringers

Bell Ringing Report 2018

We had several new recruits at the turn of the year which was very pleasing and although two dropped out we have a net gain of three ringers. Those ringers are now very confident and have settled into rounds and call changes with ease.

We now ring most Sunday mornings and are open to ringing for any other church related services.

Beyond that we rung on two other occasions, one which included ringing at the start of the May Fayre and the other to remember Jacqui Bertrand who passed away recently. Two rings, one a happy joyous event, the other filled with sadness, but in their own way special.

We also hosted three visiting bands over that period from different corners of Britain.

This year we opened the tower & belfry to the public on the May Fayre day and also the afternoon of the Open Gardens in August. Both events proved very popular with the public as most church towers are inaccessible except to the very fittest. We are very lucky we do not have that problem and it does educate people to the sounds they hear most Sundays in their home villages and towns.

On that note the bells are very much a village institution and should sound out across the village for whatever occasion demands they are rung for.

In a nutshell we do have an enthusiastic band at present who are enjoying their ringing and wish to promote their hobby to the wider village.

Robert Small. Tower Captain.

South Stoke Historical Society

We formalised membership at our first AGM in October 2017. Fees were set at £10 per annum and we now have over 40 members. We have had a full programme of activities throughout the year, including visits to Wallingford Museum and South Stoke Belfry; guided walks in Goring and Wallingford; a film evening with Martin Bullock and talks on "Goring's Wonderful Railway" and Eynsham Abbey.

We researched and prepared a booklet for sale regarding the history of 11 of the houses in South Stoke that were part of the Open Gardens last August. Behind the scenes we continue to collect and archive historical documents and photos regarding the village and this information is continually being up-dated on our dedicated hard drive.

This year we will have had a repeat of the popular film evening with Martin Bullock; we have organised guided tours of Eynsham and the site of the Abbey and Dorchester Abbey, and set up 4 speakers to attend in April, July, October and November on a variety of topics of historical interest.

We are currently researching with a view to producing a guided historical tour of South Stoke for visiting societies and for the interest of villagers later in the year. We are pleased with the success of the Society so far and would welcome even more members and guests of any age to join us.

Linda Gatto

Angling Club

No report

Parish Council

The following are reports from each of the Councillors

CLlr Roy McMillan – Chairman

Governance & Development

The Parish Council (PC) which routinely meets on the third Monday of each month, has been busy over the last year with both mundane matters and several important development projects, each of which you will have heard more about from earlier speakers. These are:

- 1 The Community Hall project
- 2 The Housing Development project

The PC and I are very grateful to all who have been involved in these two working project groups and especially to Geoff Ward for leading the former, and to Ian Haslam who has been of enormous assistance on the latter.

In connection with both these projects and more particularly for clarification of the responsibilities of the PC and the Amenities Charity (AC), the PC sought legal advice earlier this year. In essence this advice confirmed that the AC has total responsibility for both the existing Village Hall and the Recreation Ground (Rec), and that although the PC

holds the deeds for both, they/the PC are purely the Holding Trustees, and have no powers in relation to either of these two Parish assets.

The expansion of this advice therefore requires the AC to:

- Retrospectively seek agreement from the Charity Commissioners (CC) for the location of the existing Community Shop on the Rec, as the original peppercorn lease agreed between the Shop Board and the PC is not valid.
- Similarly, if full planning permission and funding availability for the proposed new Community Hall – on the Rec - is achieved, we have been advised that the AC will have to obtain similar approval from the CC before any construction goes ahead
- Review its current status as an unincorporated community type Charity, with the suggestion that it should consider becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which would amongst other things give legal protection to the trustees.

Some of the other matters with which I and other PC members have been actively involved during the year are as follows:

- Various OCC and SODC Consultations and Forums
- Continuing to support and give publicity to Going Forward Buses CIC, who have been providing the 134 bus service to both Wallingford and Goring for over a year – a lifeline for many of our residents.
- Establishment of several unclassified Rights of Way in and around the village
- Concern about the somewhat dilapidated state of the Dovecote at Manor Farm – a National Monument
- Planning applications - the PC is required to consider each PA for house extensions and new house building in the Parish, and to submit its views to SODC Planning
- Although the PC does not own the Slipway, it does play a part in maintaining it and the surrounding grass area, and it is also required to pay an annual slipway fee to the Thames Conservancy

My thanks to Sue Gill who served as our Clerk up to May last year, and also to Colin Ratcliff who took over this role from the June 2017 PC meeting and onwards. Colin has been an asset to the PC, as he brings an array of PC related knowledge, having been the Clerk for Goring PC for several years, and is able to add expert guidance to our deliberations, as well as keeping both us Cllrs and the PC's financial accounts in order.

Lastly my thanks to my fellow Cllrs who have all contributed to the running of the PC. Special thanks must go to Andrew Scrivener, who guides us on how to respond to each and every planning application, and to Bryan Urbick our Vice-Chair, who not only provides guidance on most issues and questions with which we are faced, but who also singlehandedly produces our excellent monthly South Stoke Newsletter.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention the unexpected and sudden loss of Jacqui Bertrand a few weeks ago. Although she, and her husband Chris, only moved into South Stoke some seven years ago, Jacqui became almost an institution in the Parish

very quickly, and many of us were touched by her involvement and interest in all things South Stoke, and particularly for her leadership of the AC, and for her love for our ageing Village Hall. Thank you, Jacqui, for all your hard work and enthusiasm for our village – I will miss you.

The year ahead will undoubtedly be equally busy for the PC, and although – as I have already advised my fellow Cllrs - I will not be available should any Cllr wish to propose me as Chairman again, I will endeavour to give full support to whoever is proposed and seconded for this position for the year commencing at our AGM in May.

Councillor Roy McMillan, Chairman

Cllr Gareth Dean

Environment

Since the last village meeting I have joined the parish council and taken over responsibility for the environment aspects of the village. This includes any matters related to trees and non-road infrastructure in the village.

During my time we have attempted to deal with a dangerous tree, which came down before SODC were able to inspect it. Through the fire brigade and the kind assistance of John Lindley we were able to remove the fallen tree and recycle the wood for the village bonfire. Please do continue to report trees that are looking like they will fall or obstruct in any part of the village and we can look at what action is necessary.

We have continued to supplement the verge cutting after SODC cuts left us with undergrowth obscuring junctions. We will monitor this during the year to make sure we strike the right balance, but please do let us know if any of the visibility splays give cause for concern.

It has been decided that action will be taken to restore the bollards at the slipway this year in order to prevent parking on the grass areas, which damages them and prevents the use of this riverside space. These bollards will be more substantial to prevent them being as easily removed as the last set were.

The Parish Council has successfully applied for a grant from County Councillor, Kevin Bulmer, which will cover most of the cost of replacing the baby swings. This is in the process of being arranged to be completed this year and will represent the last part of the original play equipment on the recreation ground to be replaced.

Councillor Gareth Dean

Cllr Bryan Urbick

Finance

The precept is part of the Council Tax for all who live in South Stoke Parish, and it is a designated line item on the Council Tax Notice. This year the budget and precept was approved in our November Parish Council meeting and was set at £22,348.35, an increase of 7% from the previous year. This increase is broadly consistent with increases at South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) –

the other entities that determine the Council Tax. The Parish Council portion of the increase in Council Tax is about £0.55/month for a Band D dwelling, so in real terms should not be too onerous. This increase is because of the decision of the Parish Council to cover additional costs for various services, to add to reserves as well as for the continued support of two Working Groups leading large projects for the Parish: Community Hall and Development in South Stoke. As in previous years, the decision to increase the precept was not a decision taken lightly, and we maintain our intent to continue to invest in our parish life and support our local community.

It is important to note that we continue to see the services of OCC and SODC erode because of budget restrictions. As a result, the Parish Council believes it needs to be ready to take on some of these shortfalls. Budgets for services like Police, Highways, Education, Health and Social Services have been so drastically cut, that smaller expenditures like road repair and resurfacing or traffic enforcement are increasingly needing to be funded locally.

The detail of the finance by our Clerk can be found further on in the report – but if there are questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Communication

The Newsletter is delivered to and (hopefully) read by all households in South Stoke. It is a service spearheaded by the Parish Council and supported through the sale of advertising. Jane Newton recently has taken on the job of managing the advertising, keeping track of and chasing through renewals as well as encouraging new advertisers – lots of thanks to Jane for this. Please support our advertisers and let them know when you do use their services that you saw their advert in the South Stoke Parish Newsletter. (If you are aware of businesses or individuals that would like to advertise in our newsletter, please have them contact Jane at adverts@southstoke.org.uk.)

Sian Rasmussen and her family, as well as Trudy Scarratt continue to deliver each issue to all households in the Parish. This is a monthly task, taking several hours. And for this amazing service we are very grateful!

Thank you also to those who submit articles each month. It is rewarding to see the interests of the groups and individuals in the Parish, and to be able to include, in each issue, a wide range of topics. If anyone wants to submit an article, or has an idea for a recurring feature, do not hesitate to contact me at editor@southstoke.org.uk).

Councillor Bryan Urbick

CLlr Andrew Scrivener

Planning

Between the last Village Meeting and now, we have received 14 original planning applications. This is down in number on the previous year.

In addition to minor modifications to existing dwellings, we will have as a result of these applications, two new dwellings on Cross Keys Road, one replacement dwelling in Ferry Road and one new dwelling on the Thames path next to Herons. We will also have the prospect of 5 new houses on the Woodcote Road. The first three are under construction, the third (Herons) not yet started. The houses on the Woodcote Road

were subject to Outline consent so we will see more detail before any activity takes place on this site.

Where new houses are built by a developer (as opposed to a homeowner) within the Parish, the Parish now receive a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The quantum received relates to the amount of additional floorspace provided. The anticipated CIL receipt based on the above but excluding the houses on Woodcote Road (as the size of these are not yet known) is £7,400.

We aim to listen and support the views of our Parishioners within the guidelines set by SODC and work to take a balanced view on delivery of new homes in the village, quality of those homes, suitability in the village environment and neighbour issues. We would therefore encourage all parishioners to make their thoughts known to the Parish Council on Applications so that these can be taken into consideration.

Councillor Andrew Scrivener

Cllr Mick Walsh

Insurance

The current insurance in place with Hiscox Insurance Ltd, policy is due for renewal 1st October 2018, and as mentioned in the last annual report, is a comprehensive policy covering both the South Stoke Parish Council, and the South Stoke Village Hall and Recreation Ground.

This is the 2nd year of a 3 year agreement where, with good cover, and a good saving was made by signing the agreement, with reasonable increases applied each year by the insurers.

The brokers organising the cover (Came & Company) are specialists in parish Council Insurances and have schemes with three separate insurers, and indeed the cover moved at last renewal from Aviva to Hiscox, which enabled a premium saving, with no compromise on the cover given.

The current Long-Term agreement ends in October 2019, where alternative markets will be reviewed, and compared to the Came and Co offerings.

Road Safety and Traffic Calming

Following the speed surveys on the B4009, and other parts of the village, we managed to secure funding from OCC for the installation of the gates at either end of the village on the B4009, plus repeating of the circular road, and junction markings, together with larger repeater signs.

The survey results showed that traffic in other parts of the village was of a satisfactory nature, and OCC are considering a 20mph limit along the Street, as together with the School, as the road forms part of The Ridgeway, a 20-mph limit would seem appropriate.

We also have a commitment from Thames Valley Police, via PCSO Mark Bell, to run volunteer speed monitoring, where volunteers will carry out radar gun checks, which on occasions are enforceable, and at all times the volunteers will be accompanied by a PCSO to avoid confrontation with drivers.

I had intended to organise the initiative and already have willing volunteers, however I am stepping down from the Parish Council this year, and will be unable to organise, so I will assist in trying to get another willing volunteer to manage this, supported by the Parish Council.

Councillor Mick Walsh

Financial Summary

Please note that these are unaudited figures and that a new accounting software package was introduced for the current financial year. Therefore some headings vary from the previous year. The reserve account contains funds that have been earmarked for specific purposes.

Receipts	2016/2017	2017/2018
Grants/donations/advertising/grazing	£ 4,032	
Insurance share from Amenities Charity	£ 881	
Reimbursement Amenity Charity utilities	£ 1,360	
Contribution, Donation & Grant		£ 3,429
The Park		£ 305
Newsletter Advertising		£ 2,087
Precept	£ 19,081	£ 20,503
Bank Interest	£ 2	£ 7
Total receipts	£ 25,356	£ 26,331
Payments	2016/2017	2017/2018
Administration		
Administration – Salaries	£ 2,274	
Clerk Salary		£ 3,846
Clerk Allowance & Expenses		£ 43
Administration – General & Newsletter	£ 5,968	
Printing Inc newsletter		£ 3,365
Office supplies		£ 127
Councillor's Allowance & Exp		£ -
Councillor Training		£ -
Audit Costs		£ 380
Insurance		£ 1,231
Web Hosting Costs áé		£ 50
IT and software		£ 658
Bank Charges		£ 8
Legal Fees		£ -
Utilities		£ 90
Sub Total	£ 8,242	£ 9,798
Membership, Rents & Licences		
Memberships, rents and licences	£ 535	
Membership		£ 146
Bus Shelter Land Rental		£ 10

Slipway Licence			£	68
Village Hall Use			£	228
Sub total	£	535	£	452
Regular Maintenance				
Regular maintenances	£	2,409		
General clearing & grass cuts			£	252
General Repairs			£	-
Dog Waste Bins			£	42
Salt Bins			£	-
Sub Total	£	2,409	£	294
Grants				
Grants	£	3,505		
Additional items and Section 137	£	4,086		
Amenity Charity Grants			£	5,000
Churchyard / PCC			£	700
Section 137			£	300
Sub Total	£	7,591	£	6,000
Additional Items				
Shop / Hall project			£	183
Other Projects			£	690
Sub Total	£	-	£	873
Total payments	£	18,777	£	17,417
Net Receipts over Payments	£	6,579	£	8,914
Closing Bank Balance Current Account	£	19,069	£	9,617
Closing Bank Balance Reserves Account	£	3,626	£	22,252
Total bank accounts	£	22,695	£	31,869

Colin Ratcliff, Clerk

Goring & South Stoke Annual District Report Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2017-2018

Quick run through of the years events at District

Apart from my basic councillor duty's I sit on a couple of Committees at District.

I Chair the Joint Audit & Governance Committee with a Vale Cllr and also sit on the Licensing Committee.

GOVERNMENT MINISTER SIGNS £215M GROWTH DEAL FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Housing Minister Dominic Raab visited Heyford Park near Bicester last month to sign a deal to deliver a £215m investment in transport infrastructure and affordable housing in Oxfordshire. The Minister met Councillor Yvonne Constance, the county council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy. The deal was signed by all six members of the Oxfordshire Growth Board: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. March also saw the Oxfordshire Growth Board announce the first year of projects to be funded by an initial release of £30m for infrastructure projects as part of the Deal agreement. Government road money is for major improvements and cannot be used for day-to-day maintenance, but the investment will help to improve the overall standard of the road network.

HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (HIF)

On 21 March the Government announced 44 bids which have made it through to stage 2 of its Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to fund major infrastructure projects. Two of the three HIF bids submitted by OCC last autumn on behalf of Oxfordshire made it through and will now progress to a co-development stage:

Didcot Garden Town – £171m is sought for transport improvements including a Didcot Science Bridge and A4130 dual carriageway, a new river crossing at Culham and Clifton Hampden Bypass. This would support the delivery of over 22,000 homes in Didcot, Culham, Harwell and Berinsfield. Additionally, up to £70m of cycle and other sustainable transport improvements are proposed for inclusion in the bid plan.

These deals mean we will enjoy the protection of a 3year land supply for 3years preventing unrestricted development

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS GRANT FUND

I was able to support 3 projects with my £5k Fund one in Goring (School Playgroup), one in South Stoke (play equipment) & one that covered both Parish's (GAP festival).

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION

South Oxfordshire district councils are giving those who are part of the paid-for service the opportunity to put out the equivalent of one extra bin's worth of garden waste (around three large bin bags) during:

- week commencing 9 April – South Oxfordshire

South Local Plan 2033

This has still to be approved to proceed to the inspector stage, councillors are still discussing which strategic sites should be included.

Countdown to new community lottery with £25,000 jackpot up for grabs

Tickets for South Oxfordshire District Council's exciting new community lottery will go on sale on Tuesday 27 March.

The online SO Charitable Lottery will raise funds for local voluntary and charitable groups and a new website www.socharitable.co.uk is now live for people to find out more.

Tickets cost £1 and need to be bought via the website. The first draw will take place on 28 April and will then run weekly. There is a one in 50 chance of winning a prize, with a jackpot of £25,000.

From each ticket bought, 60p will go to good causes and the local community

£1.55 million available to boost rural areas in the county

Grants of up to £100,000 are available to community groups, small businesses farmers and foresters for projects that support the rural economy.

The Oxfordshire LEADER fund aims to support a wide range of activities in the countryside such as assisting local small businesses, supporting local heritage and cultural events, attracting tourism and visitors increasing foresters and farmer's productivity and helping to diversify services.

Contributions are available for capital costs such as building work, equipment and for projects located in the Oxfordshire LEADER area until September this year.

Permanent chief executive appointed

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have appointed Mark Stone as their permanent Chief Executive. Mark has spent a successful six months as Acting Chief Executive. His appointment was approved by councillors at Vale of White Horse District Council's full council meeting on 13 December and South Oxfordshire District Council's full council meeting on 14 December, following a rigorous interview process with the two councils' Joint Staff Committee.

CONTACT DETAILS



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District Councillor

Goring & South Stoke Ward

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Goring Division County Councillor Kevin Bulmer 2017-2018 Report

I'm not going to repeat what's in my April report and this is a quick highlight of the year at County

Apart from my basic councillors duty's I sit on a number of committees at County I'm Chairman of the County Pension Committee, Vice Chairman of the Brunel Pension Fund oversight Committee, Vice Chairman of The Remuneration Committee (not Cllr Remuneration but Officers), member of the Oxfordshire Health Oversight Committee and I sit as the elected member on the Children's Adoption Panel.

The Brunel Pension Fund is a government initiative for Public bodies to combine the pension funds to achieve savings of scale and cost. We've combined with 8 other similar minded County's and the environment agency to create a fund of approximately £29billion.

HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE UPDATE

As detailed in the July 17 Parish Report, OCC has signed a new Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) contract that secures all seven sites in the medium term, with no change to the sites opening hours or days

CHANGES TO DAYTIME SUPPORT

OCC is introducing a new daytime service. This follows a review of adult daytime support and a public consultation. From 1 October 17 OCC's Health and Wellbeing and Learning Disability Daytime Support Services will be replaced by a new Community Support Service. This will be delivered from eight centres: Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Oxford, Wallingford, Wantage and Witney

OCC STEPS UP POTHOLE WORK AS WINTER HITS THE ROADS

Repeated cycles of ice, thaws and snow created the worst possible weather conditions for roads over the last few months leading to a rise in reports on Fix My Street from 3,000 pre-Christmas to 7,000 during January. 36,000 potholes were repaired in the year.

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND KEY PART OF BUDGET PROPOSALS

A key proposal for the upcoming Oxfordshire County Council Budget is to have a Councillor Priorities Fund – all County Councillors will have a £15k fund each to support parish council Highways needs and community group projects.

OXFORDSHIRE'S LIBRARIES ARE THRIVING – NOT JUST SURVIVING

Libraries Minister Michael Ellis MP attended the official opening of Oxfordshire County Library in February. The newly refitted facility welcomed more than 100 guests including staff, volunteers and community groups who have helped ensure the county's 43

branches have a bright future.

OCC BUDGET 2018/19

OCC agreed its budget at a Full Council meeting on 13 February following a five-hour meeting of all 63 county councillors. Council Tax will rise by 5.99%, the maximum amount allowed without a referendum. Key points include:

- Finances are sound compared to other councils, with difficult decisions having already been taken
- The Council Tax rise will deliver extra money for adults and children's social care
- Proposal to extend £500,000 contribution for homelessness for an extra year in 2019/20 (subject to consultation)
- 10-year programme to improve transport network and release more money for road maintenance
- £15,000 for each of the 63 county councillors to spend on local priorities in their area

OX-CAM EXPRESSWAY

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has published its report to Government on the Oxford-Cambridge arc. It advised on the need for long-term investment funding for new transport infrastructure to harness the region's economic potential, to benefit local people and boost UK plc in a post-Brexit landscape. Its route is currently Didcot, Abingdon and after that still under consideration together with its exact route past Didcot & Abingdon.

CAMPAIGN TO RECRUIT CARE STAFF TO REDUCE DELAYED TRANSFER

Against a background of increasing demand for care services, particularly from older people with complex problems and needing support, a major campaign to recruit more care staff was launched on 20 November.

COUNCIL AND CARILLION

The Council has worked very hard to reduce the effect of the carillion bankruptcy and a lot of work is still ongoing to assess the state and situation of all carillions maintenance & new build contracts across the county with particular emphasis on schools.

I produce a monthly report which is sent to the Parish Councils on things going on at County



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