

Stoke Poges *News*



Issue 230 | **Autumn 2024**



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ASK ABOUT OUR PRE-PAYMENT
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Our great outdoor spaces

We live in a semi-rural village, and I for one really value the green spaces which are moments from my doorstep.

There's a lot in this issue about our outdoor spaces. There's the new exercise track at Plough Lane Recreation Ground, a look at how community gardeners created a wildflower meadow for us to enjoy, and details of a new extension to the memorial gardens.

Meanwhile, the team at Stoke Common have been keeping things safe for cattle and humans alike!

In upcoming issues, we plan to bring you details of the many footpaths around the village that connect us with the surrounding areas.

Rich Huckle
Editor

Winter issue No 231 – all material to the editor by no later than Monday 21st October.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or Stoke Poges Parish Council.

All dates included are provided by contributors and should be verified with them.

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Editor: spneditorsp@gmail.com

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On the cover

The wildflower meadow created by community gardeners (see page 37)

Updates from the Parish Council

Exercise path completed at Plough Lane Recreation Ground

The Parish Council announced in the spring issue of *Stoke Poges News* that it agreed to install an exercise/walking path in Plough Lane Recreation Ground, to mirror the one at Bells Hill. We are happy to report that the work was completed in time for the school holidays. We hope you enjoy making full use of this asset.

You will notice that there is a strip of tactile paving which marks a start point with the distance in meters of the path, enabling you to measure how far you have walked.

We must thank The Beeches Community Board for agreeing a grant of £15,000



towards the cost of this project and to Cllr Trevor Egleton, one of our Unitary Councillors and Chair of the Health & Wellbeing sub-committee, who assisted us with the grant application and stating a strong case for us. With this support and generosity we were able us to fast track works so they were completed in time for the start of the summer break.

We have had very positive feedback about the contractors that we used, D&H Saunders, who have done an excellent job for us, as well as being professional and courteous towards members of the public.

Our thriving allotments

The Parish Council has allotments that we have owned and managed for many years. Please contact the Parish Clerk, Julie Simmonds, if you are interested in finding out more or would like a plot.

The allotments have a thriving community with an allotment association – if you would like to speak to a member to understand more about allotment gardening, please email stokepogesallotmentassociation@gmail.com

Wildlife and bug hotels

With ever-increasing traffic and disruption to our wildlife, the Parish Council decided at the July meeting to install three bug hotels. Benefits will include assistance with nature and species conservation. In turn, this will assist in lowering the population of pests due to encouraging a larger population of beneficial insects, and of course will encourage interest in nature and conservation among children.

Parish Chair's letter

I write to you as Chair for the first time – for the last 13 years I have been Vice-chair!

I would firstly like to thank Cllr Ralph Bagge for chairing the Parish Council so well and with fairness and integrity for the last 13 years. Ralph will continue as a parish councillor for the remainder of our term.

I would like to congratulate Cllr Mary Crocker for stepping up as Vice-chair. Mary is a very experienced councillor with 12 years of experience.


As a village, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. We held a short service on our village green and – like many other villages, towns and cities – we lit our beacon.

This summer, we also enjoyed our village fete in June and the Stoke Poges, Wexham

& Fulmer Horticultural Society's 130th Annual Show in July. In September, we will be holding our first Stoke Poges Market, with stalls offering artisan foods and crafts. Please pop along and enjoy a cuppa and a slice of home-made cake. All of these events are a way for us to come together as a village and meet friends and neighbours – a part of village life that we treasure.

On a sad note, we bid farewell to our Post Masters, Arun and Rita, who have been part of our community for 20 years. We sincerely thank you for all you have done, and we wish you all the best in your retirement.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and don't forget we have *Carols on the Green* to look forward to on Saturday 23rd November.

 Saera Carter BEM
Chair, Stoke Poges Parish Council

Adding a bug hotel to a green area makes for a fun and creative way to encourage biodiversity. Bug hotels provide shelter and nesting sites to native and migratory solitary insects. These tiny creatures are crucial as most plants depend on pollinators. Solitary bees such as mason and leafcutter bees will be the most likely guests. Along with solitary wasps, mason bees are very effective pollinators.

Maintaining our pavilion

The pavilion is now eight years old, so we did a thorough maintenance survey and redecorated throughout. Work took place over the summer holidays and was completed in time for the new school term and football season.



At the July Parish Council meeting, councillors voted to install solar panels to help with running costs. We hope to have them installed by winter.

Litter and dog poo

We see a lot of litter in the village, and even though clearing it falls under the remit of Buckinghamshire Council, the Parish Council has responded to comments and complaints by arranging four community litter picks throughout the year. We have completed three litter picks so far this year, and at our July litter pick we collected 15 sacks of litter, much of which was cigarette butts.

Our next litter pick is Saturday 14th September, 10am to 12 noon, meeting at the Village Centre.

Dates for our litter picks are displayed on our four notice boards, social media and the Parish Council website. We very much encourage villagers and accompanied children to attend our organised events as it is an opportunity to meet neighbours and do something community minded.

If villagers wish to undertake their own litter picks, the Parish Council has equipment which can be borrowed – contact the Parish Office for details. Thank you to all of you who do your bit to help!

Just a quick reminder that if you have a dog or need to dispose of litter there are plenty of bins, so please use them. Leaving your litter and dog mess is not only antisocial but dangerous if its stepped in or accidentally touched. We would also respectfully ask that residents don't use the bins to dispose of their own household or dog waste but use their own bins. There are various red bins located around the village and in both recreation grounds.

Litter and the law

In the last few weeks, Buckinghamshire Council announced their *For Bucks Sake* campaign. Anyone caught deliberately littering in Buckinghamshire will face a fixed penalty notice of £500 under a new policy adopted following a decision by

Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet, which took effect from July 2024.

Sweet wrappers, fast food containers, cigarette butts and vape canisters are all familiar sights on our verges, open spaces and roadsides because people have chosen to dump them rather than dispose of them responsibly.

In a bid to clamp down on litter, Buckinghamshire Council agreed a raft of strong new measures to tackle the issue. The council is an early adopter of new powers allowing an increase in the penalty amount for littering to £500. They chose to adopt this maximum rate without the option of an early payment discount to act as a strong deterrent to stop people littering in the first place.

As part of this campaign, they are appealing to motorists and road users to send in dash-cam and phone footage of littering they may have captured on camera – where of course, it is safe to do so.

Dealing with discarded litter is an ongoing problem for councils up and down the country. Annually, it costs Buckinghamshire tax-payers an estimated £3.5m to clean and dispose of littered waste. It's a huge £25,000 every time the council clears litter from the A404 Marlow by-pass; this is because they have to cover the costs of traffic management to make sure it's safe for workers to clean up this busy and dangerous stretch of road.

Under the new approach, the council will use civil enforcement powers to penalise the registered keeper of a vehicle linked to a littering offence rather than needing to identify the exact individual who dropped the litter. This makes it easier to secure a positive result as you don't need to be the one who dropped the litter to have to pay the consequences.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/campaign/for-bucks-sake>

Abandoned cars

The Parish Council has received correspondence from villagers who are experiencing an increase in abandoned cars or cars that are parked on the highway untaxed, uninsured with no MOT – in essence using the highway as storage, sometimes for weeks or months.

The way to report untaxed cars parked on the road is via the DVLA at <https://contact.dvla.gov.uk/report-untaxed-vehicle> or to *FixMyStreet* (see right).

It may not be dealt with quickly, but these are the the correct channels to use.

An abandoned vehicle is one which has not been moved or attended to for a long time. There may be visible damage to suggest a crash or signs the vehicle has been stolen, such as:

- significant damage;
- it's run-down or unroadworthy, including being rusted;
- missing or suspicious number plates;
- has a lot of rubbish inside it;
- broken windows, flat tyres, broken or loose ignition or a broken steering column.

In this instance you can report via 101 or online at <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-v3/report-antisocial-behaviour>

The law and parking

Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 makes it an offence to wilfully obstruct the highway: "If a person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway he is guilty of an offence" and is liable to imprisonment, a fine or both.

FixMyStreet

'FixMyStreet' can be used to report any issues to do with the highway.

This includes things which are broken, dirty, damaged, dumped, need fixing, cleaning or clearing – like graffiti, dog fouling, potholes or street lights that don't work and unlawful parking.

The website and smartphone app are designed to make it easier to report problems in the community, even if you don't know where reports should go to.

What shouldn't I report?

Anything that is deemed urgent that might put people in immediate danger, like gas leaks or falling trees, please contact your council or the appropriate utility company or emergency service directly, by phone if possible. The Buckinghamshire Council emergency number is 0800 999 7677.

FixMyStreet will route problem reports via cleansing services or highways maintenance departments, so using *FixMyStreet* for urgent matters may result in a delay in your report getting to the right department.

For issues such as noise pollution, barking dogs, fires, missing wheelie bins or missed rubbish collections, proposals for speed bumps or pedestrian crossings, or complaining about the council itself, please contact Buckinghamshire Council directly.

-
- Find out more at <https://www.fixmystreet.com> or <https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk>

About the Parish Clerk

Find out more about the work of our Parish Clerk, Julie Simmonds.

Julie has worked for Stoke Poges Parish Council for 18 years and comes with 24 years of experience. We are very fortunate to have Julie – she is very committed to our village, is reliable and carries out her duties conscientiously.

What does a clerk do?

The Clerk is the Parish Council's only employee and is the responsible legal and financial officer. They are therefore responsible for the administration of the council's financial affairs.

The primary responsibility of a clerk is to advise the council on whether its decisions are lawful and to recommend ways in which decisions can be implemented. They are required to give clear guidance to councillors, including the chair, and must recognise that the council is responsible for all decisions and that they take instructions from the council as a body.

To help with this, clerks may be asked to research topics of concern to the council and provide unbiased information to help the council to make appropriate choices.



Parish councillors must be confident that the clerk is at all times independent and objective.

It is a clerk's responsibility to set the agenda for meetings. This is often done in consultation with the Chair and individual members can request the addition of relevant items, but the agenda remains the clerk's responsibility.

The agenda and relevant papers must be sent out at least three clear days before the meeting. The 'three clear' days is established in law to allow time for proper consideration of issues to be discussed. Items for decision cannot be added to the agenda after this time but must be taken at a future meeting.

At a meeting, all councillors must comply with 'standing orders' and the chair must ensure that these are enforced.

When parking in and around the village please do not block the pavements – they are for the use of pedestrians, especially those with wheelchairs, walking frames, prams, pushchairs and young children. Parking on the road will force cars to slow down which is something many would welcome. If vehicles are causing an obstruction they can be reported to Thames Valley Police online.

The Parish Council is currently working in

partnership with Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire Council to get parking enforcement officers to attend during school times.

Carols on the Green and Christmas lights

This year's Christmas village event will be held on Saturday 23rd November, 6pm - 8pm in the car park of the Village Centre on Rogers Lane.

If you would like a stall or would like to help please contact the Parish Clerk.

Delivery round of 'Stoke Poges News'

Stoke Poges News is hand-delivered to every house in the village. We currently have a vacancy for someone to deliver from the winter edition onwards, starting in November. The roads covered by this delivery round are Duffield Lane, Neville Close, Rickmans Lane, Wakefield Crescent, Ash Grove, Elderfield Road, Hazell Way, Vine Road and Fircroft Close – a total of 396 copies to be delivered, for £34.

If you are interested please contact the Clerk.

Keeping you up-to-date

We have four noticeboards in the village. They are located:

- Inside the Village Centre, outside the Parish Clerk's Office;
- Outside the Village Centre on Rogers Lane;
- Bells Hill Green;
- Tubwell Stores on Tubwell Road.

We display a list of councillors, a list of



committees, a list of meetings throughout the year and agendas for all those meetings.

This information is also uploaded to the Parish Council website, together with meeting minutes.

👤 *Saera Carter BEM*
Chair, Stoke Poges Parish Council

■ *Please check the Parish Council noticeboards and website for further updates. Contact details for the Parish Clerk are on page 50.*

<https://www.stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk>

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A village market for Stoke Poges

A village market is taking place on Saturday 7th September, helping to raise funds for our Village Centre.

Many other nearby villages and towns have street markets. In passing comment, a couple of villagers suggested it might be a good idea to explore the same for Stoke Poges.

Informal talks between the Parish Council and the Village Centre began, and after doing some research and visiting nearby markets it was decided to formally approach the Parish Council to form a working party to look at viable options. At the June meeting, the Parish Council agreed to support the concept.

Our first village market will be held on Saturday 7th September, from 10am to 2pm at the Village Centre. Entry is free, and both children and well-behaved dogs are welcome.

The event is a collaboration between the Parish Council, the Village Centre and the administrators of a village Facebook group, 'We all live in Stoke Poges'. All charges for a table will go directly to the Village Centre charity.

Parts of the Village Centre building are now over 100 years old, and funds raised will be used towards maintenance and refurbishment – for example, the hall floor is reaching the end of its life and will be a large cost when it needs to be replaced.

There will be an array of artisan food and craft stalls offering a variety of tantalising foods, fashion, home décor and gifts in the main hall and throughout the ground floor of the building, including the car park.

Please do come along and support this initiative – our local Scouts will be offering bacon rolls, the Village Centre trustees will open the kitchen to sell tea, coffee and cake, plus the Social Club bar will be open during the day. We will also have a pizza stall and an ice cream van – so there's something for everyone! Have a look at the page opposite for more information, and please note that new stalls may have joined since going to print.

This promises to be an excellent way to meet up with neighbours, friends and family. Village cohesion is important in maintaining village life, creating good community values and relationships.

The organising and running of this day is being carried out by volunteers. If you're able to spare an hour or two to help with setting up, closing down and parking/marshalling, please email spvillagemarket@gmail.com

We are very much hoping that if the market is successful we can consider the possibility of holding this community event on a regular basis.

■ *Visit the village market on Saturday 7th September, 10am - 2pm at the Village Centre on Rogers Lane.*

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE VILLAGE HALL

Stoke Poges Parish Council, The Village Centre &
We All Live in Stoke Poges invite you to the

STOKE POGES VILLAGE MARKET DAY

at

THE VILLAGE CENTRE

Rogers Lane, Stoke Poges SL2 4LP

on

SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2024

10:00am to 2.00pm

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◆ FREE ENTRY ◆ PET FRIENDLY ◆

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- ◆ Honey from Stoke Poges Bees ◆ Jamaican Patties ◆ Luxury Brownies ◆
- ◆ Locally Air Dried Biltong ◆ Freshly Made Cupcakes ◆
- ◆ Hand Crafted Fine Chocolate ◆ Neapolitan Style Calzone & Specialist Coffee ◆
- ◆ BBQ Bacon Rolls, Burgers & Hot Dogs ◆ Tea, Coffee & Cake ◆ Ice Cream Van ◆
- ◆ Fresh Flowers & Plants ◆ Crystals & Crystal Jewellery ◆
- ◆ Hand Made Crochet Blankets ◆ Hand Crafted Candles & Home Fragrance ◆
- ◆ Hand Crafted Pottery ◆ Ladies' Clothing & Accessories ◆
- ◆ Stationery, Stickers & Personalised Gifts ◆ Frames & Home Décor ◆
- ◆ Purses, Bags, Hats & Accessories ◆ Painted Terracotta Pots & Plants ◆
- ◆ Hand Carved Wooden Cheese Boards ◆ Beaded Jewellery & Accessories ◆

A look at the Parish Council's Planning Committee

The Planning Committee works hard to defend the character, space and semi-rural nature of our village, which is often a challenge for us.

The committee is made up of parish councillors and two co-opted members. Jason Harris works full-time and has been helping with planning for nine years. Our most recent co-opted member is resident Rod Wilson, who has recently retired. Rod has been helping for five months now and is an invaluable member of the committee. We are very grateful to both of them as they are not elected members yet have volunteered to give their time to help us every month by going through each planning agenda to understand planning applications so that we might exercise our statutory responsibility to comment. We thank them both for their time and commitment to their village.

How planning meetings work

The committee meets on the third Monday of the month and follows an agenda which is always displayed in advance on the four noticeboards in the village and on the Parish Council website. The first 15 minutes of each meeting is set aside for the public to discuss items on the agenda.

The committee formulates our comments, which can only be based on existing policies. As a statutory consultee, we are invited to comment on all applications within our parish in a similar way to you as a resident when you are notified that a neighbour has submitted a planning application.

Our Clerk minutes our comments and sends them to the planning department where they then get uploaded to the planning portal.

The final decision on whether an application is approved or granted is made by the Planning Department based at Buckinghamshire Council. It is our duty to understand local and national policies, and represent the concerns of villagers in an endeavour to protect our village from inappropriate development. Planning policies are subjective, so decisions made by Buckinghamshire Council are not always in line with our committee's opinions.

Call-ins

In some cases, we can exercise our right to request that a planning application is 'called-in'. By calling-in an application, councillors are indicating that they feel the issues are genuine and require debate at Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Committee. This means that the decision is decided by a committee, rather than a planning officer. This is something that may happen if the application is complex and/or controversial. In recent months, we've requested that three applications are called-in. During the call-in process, the Parish Council is invited to speak at the meeting to explain any concerns.

The Parish Council has looked at how we can add extra detail in our comments, and our draft Neighbourhood Plan is helping here. We have a draft of nine new policies that go into more detail, especially where design is concerned. Even though the plan is not yet adopted we are able to quote it when we send our comments into the Planning Department.

Planning enforcement

This continues to be an issue in the village with building works commencing without planning permission. We also have building taking place that is not as per the approved plan, as well as an increase of outbuildings. If you are concerned about unlawful development you can report it online at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-compliance-and-enforcement>

The Parish Council can also report such issues for investigation. Other things that can be reported include an unlawful change of use of a building, e.g. someone running a business from their home which is causing a nuisance and affecting the local environment.

As the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council has a duty to investigate reports of alleged breaches of planning control and has the discretion to take formal enforcement action where appropriate. Within eight weeks of receipt of any case, investigations should be sufficient to establish whether a breach of planning control has occurred and what action, if any, is required.

Buckinghamshire Council investigates a variety of alleged breaches of planning control, including unauthorised building works, changes of use, breaches of planning conditions and unlawful works to trees and hedgerows. They decide if the alleged breach is allowed under permitted development, research the planning history of the site, identify any special designations or constraints e.g. listed building status, and search other council data or publicly held information.

They then contact the person responsible for the alleged breach to discuss the works being undertaken. Once a decision is made regarding further investigation, the matter is logged on the Council's database accordingly and given an appropriate level of priority.

Our Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood plans are a key part of the government's localism agenda for parish councils to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood. The idea is to give local people a chance to create a planning document that guides and shapes all types of development in their local area.

We are now 3½ years into this project, but we still have many hoops to jump through before the plan can be legally adopted. We have worked very hard to ensure we have created a policy that also focuses on design. There are many comments in the village about the style of housing and extensions that cause an erosion to our character and can be detrimental to the street scene. The Design Code document does show good and bad examples of development and covers a lot of detail. If you would like to have a look you will find it online at <https://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan>

The Planning Committee is already finding this document to be extremely helpful.

Once the plan is adopted it will be a formal statutory document that is additional to the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan. We are now at the stage where Buckinghamshire Council needs to assess the document and assign an independent assessor to ensure the document is lawful. There have been some delays due to the volume of other towns and parishes also submitting their plans. At some stage, there will be a referendum where you as villagers can vote to adopt the plan.

More information will follow – please keep an eye on our noticeboards, website and social media. With a new government in place, we are also currently unsure how any new legislation may affect the plan. We will report back when we know more.

Exploring the best in British aviation history

This year, we are continuing the theme of visiting venues that highlight the very best in British aviation history.

On Thursday 26th September, we'll be visiting the Farnborough Air Sciences Museum, located at Farnborough Airport and housed in one of the aviation buildings of the former world famous Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE). The museum is the birthplace of British aviation and includes ten aircraft, two helicopters, satellites, simulators and other unique material related to Farnborough's RAE. An exclusive guided tour of the museum (the museum is not open to the public on Thursdays) will be followed by time to view the exhibits again and maybe an opportunity to experience one of the flight simulators.

We will assemble in the car park at St Andrew's Centre in Rogers Lane, leaving around 9am. Transport to the museum is available. Following our morning refreshments, there will be an introductory talk and our guided tour will last around two hours. We will then take a short drive to a Toby Carvery restaurant for lunch – this is optional and not included in the ticket price. After our lunch, we will make our return journey back to Stoke Poges.

The following event is a Men's Dinner on Friday 22nd November at the South Buckinghamshire Golf Club (in Park Road, Stoke Poges). The bar will open at 7.15pm and our buffet-style meal will begin at 8pm.

Our after-dinner speaker is Richard Borgonon, a guy who has had an illustrious career in the City of London. In his younger

years, Richard had to travel (unwillingly) around the country visiting various cathedrals because his father was the chief cantor for the Gregorian Society. When he left school, he followed his father into the Lloyd's insurance market and worked there for 44 years. During that time, he held various market leadership positions, became chairman of a Lloyds Broking firm and travelled the world with his job.

Today, he runs his own consultancy company, holds international leadership positions and is chairman of the Christian publishers '10ofthose Ltd'. In recent years he has developed resources to help people discover for themselves what the Bible actually says and has co-authored a set of booklets called *The Word One to One*.

Richard will share with us his experiences as an executive in Lloyds of London and give us an introduction to his booklets, which will be available to purchase at the end of the evening.

■ *If you use Facebook, please check out 'Stoke Poges Men's Group'. For further information about future events, please get in touch. We are not an exclusive group, but very inclusive and guys from a wide area (not just from Stoke Poges) come along. Everyone is always given a very warm welcome.*

*Tony Shortman
01844 350014
shortmantm@gmail.com*

*Nigel Lowe
07973 349721
nigelatsuchlowe@gmail.com*

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The Stoke Poges School

Taking pride in their achievements as another school year comes to a close

It is hard to believe that we reached the end of another school year!

There is so much to be proud of and it is lovely to look back and reflect on how well the children have applied themselves to school life and developed throughout the year.

We were delighted that, after our inspection in May, Ofsted judged us a “Good” school. This outcome is a testament to the care and commitment of our staff and governors, the support of parents and carers, and of course, a celebration of our wonderful children.

Sadly, this is the time of year when we say farewell to some staff and pupils. It is always with mixed feelings that we see our Year 6 pupils move on to new schools and adventures. We are extremely proud of their achievements and wish them the best of luck in whatever the future brings.

A member of staff who we are not likely to forget is Anne Frank, who is retiring after

sixteen years at the school. She has brought a passion for music that has inspired hundreds of children, many of whom have gone on to pursue music further after leaving us. We were moved by the surprise visit of some of these ex-students at our Summer Concert, where Ms Frank was serenaded with a special tribute of Abba’s *Thank You for the Music*. The words say it all – thank you Ms Frank!

Once again, we have come to the end of another Junior Challenge cycle with many children earning their bronze, silver and gold badges. The children have worked very hard throughout the year on their voluntary, skills and physical sections. They raised a fantastic amount of money for charity during their Walkathon in June:

- Gold raised £555.16 for Riding for the Disabled;
- Silver raised £666.10 for Slough Homeless Our Concern;
- Bronze raised £2,336.70 for The Trussell Trust.

Poppy Appeal preparations

By the time you read this our preparations will be well underway for the next appeal.

Firstly, we are in need of a few helpers – can you help?

- We need help distributing poppy boxes to businesses in the area – it's not onerous but would be a tremendous help.
- Our main fundraising will be at the motorway service station at Beaconsfield. Would you be able to take a turn for an hour or so? It can be very entertaining.
- Are there any handcrafters? Hand-knitted or crocheted purple poppies are always in demand.

Any help is much appreciated of course, so please contact Manesh or Chris on the numbers below to offer your help or to discuss further.

Our committee member David Moore recently went to France for D-Day 80 and says: "It was an honour and a privilege to lay a wreath on



behalf of the parishes at Bayeux, Normandy, as our local RBL representative for D-Day 80. This followed a moving service with the Princess Royal at the Bayeux Memorial."

As ever, our aim is to raise much needed funds to ensure help, assistance and advice is available to those who have served our country.

■ For further information, please contact Chris or Manesh at the Royal British Legion:

Chris Leister-Crow, Poppy Appeal Organiser
07942 016072

Manesh Patel, Chairman
07919 216820

The Junior Challenge closed with a hike, and a celebratory barbecue, sleepover and afternoon tea. Congratulations to all the children for this incredible achievement – we could not be prouder.

There is much to look forward to in the new school year, including our annual Fireworks Night on Tuesday 5th November. This event is open to everyone in the community, so we hope to see you there.

Funeral Celebrant
Linda Kidd
"Telling the Story"
Supporting families in their
time of bereavement
07766 280152
ljkidd21@hotmail.com

Family fun in full bloom

On 27th July, visitors came from far and wide to gather in the grand marquee for our 130th Annual Flower Show.

This much-loved event, dating back to 1884, is a highlight of the summer, bringing together families, friends and neighbours for a day filled with flowers, fruit and vegetable displays, arts, crafts and culinary delights. With blue skies and sunshine, it was a perfect summer's day filled with colour, creativity, and a sense of togetherness.

The showground buzzed with excitement, and the crowds were treated to music from Marlow Town Band, a display of classic cars, a sumptuous tea tent, bar and food options, plus a stunning array of stalls and stands to browse. Families enjoyed children's rides, face painting, and a petting zoo. There was plenty to see and do, but also time to sit, soak up the sunshine, listen to the band, and enjoy a cool drink or afternoon tea with homemade cake.

A showcase of blooms and harvests

As visitors entered the expansive marquee, they were greeted by an impressive display of floral arrangements and displays featuring roses, sweet peas, lilies, dahlias, and zinnias. The tables were laden with beautifully presented vegetables, pot plants, cacti, troughs and hanging baskets in full bloom.

The home-grown produce, flowers and plants were a testament to the gardeners' dedication despite this year's difficult cold and rainy weather conditions. This year, the prestigious Banksian Medal was awarded to Varinder Randhawa for earning the most prize money



in the horticultural sections. He was especially commended for his stunning fuchsia display and outstanding hanging basket and trough. The top prize in the floral art category went to a beautiful arrangement by Ann Hall.



Culinary delights

The cookery section was filled with the delightful aroma of baked goods. Notably, Jane Boot won first prize for her incredibly lifelike sugar craft and cake representation of a chopping board of vegetables entitled 'From Garden to Table'. The bake-off competition for the best Tea and Whisky Loaf was fiercely contested, with Jenny Harper-Jones winning the coveted Devening Memorial Cup.

Meanwhile, the children's baking category was full of talent, with young bakers showcasing their skills through decorated cupcakes and biscuits.

Rachel Cornall's liqueur stood out in the homemade wine and cordials category, earning high praise from the judges.

Crafts and creativity

The crafts section displayed a wide array of handmade items, including knitted and crocheted pieces, beautifully stitched needlework, woodwork and stained glass. The children's craft classes were particularly popular, featuring imaginative creations like hand-painted rocks and fruit and vegetable creatures.

Local amateur artists displayed paintings and sketches in the art section, with the overall winner being a beautiful painting of boats in a harbour by Anthony Wallington.



Growing for the future

The society works with five local schools to support gardening activities and their gardens were judged in the week before the show, each one impressing the judges with their vegetable and flower growing – all centred around the theme of the Olympics. Wexham Court Primary School was the overall winner of the School's Trophy this year.



And finally...

Of course, although the event is truly magical, it doesn't come together on its own! The committee works tirelessly behind the scenes throughout the year, fundraising, planning and making preparations to ensure everything runs smoothly. The goodwill and support of our volunteers, members of the society and our sponsors are also crucial. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the 2024 show, and we look forward to welcoming you all next year.

The schools also created Olympic-themed scarecrows which were displayed at the show and voted for by the public. Photos from the five participating school gardens were displayed for visitors to admire.

The potato live weigh-in was a highlight, with Farnham Common Infants winning this exciting contest. In the individual children's horticulture section, the best miniature garden prize went to Willow Milton.

Whether you're a gardener, a baker, an art enthusiast or simply someone who appreciates beautiful things, our annual show has something for everyone. Join us next year on Saturday 26th July 2025 for another celebration of community, tradition, timeless charm, fun and discovery. Don't forget to mark your calendars!

Celebrating with the community

After the raffle was drawn by local celebrity Johnny Ball, the day concluded with an awards ceremony where Countess Howe, the Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, presented prizes. Her presence added a special touch to the event, as she warmly congratulated all participants, especially the children, who were thrilled to receive recognition for their efforts.

👤 *Maureen Barton*
Chair, Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society

■ *If you would like to join the society, be part of the committee or help as a volunteer or supporter, please get in touch. Member benefits include discounts at local plant nurseries, free show and competition entry, social evenings, talks and visits throughout the year. Further information can be found on the society's website at www.hortsoc.org*





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Stoke Poges Village Centre

Stoke Park's community outreach programme supports our Village Centre

The Village Centre is delighted to be the latest local charity to be invited to join the Stoke Park Partnership Framework.

The framework shows Stoke Park's commitment to supporting the Village Centre beyond just grant funding. As with all the many community outreach projects they work on, it is all about long term benefits, positive impact and finding ways the Stoke Park team can support through all the different skillsets and expertise they can bring beyond their operating boundaries.

Members of our Village Centre executive committee met with Stoke Park's Amy Turner and Nick Downie to mark the signing of the partnership.

In addition, we have received a donation from Stoke Park to help us refurbish two of our rooms. Work is taking place over the summer and we hope to show you the results in the next issue. We are very grateful for all this support, which is vital in helping us

continue to maintain the Village Centre facilities for our community to enjoy.

Recognising an outstanding contribution

At our AGM each year, the Judd Cup is given to an organisation or individual in recognition of their contribution to Stoke Poges Village Centre.

This year's recipient is Dave Shillabeer, for the significant role he plays as Vice-chairman and behind the scenes in support of the staff and our operations. Congratulations Dave, and many thanks for all the work you do for us!

Please come along and support our village market

As you may already have seen on page 10, there will be a village market on Saturday 7th September.

We are grateful to the Parish Council and the admins of 'We all live in Stoke Poges' for asking us to be part of this initiative and

Stoke Poges Village Centre

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hall with stage and kitchen – licensed bar



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www.stoke-poges-centre.org.uk

07565 116075

helping us to raise funds for our charity. Some of our trustees will be baking in advance and selling tea, coffee and cake on the day, so please come along and say hello to us.

Hire discounts for Stoke Poges residents

The main hall and a range of meeting rooms at the Village Centre are available to hire for parties and other events, and some discounted rates are available for residents of Stoke Poges. Please consider us if you're planning a celebration!



Rich Huckde, Chairman of the Village Centre, presents the Judd Cup to Dave Shillabeer

- *Further information on hiring the Village Centre and details of the many clubs and societies who meet at the hall can be found online at <https://stoke-poges-centre.org.uk>*



Stoke Common

Scoop that poop!

There are an estimated 90,000 visits made to Stoke Common each year, with 74% of visits involving a dog.



Dog walking is a popular activity and most dog owners when asked say they pick up after their dogs. However, there are some owners who still do not pick up after their four-legged friends, some who 'stick and flick' and some who bag it but leave it.

Although there have been mixed messages in the past from various organisations about the right way to clean up after your dog, we are asking visitors to please pick up after your dog and either bin it or take it home with you to dispose of. Dog poo is detrimental to the future of Stoke Common and causes multiple issues to vegetation, livestock and people.



What is so bad about dog poo?

Nobody wants to step in dog poo on their walk or have their children playing near it. Our volunteers work close to the ground where dog poo might be left behind which can sometimes result in some very unhappy volunteers!



During summer months, Stoke Common is home to around 26 breeding Sussex cattle. The cows are used to graze and maintain the open aspect of the heathland, keeping scrub under control and to maintain the desired small-scale mosaic structure of habitats and vegetation. Neosporosis is an infectious disease of cattle caused by the parasite Neospora which is transmitted in dog faeces and is a significant cause of abortion in cattle. Infected cows are 3-7 times more likely to abort their calves than uninfected cattle.

Cattle become infected when they consume food or water from an area contaminated with the disease from faeces of an infected dog. Once the cow and calf are infected with Neospora, they remain infected for life.

One question asked a lot to Rangers is why do you let the cow pats stay if we must pick up our dog's poo? All nutrients from dog poo come from outside Stoke Common. The cattle only graze on material from the heathland so their poo is made up of only the plant matter available to them on Stoke Common.

Some dog foods provide excess nutrients to improve flavour and this excess is then excreted. Most are fed commercial feed, and this includes high levels of bone meal with high phosphorus levels. Dog faeces cause a buildup of undesirable nutrients and other chemicals such as phosphate, nitrogen, and potassium on the heathland. Dog fouling has a particular impact on soils with low fertility and where levels of deposition are high, this may cause the habitat to change through eutrophication. The addition of nitrogen, phosphates and potassium from dog faeces to nutrient poor habitats can have a fertilising effect. Stoke Common is a nutrient-poor area with heathland soil, thus dog faeces change the soil and the vegetation. Furthermore, increased nitrogen has been shown to cause a decrease in mycorrhizal fungi species essential for healthy tree and plant growth.

What do the City of London Rangers do about all that poo at Stoke Common?

Have you ever seen small yellow or red flags on the ground at Stoke Common?

'Flag the Poo' has been ongoing since 2006


and the work is undertaken to show the regular users of the reserve the number of deposits more clearly. Flags are placed where dog poo has not been picked up and left for a week in certain areas. A sign is also left near the flags to explain the flags and some key facts about dog poo. Towards the end of February, they were placed in two sections at Stoke Common and we found:

- 100 dog poos in a 180m section;
- 24 dog poos in a 300m section;
- 10kg total weight of dog poo collected.

Since February, we have seen an 80% decrease in the amount of dog poo left at Stoke Common in these two areas. This is a great reduction so thank you to all visitors who continue to pick up after their dog; however, we need all dog poo to be picked up and taken away!

Help us protect Stoke Common, the largest area of heathland in the south of Buckinghamshire and one of the rarest habitats in the UK, by taking your dog's poo away with you to dispose of at home.

Please, always: 'Spot it. Bag it. Bin it.'

 *Jordan Payne*
Conservation and Community
Engagement Ranger



Community Speedwatch

Please drive carefully

The wet weather has rather hampered our early summer sessions – it's impossible to read the number plates on the video in the rain. However, we have filmed 550 speeding cars in the last twelve months. Hopefully those drivers will give a thought to the impact of their speeding when they receive a letter from the police.

Our last session proved fruitful – we set up outside Banana Moon, northbound on Bells Hill. Usually, we find just under 10% of cars are speeding (this is not just doing 31 or 32, but nearer 40). In the hour-long session, we recorded 301 cars passing, of which 39 were well over the limit. The top speed was 56mph, followed (literally) close behind by a 55.

We had several people come and thank us, as well as a potential new volunteer.

- *If you would like to spend the odd hour helping with the scheme, please get in touch with Anne Frank via the Parish Clerk.*

*theclerk@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk
01753 644803*

Friday Club

Happy birthday, Friday Club!

The Friday Club was set up two years ago and is based at St Andrew's Church in Rogers Lane.

It was initially created up as a spin-off from The Store Cupboard, which supported our isolated villagers during lockdown. However, when lockdown was over, the isolation of villagers was very much still felt, so the collaboration between Stoke Poges Parish Council, St Andrew's Church and The Good Neighbour Scheme continued.

The club meets on the first Friday of every month from 10am to 1.30pm. It is for any villager in the parish of Stoke Poges who may be lonely, vulnerable or who would like to meet up with other villagers in the same position, meet existing friends or make new ones. We have 70 members registered and approximately 25 volunteers.

The Good Neighbour Scheme can arrange to pick up those who need lifts. We offer refreshments on arrival followed by a range of activities to choose from, such as gentle exercise, board games, cards, jigsaws, crafts, painting or just chatting. A two-course homemade lunch and occasionally fish and chips is served at 12 noon and then we have some form of entertainment – a quiz, bingo, speaker or singer. The cost to our members is £4 for everything.

We do not make a profit and every penny goes back into the running of the club. We are very blessed that St Andrew's Church allows us to use their facilities and do not charge. They also donate a subsidy every month towards the food costs. We do rely on the generosity of local businesses and villagers as well as raising money ourselves



for our funds. Thank you very much to all who have contributed to keeping The Friday Club running over the past two years.

Because of your generosity we have been able to arrange little extras by way of a yearly outing, treats on special occasions such as Mother's and Father's Day, Easter, Christmas and birthdays.

For our first trip last year, we took a boat trip on the River Thames from Runnymede to Windsor and back and enjoyed a superb ploughman's lunch. A few weeks ago we enjoyed our second trip by coach to Longacres Garden Centre in Bagshot, again with a beautiful lunch. Our members explored the garden centre and picked up a few plants and treats.

On 7th June, we celebrated our second anniversary with fish and chips, strawberries and cream, Buck's Fizz and, of course, birthday cake!

Our next big fundraiser will be at this year's *Carols on the Green* on Saturday 23rd November at the Village Centre. We will be

making luxury hamper baskets and selling raffle tickets. If you have any unwanted presents or toiletries, candles, wine, biscuits, chocolates sitting at home then we would greatly appreciate them.

We would like to thank villager Cath Smith for taking the lead in the kitchen for the last two years – she has been a tremendous asset to Friday Club and will be dearly missed. We wish Cath all the best in her new job.

As Cath is moving on, we are looking for someone to take the lead in the kitchen. Is this something that may suit you? If you would like more information please let us know.

-
- *If you think you might be interested in joining Friday Club and you live in Stoke Poges then please ring 01753 642331 and leave your name, address and contact number and the team will get back to you with a registration form.*

The history and heritage of our village

This summer, the Year 6s at The Stoke Poges School heard about the history of the parish and we shared information at the annual Horticultural Show.

At the show, we had our history leaflets on Dorothy Allhusen of Stoke Court, Framewood Manor, funeral hatchments of St Giles' Church, the Howard-Vyse family of Stoke Place, Stoke Common and Stoke House. These leaflets are available upon request. It's extraordinary how these places are so steeped in history and can add to our wellbeing.

The annual outing, this year to Stowe House, was enjoyed by all on a gloriously sunny day. Next year's events have nearly been finalised and include a trip to Bentley Priory Museum in Stanmore, the home of Fighter Command HQ in WWII. Well before that, on Monday 9th September, Squadron Leader (Rtd) Graham Laurie will join us at St. Andrew's Church Centre to talk about his time serving Queen Elizabeth II and royal flying.

Our annual lunch will be in The South Buckinghamshire Golf Course clubhouse on Saturday 12th October. Booking for the lunch is essential by contacting Maggie by emailing tspevents@outlook.com or by calling 07478 309044.

- *Further information about the society's range of events, linking with our village heritage, is available on their website, where you can also find details about becoming a member.*

www.e-voice.org.uk/stoke-poges-society

History of Stoke Poges: Part Four

We continue to tell the early recorded history of the Parish of Stoke Poges. The story now is based on a copy of the history published in the village's church magazine of 1895 by the vicar of Stoke Poges, Reverend Vernon Blake.

Following the death in 1595 of the Lord of the Manor of Stoke Poges, Henry Hastings, 3rd Earl of Huntingdon, his heirs failed to make payments for the mortgage of £7,000. Only half of the money had been paid back to Branthwaite, a barrister. Upon Branthwaite's death, his trustees foreclosed on the manor. In 1599, they were able to sell the manor to Sir Edward Coke, 1st Lord Chief Justice of England. Yet, Sir Edward did pay £4,000 to the Dowager Countess of Huntingdon for release of dower in the manor. In 1635, Sir Edward died in the Manor House at the age of 82.



Reverend Vernon Blake



The Sir Edward Coke monument in Stoke Park during one of the public open day tours in 2024

It is difficult to ascertain whether or not Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor and a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, whose name through the lines of Thomas Gray's *Long Story* is so indissolubly connected with the manor, ever resided there. If he did, he must have rented it from Henry. John Penn of Stoke Park, two centuries on, wrote in his book, 'Historical Account of Stoke Park', that it was during the period Henry had mortgaged the manor, that Sir Christopher occupied it. National Archives records and original parchment documents held by the Coke family show the ownership of the manor by Sir Edward, without any mention of Hatton, except for his wife in his will.

The rich Sir Christopher made an heir of his nephew, Sir William Newport. In turn, William left much wealth to his widow,



Lady Hatton Place, off Bells Hill

Elizabeth, who styled herself 'Lady Hatton'. She retained the name on her marriage to Sir Edward.

Many biographers of Sir Edward, including the History of Parliament online, inaccurately attribute the ownership of the Manor by Sir Edward as a result of the marriage to Lady Hatton. Despite a stormy relationship, Sir Edward did leave the Manor to Lady Hatton. On her death in about 1646, it passed to John Villiers, Viscount Purbeck, as a consequence of his marriage to Sir Edward and Lady Hatton's daughter, Frances.

Today in the village we are reminded of Sir Edward and his wife, Lady Hatton. A column in Stoke Park has on top a life size figure of Sir Edward; a new road has been named 'Lady Hatton Place', off Bells Hill, (in recognition of the monies she left in her will for the sick and poor in Stoke Poges Parish) and the colourful armorial glass of families connected with Sir Edward in St Giles' Church.

Much has been written about the legal work of Sir Edward. Yet there are three 'gems' of what happened during that period in Stoke Poges:


(i) there was an impressive library and the

library catalogue still exists which shows such items of 14 manuscripts on heraldry;

(ii) his neighbour, Sir John Whitelock, wrote about Sir Edward keeping a hospitable house. Sir John sent a salmon which cost 22 shillings to Sir Edward. A dinner was held in the Manor house with Sir John and other gentlemen of the county eating it. Sir Edward sent half a buck to Sir John. After dinner they would play Tables: known as backgammon;

(iii) Lady Hatton supported Parliament when civil war broke out. When Prince

Rupert was nearby, she fled, leaving a note, "The Parliament is the only firm foundation of the greatest establishment the King or his posterity can wish and attain, and therefore, if you should persist in the unhappiness to support any advice to break the Parliament upon any pretence whatsoever, you shall concur to destroy the best ground-work for his Majesty's prosperity."

 *Harvey Whittam*
Chairman, *The Stoke Poges Society*

Stoke Poges Photographic Club

Photographers share their best of the year

During the course of a season, Stoke Poges Photographic Club have internal competitions between members which are scored by an external judge.

We have seen some really terrific images this season and we had the chance to view some again in the final competitions when members get to choose and enter their best three images.

The ladies in the Intermediate class excelled in the finals with a new Intermediate member, Penny Mayhew, winning the Print Set and PDI Open competitions with 'Dark Side of The Bubbles' and 'Pretty Flamingo' respectively. The PDI Set Intermediate was won by Lesley Lane with 'Lady Chapel' whilst Judy Giles achieved Intermediate Photographer of the Year having scored the most points from her top 12 entries.

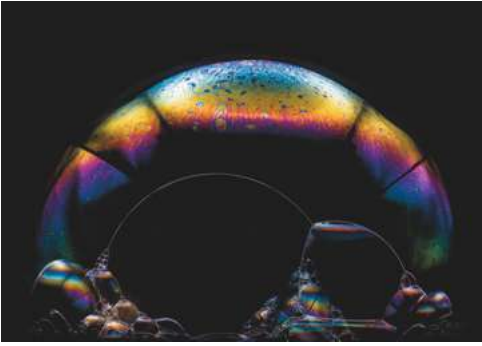
Other winners were Adam Lane with 'Flight'

for the Intermediate Print Open, Advanced Print Set and Print Open were won by Kevin Day with 'A Modern Girl' and 'Passing Down Wisdom'. The Advanced PDI Open and PDI Set were won by Ken Grant with 'Mr Monty' and 'Are You Ready' whilst the Advanced Photographer of the Year was Andy Smith. Well done to all!

The season ended with a social evening when the winners were presented with certificates,



'Pretty Flamingo' by Penny Mayhew



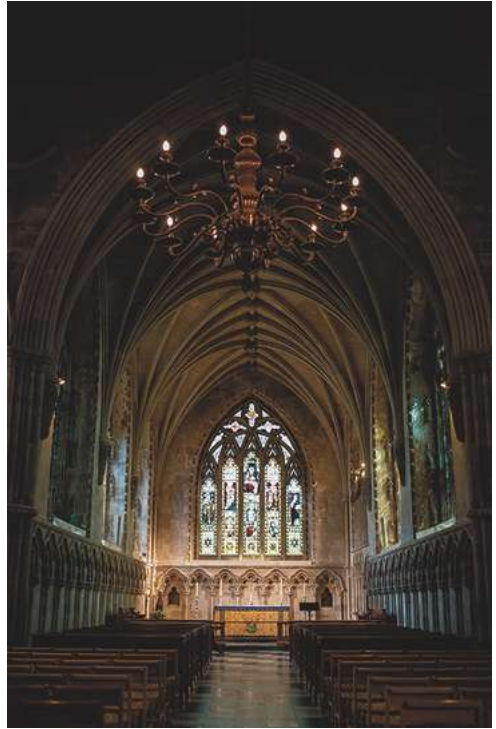
'Dark Side of the Bubbles' by Penny Mayhew

followed by a buffet. This was a time when we looked forward to the next season but also reflected on the past.

In February, our Honorary President, Edwina Chown, passed away. Edwina was a well-respected Stoke Poges villager and member of our club. In her memory, the club received an anonymous donation, part of which has been used to purchase a cup. The Edwina Chown Memorial Cup will be presented to the winner of a new competition which will be of images taken within 5 miles of Stoke Poges, to reflect Edwina's life and the support she gave to the area.



'Ruby' by Judy Giles



'Lady Chapel' by Lesley Lane

In the closed season, some members went on this year's annual trip to Lacock Abbey and in July there was evening walk around Windsor followed by a meal at a restaurant.

Looking forward, we have an exciting programme that has been put together by our Programme Secretary, Ken Grant, which includes six visiting lecturers who will share their images and tell us about a variety of subjects.

We will meet again at the Village Centre for the Welcome Evening at 7.45pm on Tuesday 3rd September.

- *For more information about the club, please attend the Welcome Evening or visit the club's website at stokepogeshphotoclub.co.uk*

Autumn programme for the WI

Our autumn programme begins on September 11th with a talk by Gill Opie entitled 'Women and Money'. She will be explaining how much women have advanced over the last 100 years from being merely a chattel with no money rights, to a citizen with equal money rights and independence from their spouses.

We are having our AGM on October 9th in the club room of the Village Centre at noon. We'll be discussing our future programme and outings for next year, as well as voting for our officers and committee. This will be followed by a three course lunch in the main hall at 1pm.

At our meeting on 13th November, Jeanette Hartley will talk to us about her amazing experiences as a member of the cabin crew on Concorde, from its inception until its withdrawal from service.

- *The Stoke Poges & Wexham Women's Institute meets at the Village Centre on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.15pm and new members are always welcome.*

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Official opening of new garden extension

Over the last four years we have been working on an extension to the Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens.

The new area can be accessed from the main drive. It is situated to the side of St Giles' churchyard and stretches down to one of the lakes at Stoke Park. The area is part of the historic vista from Stoke Park to the church, which we were careful to preserve.

On Friday 14th June 2024, we had the great pleasure of welcoming the Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Countess Howe and the



Chairman of Buckinghamshire Council, Cllr Mimi Harker OBE, to officially open these new areas.

One of the new areas is the Covid Memorial Garden. It commemorates the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and creates a space of solace for visitors. The central memorial stone of Welsh slate and York stone is carved beautifully by master craftsman Martin Cook. The memorial represents a stylized oak tree, a symbol of strength, stability and endurance – qualities shown by many people during the pandemic.

The garden includes a curved stone bench where visitors can sit, remember loved ones, find comfort and feel the restorative effects of being in beautiful surroundings. Nearby St Giles' Church, where the poet Thomas Gray is laid to rest, creates a beautiful backdrop to the memorial.

Our hope is that this new space will give visitors an opportunity to explore and process some of the emotions experienced during the pandemic and aid their wellbeing.

Plaques in memory of loved ones who died during the pandemic, of any cause of death, not just Covid, can be purchased to be mounted on the wall at the back of the Covid Memorial Garden. We are keen to include as many people as possible to give a sense of the scale of the pandemic for future generations. If you would like more information, please talk to Karen or Alison in the office on 01753 523744.

We are grateful to the Friends of Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens, the Mobbs Memorial Trust and Tesco Community Fund for their generous support of this project.



Everyone's journey of grief is different and there are no right or wrong ways to live with loss. Similarly, the time it takes for a person to process grief varies. Included in the design for this new area are a number of features that make up our Bereavement Trail. We worked with local craftspeople to design and develop these. Each area or sculpture explains some of the emotions that one might encounter after a loss and helps visitors remember loved ones who have passed away. The idea is that visitors are able to follow the trail with the help of a leaflet (and in time, some QR codes that will help access information by mobile phone).

Do come and pick up a leaflet from the porch and have a walk round the trail.

-
- *The Grade I listed Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens are located on Church Lane.*

Ancient writing, a pre-Tudor house and a local astronomer

After a summer break, a new season of talks is planned by Middle Thames Archaeological and Historical Society.



'Origins of Writing and Numbers – Part 2' with Brian Withington

Friday 13th September, 7.30pm

We'll explore how the first alphabets arose, were perfected by the Greeks, who added five vowels, and were then spread 'worldwide' by Alexander the Great, giving the West its simple, versatile, alphabetic systems of written records.

The picture above shows the Rosetta Stone, featuring Egyptian hieroglyphs, Demotic Egyptian and Greek.



'Virtual Tour of Ockwells Manor, Maidenhead' with Ann Darracott

Friday 11th October, 7.30pm

Ockwells Manor House on the outskirts of Maidenhead was built by John Norreys, Esquire of the Body for Henry VI, in the mid 15th century at the end of the Hundred Years War but before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses.

The talk will include a virtual tour of the house, pointing out both original features and changes. Still in its Great Hall is a set of contemporary armorial glass of great historic and aesthetic interest. The personalities represented in the glass and the scheme that Norreys put up will be detailed.

At the end of the 19th century, Ockwells was being used as a farmhouse and was becoming ruinous. The process of restoration will be described as well as the present status of the house. The National Trust nearly acquired this house in the 20th century – you'll find out why they didn't!

'William Herschel – Astronomer and Innovator' with Richard Emerson

Friday 8th November, 7.30pm

This talk will look at the life of William Herschel, musician turned astronomer, whose discoveries vastly increased the size of the known universe and expanded our knowledge of the world about us.

Herschel was one of those remarkable people who seem to have lived two lives compared with other people's one. He came to England as a refugee from the band of the Hanoverian Guards and soon became successful as a multi-talented musician and composer. For a while, he was more popular in this country than Joseph Haydn. But that was not enough for him. He started a second career as an astronomer, manufacturing his own reflector telescopes and using them to study the sky. In the process, and aided by his loyal sister Caroline, he discovered a new planet, Uranus, the first since antiquity.

He studied the misty and mysterious deep space objects known as nebulae, and discovered that some were galaxies like our own Milky Way, thereby vastly increasing the size of the known universe. He also built increasingly large telescopes – the biggest being 40 ft in length – and, for good measure, he discovered infrared and predicted the electromagnetic spectrum.

These and many other achievements will be covered in a talk by Richard Emerson, chair of the Friends of St Laurence Church, Upton. It was in St Laurence that William married a local widow, Mrs Mary Pitt, and where their son, John, was christened. And it is here that



William and Mary lie buried – under the church tower.

The picture above shows a model (on display in St Laurence Church) of the telescope Herschel built in the garden of his house in Windsor Road, Slough. For the scale, note the figures of the lady on the steps and the observer, leaning back at the top of the 40ft tube.

Christmas Social

Friday 13th December, 7.30pm

Quizzes, a buffet, hot drinks, and bring your own alcohol.

■ Join the society at 7.30pm on the second Friday of the month for a pleasant and interesting evening with refreshments and a chat in the Hastings Room at St Andrew's Church Centre. Only £2 for visitors.

For latest info, visit e-voice.org.uk/mtahs or email enquiries to sec.mtahs@yahoo.co.uk

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Creating a wildflower meadow

A team of community gardeners is continuing to bring colour to our village.

Many positive comments have been received about the beautiful patches of wildflowers at the junction of Bells Hill and Hollybush Hill. A second section was prepared on a sunny, autumn day in October last year.

Firstly, a layer of cardboard was put down to suppress the grass beneath. This was given a good soaking with water before being covered in compost and again watered. The area was then marked out into smaller squares with twigs, to help the even distribution of the wildflower seed, which was scattered onto the surface. Finally, the seed was raked into the compost.

It was then a long wait until the kaleidoscope of colours started to appear at the end of spring, which included poppies, daisies, cornflowers and corncockles. The meadow has been successful in attracting hoverflies, butterflies, bees and other pollinators.

The team – Tracey, Maureen, Oliver, Nick, John, Rich and Nik – meets for an hour or so on Sunday afternoons to maintain the meadow and also the area behind the shops on Bells Hill Green, removing weeds and litter, and adding new plants they have grown.

- *To join the community gardening team, please email traceylovesgardening@gmail.com to find details of the next session.*





Stoke Poges Players

'Purrder She Wrote'

You may be wondering where the Stoke Poges Players' May Play went. Did we kill it off? Lights, camera and sparkle! Wait, what?!

Ah, don't worry... the plot thickens, as we've been working behind the scenes to test out a new format and a new opportunity.

So, we have the exciting news to announce that we will be putting on our first ever interactive murder mystery evening. Do you see yourself as the next Sherlock Holmes or Miss Marple? Can you catch the killer?

Put on your detective hat and come join us for an evening of mystery at St Andrew's Church Hall on the 20th September at 7.30pm. Book fast via our website as only a limited number of tickets are available.

What does that mean for our pantomime? Well, we have some great news – we will also be returning this December with another hilarious, family-friendly pantomime.

This year, we will be asking you to help Jack

who is trying to win over the attention of the young princess and defeat the evil ogre in 'Puss in Boots' written by Damian Trasler, David Lovesy and Steve Clark.

Performances run from from 5th to 8th December, and tickets are available for all five of our shows, including both matinees, from our website. Book your tickets to the pantomime now and use the exclusive code EARLYBIRD to get 15% off – but be quick as it only lasts until the 31st October!

- Tickets for 'The Sparkle Murders' interactive murder mystery evening and December's pantomime 'Puss in Boots' are available at stokepogesplayers.org



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FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TICKETS PLEASE
VISIT STOKEPOGESPLAYERS.ORG



Farewell, Arun and Rita

Many of us in the village know our postmasters, Arun and Rita.

They arrived in Stoke Poges in November 2004, when we still had the previous shopping centre.

Within six months, the news came of the redevelopment of Bells Hill and the demolition of the shops. Under very tough circumstances, both the Post Office and chemist operated out of portacabins for five years from 2005 to 2010. Even when the new shops were finished, there were many contractual issues that needed to be addressed, which delayed moving in. Despite all of this, Rita and Arun stuck with Stoke Poges and our villagers.

Over the years they have gone over and above in serving their customers and assisting those who may have needed help. We all know that when we pop in to the Post Office we will be met with a friendly face, a chat and some banter!

Previously, Arun and Rita had run a Post Office in Windsor for 16 years before they came to Stoke Poges – so they've worked for the Post Office for 36 years. At 71 and 66, both Arun and Rita have been putting off retirement but with a new addition to the family, a 7-month-old granddaughter, it is time to retire. They will both spend some time looking after their new granddaughter, travelling and visiting friends. Arun of course plans to play more golf!

Both Rita and Arun believe passionately that we need a Post Office here in Stoke Poges and have spent many years persuading the



Post Office to remain in the village. Their message to us as a village is: “Please, please, please, use it or lose it!”

They thank Stoke Poges for supporting them and their business, as we thank them for providing a first class service to us.

In their retirement, they very much hope that we will welcome and support the new postmasters.

Even though it will be sad to see Rita and Arun leave our village, we wish them all the best. Please enjoy your retirement, we hope you take many fond memories of Stoke Poges with you and we look forward to getting to know our new postmasters.

Stoke Poges United Charity & Stoke Poges Hastings Community Fund

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Improve your health and wellbeing by simply walking

Walking is a great way to get out and about and meet new people while improving your health and wellbeing.

Simply Walk Bucks is a Buckinghamshire Council initiative which encourages different levels and abilities of walking, and offers over 60 walks across Buckinghamshire.

Trained volunteer walk leaders and back markers are there to help you walk at your own pace, with no need to worry about being left behind. All new walkers are welcome – whether you are fit and active, haven't exercised in a long time, or have been advised to join by a doctor.

There are four different levels of walks to choose from depending on your physical health:

- Level 1 – Get started with walks over flat ground and no stiles (up to 45 minutes);
- Level 2 – Occasional stile and gradient (up to 60 minutes);

- Level 3 – Occasional stile and gradient (between 60 to 90 minutes);
- Level 4 – Occasional stile and gradient (90 minutes plus).

Level 4 walks are the most advanced walks. They are more than 1.5 hours and possibly over more demanding terrain. Although they are not officially a 'health walk', they are still part of the *Simply Walk* scheme.

How to register

Before attending your first walk, you need to register for *Simply Walk* online.

If you're unable to register online, paper copies of the registration form will be available from your walk leader on-site.

- A list of upcoming walks and a registration form can be found at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-and-sports/simply-walk

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An update from Buckinghamshire Council

In late June, it was great to see the Council's contractors at work on Vine Road, removing the old, damaged surface and laying new material. Since I was elected to the old county council, I have nominated Vine Road as my top priority 'local road' for resurfacing, and I have pushed officers at every opportunity to commission the work, so it was excellent to see the work being done.

The roads programme is in full swing now that we can expect warmer, better weather. The council is spending £105m over the next four years to upgrade damaged roads across the county. An additional £500,000 has been released from reserves to accelerate gully cleaning to reduce the risk of flooding when we experience torrential rain.

The acute financial pressures continue: the budgets for adult social care, children's service, homelessness and school transport

for SEND students are being stretched due to increases in demand, complexity of needs and supplier cost inflation. The council is working at pace to address the higher cost elements by bringing on stream additional children's homes and also recruiting new foster carers to look after children.

The council has introduced an innovative new package of benefits for foster carers, with incentives including council tax reductions, free bus passes, free sports and leisure passes, free garden waste collection plus other help for families who provide foster care. If you have room in your home and you are interested in fostering children then full details can be found at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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News and activities at Stoke Poges Church

All of our activities are open to everyone, regardless of their faith or church attendance. To join in with any of them, check our website for details or contact us via the church office – details below.

The Lighthouse Café

We serve excellent value coffee from our bean-to-cup machine, a range of teas and beautiful cakes baked locally. We are open from 12-4pm each weekday and there's always a friendly welcome. If you want to work or read quietly, there's plenty of room for you too! On Friday mornings, we host a regular coffee group with a bottomless biscuit tin and an endless supply of stories.

Baby Steps

Following a summer break, we'll be back on Tuesday 10th September at 10am at St Andrew's. It's so important for babies and toddlers to socialise and for parents and carers to have a supportive network so this is a vital community activity. We have songs and stories in the Chapel and then move into the main hall for playtime with toys, trikes and dressing up clothes plus tea and coffee for parents, grandparents and carers.

Knit and Natter

The latest post box topper featured a tribute to D-Day veterans. We meet every Wednesday morning at St Andrew's, and always welcome new members, no matter what their ability, to join in or just bring their own projects and share ideas.

Do you have an hour to spare once a month?

We are looking for helpers to vacuum a section of St Giles' Church on a rota with others as a couple of our previous team are no longer able to continue. This beautiful old building, which has seen so much village life, can only be maintained for future generations with enough helpful hands. You can choose your own hours - please contact the church office if you might be able to help.

St Andrew's EcoGarden

There's been a spectacular display of roses and veg this year, thanks to the efforts of our volunteers. We've collaborated with the International School for Creative Arts in Fulmer on new garden designs and decorations. At the horticultural society's annual show in July, we were announced as winners of their community garden award, which was presented to Revd Natasha by Countess Howe, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire.



Why not try a church service? There's something for everyone

Coming with children? We have carpet activities in the St Andrew's service for tots, plus craft and cartoon sessions in the next room for primary aged children. Years 7 and up have their own chat'n'chew group.

Going through a tough time? We know everyone handles life differently. Tissues, tea and an understanding ear are all on tap.

Can't make Sunday mornings? Our services at St Giles' alternate between 9am and 6.30pm. Or check out our Facebook services @stokepogeschurch live on Wednesdays at noon, or catch up any time.

Need more discussion and less music? We run regular evening sessions, exploring the big and not-so-big issues in life from a Christian perspective. We love a debate! Look out for our next series coming this autumn.

Love a special event? There's several coming up soon, with no charge to attend.

Bring & Share lunch with free barbecue

On Sunday 8th September, following the 10.30am Family Service at St Giles'. Our annual get-together after the summer holidays for a family-focused service. Then we catch up and enjoy a meal together.

Raise the Roof 2: Lift your voice!

On Sunday 29th September, 7-9pm at St Andrew's. If you like your worship music loud and upbeat, this is the event for you. We had such a great evening when we tried this in May, so we are back for a sequel.



Traditional Harvest Festival

On Sunday 6th October, 10.30am at St Giles'. Come and give thanks for all that we enjoy in life and bring your donations of non-perishable food and essential items for Slough Homeless Our Concern.

Remembrance Sunday Service

On Sunday 10th November, 10am Flagpole Service at Bells Hill and 10.50am at St Giles'. Details of our Walk for Peace and Acts of Remembrance will be advertised nearer the time.

■ *Please check the website for more details or contact the church office.*

01753 642331
office@stokpogeschurch.org

www.stokepogeschurch.org

Facebook @stokepogeschurch

Instagram @stoke_poges_church

Looking back in time with Hedgerley Historical Society

Details of Hedgerley Historical Society's upcoming talks.

'Hidden Histories – a Spotter's guide to the Landscape' with Mary-Ann Ochota

Wednesday 18th September, 8pm

In this talk, TV presenter and archaeology author Mary-Ann Ochota will celebrate the joys of being a 'landscape detective' – spotting clues and telling the stories written into the countryside around us. Later, on Sunday 29th September, Mary-Ann will guide us for 'Hidden Histories – Ridgeway Walk' – time and location to be advised.



'Chilterns at Work' with Dr Jill Eyers

Wednesday 16th October, 8pm

The Chilterns landscape reflects centuries of people working the land and exploiting its resources in an imaginative way. This same landscape also gives us a glimpse of a once much more industrial past.

'Putting Hedgerley on the Map: From Gough to Google' with John Leighfield CBE

Saturday 26th October, 2pm

An updated talk, previously given in 2018, heavily illustrated with pictures of all the key maps that feature Hedgerley from 1574 onwards.

'Searching for London's Lost History' with Jason Sandy

Saturday 9th November, 2pm

Jason Sandy will tell us about some of the greatest artefacts discovered in the River Thames in London. He will also display hundreds of artefacts from his own personal collection which you can handle.

'Breakspeare - The English Pope' with Adrian Waddingham CBE

Wednesday 20th November, 8pm

Born in poverty and probably illegitimate, Breakspeare rose to become the only Englishman to ascend the throne of Saint Peter, ruling over the papal states as Adrian IV.

■ *These talks take place at Hedgerley Memorial Hall. For full descriptions of each event, please visit www.hedgerleyhistoricalsociety.org*

Winter concert to feature British jazz composers

Stoke Poges Singers return for rehearsals on Thursday 5th September as we begin another varied and exciting programme of music.

We welcome new choir members at any time, but the beginning of the season is an especially good time to join and get acquainted with the new music. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm at St Andrew's, Stoke Poges. All music and access to online practice videos are provided as part of the termly or annual subscription. We are a very friendly and sociable group – give us a try!

And it promises to be a busy and rewarding re-start as we prepare for our winter concert and the run up to Christmas. The concert will feature the works of two British jazz pianists and composers.

Sir George Albert Shearing (1919 to 2011) authored over 300 songs, several of which became jazz standards. We will perform his *Songs and Sonnets* with texts by William Shakespeare.

Will Todd (b. 1970) wrote the *Jazz Missa Brevis* in 2015, giving a modern yet very melodic setting to the traditional 'Kyrie', 'Sanctus', 'Gloria', 'Benedictus' and 'Angus Dei'.

The choir will be accompanied by a jazz trio, comprising double bass, drums and our regular rehearsal pianist Debbie Langham on keyboards. The concert will be held on Saturday 16th November at St Andrew's – the smaller space suiting the more intimate nature of the music.

Prior to that, we have our popular choir fundraiser Quiz Night on Saturday 5th October. Once again, our Chairman, Martin Gibney, will act as quizmaster in what is a fun and competitive (but not overly so!) evening. Your support will be greatly appreciated as the funds raised enable us to put on concerts for the benefit of local charities.

And then, believe it or not, it's the run up to Christmas! We will continue with our now traditional Family Carol Concert on the afternoon of Saturday 7th December. This is an opportunity for everyone, young and old, to enjoy singing and listening to carols, with mince pies and mulled wine on offer.

-
- *Tickets for the above events (all held at St Andrew's) can be bought online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/stokepogessingers*

For more information on the choir, or to enquire about joining, please use the contact form at www.stokepogessingers.org.uk

Stoke Poges Parish Council

www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Saera Carter BEM (Chair)

cllrarter@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mary Crocker (Vice-chair)

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Ralph Bagge

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Steve Webster

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Planning Committee

Chair: Saera Carter BEM

Vice-chair: Mary Crocker

Manjit Bassi, Keith Finan, Jason Harris (co-opted),
Rod Wilson (co-opted)

Recreation and Environment Committee

Chair: Saera Carter BEM

Vice-chair: Mary Crocker

Ralph Bagge, Manjit Bassi, Geoff Cox,
Steve Webster

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Chair: Mary Crocker

Vice-chair: Maggie Knox-Scott

Ralph Bagge, Saera Carter BEM (ex officio),
Keith Finan, Nick Moore

Parish Office

Clerk to the Parish: Julie Simmonds
The Village Centre, Rogers Lane SL2 4LP

01753 644803

theclerk@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pavilion caretaker: 07881 388778

Parish Council spokespersons

Allotments — Geoff Cox

Finance and grants — Ralph Bagge

MVAS coordination — Geoff Cox

Highways and transport — Ralph Bagge

Planning — Saera Carter BEM

Youth — Saera Carter BEM

Older people — Saera Carter BEM

Tree warden — Alan Fox

Flagmaster — Jim Budd

Website — Rich Huckle

Appointed representatives

Stoke Poges News Editor — Rich Huckle

Stoke Poges Village Centre — Saera Carter BEM,
Nick Moore

Community Speedwatch — Anne Frank

Buckinghamshire Councillors for Stoke Poges & Wexham ward

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ralph.bagge@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Trevor Egleton

trevor.egleton@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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