

South Stoke Parish Council Newsletter No 59.

Annual Report 2018-2019

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

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in South Stoke Village Hall at 7:30 pm on Monday 15th 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.

We would like to send this report and other Village News by e-mail. If you would like to receive such information in this way in the future, please just send your e-mail address to southstokenews@aol.com. The items will then be sent to you from southstokevillagenews@aol.com using blind copied addresses.

There were no Parish Council elections this year, however David Sixsmith was co-opted as a Parish Councillor on 21st May 2018, Ruth Haynes resigned through pressure of work and non-attendance at the same meeting. Mr. Roy Hayward was co-opted as a Parish Councillor on 16th July. Mr. D. Sixsmith resigned as Parish Councillor on 19th November, and Mr. Adrian Done resigned as Parish Councillor on 14th January 2019. There were therefore two vacant Councillor posts.

2019 is an Election year and the following people are nominated for election:-

Dawson, Patrick John - Dustin, Susan Mary - Hayward, Roy Andrew - John, Jennifer Ann - Stroud, Mags - Webb, Colin Thomas - Winpenny, Christopher Patrick

Parish Councillors and their individual responsibilities

Patrick Dawson	Midford Highways, Midford liaison, Cycle Paths, Wessex Water and Sustrans liaison, Financial monitoring.
Vacancy	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, Ad hoc South Stoke matters.
Roy Hayward	Sulis Down matters and development, Highways
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 southstokeclerk@hotmail.com

Meetings - The Parish Council met on 10 occasions during the period 2018-2019. 7 full meetings, one of which was additionally arranged to deal with the Approval of the Revised Planning Application for the Sulis Down development, 1 other planning meeting, 1 informal meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting. In addition to continuing to respond to the ongoing proposals for the South Stoke Plateau, the Parish Council also considered several other consultation documents throughout the year.

Police Liaison – David Sixsmith maintained liaison with the Police and re-instated the Beat Team meetings at the Packhorse Pub.

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 Development Management Committee Meetings, most notably at the approval of the Sulis Down Application (Phase 1).

Attempted introduction of a new Masterplan for the Sulis Down development proposals into the B&NES Local Plan Review and the West of England Joint Strategic Plan Consultation. In March 2019, Hignett Family Trust have responded to these two consultations by attempting to introduce a new revised masterplan for approximately 800 dwellings, which proposes building on further Green Belt land together with an access from the Cross Keys Junction, as a response to the consultation. It is understood that B&NES Council has rejected this as submission to the Local Plan Review. We are still to hear if it will be allowed into the West of England Joint Strategic Plan Consultation.

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. B&NES Council have now ceased the Parish Sweeper scheme, and following protests from this and other Parish Councils, are providing transitional funding to phase it out. The Parish Council has resolved to continue the Parish Sweeper scheme by funding it from the Parish Precept. This is the primary reason for the increase in the Parish Precept this year. Similar increases will be necessary in the following two years to compensate for the reducing funding from B&NES.

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, Philippe Apchin & Tim Sheppard for their work keeping the Millennium Viewpoint and other areas of the Parish in good condition.

Village Green & Millennium Seat

The Parish Council has had to repair vandalism to the Millennium seat, both Graffiti and Broken Stonework. It has also been necessary to remove the Rowan tree from the village green, as it had become rotten and in danger of falling. It will be replaced with a similar tree later in the coming year.

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

Highways Maintenance and Safety – Significant liaison with B&NES Highways over highway safety in both South Stoke and Midford has taken place. A significant improvement scheme has been implemented at the Midford Castle Bends. The speed restriction changes will be implemented in the 2019/2020 financial year. The Council is meeting with a Highways Officer on 9th April to agree which safety improvements might be taken forward for Southstoke Lane, South Stoke Village and Midford Village and we hope to report some progress at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Parking – Parking within the village of South Stoke continues to present some problems. It has been possible to take some minor measures to improve matters, but all options considered have now been exhausted and the Parish Council has no further proposals to take forward.

Village Hall Management Committee - During the course of the year the Parish Council has supported the ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of the Village Hall. It currently faces a significant challenge as the heating system has failed and needs replacement. We are currently working with the Village Hall Management Committee to remedy this situation.

Parish Council Finances - For the year to 31st March 2019, the accounts show a surplus of income over expenditure of the order of £780, slightly higher than that expected. This primarily due to the Midford Phone Box project not currently being taken forward, so a budget of £600 is taken forward into the current year.

Parish Council reserves are £13,680, of which £2,659 is Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money of £2659 which is ring-fenced for infra-structure works only. This CIL money can be spent, for example, on the Village Road Safety measures or the Village Hall repairs. However, it is not sufficient to do all likely funding requests.

In the light of the reducing funding to pay for the Parish Sweeper the Precept has been raised by £1,500 to £11,358. This increase compensates for the reduction in Parish Sweeper funding. As the funding from B&NES reduces to zero over the next two years, it is likely that a similar increase in precept will arise in the following two years.

The Parish Council has set a balanced budget for 2019-2020 returning only a very modest Income over Expenditure of £128.

The Parish Council is not well placed financially to obtain or prosecute any further legal or professional advice regarding Sulis Down development, and has no budget for professional fees in this respect.

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.