South Stoke Parish Newsletter

Issue 230 Southstoke.org.uk September 2026

Many thanks to Charley Ayres for this month's masthead photo. If you would like to see your picture in the Newsletter, please send them for consideration to editor@southstoke.org.uk.

Bin Collection

Due to the bank holiday, bin collections will take place a day later than usual, now on Friday 4th September., Green Bins

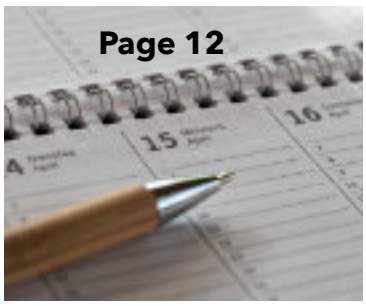


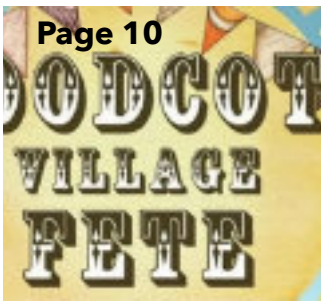












South Stoke BBQ & Bar

Taking place on Bank Holiday Sunday August 30th , this year on the Park area, next to the Village Hall.

The bar will be open from noon and the first food available from 1pm. No charge and no advance tickets , just come along on the day!

During the afternoon we will hold our auction of promises as well as a prize raffle.
In the event that the area is still too dry to safely bbq - the cooking will be moved either in or directly adjacent to the Hall.

Presented jointly by the Village Shop and the Amenities Charity.

Dave Lucas



The South Stoke Set Menu

At the Perch and Pike, we are excited to share with you our new set-menu, running throughout the weekday from Wednesday - Friday. Carefully put together by the kitchen team, the new menu brings together some of our most loved dishes from the past few months with the addition of new meals, including beautiful seasonal ingredients.



Our new menu has been designed so there is something for everyone. Within our three courses there are a range of options for vegetarian meals, for example our fan favourite mushroom risotto, and gluten free options like the brand new Heritage Beetroot, and of course we have a variety of home made desserts such as a treacle sponge or Crème Brûlée to top off a brilliant meal.

Whether you're looking for a relaxed meal out in a fabulous setting, celebrating a special occasion or somewhere to catch up with friends, at the Perch and Pike we are happy to welcome you.





South Stoke WI

Due to the extreme heat we have had this summer our Summer Lunch which we normally hold in July was changed to the Group Lunch, which was originally planned for the 23rd June at South Stoke. The Group lunch includes members from Woodcote & North & South Moreton WI's. But due to the high temperatures forecast for that week we again cancelled and have now moved the lunch to late September, when hopefully it will be somewhat cooler.

At our August meeting on the 11th we celebrated 4 members birthdays, Penny Cooper, Linda Gatto, Diana Drew and Jane Bodys and we were pleased to welcome a visitor.

Our speaker this month was John Paine who's talk 'Maharajahs and Tigers' showed

a number of photos taken on a recent trip to Rajasthan. He had managed to get some lovely pictures at a tiger reserve, and also photos of some of the interesting buildings.

For our September meeting we are again out for lunch, this time at The Bell at Crowmarsh. We will be back in the hall for October when our speaker will be talking about Machu Picchu.

Visitors are alway welcome.

Contact either Rita Mann 01491 872208 or Eve Thynne 01491 875346

Rita Mann

Shop Going Well but You Could Help

As you can see the new shop project proceeds apace. By the end of next week we should have plaster drying and be ready to start decorating. We're still hoping to be open before the end of September but it will be tough!

We're also still short of funding - everything needs more and everything costs more. If you haven't (or even if you have) made a contribution yet anything you can give would be hugely appreciated.

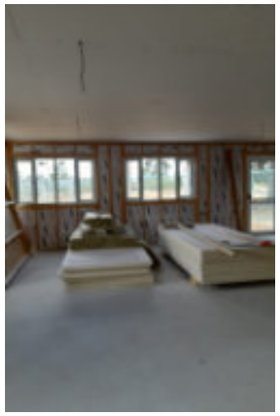
Mick Woodall

Donations can be made by bank transfer South Stoke Community Shop Limited, Sort : 08 92 99, Account: 65720697 or by using the QR code.









Historical Society October Meeting

Lord Nuffield's great generosity to the Oxford colleges



On Monday 5th October at 7.30 pm in the village hall Liz Woolley is coming along to talk about William Morris (the other one!). Liz is a regular visitor with a wealth of subjects in her canon. Come along as a guest for just £5 or become a member. We welcome all ages and especially new villagers.Take a breath and come in. We'll give you a coffee afterwards.

William Morris, Lord Nuffield, probably did more than any other individual to transform Oxford in the twentieth century, physically, economically and socially. His success as an industrialist allowed him to become one of Britain's most generous benefactors; he gave away the equivalent of £1.5 billion in today's money, to causes including health, education and academic research. This talk looks specifically at Lord Nuffield's vital support to various Oxford colleges, including the saving of St Peter's from closure, and the founding of the college which bears his name, Nuffield College. It also explores his complex and sometimes difficult relationship with the university.

Linda Gatto

South Stoke School: Playground Summer Maintenance Update

As we near the end of summer, our staff and governing board are busy preparing to welcome the children back to school this September. The summer break is our ideal opportunity to carry out vital maintenance work on the school building and playground, and we want to keep everyone informed.

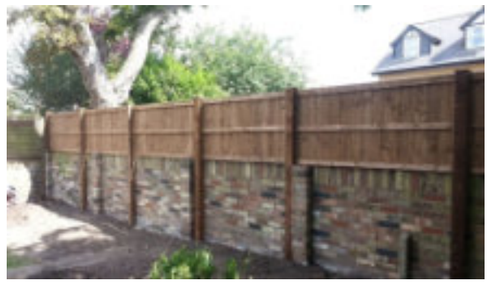
What's happening in the playground?

To meet required safeguarding standards, we are upgrading two key parts of our school boundaries:

- **The front boundary:** The existing green perimeter railings facing the road are being replaced.
- **The church boundary**: Our border with the church graveyard is being extended using wooden panel fencing.



Example of road boundary railing



Example of timber panel fence

Why is this work necessary?

Following a recent inspection, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) notified us that we must further secure our school boundaries to fully align with OCC and UK Department for Education guidelines.

Preserving our village's historic character

Because South Stoke sits within both an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a designated conservation area, we have worked hard to minimise the visual impact of these safety upgrades:

- **Height limits**: While OCC guidelines typically require school fences to be between 2.0 and 2.4 metres high, we have been permitted to limit our fence height to 1.8 metres (a minor increase from the current 1.6 metres).
- **Matching design**: The road boundary will maintain its traditional, green bow-topped railing style.
- **Natural materials**: The church graveyard boundary will extend upward from the existing brick retaining wall using natural timber panels. This specific work is already underway.

The main works are scheduled to be completed by 27th August, ahead of the new school term.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we complete these important safety improvements for our children.

Kate Richardson, Health & Safety Governor

Meet the Class of 2026 at Lime Tree Alpacas

It has been a particularly exciting summer at Lime Tree Alpacas, with the arrival of our Class of 2026 – ten beautiful new cria, five girls and five boys.

The first arrival was Guildy on 30 April, followed over the spring and summer by Gads, Izzi, Gertie, Sebastian, Nell, Bea, Salisbury and Rosie, with little Polonius completing the class on 1 August.

They are now growing fast and developing very individual personalities. Some are bold and inquisitive, others a little more reserved, but they are all wonderfully curious – and there is nothing quite like watching a group of young alpacas racing around the paddock together!

Come and meet them – 31 August

We would love to welcome local families and visitors to Lime Tree Alpacas on Monday 31 August for the opportunity to meet our Class of 2026 and some of the rest of the herd.

You will be able to get up close to the alpacas, meet the cria and learn a little about these fascinating animals and life on an alpaca farm.

So, if you have ever wondered what an alpaca feels like, what they eat, why we shear them, or simply fancy meeting ten rather gorgeous youngsters, do come and see us.

We look forward to introducing you to the Class of 2026!

Lou Verrill







South Stoke Historical Society AGM

On Monday 7th September at 7.30 pm in the village hall the Society will meet for their annual general meeting. Topics include finance, membership ,the chairman's report, new members for the committee? (I live in hope) and any other business members wish to raise.

A glass of wine will be available. If you are a member please come along and have your say.

The meetings proper will begin in October when all are welcome.

Linda gatto , Chairman of South Stoke Historical Society

Updates from he School

As many of you can see, the school is having new, higher fencing installed to ensure it is safe for the children who attend and compliant with health and safety guidance and risk assessments. We hope the work has not inconvenienced residents over the summer period, and we apologise that it has overrun.

The plan for the summer holidays was to update the school library but unfortunately this has been delayed as we can not get on site ourselves but we are excited for what is to come!

Updates from the Parents Association

Thank you to everyone who has supported the school and the Parents Association this year. We had a successful Fireworks Night and May Day event, which means we can continue to support your village school and the children who attend.

In addition to those events, we were also lucky enough to have a stall at the Woodcote Rally, where we were able to tell people about the school and run a "Splat the Rat" stall, which was great fun. The highlight was a German exchange student who found the whole concept of "Splat the Rat" amusing and was pleased to be successful against the hosts he was staying with. We want to continue getting out and about in the community to raise awareness of the school which is a fantastic community asset. If you are holding a local event then please let us know.

School Lottery

Massive congratulations to Mrs B, who won £25 on the South Oxfordshire Lottery in support of the school. The South Oxfordshire Lottery is a great fundraiser that really helps us raise money between the two events of May Day and Fireworks Night, as it creates a regular income that makes a real difference to the children. To buy tickets, please visit the South Oxfordshire Charity Lottery page and search for the school, or click the link below.

https://www.socharitable.co.uk/support/south-stoke-primary-school-pa

Friends of South Stoke School

We would like to apologise for the delay in responding to those of you who sent an email asking to become a Friend of South Stoke School. Due to technical issues, there was a delay in responding, but we hope this has now been resolved. Please feel free to email fosouthstokeschool@gmail.com if you would like to become more involved in the School Parents Association and its events and fundraising activities.

Upcoming Clothing Recycling Day

On Tuesday 22nd September the school are going to be a drop off and collection point for a clothing recycling scheme. This is great for the environment and great for the shopoholics amongst us who have wardrobes filled with clothes we no longer wear. Reusing 1 kg of clothing saves approximately 4 kg of CO_2 emissions and the previous collections have saved over 1,760 kg!

Bags of clean clothes can be dropped in the school playground shelter on Monday evening after 4 or before 9am on Tuesday 22nd September. Clothing is recycled and as a bonus it raises money for the school. The children love seeing the mountain of clothes bags and it opens up conversations about recycling and the environment which is great!

If you are unable to drop items off yourself then we are happy to collect bags from your home address. Please call or text 07305546410 or email fosouthstokeschool@gmail.com.

Amy – Chair of the School Parents Association

400 Club

The July draw was held on Friday 17th in the Perch and Pike.



Thanks once again to Hugo (see pic) for drawing the balls from the bucket during his last night at the pub. The lucky winners from the new record of 482 numbers were:

First Prize	£145	Alex Reid
Second Prize	£121	Victor Meyer
Third Prize	£ 96	Joanne Kennedy
Fourth Prize	£ 72	Janice Scriven
Fifth Prize	£ 47	Nick Hutton



The August draw was held on Friday 21st and thanks to Vicky (see pic) for picking out the numbers. The lucky winners from the (once again) new record of 486 numbers were:

First Prize	£146	Lin Woolridge
Second Prize	£122	Cliff & Sally Coombes
Third Prize	£ 97	Tim Brazenor
Fourth Prize	£ 73	Chris Bertrand
Fifth Prize	£ 48	Vanessa Guiver

Just £2 per number per month is terrific value, given the size and distribution of the five prizes on offer. Information is available from the Perch & Pike, from the trustees at the email address below, or online via the Parish Council website.

Your £2 per number is split 50/50 between the prize pot and charity funds. If you haven't joined yet (or would like to add to the numbers you already hold), please do get in touch via the email address below.

If you've already got one number, how about investing £4 per month instead of £2 and, for a very modest outlay, doubling your chances (almost) of winning one of five really generous prizes?

Are you new to the village? Would you like to support the Amenities Charity's activities in maintaining and enhancing the Village Hall, the Recreation Ground and the Playground? Doing so is easy. Simply email the address below to register your interest and start the ball rolling.

Date for your diary: The September draw will be on Friday 11th at 8.00pm in the Perch & Pike.

Mark Taylor & Nicola Astles-Jones: 400 Club Trustees
email : 400club@southstoke.org.uk

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District Councillor Update

Resident Surgeries in Whitchurch and South Stoke



It was really good to join Tim Bearder, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, and Freddie van Mierlo MP for resident surgeries in Whitchurch and South Stoke. Fair to say we came away with plenty of casework to get through, covering a range of local and individual issues.

Freddie will be piloting online surgeries, but I am happy to consider running surgeries more regularly if that is something people would find helpful for local issues.

Recent Anti-Social Behaviour

Great to see the Parish Council, SODC Community Safety team and the police working together to tackle some of the antisocial behaviour we've been seeing in Goring recently.

I also took the opportunity to speak to police representatives about the illegal off-road bikes we regularly see in and around Woodcote.

Goring to Wallingford Greenway: Progress Update

Work continues to progress on the proposed Goring to Wallingford Greenway, with discussions going well with the two affected landowners. The preferred route remains along the western side of the B4009, providing a safer connection between Goring and Wallingford for walking, cycling and riding.

Developing a Local Walking and Cycling Plan

I was pleased to welcome Oxfordshire County Council officers to Goring to begin discussions about developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Goring and the surrounding villages. An LCWIP is a long-term plan identifying where improvements to walking and cycling routes are most needed, helping communities build an evidence-based case for future investment when funding becomes available.

Local Government Reorganisation: Government Decision

The Government has now announced its preferred structure for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. This is a major change for local government and will ultimately replace the existing district and county council structure with new unitary authorities responsible for the full range of local services. For us here in the south, the decision is to create a New Ridgeway council, which will include most of South Oxfordshire, the Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire.

£270,000 Councillor Community Grant Fund Opens

The latest round of South Oxfordshire's Councillor Community Grant is now open, with £270,000 available across the district to support projects that benefit residents and help create healthy, thriving communities. This is a useful opportunity for local voluntary and community organisations to secure funding for practical projects in their area.

New Online Council Map

South Oxfordshire's new interactive public mapping system is now live. Residents can use it to search a wide range of publicly available information in one place, including planning applications, Tree Preservation Orders, land owned by the council and other geographic information.

Free Electric Blanket Safety Testing

Oxfordshire residents can access free electric blanket safety testing this autumn. Local sessions include **Didcot on 5 October**, with a Thame date also expected to be confirmed. Places need to be booked in advance, so residents who use electric blankets are encouraged to take advantage of the free service.

Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Ward member for Goring and South Stoke

Cholsey Repair Café

Cholsey Repair Café will be back on Saturday 19th September at the Cholsey Pavilion, between 10.00 and 12.45. This follows the regular formula of third Saturday of odd-numbered months. Volunteers will be there to help you attempt repairs to a wide range of household items, bikes, gardening equipment and electrical goods (white goods excepted). No charge is made but if you care to make a donation, it helps to cover operating expenses. You can see more at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com or email repaircafe@cholsey.com.

Woodcote Village Fête – Saturday 12th September 2026

Come along and enjoy a fun day out at Woodcote Village Fête on Saturday 12th September 12pm to 5pm. This is a great event for the whole community. Entertainment includes live music, a dog show, a Produce & Craft Show, inflatables and a tug of war. Bubbles Man will return again to entertain the children (and adults!) with his giant bubbles. His performance will be at 1pm for an hour and after that he will give you the opportunity to create some bubbles yourself! We also have a raffle with some great prizes, including £100 cash prize, and a variety of stalls to peruse.



There is plenty of food and drink on offer too. There will be a bar, a traditional tea tent, Soleuna pizza van, a barbecue, Olives & Lemons greek food, Açai Love bowls and smoothies, an ice cream van and a coffee truck.

Visit woodcotefete.com for more information about the fête including stalls and raffle prizes. We also have the Produce and Craft show competition entry form and competition categories.

The Woodcote Village Fete Team

Historical Society July Meeting Report

Our July meeting saw Andrew Long talking about "The naming of Oxfordshire pubs ". Surprisingly, as pubs were traditionally a male preserve, ladies outnumbered men in the audience by three to one!

Andrew claimed to have spent the last 10 years researching the 600-odd pubs of Oxfordshire and how they serve their communities, in the course of which he has collected photographs of the signs of two thirds of them so far. He didn't say how many pints he had consumed in the process!

As for the Historical aspects of the talk, he covered the origins of signs for businesses in an age when most people were illiterate, through the first attempts to regulate the industry under Richard II, and the little-known fact that Shakespeare's father was an official "Ale Taster"! We were then introduced to the knotty issue of choosing a sign without upsetting particular sensitivities - often religious, factional, or those of the local lord. Hence White Hart (Richard II's own Arms), bland signs like Chequers, homage to the Lord of the Manor e.g. Harcourt Arms, Duke of Marlborough.

Many have religious connections - Mitre, Catherine Wheel, Lamb & Flag, Angel (on the Bridge?) - via the Crusades - Turk's Head, Saracen's Head. As one might expect farming plays its part - Wheatsheaf, Barley Mow, Malt Shovel, Shears, Fleece - as does industry and transport - Ferryboat, Row Barge, Pack Horse, Royal Blenheim (after a Stagecoach of that name), Morning Star (after the GWR locomotive). Finally the Broad Face was mentioned, suggesting that it may be a macabre reference to the swollen features of someone hanged on a nearby gallows!

Hopefully you might conclude that History isn't such a "dry" subject after all.

Rod Payne

Goring & Streatley GAP Festival 2026

This year's GAP Festival brought ten vibrant days of arts, science and community spirit to Goring and Streatley from 12–21 June, with many visitors joining from surrounding villages, including South Stoke. Glorious summer weather and a "Journey of Discovery" theme set the tone for a lively programme that attracted more than 3,300 ticket bookings across 70+ events, plus hundreds more at free activities.



Audiences enjoyed an impressively varied line-up spanning music, theatre, literature, science, wellbeing and family events. Highlights included the sell-out three-night Opera at Streatley Farmhouse, a packed Wonders of the Natural World Family Day that welcomed around 600 visitors, and the much-loved return of Open Gardens. Daily wellbeing sessions, art workshops, concerts, talks and exhibitions ensured there was something for everyone, whether seeking quiet reflection or energetic celebration.

The festival atmosphere was warm, joyful and unmistakably communal. One attendee commented, "There was such a fun atmosphere in the village during the Festival… the events I attended were super, and all the volunteers were so friendly and enthusiastic." Another added, "The Festival is a wonderful event with an impressive range of activities."

Behind the scenes, more than 40 committee members and volunteers worked for months to plan and promote the programme, with a further 50 supporting events during the festival itself—stewarding, setting up venues, running bars, assisting workshop leaders and capturing photos and video. Their dedication ensured the festival ran smoothly from start to finish.

Outgoing Artistic Director Ginny Avery reflected on her final festival: "I couldn't be prouder that my last programme celebrated everything the GAP Festival stands for—creativity, curiosity and community." The Festival is now seeking a new Artistic Director for 2028; anyone interested can contact help@gapfestival.org.

The GAP Festival extends heartfelt thanks to volunteers, sponsors, performers, hosts and audiences. A wrap-up video and feedback competition (with a chance to win 2028 tickets) are available at www.thegapfestival.org.

Melrose Cottage B & B



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St Andrew's Church Services

All are welcome to St Andrew's. The church is open every day, 9am till 5pm.

A place to draw breath and touch base with all that is bigger than us and all that has gone before us and all that will come after… and to find generous love and hope in it all.

We welcome everyone to our services. Coffee and biscuits are served afterwards.

6th September, Sunday, 11.15am, "Back to School and God-parent Sunday" Family service

13th September, Sunday, 11.15am, BCP Holy Communion service

20th September, Sunday, 11.15am, Good News service

23rd September, Wednesday, 10.30am, Coffee morning in St Andrew's

27th September, Sunday, 11.15am, Holy Communion service

Mid-week Holy Communion is on Wednesdays at 10.30am in St Thomas'.

Pre-school, toddler and baby service "Little Lights" in St Mary's, Streatley. Wednesdays 2nd and 16th Sept at 10.30-11.15am story, prayer and rhyming songs.

Youth Alpha – a fortnightly space to ask deep questions for 11-15 year olds begins Sunday 27th Sept. Details of this and many other events, Pick a Flick etc. from contacts below.

The Benefice Office or the Vicar, Ben can be contacted, Monday to Thursday mornings, until noon, on (01491) 875651.

The website is www.ThomAndMary.org.uk . Emails can be sent to vicarofgsandss@yahoo.com

Ben Phillips, Vicar

Diary



South Stoke BBQ Sunday August 30th in The Park

South Stoke Open Gardens, Monday 31st August 1-5pm

Meet the Alpacas, Fishponds**,** Ferry Lane, Monday 31st August

Bin Collection Friday 4th

Historical Society AGM Monday 7th at 7.30 pm in the village hall

400 Club draw Friday 11th at 8.00pm in the Perch & Pike

Woodcote Village Fête Saturday 12th 12 - 5pm

Cholsey Repair Cofé Saturday 19th, Cholsey Pavilion, between 10.00 and 12.45

Clothing Recycling drop off, Monday 21st after 4pm, the School

Newsletter Deadline, Wednesday 23rd

Free Electric Blanket Testing Monday 5th October, Didcot

Historical Society meeting Monday 5th October at 7.30 pm

The Next Issue

All contributions welcome. Email editor@southstoke.org.uk. Please include a telephone number and an email address if possible. Photos are welcome and encouraged.

Deadline for the October issue is Wednesday 23rd September.

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