

South Stoke Parish Council Newsletter No 54.

Annual Report 2016-2017

(This document and a comprehensive range of South Stoke Parish Council documents can be found on our website:- www.southstokepc.org.uk)

There were no Parish Council elections this year, however Councillor Tom Geake retired from the Council after many years of service to the community and council elected and co-opted Paula Black as Parish Councillor at the Annual parish Council meeting on 25th May 2016.

Parish Councillors and their individual responsibilities

Patrick Dawson		Midford Highways, Midford liaison, Millennium Wood, Financial monitoring.
Sue Dustin		Village Hall Management Committee, ALCA Representative.
Clare Fox		Midford Highways & Sweeper, Midford liaison, CPRE liaison, Cotswold Conservation Board liaison, Cycle Paths, Wessex Water and Sustrans liaison
Paula Black		South Stoke Highways & Sweeper, Police liaison
Robert Hellard	Vice Chairman	Planning, Village Hall Management Committee, and liaison with Bath Preservation Trust
Jenny John		Footpaths, Allotments and Open Spaces, Trees, Parish Notes
Chris Winpenny	Chairman	Planning, Parish Notes, Bath Preservation Trust liaison, ALCA Representative.
Geoff Davis - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Tel. 840201. Email southstokeclerk@hotmail.com		

Parish Councillor Vacancy – Councillor Robert Hellard will retire from the Council on 30th April 2017 after 30 years of invaluable service to the community and council. The Parish Council must therefore fill the vacancy and notice of the vacancy and process will be posted on 1st May 2017. Anyone interested in standing for election should please contact our clerk, Geoff Davis. If you have any questions about our role please ask Geoff or any current Councillor.

Meetings - The Parish Council met on 11 occasions during the period 2016-2017. 6 full meetings, 4 planning meetings and the Annual Parish Meeting.

In addition to responding extensively to the Masterplan Consultations throughout the year, the Parish Council also considered several other consultation documents.

Police Liaison – Councillor Paula Black has maintained liaison with the Police and co-ordinated crime awareness in the Parish.

Planning - During the year we have considered many different planning applications for works in or near the Parish. We comment only on purely 'Planning' grounds, using Local and National planning policies for guidance which still supports the purposes of Green Belts and AONBs. On occasions where works have started before an application has been received we have contacted the Planning Enforcement Team. We have again been represented during the year at Masterplan Consultation meetings and at Development Management Committee Meetings.

The Odd Down/South Stoke Plateau is the most important Planning issue dealt with by the Parish Council again this year.

More recently the Developers sought and obtained legal opinion that a Masterplan is not required prior to the submission of a planning application. Instead The Hignett Family Trust (HFT) are preparing an indicative 'Masterplan' for the whole site which, it is understood, will be submitted at the same time as a Planning Application later this month. This is expected to be for about 170 dwellings on the land to the west of Sulis Manor. Three further phases are anticipated on the rest of the site which would bring the total to about 600. These plans do not currently involve access from the East as far as we are aware. The Parish Council has responded to the consultation by the developers on these proposals and now awaits this planning application.

We will continue to remind BANES' Planning Policy Team that they confirmed that no increase in housing numbers will be allowed unless compelling evidence is provided to show that all the Core Strategy's 'Placemaking Principles' can be accommodated.

The Packhorse Inn a Community Asset. - The Packhorse Pub has now been purchased by The Packhorse Community Pub Limited and funding has been raised to support some of the needed repairs and refurbishment. Planning and Listed Building Consent has been granted for these repairs and it is hoped that the pub will re-open later in the year. It is expected that representatives from The Packhorse Community Pub Limited will be at the meeting to give an update on progress.

Parish Sweeper - Grant Davis is our parish sweeper doing both South Stoke and Midford and does a really excellent job throughout the Parish and a huge vote of thanks is due to him. The sweeper makes a very noticeable difference to the roads in the Parish and is one of the most important services we provide.

Footpaths and Open Spaces - Public footpaths are walked regularly and fallen trees and overgrowth of foliage are attended to when reported. The Parish Council continues to take pride in supervising care of the Churchyard. Other additional maintenance has been carried out in the Village and Churchyard. We thank the Voluntary Cotswold Wardens, Wilf Dando and Pauline Vincent for their work keeping the Millennium Viewpoint and other areas of the Parish in good condition.

Village Green – Improvements from the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The Parish Council has carried out a number of works to improve the Village Green. These include adoption of the historic K6 Telephone Kiosk and the installation of a Defibrillator, works to repair the wall behind the horse troughs and removal of the cotoneaster above and replacement with daffodils. The Community Heartbeat Trust, who provided the defibrillator also offer a training/awareness session, free of charge, as part of the process. The session can take up to 50 people and anyone interested can let us know at the Annual Parish Meeting so that we can arrange a convenient date in May.

Allotments - Most of the 16 allotments are under cultivation, and well tended. One is available for rent.

Highways Maintenance and Safety – Significant liaison with B&NES Highways over general repair and other works takes place continually. The height restriction signage for the Midford Viaduct is having some effect, although occasional lorries have still ignored the warnings and attempted to pass through. Many of the other safety issues remain for the B3110 Midford Road and the Parish Council works tirelessly to progress these necessary improvements with B&NES. The Parish Council continues to work on safety issues on Southstoke Lane arising from increasing traffic volumes and speed. Signage has been re-painted, potholes filled, and the postcode of Manor Farm buildings has been changed.

Parking and vehicle security issues - A number of vehicles were vandalised and had items stolen from them when parked at the bottom of Old School Hill. A number of similar incidents took place across Bath and North East Somerset. Measures to improve security in this location, such as lighting, are being considered. Also, as a consequence owners are parking their vehicles elsewhere in the village, which has added to the growing problem of the number of vehicles regularly parked in the village centre.

Village Hall Management Committee - During the course of the year the Parish Council has supported the ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of the Village Hall with extensive repairs to the roof and re-painting being carried out. We will be supporting the hall again this next financial year.

Parish Council Finances - For the year to 31st March 2017 we expect to record a surplus of income over expenditure of the order of £770, continuing to restore reserves to a level of £9,500 following the significant expenditure on professional advice taken in responding to the Core Strategy examination in public. With further significant expenditure being anticipated, again obtaining professional advice and support to respond to the forthcoming Sulis Down planning application, the Parish Council has set the Parish precept for 2017/18 at £7,858 which will maintain the average household contribution at the same level as last year. We will also receive a reduced Local Council Tax Support Grant of £70.

Millennium Wood - The Council has worked with the Woodland Trust to move and replace the seats. We are also seeking to plant trees to replace those that have been identified as having ‘Ash Die Back’.

B&NES Ward Councillor support - Finally, we thank Neil Butters our Ward Councillor for his ongoing help and support throughout the year, particularly his Ward Councillor Initiative funding which paid for the defibrillator installation in the phone box.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in South Stoke Village Hall at 7pm on Monday 24th April. This is an opportunity for all residents of the Parish to attend a meeting with the Parish Council and allows us to hear from you. Please try to support your Council by attending.

Chris Winpenny. Chairman, South Stoke Parish Council.