South Stoke Parish Newsletter

Issue 231 Southstoke.org.uk October 2026

Thanks to Jeremy Pomeroy for this month's masthead photo. I've had a number of great photos this month but unfortunately many of them are too low resolution for print. Often they are at 72 dots per inch where for print we need 300dpi or better.

If you would like your photo on the masthead, something connected with South Stoke and reflecting the season, please send them for consideration to editor@southstoke.org.uk.



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Historical Society November Meeting

MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30pm

The South Stoke Historical Society invite one and all (and that means new villagers too) to come along and listen to a talk given by Peter Adamson. His talk will incorporate two of his interests - "Landmark in Time- The World of the Wittenham Clumps" and "A Town called Wallingford"



Landmark in Time takes us on a journey behind the scenes of what can be seen from the Oxfordshire landmark known as the Wittenham Clumps. Along the way, you may hear the stories of a village rectory that helped bring about the American Revolution, or a peaceful farmhouse that gave us some of the greatest literature of war, or a 1960s council estate with a glamorous past, or even mention of a nondescript building that houses temperatures greater than the centre of the sun.

A Town called Wallingford is a tribute to a town with unknown stories to tell of Alfred the Great and William the Conqueror but also of a state-of-the-art enterprise and Europe's biggest tsunami simulator. Peter has published a book on this subject so you will have to see what stories he gives us. Could it be of the blacksmith's son who rose to become the greatest mathematician of the age or of the small-town lawyer who became one of the most influential figures ever born in these islands. The thousand-year-old Saxon defences or the great castle that gave England the Plantagenets and the Tudors or a heroic act that averted a twentieth-century disaster?

Membership is now £15 but you can come along as a guest for £5. That includes coffee and chocolate biscuits. Now that has to be a bargain!

Just a mention that on Monday 5th October at 7.30 Liz Woolley is giving a talk on " Lord Nuffield's Great Generosity to the Oxford Colleges". All these details are in last month's Newsletter or you can look on line.

Linda Gatto
South Stoke Historical Society

South Stoke WI

For our September meeting we had a Pub Lunch at The Bell at Crowmarsh on Tuesday 8th October. And one member Jean Davis celebrated her birthday this month.

On Tuesday 22nd September we held a Group Lunch with members from Woodcote WI. Our speaker was Peter Hague and he gave a very interesting talk about Ian Fleming's life, his war time service, his local connections and of course James Bond. Certainly a life well lived.
We had originally planned this event for June, but cancelled because of the heatwave.
So we it moved to July, another heatwave! Fortunately it was third time lucky and we enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon and lunch.

Our next meeting is on 8th October when our speaker Colin Wade, himself a crime writer will be talking about Agatha Christie.

Visitors always welcome.

Rita Mann 01491 872208

Garden Design Award

The Garden Design Company Ltd is celebrating a monumental double milestone winning a National Landscape Awards from the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) during their 30th anniversary year of designing and creating bespoke private gardens.

Commenting upon the creation the BALI Judge Dave Twist, said; "This was a stunning garden area produced by ultimate professionals showing care for hard and soft landscaping details. It also showed a close relationship between client and contractor in producing a special area of the garden for the client to entertain in. The garden showed high quality construction and design and proved that pre planning is the winning formula on how to construct a garden - the use of existing landscape features was also a major factor in producing this award winning landscape garden area"

Former Lawyer and Founder of The Garden Design Company Ltd, Rob Jones noted; "To receive our fourth BALI awards in four years is an incredible endorsement of the quality of our designs, workmanship and team work. The latest award is brilliant recognition for each and every one of our staff, and reinforces our belief in professionalism, as we celebrate our 30th year".

In supporting the entry for the award the client (who wishes to be anonymous) said; "The construction of the garden took approximately four months and was undertaken with professionalism, consideration and good nature, always with attention to detail and an attitude of 'no problems, just solutions'. The end result is a garden that appears to be twice the original size, and is a delight to wander through and enjoy. The brief has been exceeded with 'wow' factors at every turn. We are exceptionally proud to be the owners of this garden and now very much enjoy spending time in it with friends, family or just a glass of wine!"

The award-winning entries will be celebrated alongside other top industry professionals at the official 50th Anniversary National Landscape Awards ceremony, taking place on Friday, 4 December 2026, at The Grosvenor House in London.

For a complete look at the company's recent award-winning projects or to explore their bespoke garden design services, visit www.gardendesignco.co.uk.

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Successful Bank Holiday Weekend

The August bank holiday saw the return of The annual Village barbecue on the Sunday, followed by the immensely popular Open Gardens on the Monday.

Despite forecast of showers on both days, a crowd of over 60 villagers gathered for the barbecue, and well over 350 came from far and wide to the Open Gardens.

For the first time the barbecue was located on the park area in the village next to the new Community Gardens. The CGA opened their produce stall, and most of the barbecue goers took the opportunity to buy the local veggies and flowers!

The barbecue and open gardens raised funds both for the amenities charity and also for the Village shop. Thanks to all those who attended, and of course huge thanks to all the volunteers, too many to name, who actually made it happen!

Dave Lucas





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400 Club Winners

The September draw was held on Friday 11th in the Perch and Pike and this month thanks go to Chris from Abingdon (see pic) who was quite happy to have his quiet Friday pint of Guinness interrupted to do the draw for us.



The lucky winners this month were:

First Prize	£145	Simon Courtney
Second Prize	£121	Dave Rawson
Third Prize	£ 96	Angela Reid
Fourth Prize	£ 72	Jamie Turner
Fifth Prize	£ 48	Deborah Holt

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 October draw will be on Friday 16th at 8.00pm in the Perch & Pike.

Hope to see you there!

Mark Taylor & Nicola Astles-Jones: 400 Club Trustees

email: 400club@southstoke.org.uk

Mapping Upgrade

Want to find out more about your local area?

We have upgraded our GIS Mapping System, giving you an easy way to find out information about your local area.

You can find information about planning applications, conservation areas, listed buildings, Green Belt, local nature reserves, wildflower areas and more.

You can find information on our website, including guidance on how to use the map: https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/data-hub/maps-of-public-data/

Pangbourne Art Group

Annual Exhibition

Pangbourne Village Hall, Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 October, 10am to 5pm

Local artists are displaying their work. More than a hundred paintings will be on display and visitors can also buy cards and enjoy tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

They are a friendly club, meeting on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4pm and welcoming artists of all abilities.

New appointments at the Parish Council

It was busier than usual at our September meeting of South Stoke Parish Council. After a number of months with a vacant seat on the Council, a new Councillor, David G Rawson, was co-opted, bringing the number of councillors to six.

David moved to South Stoke in 2020 with his wife Danielle and daughter Darcy. He has been serving in the Royal Air Force since 2007, involved in operations both in the UK and Overseas. Currently David is the second-in-command of 22 Squadron at RAF Benson. He brings a wealth of experience to the Council, a dedication to serving the wider community and has a decidedly 'let's get things done' approach to life.

Following Sinead's resignation after her relocation to Somerset, the staffing committee have been busy recruiting for the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. We received a good number of applications and interviewed three candidates in the Village Hall on 24th August.

On 14th September Nick Mallen started as the new Clerk and RFO. Nick and his family have been living between Goring and South Stoke for over 40 years and he knows the local area well. We were impressed with his knowledge of Parish Council workings, local issues, positive attitude and approachable manner. Nick can often be found walking his dogs and is already known to many local residents.

He can be contacted on clerk@southstoke.org.uk

We are all here to serve you, the local residents, and listen to everyone's ideas and concerns. We always welcome constructive opinions and take all into account. If you have any suggestions or grievances, please contact the Parish Council directly so that we can respond in a considered manner.

Cllr Vanda Scholey

Dear South Stokers

After 14 happy years in South Stoke we bade the village a fond farewell in the summer when our landlord decided to sell Vine Cottage. Thank you to all who played an integral part in our lives and to our enjoyment in the village. A special mention must go to our neighbours, the Orcales, who saved me from being locked out of our house on more than one occasion with a small child in tow, and who looked after our cats (and bins)! South Stoke is a wonderful community and we feel very fortunate to have been a part of it. We're now getting used to the busier life of a town. All the best with the changes afoot in the village.

With best wishes,

Catherine, Shaun and Jacob

Style Acre Events

Quiz Night, South Stoke Village Hall, Friday 23 October, 7pm

Wallingford Triathlon Club are hosting a Quiz night to raise money for Style Acre. £10 per person and there will be food and bar.
For more details please e-mail tanya_jacques@hotmail.com.

Santa Dash, Sunday 6 December, 11.30am

Get ready to dash with hundreds of Santa lookalikes, starting and finishing in Market Place, Wallingford.



Just Grow – South Bank Field Proposal

At the Parish Council meeting on Monday 14 September, Revd Ben Phillips and Dr Madeleine Bastawrous, representing a proposed charity called Just Grow, presented an initial vision for the future use of the field opposite South Bank which would significantly impact the village.

Just Grow aims to address issues including childhood obesity, food-related ill health and inequality in access to healthy food. The proposal would see part of South Bank field used for growing produce alongside educational activities, involving children and community groups visiting from the wider region. The emerging concept could include growing areas, polytunnels and supporting agricultural and educational infrastructure, buildings, a new access and car parking.

South Bank Field is owned by the Diocese and Christ Church, Oxford, and its lease is currently due for renewal. The Just Grow proposal remains at an early stage, and no detailed site plan or final design has yet been presented.

Councillors and residents raised questions regarding the potential scale of the development, its impact on the village, the suitability of the site and its relationship with the successful Community Garden project. The Parish Council has therefore requested (but not been promised) further detail and meaningful consultation before plans progress, including consideration of whether elements of the proposal could complement existing community facilities.

While recognising the positive aims behind Just Grow, the Parish Council believes any development of this scale will have a significant impact within the Parish boundary and requires careful consideration of its planning, environmental and community implications. We will continue to engage constructively with Just Grow and the landowners and keep parishioners informed.

If you would like more information or would like to express a view, email: clerk@southstoke.org.uk

Nick Mallen, Clerk to South Stoke Parish Council

See Page 8 for Just Grow's Proposal - Ed

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Just Grow Proposal

The Problem:
In Oxfordshire, we consume 1% of what is grown in our county, yet we have the potential to grow up to 50% of the fresh, healthy food that we eat.

Just-Grow is an expression of justice to bring hope and restoration for the people in our food system, consumers and producers. It will demonstrate land stewardship that enables an accessible food system governed within planetary and health boundaries.

Throughout the past year, we have been looking for land, ideally 12–15 acres within the local area around Goring and South Stoke. We are currently in discussions with the Oxford Diocese to lease or buy the land by South Bank on the edge of South Stoke.

Our Vision:

Just-Grow aims to restore connection between nature, people and health for current and future generations in a community setting.

We very much welcome conversation and collaboration with local residents from South Stoke as we explore the possibility for Just-Grow to be based just outside the village's residential limit, particularly as South Stoke has already achieved so much in the area of conservation.

We have received generous local donations, including that from a legacy fund from St Thomas Goring, and Just-Grow has been set up as a charity to hold the land and vision in trust for the community here and beyond.

Our plans:

Just-Grow plans to host an agroecological market garden combining commercial food production, intergenerational community education and environmental regeneration.

The charity Just-Grow will employ a Head Grower and team to manage the market garden.

The project seeks to demonstrate a practical model of a more just food system by:

- Producing local agroecologically grown food.
- Improving biodiversity and soil health.
- Supporting schools, young people and community groups to learn growing and cooking skills.
- Creating volunteering, wellbeing and social prescribing opportunities.
- Building a financially sustainable social enterprise, supporting local businesses and households with local produce.

As part of the market garden, wherever Just-Grow is situated, we will be planting native fruit trees and a hazel coppice.

What's next?

We had the opportunity to attend the South Stoke Parish Council meeting in mid-September. Following the meeting, areas we identified that may be of particular benefit to South Stoke are:

- Year-round seasonal, agroecologically produced local produce that can be sold in the new village shop.
- Education is one of the main stems of the charity vision and, with professional growers managing the market garden, there will be an opportunity for Just-Grow to share expertise and support with South Stoke Community Garden, which can support an already thriving community garden.
- There is the opportunity for Just-Grow to plant native fruit trees and a hazel coppice along the north side of the Southbank field, so enhancing a clear distinction to the residential edge of the village.
- We appreciate there may be concerns about traffic along Wallingford Road. A potential entry to the South Bank field, subject to planning, on the south edge near the sewage works creates an opportunity to further support traffic-calming measures coming into South Stoke.

If you would like to know more about the "why", or more detail on the vision of the charity, please look at our website and/or sign up to our newsletter.

web link is: https://just-grow.netlify.app/

With many best wishes

Madeleine Bastawrous, One if the 6 trustees of Just-Grow

Parents' Association

Fireworks

It's that time of year again: fireworks are coming to South Stoke on 23rd October 2026. Unfortunately, they are a little earlier than normal due to the other commitments of the award-winning Illusion Fireworks. We are really lucky that this award-winning firework company supports the School Parents Association by helping us to host this great annual event. We recognise that, although it benefits the school's fundraising efforts and many people enjoy the spectacle, it can also be incredibly disruptive to the village, and we apologise in advance for this and will try to keep inconvenience to a minimum. We will notify everyone on Facebook when the fireworks are due to go off, and there will be a standard five-minute warning shot. I will also be delivering leaflets through residents' doors in case people miss the newsletter to alert them to the event.

Money from the event pays for the children's trips to the annual Christmas pantomime and will also contribute to the outdoor classroom area.

To purchase tickets, please visit https://www.ticketsource.com/south-stoke-primary-school-parents-associataion

New Library Area



We are always grateful to residents for their kind support of the school and the School Parents Association. For everyone who bought raffle tickets at May Day, your generosity has gone towards the new library area, which continues to be the focus of the PA's efforts. Due to the ethos of the school, and the community spirit we try to encourage in the children, we want to work closely with local organisations. For the library, we have been lucky enough to have Wallingford Bookshop attend the school to talk to the children about all things books. Each child was then allowed to pick one book to go into the new library selection, which the Parents Association purchased. It was far more personal than an Amazon wish list, and the children were able to have an active role in choosing the books they and their school friends will get to enjoy.

We plan to continue upgrading the library area, and we look forward to welcoming people to view it at a future open day.

School Open Days

We have three upcoming school open days for Reception places and in-year transfer spaces. If you are unable to make the dates, please contact the school office on 01491 872948 to arrange a visit.

Tuesday 29th September, 1.30–3.30pm

Monday 12th October, afternoon

Thursday 19th November, afternoon

Amy Snell, Chair of the Parents Association

Citizens Advice

Join our friendly team at Citizens Advice!

Are you seeking a new challenge, and want to contribute something positive to your community? Citizens Advice Oxfordshire is looking for dedicated and compassionate volunteer advisers to work in our offices. Citizens Advice gives people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are and whatever their problem. Our volunteers play a vital role, ensuring that people receive the advice and support they need.

A Citizens Advice volunteer recently commented on the way many clients are transformed after benefitting from the close attention and help of an adviser. Lewis told the Henley Standard: "There are problems that seem insurmountable to those experiencing them, but we break down those seemingly impenetrable problems into manageable steps, providing a route out of despair. This process has a profound impact on the resilience and happiness of our clients."

What kind of basic skills will you need to volunteer with us? You will need to be confident with computers and have a both a willingness to learn and a positive desire to help people. In the course of your volunteering you'll learn new skills and meet new people, helping clients with problems in the areas of debt management, benefits, employment, housing and relationships (no prior knowledge necessary). After extensive training you will be giving confidential advice to clients, mainly on the telephone at first, and then later by emails, in person or by using webchat.

We would like you to be available for two sessions per week, either mornings or afternoons or for a whole day. We offer a rewarding, flexible and supportive working environment.

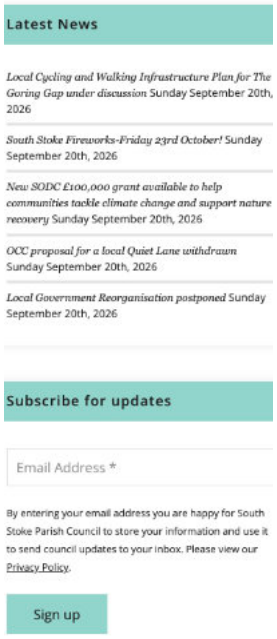
If you would like to discuss these volunteering roles, please email: volunteer-recruitment@caox.org.uk and one of our staff will contact you.



Parish News

Check out the Parish Council web site, it is surprising what you can find. You can download current and past Newsletters. There are all Council meeting dates and minutes. There is a section on the latest news and event information. You can sign up to subscribe for updates.

https://www.southstoke.org.uk/news



SOUTH STOKE PARISH COUNCIL

County Councillor Report

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has announced that it will review the preferred local government reorganisation decisions made across England. Ministers have said they remain committed to reorganisation and devolution but want to check that decisions have been reached correctly, are sustainable and can be implemented successfully. The scope of the review is still being finalised, with Government aiming to complete it around mid-October.

For Oxfordshire and West Berkshire, this is likely to push the timetable back. Shadow elections for the proposed new councils now not in May 2027, meaning elections to existing councils are expected to proceed instead (district council elections for SODC). Work directly related to establishing the new authorities is being paused while the review takes place, although councils can continue sensible preparatory work. I will provide a further update once Government confirms the outcome and revised timetable.

Goring to Wallingford Greenway: Encouraging Progress

There has been another positive step forward on the proposed Goring to Wallingford Greenway. As previously reported, the preferred route would create a largely off-road link along the western side of the B4009. Making it continuous requires agreement from two private landowners, and discussions with both have been progressing well. The route itself is already recognised within Oxfordshire's wider Strategic Active Travel Network as a proposed Wallingford–Goring connection.

A further site visit took place on 11 September, including Savills, acting as agent for Christ Church, alongside the relevant parties. This allowed us to work through the remaining practical and land issues on the ground. The discussions were very positive, and we expect to have a definitive answer, subject to final agreement, within around two weeks.

For the first time, this is starting to feel like a route that may actually happen! OCC officers have been very supportive and are beginning to explore potential funding routes and how the Greenway can be embedded in relevant active-travel and rights-of-way planning documents, strengthening the case for future investment. That matters because inclusion in strategic plans can help support subsequent funding bids

Goring Gap Local Cycling and Walking Plan

There has been a significant step forward on plans for a Goring Gap Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Funding to develop the plan has now been brought forward by a year and is included in this year's County Council budget, allowing work to begin sooner than originally expected.

The newly established Goring Gap Active Travel Group is already engaging with OCC officers to identify what preparatory work can be done while consultants are appointed and contracts finalised. The precise geographical coverage of the LCWIP is still being considered, including how best to capture the important connections between Goring and surrounding communities.

There is still a process to work through, but bringing the funding forward and beginning the local work now is very encouraging progress.

Oxford Traffic Filters: Trial Starts 28 Sept

From Monday 28 September, Oxford's traffic-filter trial will replace the temporary congestion charge. The congestion charge will no longer be payable. All parts of Oxford will remain accessible by car, but drivers without a permit may need to use a different route rather than passing through a filter.

Existing congestion-charge permits will automatically transfer to traffic-filter permits, so current permit holders do not need to reapply. Permits are available for a range of groups including residents, Blue Badge holders, community health and care workers and mobile traders. Applications can be made online, or by phone on 01865 519800 for people unable to use the online service.



Cllr. Maggie Filipova-Rivers

St Andrews 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.

4th October, Sunday, 11.15am All age Harvest service



11th October, Sunday, 11.15am Holy Communion

18th October, Sunday, 11.15am Good News service

25th October, Sunday, 11.15am Holy Communion

28th October, Wednesday, 10.30am Coffee Morning

Also at 4pm on 25th October: Thanksgiving for departed loved ones - All Souls – at St Thomas', Goring - a special service to help us remember, grieve and be comforted. All welcome.

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

The Benefice Office or the Vicar 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

October Diary

Sun 4th, **Book Launch, Rivering**14:30-16:30 Morrell Rooms, Goring

Tues 6th, **Chat and Share** 10 to 12 VHall

Wed 7th, **Goring Green Fingers** 19:30

Thurs 8th, **WI Meeting**, Village Hall

Thur 8th, **Mobile Post Office** 8-11:30 Westholme Stores & tuesdays 13:30 - 16:00

Sun 11th, **Classical Guitar & Piano**, 16:00 St Mary's, Goring

Mon 12th, **School Open Day**, afternoon

Fri 16th, **400 Club Draw**, 8pm Perch & Pike

Sat 17th &18th **Pangbourne Art Exhibition**, 10:00-17:00

Fri 23rd **Style Acre Quiz**, 7pm VH

Fri 23rd, **School Fireworks on the Rec**

Fri 23rd **Newsletter deadline**

Mon 24th - Fri 30th **Scarecrow Trail Goring,** map from Garden Design Studio

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Mon 2nd November, **Historical Society**, 19:30 VH

Thur 19th November, **School Open Day**, afternoon

Sun 6th December, **Santa Dash**, 11:30am Market Place, Wallingford

The Next Issue

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

Deadline for the November issue is Friday 23rd October

Every effort is made to ensure that any information provided is correct. The South Stoke Newsletter, Editor and South Stoke Parish Council do not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of content or the consequences of relying on it. Any views expressed are those of the contributor at the time of submission and do not reflect the opinions of South Stoke Parish Council or the editor.