

# **South Stoke Parish Council Newsletter No 58.**

## **Annual Report 2017-2018**

(This document and a full range of Parish Council documents are on our website:- [www.southstokepc.org.uk](http://www.southstokepc.org.uk))

### **The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in South Stoke Village Hall at 7pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

There were no Parish Council elections this year, however Councillor Robert Hellard retired on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017, Councillor Clare Fox resigned on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 and Councillor Paula Black resigned on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Ruth Haynes was co-opted as a Parish Councillor at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, and Adrian Done was co-opted as a Parish Councillor at the Parish Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017. However, due to pressure of work and health Ruth Haynes has now resigned. There are therefore currently two vacant Councillor posts.

### **Parish Councillors and their individual responsibilities**

Patrick Dawson		Midford Highways, Midford liaison, Cycle Paths, Wessex Water and Sustrans liaison, Financial monitoring.
Adrian Done		All Highways, Non-Strategic Planning, Midford Road and Midford liaison. CPRE and Cotswold Conservation Board liaison.
Sue Dustin		Village Hall Management Committee, ALCA Representative.
Vacancy		South Stoke Parking, Non-Strategic Planning, Police liaison. Ad hoc South Stoke matters.
Jenny John	Vice Chair	Footpaths, Allotments and Open Spaces (Trees, Millennium Wood and Churchyard) Parish Notes. Strategic Planning.
Chris Winpenny	Chairman	Strategic Planning, BPT Meetings and liaison, ALCA Rep.
Geoff Davis - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Tel. 840201. Email <a href="mailto:southstokeclerk@hotmail.com">southstokeclerk@hotmail.com</a>		

**Parish Councillor Vacancy** – The Parish Council needs to fill the two vacancies. Notice of one of the vacant posts will be posted on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, and the other is an existing vacancy. Anyone interested in standing for election should please contact our clerk, Geoff Davis. If you have any questions about the role please ask Geoff, the Chairman or any current Councillor.

**Meetings** - The Parish Council met on 12 occasions during the period 2017-2018. 8 full meetings, two of which were additionally arranged to deal with the Revised Planning Application and Masterplan for the Sulis Down development proposals, 3 other planning meetings, and the Annual Parish Meeting. In addition to responding extensively to the ongoing proposals for the South Stoke Plateau, including the proposed demolition of Sulis Manor, the Parish Council also considered several other consultation documents throughout the year.

**Police Liaison** – Paula Black maintained liaison with the Police and co-ordinated crime awareness in the Parish whilst a councillor, and this is a role which is now vacant.

**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 Revised Planning Application and Masterplan for the Sulis Down development proposals** is the most important Planning issue dealt with by the Parish Council again this year.

The Parish Council organised a public exhibition of these plans and held a public meeting to receive residents' views and comments on these revised proposals. The Parish Council has made an extensive response objecting to the Planning Application and the associated Comprehensive Masterplan. The detailed submission can be found on the Parish Council website and on the B&NES Planning Portal. The Parish Council is also seeking legal opinion on the current position of the Application and Masterplan and whether either or both can be lawfully approved by B&NES Development Management Committee.

**The Packhorse Inn a Community Asset.** - The Packhorse Pub has now been re-opened, and is thriving. The Packhorse Community Pub Limited and the whole community can be very proud of their achievement of this quite remarkable feat.

**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 which include the installation of an emergency only telephone in the historic Telephone Kiosk and the re-painting of the Kiosk.

A training course was held for those interested in learning how to use the defibrillator and was attended by 22 members of the community.

**Allotments** – All of the 16 allotments are under cultivation, and well-tended.

**Highways Maintenance and Safety** – Significant liaison with B&NES Highways over general repair and other works takes place continually. Many safety issues, such as the Midford Castle Walls, still exist 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. It is hoped to present to the meeting a ‘Quiet Lane’ scheme, similar to that in Bitton, as a proposal for introducing advisory speed signage.

**Parking** – The response to a parking survey highlights problems within the village, as does the increased volume of vehicles associated with the re-opening of the Packhorse. A number of measures are being considered and some implemented. Councillor Jenny John will discuss the survey results and these measures at the meeting.

**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 the re-surfacing of the car park. We will be supporting the hall again this next financial year.

**Parish Council Finances** - For the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 we expect the accounts to record a surplus of income over expenditure of the order of £4570. However, the Parish Council has received Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money of £2659 which was not budgeted and which is ring-fenced for infrastructure works only. Furthermore, significant expenditure in the year remains to be invoiced and paid, notably about £1,000 for the Village Hall Car Park, and about £1500 for professional advice on the Sulis Down Planning Application. The true picture therefore, is one of excess expenditure over income of about £590. In the light of this deficit, further significant expenditure being anticipated, again obtaining professional advice and support to respond to the Sulis Down planning application and Masterplan, and in anticipation of the reduction of the funding of the Parish Sweeper by B&NES, Parish Council has set the Parish precept for 2018/19 at £9,858, representing a £2,000 increase on the previous year, a 27% increase in the Parish Council proportion of Council tax, or £8.60, for each household. We will also receive a reduced Local Council Tax Support Grant of £30. This level of funding is budgeted to produce a small excess of Income over Expenditure next year of about £435, and this assumes that works such as speed restriction signage is paid for from the CIL money.

**Millennium Wood** - The Council has worked with the Woodland Trust 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.

Chris Winpenny. Chairman, South Stoke Parish Council.