

Stoke Poges *News*



Issue 233 | Summer 2025



V
80
VE DAY



Looking back, looking forward

In this issue, we record the way we marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day in Stoke Poges. Far from being a display of triumphalism, this was a respectful celebration – a poignant and fitting reminder at a time of increasing geopolitical instability and intolerance.

Looking forward, there’s a lot to enjoy in our village, not least the two fantastic beasts of our summer calendar – the Stoke Poges Village Fete and the Horticultural Society’s Summer Show, both celebrations of village life in their own ways. Please support them as much as you can!

Lastly, it’s great to report on the achievements of some of our younger villagers (see page 43). We’re always on the lookout for good news to share, so please get in touch with anything of interest.

Rich Huckle

Editor

Autumn issue No 234 – all material to the editor by no later than Friday 1st August.

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

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On the cover

*Flying the flag on Bells Hill Green
for the 80th anniversary of VE Day*

Inside front cover

Lighting the beacon

*Stoke Poges Singers lead the sing-along
at the Village Social Club*

Parish Chair's letter

As the summer approaches we look forward to brighter days and longer nights.

It's always good to see villagers out and about enjoying some of the lovely walks that we are so lucky to have in Stoke Poges.

In March, the Parish Council held its Parish Reception. Congratulations to resident Andrew Booth and the working party that worked on the Neighbourhood Plan for the last few years, who were both awarded special recognition for their contributions to the village – more information on this can be found on page 9.

Back in April, our second village artisan market was a huge success. It was brilliant to meet up and chat to local villagers. This was another great collaboration with the Parish Council and the Village Centre trustees, supported by the Social Club. Thank you to all who helped and volunteered their time to make the event a success. You can read more on page 33.



At the start of May we had local elections. Congratulations to those who were elected, but also a thank you to the two outgoing unitary councillors, Ralph Bagge and



Trevor Egleton, for their combined 55 years of service to Stoke Poges.

Also in May, we commemorated 80 years since Victory in Europe was achieved. We met on the Village Green to pay our respects to those who fought and lost their lives during World War II. We were joined by Deputy Lord Lieutenant Andrew Smith OBE DL who read out part of the service, and we thank him for his attendance. The beacon was lit, with thanks to Wexham Mowers for donating the gas. This was followed by drinks and a sing-along led by Stoke Poges Singers at the Village Social Club. Again, thank you to all involved.

As a Parish Council, it is important to us that we recognise, thank and support our vibrant community, so please do read this magazine to get a flavour of what's on offer in our village. These opportunities encourage a sense community and belonging.

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

News and information from our Parish Council

May elections

Across our county, the elections on 1st May covered town and parish councils and Buckinghamshire Council (our unitary council).

The Farnhams and Stoke Poges ward of Buckinghamshire Council has three Unitary Councillor positions, and councillors may be affiliated to a political party or can be independent. These councillors oversee services such as:

- Education;
- Transport;
- Planning and Development;
- Social Services;
- Waste Management;
- Housing.

The outgoing Unitary Councillors were Trevor Egleton and Ralph Bagge.

Trevor Egleton has devoted 40 years representing Stoke Poges as a parish councillor, a district councillor and a unitary councillor. Trevor has been very active with planning and has chaired the Planning Committee at Buckinghamshire Council. He has been especially supportive when we have had contentious applications that have required intervention.

Ralph Bagge has been actively involved with Stoke Poges Parish Council since 2010, when he was elected as a parish councillor. He then became a unitary councillor. Over his 15 years of service we have seen many changes and improvements to our village.

On behalf of Stoke Poges Parish Council we wish you both well and hope you enjoy your

retirement from local politics.

Following the elections, the Unitary Councillors for our ward are:

- Cllr Dev Dhillon;
- Cllr David Moore;
- Cllr Thomas Hogg.

All three councillors represent the Conservative Party.

Stoke Poges Parish Council has up to eleven councillor positions. This time, only five residents put themselves forward which means they were uncontested, and therefore an election was not triggered for the parish.

The Parish Council will now actively look to co-opt. If this is something you would like to know more about please contact our Clerk – contact details are on page 50.

The uncontested Parish Councillors are:

- Cllr Manjit Bassi;
- Cllr Saera Carter;
- Cllr Mary Crocker;
- Cllr Keith Finan;
- Cllr Kim Pritchard.

We have also co-opted:

- Cllr Rod Wilson;
- Cllr John Harwood.

Our Parish Council is politically neutral and we do not represent any political party.

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing councillors for their service and support.



Planning – Sefton Business Park

The Parish Council can confirm that the Sefton Business Park site was sold in February 2025 to Bonds Land Company. They will look to convert the offices to residential via permitted development. This is subject to ongoing talks with two remaining tenants.

The UK Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows offices to be converted into residential flats without the need for a full planning application, so long as they comply with specific conditions. From meetings with the new owners of the site, the Parish Council understands that they intend to exercise their permitted development rights, but that they are also considering submitting a separate planning application to build new houses on the 34 acre site.

Although this may cause concern for some villagers, these changes are likely to provide flats in Stoke Poges which may suit younger people or those wishing to downsize and stay in the village.

The Parish Council will continue to communicate with the new owners to ensure that we can share with residents any relevant information as it becomes available. We are also currently working with Buckinghamshire Council to ensure that the draft Neighbourhood Plan reaches the referendum stage as quickly as possible, because this is a

key legal document that defines our local policies in relation to any potential developments in the parish.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council started work on this document four years ago. It's a very comprehensive set of additional policies that will work alongside existing national planning documents and policies.

Work is now completed on the plan and we are awaiting a referendum, which we hope will happen in June of this year. If you would like to see the draft plan you will find it on the Parish Council website.

<https://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan>

Flagpole events

Two further flagpole events are planned for 2025. These are August 15th for VJ Day (Victory over Japan) and November 11th for Remembrance Day.

More information will be published nearer the time on the parish noticeboards, Parish Council website and social media.

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".

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, push chairs 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 online to Thames Valley Police.

Report from the Annual Parish Meeting

Held in April, this is an annual meeting of the electorate where villagers are invited to speak to the Parish Council on local issues. Here is a summary of the report made by the Chair.

The precept

The Parish Council froze the precept for 2025-26. The precept is the amount of money a parish council requests each year to cover its budget. This money is added to residents' council tax bills and then passed on to the parish council. The Parish Council uses the precept for things like:

- Maintenance of public spaces like the recreational areas and the Village Green;
- Allotments;
- The pavilion;
- Community events and cohesion;
- Staff wages (e.g., parish clerk) – Parish Councillors are not paid but are volunteers;
- Insurances and admin costs.

2023-24 The precept was reduced by 5%: we collected £202,336.54

2024-25 The precept was reduced by 10%: we collected £182,102.89

2025-26 The precept was kept the same as the 2024-25: we collected £182,102.89

Total reduction since 2021 is £30,882.94.

The Parish Council has achieved this by ensuring that sub-contracted work represents value for money, applying for grants where possible and doing some of the work themselves, supported by volunteers.

Parish Council spending

Recreational areas:

£37,380: Plough Lane Rec had a walking path installed with the aid of a grant of £15,000 from the Beeches Community Board, so the actual cost to the parish was £22,380.

£1,857: Four bug hotels will be placed in both recreation grounds and the Village Green, paid for with CIL money (see explanation overleaf).

£2,350: Pond drainage works to alleviate ongoing flooding by the pond. This was done under Health and Safety.

£7,150: Bells Hill Rec footpath and fence repairs. The existing paths are in excess of 40 years old so had started to perish in places.

£19,434.00: New play equipment for Bells Hill and Plough Lane recreational grounds (installation pending).

Pavilion:

£19,181: Solar panels bought with Covid 19 Funds (see explanation overleaf). With the increase in the cost of electricity this will reduce usage and costs.

£400: Extra chairs from Covid-19 Funds.

£20,000: After eight years the building needed a refresh including landscaping the rear of the building to make it more accessible for storage. The building was painted inside and out, minor repairs made to the roof and maintenance to the boiler.

Bus shelter:

At the request of residents, we built a new bus shelter on the B416 opposite Hastings Meadow. The cost was £13,500 and paid for with CIL money.

Stoke Poges News and communication

Stoke Poges News (this publication) continues to thrive in its second year of editorship with Rich Huckle. This is our main way of communicating with the village other than noticeboards and social media. This magazine is published quarterly, but there is sometimes information that could be shared between editions. Councillors have been discussing ways to communicate with the electorate and undertook a questionnaire asking villagers what they think might be an effective, trustworthy way of sharing information. The main preference is an electronic noticeboard idea which residents could subscribe to. The Parish Council is also looking at improvements to the website, enabling users to be signposted more effectively.

Noticeboards

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

- outside the Parish Clerk's Office in the lobby inside the Village Centre;
- outside the Village Centre on Rogers Lane;
- on Bells Hill Green;
- at Tubwell Stores on Tubwell Road.

Artisan markets

It is important to many that we feel connected to our community. There was an artisan market held in April with another planned for September, both located at the Village Centre in partnership with the Parish Council and Village Hall trustees. This is a good example of collaborative working. The Parish Council also thanked Stoke Poges School and St Andrew's Church for allowing customers to use their car parks, which helped eased congestion on Rogers Lane. Volunteers also helped

with baking cakes, setting up, clearing up and directing traffic.

Conclusion

The Parish Council is in good shape financially, we have managed our precept well and are very conscientious when spending money and will always look to do some of the work ourselves in an endeavor to spend effectively. The Chair thanked councillors, collaborators and volunteers for their work and commitment over the past year, especially as we are volunteers.

Explanations

CIL money

CIL money refers to funds collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy. It's a planning charge that Buckinghamshire Council imposes on new developments to help fund the infrastructure needed to support those developments. A portion of this money comes to the Parish Council. How this money is spent is very prescriptive, it can be spent on things such as:

- playground equipment;
- bus shelters;
- footpaths (not pavements);
- facility improvements (like the pavilion).

The Parish Council must report annually on how CIL funds have been spent. If not spent within five years, then Buckinghamshire Council can take the unspent money back.

Covid-19 funds

These were funds made available to councils to provide financial support towards the running costs of buildings and loss of income during the pandemic. In our case this was the pavilion.

Parish Reception recognises volunteers for their contribution to village life

The Parish Reception is an annual event where we thank those involved with volunteering in Stoke Poges for their contribution to village life.

Volunteering is about giving time, energy, dedication and skills to make a difference. Some contribute by being involved in charity work, community projects, clubs and societies. People choose to volunteer for various reasons, including a desire to give back to their community, gain experience, meet new people or support a cause that they are passionate about. The wonderful thing is, it isn't done for recognition or reward, but because people care.

We see the impact this has on our village because volunteering is about more than just giving time; it's about changing lives, sometimes in ways we may not even realise, and this builds a stronger community. All contributions matter and volunteering does not go unnoticed – it inspires others to give, to care, and believe in community.

Every year, the Parish Council has the privilege of awarding cups to a group and an individual who they feel deserve special recognition. This time, we awarded The Caldecourt Cup to Andrew Booth, who has lived in Stoke Poges for 34 years, having moved here for work reasons. Andrew's volunteering in Stoke Poges started in 2005 when he joined the Friends of Stoke Common. In 2010, he became the Chair and stayed in this position until this year. Over the years, Andrew has volunteered at Stoke Poges Village Fete, Carols on the Green and the Horticultural Show.

In 2015, he also joined the Visitor Experience Team at the Science Museum, but unfortunately this came to an abrupt end with the start of Covid-19 restrictions. Because Andrew missed not being able to volunteer, he decided to help out at Wexham Park Hospital in 2019. This was mainly as a patient companion and during Covid restrictions he helped with distributions of donations to staff and helped with the administration of the covid vaccination centre for hospital staff.

The Jubilee Cup was awarded to the working party for the Neighbourhood Plan. Work started on the plan in late 2020 and has been a long and complex process with many hoops to jump through. It has been time consuming, frustrating, and at times overwhelming. Once adopted, it will be a vital legal document to help us do our best to protect our village.

The team consisted of Lee Duncombe, Bob Crocker, Rich Huckle, Harvey Whittam, Sally Mackey, Cllr Mary Crocker and Cllr Saera Carter BEM. Each member of the team brought a set of skills to the table, but they also needed to research the criteria for the fundamentals of the proposed policies. This took much time and effort in understanding the relevance to our village and its demographic.

The combined length of time the team has lived in Stoke Poges is an astonishing 243 years, which well qualifies them to have the experience to have contributed to this piece of work!

Congratulations the recipients of both cups, and thank you for all you do for Stoke Poges.



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Stoke Poges Village Fete

A summer celebration for everyone

Get ready for another fantastic day out at the Stoke Poges Village Fete!

This year's fete will be held on Saturday 14th June at The Stoke Poges School, Rogers Lane. Gates open at 12.30pm, and entry is just £1 per person.



This much-loved community event promises fun for all ages, with a wide range of stalls from local clubs and businesses, offering everything from crafts to games and sweet treats. There's something for every appetite too, with a great selection of food, plus refreshing Pimm's and ales served in the popular beer tent.

Children can enjoy classic funfair rides and take part in the under 12s fancy dress competition, while animal lovers won't want to miss the ever-entertaining Stoke Pooches Dog Show. For car enthusiasts, the vintage and classic car show is a must-see. There will also be live demonstrations from local clubs throughout the afternoon.

The fete is a brilliant opportunity to support the local community, catch up with neighbours and enjoy a fun-filled summer afternoon. Mark your calendars and bring the whole family for a day to remember!

■ Visit www.stokepogesvillagefete.co.uk for more information.

Protecting the heritage and distinct character of Stoke Poges

We strive to promote the preservation and protection – as far as possible – of buildings, sites and objects of local, antiquarian or historical interest.

Assisting Stoke Poges Parish Council with the draft Neighborhood Plan, we identified over fifty properties to be considered by Buckinghamshire Council to be listed as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs). These are buildings, sites, or areas that are considered to have heritage value and contribute to the distinct character of a place, but are not formally listed or designated as heritage assets by a national body like Historic England.

Thanks to society members and volunteers who formed part of the Neighbourhood Plan working party, we were able to provide vital heritage information about some buildings that supported the importance of registering them as NDHAs.



Tudor Rose on Stoke Court Drive, one of the non-designated heritage assets in Stoke Poges

We also discussed with the Parish Council whether there should be a review of the four conservation areas within the parish. They made an approach to Buckinghamshire Council, who agreed that the Stoke Green Conservation Area could be considered. However, it is not a priority for Buckinghamshire Council at this time, nor can they fund the work involved. The Parish Council is now working with them to progress and pay for the work to be undertaken.

A map of all the non-designated heritage assets in Stoke Poges can be found by visiting <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/buckinghamshire/map>

A trip to Bentley Priory

On Wednesday 18th June, our annual coach trip will this year take us to Bentley Priory, Stanmore, where there will be a guided tour of the museum.

RAF Bentley Priory played a pivotal role during the Battle of Britain as headquarters of Fighter Command. What isn't so well known, is that the battle was won in part by the radar defence system developed by Sir Robert Watson-Watt. In 1924, he was working in the Met Office when they moved to Ditton Park, then in the Parish of Stoke Poges. He became Superintendent of the Radio Research Station and conducted important experiments in the Ditton Park parkland.

In 1926, whilst at Ditton Park, he coined the term 'ionosphere' (part of the atmosphere) in a paper published in the science journal *Nature*. The research in Stoke Poges hugely helped later on in detecting the Luftwaffe planes by the use of ground radar.



If you visit Bentley Priory, do look out for a memorial to him in a stained glass window, pictured above.

- Further information about the society's range of events is available in leaflets distributed around the village, on Facebook and on the society website at www.e-voice.org.uk/stoke-poges-society

History of Stoke Poges: Part Seven

The following historical account about Stoke Poges in the 18th century is based on the Stoke Poges Parish magazine of the 1890s.

The small village was put on the 'national map' due to Thomas Gray's poetry, none more so than his, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. However, although over the centuries important people lived in the Manor House and controlled much of the neighbourhood, the 18th century saw the development of other properties in the parish. Some of the aristocracy came to occasionally live in these new and enlarged properties, without them being owned or controlled by the Lord of the Manor in the Manor House at Stoke Park.

Ditton Park, near Datchet, which was an island of the parish, was redeveloped. In 1709, on the death of Ralph Montagu, 1st Duke of Montagu, it passed through the hands of the family for a couple of centuries. John, the 2nd Duke, in 1743, bought the adjacent Manor of Datchet. The current Lord Montagu of Beaulieu is the titular Lord of the Manor of Datchet.

It was in 1760 that Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was engaged in preparatory work on the land. Following a family dispute, only a modest sum was spent on landscaping Ditton Park.

Moving north in the parish, Stoke Place was owned by the Stapleton family. They did little to the property and in 1764 it was sold to General Sir George Howard. The house was redeveloped and Brown was commissioned to landscape the grounds. The property remained in the family for a couple of centuries.

Moving west, the flat arable landscape of the south of Stoke Poges was run from Baylis farm. In the 18th century, the Godolphin family, from Cornwall, came to Baylis. It was during Francis Godolphin Osborne, the 5th Duke of Leeds', ownership (1766-1799) that it became quite a stately home called Baylis House. It is now one of the few Grade I listed heritage buildings in Slough. Lord Osborne owned 484 acres out of a total of 2,835 in Stoke Poges.


The land around the road junction of Bells Hill with Rogers Lane was known as Morrells End and there were the Stoke Farm buildings on the current site of Sefton Park. At the end of the 18th century William Molyneux, 2nd Earl of Sefton, bought the farm at auction for £555. The plain house with 180 acres was redeveloped. This house, renamed Sefton Park, can be seen in the distance from the public footpath which cuts across the grounds, to the south of the house.

Throughout the 18th century, the main employment in Stoke Poges was farming.

However, when the houses were redeveloped for the rich, there was an increase in labour, in order to service the homes.

With more people working in Stoke Poges, there became an increase in beer houses and pubs! The church of St Giles' was full for Sunday services. One vicar's son recalls his life as a boy growing up in the village. He regularly met important people in the vicarage and received gifts such as the odd coin from Thomas Gray. The boy went on to become a celebrated admiral Sir John Duckworth (known for defeating the last of Napoleon's fleet at the Battle of San Domingo in the Caribbean).

In the next issue, the eighth part of our village history will feature the change on the Stoke Park estate in the late 18th century.

 *Harvey Whittam*
Chairman, The Stoke Poges Society

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Stoke Common

Are your pet treatments harming wildlife?

Dogs are man's best friend and probably the UK's most popular pet – although around 70% of households don't have one.

They bring physical and mental health benefits and of course are great company for their owners.

However, dogs can have a negative effect on wildlife and, whilst this is especially true of those which aren't under effective control (for example disturbance of ground nesting birds when running loose or unsupervised through heath and grasslands), there are other impacts which may not be quite so apparent.

For example, dog fouls and urine increase soil nutrient levels and can change the delicate balance of sensitive eco-systems, encouraging more dominant plants like nettles at the expense of plants more typical of specific habitats (like heathland) and reducing the all-important biodiversity.

What is perhaps less obvious, is the potential impact of some veterinary treatments on

wildlife; a subject that has increasingly been in news reports recently.

Owners of the estimated 13 million pet dogs and 12 million pet cats in the UK regularly apply preventative treatments against parasites like fleas, ticks and worms. Many of these treatments are highly toxic to wildlife – imidacloprid (a neonicotinoid) and fipronil have been banned for use in agriculture as they are linked to higher mortality numbers in wild bird chicks as well as being a threat to honeybees; one study mentioned on The Wildlife Trusts' website found that when birds collect pet fur for their nests, some are inadvertently exposing their chicks to the chemicals, leading to higher levels of unhatched eggs and dead chicks.

The chemicals in the treatments can also leach into rivers and ponds, either directly when dogs swim or indirectly through faeces (that is not removed) and urine (that can't easily be removed from the open space), impacting on aquatic wildlife. They can also enter the river system through household drainage when owners wash their hands.

A paper by Wells and Collins in 2022 found that up to 90% of a dose of these treatments can pass straight through the animal. The same study also found that these treatments can have a negative effect on the health of the pets treated, as well as that of their owners, impacting lung function, affecting glands that produce hormones to regulate the way the body works, and altering dopamine and serotonin levels. Many such treatments are given monthly on a continual basis as a preventative measure.


The arguments against blanket control of pest and infection in domesticated animals are not new. Probably the best-known story is the use of penicillin in livestock as a preventative rather than treatment, which is believed to have contributed to some of the problems of penicillin resistance of infections that we are now facing. Of course it is important that we protect our pets from parasitic infection, but the questions being asked at present are whether there is an alternative to the blanket approach and if there are more environmentally friendly ways of protecting our four-legged friends. Developing guidance on the matter suggests the following:

- Speak to your vet about environmentally friendly methods of parasite control, rather than buying over the counter or online – it could even save you money.
- Consider only treating your pets when they

have an active infection, if they are at high risk of getting parasites or if you have an immune-suppressed family member.

- Try to use oral treatments as these are better for the environment than topical spot-ons and flea collars which contain chemicals that can easily wash off and contaminate waterways.
- If you have used a chemical treatment, make sure you keep your dog out of ponds and streams.
- Make sure that you always dispose of your pet's faeces responsibly to minimise chemical exposure to the environment.
- Remember that a healthy pet will have a better immune system.

It doesn't have to be the case that dog walks and important places for wildlife like Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches are mutually exclusive, but please be aware of the potential impacts and how you can minimise them. Be a responsible dog walker and help look after wildlife and the environment, simply by adjusting the way you manage your dog to the environment on which it is being walked.

 *Chris Morris*
Senior Ranger,
Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common







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Then and now: The Dog & Pot



Tales from the auction room

Many residents will have fond memories of the Dog & Pot on Rogers Lane – but it wasn't originally in this location.

The original public house is known to have existed before 1758, at which time it was called the 'Dog's Head and Pottage Pot' and was situated on the opposite side of the road.

It served the residents of West End where there was a thriving community around the north end of Rogers Lane, then called Kiln Lane due to the brick-making nearby. As well as the brick makers, it also served travellers to and from Farnham Common and Hedgerley.

In 1898, the pub was relocated to its present site on Rogers Lane due to a road diversion. The old building was demolished, leaving only the stables intact.

The Dog and Pot continued to operate as a public house until 2011, when it closed and was subsequently sold for redevelopment. The main building was converted into a private residence, and additional homes were constructed on the grounds.

 Cllr Keith Finan

The Women's Institute share details of their summer programme of events.

Our summer programme begins on Wednesday 11th June when we are having a talk by Evan Willison entitled 'Tales from the Auction Room'. We are sure our members will enjoy this. Auctions are fascinating places to browse, even if we are scared of putting up our hands to make a bid.

On Wednesday 9th July we have invited Adam Smith to talk about 'Country House Servants'. Another popular subject, judging by the popularity of TV programmes like Downton Abbey, Bridgerton and Upstairs Downstairs.

August is the month we always go on our summer outing and this year we are visiting Harefield Church Gardens. We'll be having a leisurely guided tour of the gardens. Our visit also includes lunch and afterwards we will have the opportunity to explore the church and gardens individually, while there is ample seating for those who prefer not to.

■ *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.*

You can find out more about the WI's activities and see pictures of previous events at www.stoke-poges-centre.org.uk/wi



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Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society

Countdown to this summer's horticultural show

It was fantastic to see so many of you at our plant sale in May, and it was another record breaker.

The village hall was packed with plants lovingly grown and nurtured over many weeks and months by our committee and members.

The team worked frantically the night before to prepare the hall and get everything organised in time for the doors to open the following morning. The early bird customers queued patiently outside in the morning sun, keen to get a bargain and the cream of the crop. Then, quick as a flash, within a couple of hours everything had pretty much been snapped up, including a selection of delicious homemade cakes!

The sale helps to fund our Annual Summer Show in July, and thanks to your overwhelming support and generosity once again this year we raised more money than ever before – we are truly grateful.

Do you grow roses in your garden?

Summer is a busy time of year for gardeners, and for our society too! Not only do we have our show day in July, but before that we also have a stall at Stoke Poges Village Fete in June (see page 11). There will be a small selection of plants for sale and you'll have the opportunity to find out more about what we do.

Plus, if you have some lovely roses in your garden, we'd like to invite you to enter our rose competition which we hold at the fete.

There will be four competition classes:

- One large-flowered bloom – fully open
- One large-flowered bloom – perfect stage ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ open)
- One stem cluster-flowered rose, carrying three or more flowers
- One stem miniature rose (any small-flowered rose)

All you need to do is bring your blooms (in suitable vases) along to Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society's gazebo at the

fete by 1pm on Saturday 14th June so we can display them for everyone to admire and enjoy.

Entry to the competition is free for members of the society, 50p per class for non-members. Judging will take place once all the exhibits have been mounted.

The best overall winner will receive the Rose Society's Bronze Medal. Winners of individual classes will receive small monetary prizes.

A highlight in the summer calendar – get ready for our Annual Summer Show!

Keep your fingers crossed for good weather – our fantastic Annual Summer Show returns to the grounds of The Stoke Poges School on Saturday 27th July from 12.30pm to 5.30pm.

A glorious celebration of flowers, fruit, vegetables, art, photography, crafts and baking, this year's show incorporates the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War as its overall theme.



This will be our 131st annual show since our Horticultural Society was founded in 1884. What an amazing achievement! We are very proud of our heritage and that we continue to hold this traditional show, when so many societies have sadly been unable to continue.

The show is always an engaging day out with plenty to see and do. As well as the

spectacular displays in our grand marquee, we also have other attractions including a petting zoo, children's rides, a barbecue, a beer and Pimm's tent, delicious afternoon teas and a selection of stalls selling crafts and showcasing local organisations. The Marlow Town Band will once again be performing for us – the musical icing on the top of a quintessentially British cake.

And on the subject of cake, could you be this year's champion baker? In keeping with our theme, our bake-off recipe this time is a 'VE Day Condensed Milk Cake' – you'll find the recipe below. Give it a try! All the details on how to take part in the competition are on our website.

VE Day Condensed Milk Cake

Ingredients

113g margarine
338g self-raising flour
113g raisins
1½ tablespoons coarse marmalade
9 tablespoons condensed milk, made up to 225ml with water
3 eggs, beaten

Method

- Rub the margarine into the flour.
- Add the dried fruit and whisk to a soft consistency with the marmalade, diluted condensed milk and beaten eggs.
- Spoon into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin.
- Bake in a moderate oven (170°C fan or equivalent) for approximately 50 minutes until a skewer comes out clean.
- Cool on a wire rack.



You don't have to be an expert to join in the fun

The thought of entering something into one of the competition classes might seem daunting. What if you don't know the correct way up to display your apples? Or how many stems of sweet peas should be in a vase? Would it be embarrassing to get it wrong?

The truth is, there has to be a first time for everyone! Yes, there are rules to be followed, but we encourage everyone from beginners to experts to have a go. No previous experience is necessary and we even have a wonky veg category!



Don't be afraid of getting it wrong. Our judges want to see lots of entrants, so they often provide encouraging feedback for next time. Everything is a learning curve.

To help you get it right first time, there are two documents that it would be a good idea to pay attention to. The first is the competition schedule, which details all the categories you can enter and the specifications in each case. It also explains how to register your entries in advance and when you need to bring them along to the showground.

You can download the schedule from our website or pick up a paper copy from our stall at the village fete.

Also on our website is the second useful document, 'Notes for exhibitors' – a collection of fantastic advice and top tips on what to do and how to avoid the common mistakes that are made. It contains a lot of photos of exhibits from previous shows to help you make sure you're following the rules!

Recognising that it can be hard for newbies to get their foot on the ladder, we do have a couple of novice classes in categories which are traditionally hotly contested. The main advice we give to new entrants is "have a go". Find the competition classes that sound suitable, make sure you enter what is asked for and display it as stated or in a favourable way.

Our committee is always happy to offer advice and support. If you have any questions, please telephone Heather Homan the Entries Secretary on 01753 662 166, who will try to help.

And there's plenty for kids to try, too!

We want to inspire the gardeners, bakers and crafters of the future, so there is a wide selection of children's competition classes for under-16s to enter, including a WWII-themed project. All entrants in the junior categories will receive a special rosette, presented by the Entries Secretary when the competitor collects their entry card, before they stage their exhibit.



Our committee and volunteers in a 'calm before the storm' moment on the morning of the Plant Sale

The society has been passing horticultural knowledge and tradition from generation to generation for over 140 years. However, we are always looking to update what we offer and move with the times and welcome any suggestions and new ideas for the show in the future.

Volunteers needed to help keep the show alive

Putting on this large show every year requires a big team to make it happen, and we simply couldn't do it without the kind help of many volunteers!



If you would like to contribute to the show's set-up, help during the show or participate in the after-show clear up, please get in touch with Ruth Rooley (email ruth@rooley.com or call 01753 648 040) or Maureen Barton (email maureen.barton@live.co.uk or phone 07786 084 813).

Your support is vital to ensure the continued success of this wonderful, traditional event – any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.

- *The Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society's Annual Show takes place on Saturday 26th July, 12.30pm – 5.30pm in the grounds of The Stoke Poges School. Details of the show competition classes and entry forms are on the society's website, where you will also find information on forthcoming talks and events plus an online membership application form.*

www.hortsoc.org

Incredible news from the Poppy Appeal 2024

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that the national total for the Poppy Appeal 2024 has reached £51.4 million.

That's an astonishing £1.1 million more than last year – a true testament to the generosity and spirit of our communities!

We're hoping that our local total here in Farnham Royal, Farnham Common, Wexham and Stoke Poges will also show a fantastic increase – and we'll update you as soon as we know!

Here's how your incredible support has made a difference:

- Over 22,000 people supported through welfare and casework;
- 781 residents cared for with dignity and companionship in RBL care homes;
- £2.3 million spent to support mobility needs and independence;
- £1.5 million spent helping with food, clothing and essentials for those in crisis;
- 300+ participants helped through our innovative 'Recovery through the Arts' programme;
- £4.7 million secured in debt relief to ease financial struggles;
- 22,682 grants awarded since October 2023, delivering £12.3 million directly into the Armed Forces community.

Every penny you helped raise has made a life-changing difference. Thank you!

Want to get involved?

Even small gestures – like taking a Poppy Appeal box to a local business – make a huge impact! Please get in touch if you can lend a hand.

Together, we make the biggest difference.

Volunteer secretary needed

Are you organised, passionate about supporting our Armed Forces community, and ready to make a real difference locally?

We're looking for a volunteer to be our Branch Secretary to help lead the heartbeat of our branch! You'll be supporting veterans, service families and the wider community in our area.

You'll need good organisational and admin skills (basic email and document handling), a passion for community and respect for the Armed Forces family. The role is for just a few hours a month and is flexible to fit around your life. No military background is needed – just a big heart and a willing spirit.

Whether you're retired, working part-time, or just want to give something back, we'd love to hear from you!

■ *To find out more, please contact Chris or Manesh at the Royal British Legion.*

*Chris Leister-Crow, Poppy Appeal Organiser
07942 016 072*

*Manesh Patel, Chairman
07919 216 820*



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Walking from Stoke Poges to Black Park

Many of you will have visited Black Park to walk and enjoy its wonderful attractions – the lake, the children’s playground, the tree-top adventures and now two excellent cafés.

However, it’s most likely that you will have driven there, since it is about 4km from the village centre and there is no obvious safe walking route.

There are some pedestrians, particularly Park Runners on a Saturday morning, but they are taking a big risk on the sections of Rowley Lane that do not have any form of footpath, and which is busy road with huge concrete lorries travelling to and from their depot.

This article has been written to describe a glorious route from the centre of Stoke Poges to Black Park which avoids almost all traffic, takes no longer than the obvious Rowley Lane route, and is safe!



Credit: Map © OpenStreetMap
<https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>



As usual, we start our route from the shops at the Village Green. Use the pedestrian traffic lights to cross the B416 and turn right on the grass down the hill.

If you walk on this side of Bells Hill you are in the lovely avenue of mature trees that run all the way along the main road and are very much unappreciated from the pavement running along the opposite side.



When you have passed the entrance to Sefton Park on the left, and Decies Way on the right, you arrive at a bus stop and shelter with a kissing gate.

Go through the gate and follow the path across what used to be the private golf course of Sefton Park. Note the attractive lake in the dip on the left – there's lots of wildlife around there.



You will soon arrive at another kissing gate with a second one directly opposite. This is the old grand drive to the original Sefton Park mansion but is now a very secluded, lovely walk in its own right.

Go straight through both gates and follow the path and you will arrive at another kissing gate onto Farthing Green Lane.



Go through the gate and straight across the road onto a track known as Muddy Lane. This eventually emerges on Plough Lane. Go straight on until you reach Wexham Street.

Turn right towards Slough and you'll shortly arrive at the entrance to Wexham Golf Course on the left. Walk up the drive to the end of the car park, keeping the clubhouse and then driving range immediately on your left side. At the end of the car park, walk along the road which runs onwards past attractive ponds. This is a public footpath so you are not infringing the golf course in any way.



Follow the service road until it forks, at which point walk straight on across the grass towards small red posts on the far side of the fairway – this is still the public footpath.



Go over the stile and the small footbridge.

You are now on an ancient road known as Galleons Lane – a route that is now almost entirely ignored. Turn left and follow the path through the most glorious trees and countryside.



You soon come to Rowley Lane and looking to your left you can see the dangerous section and immediately feel just how dangerous it is.

However, do not go out to the road – turn right and follow the track through beautiful woods that run parallel to Rowley Lane but safely separated from it.




Eventually, the path emerges onto Rowley Lane close to the entrance to Black Park. Care is needed here because of traffic. Avoid walking towards the vehicle entrance, but instead walk across the main road onto Black Park Road.



Take the path and 100 metres later you are in Black Park. The new café is at the top of the car park and a much shorter walk than the original café, which is around the lake.

This is a splendid walk with lots of variety along the way and most of all it avoids the dangerous section of Rowley Lane. It is just 4km in length and takes about 50 minutes to complete, with all the rewards of Black Park at the end of it.

 *Bob Crocker*

An eventful spring at the Village Centre

Many of our village organisations came together in March to showcase their activities as part of an open day for Village Halls Week.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Village Centre to find out more about the many fabulous things that happen in Stoke Poges. We had a lovely afternoon promoting and celebrating all our activities, sharing information, making connections and welcoming new members.

We received some really positive feedback about the event – well done and thank you to everyone who worked hard to make it a success, including the wonderful WI team for serving the refreshments for us all.

One of our aims for the open day was to encourage more young people to get involved and learn about the Village Centre. Our congratulations go to Manroop Rakhra (pictured below), recipient of a £30 book token as the winner of our treasure hunt. We hope you spent it wisely and found some brilliant books to read!



Our best kept secrets!

Last year, we redecorated two of our rooms thanks to a generous donation from Stoke Park. Many people who are regular users of the Village Centre were surprised at our open day to discover these rooms – they are tucked away upstairs, above the Social Club!

Both spaces are named after former trustees who were heavily involved in the project to build our extension, nearly 30 years ago.

The Colin Hurt Room is a large space, used in the early morning and late afternoon on schooldays for Breakfast Club and After School Club. At other times – during the day, evenings, at weekends and in school holidays – the room is otherwise available to hire.



With its own kitchen area, it is a particularly good room for children's parties and for larger groups to meet in when the main hall is busy.

The Debbie Towart Room is a smaller room, also up in the eaves of the building, and is perfect for study groups or small committee meetings.



Hire rates for all our rooms can be found on our website, along with more pictures and a 360 degree view of each space. There's a 10% discount for Stoke Poges residents on our special party rates, too!

Artisan markets

It's great when the Village Centre can play a part in community events, and we are delighted to be partnering with the Parish Council to organise and host Stoke Poges Artisan Market.

We'd like to thank everyone who supported our spring market in April. We continue to be very grateful to both St Andrew's Church and The Stoke Poges School for allowing our

visitors to use their car parks, to local charity Thames Valley Heartbeat for providing first aid cover, and to all our volunteers who helped on the day. Finally, a special mention to the Social Club team who always support our events and work hard behind the scenes.

Our autumn market will be held on Saturday 6th September – save the date! Beyond this, our trustees hope to continue working with the Parish Council to establish the market as a regular community event in our village calendar – so watch this space!



■ Details of the artisan markets plus further information on hiring the Village Centre, together with an online booking form, can be found at www.stoke-poges-centre.org.uk

See you next time!

STOKE POGES ARTISAN MARKET

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Stoke Poges – new walk!

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The Lighthouse Café, St Andrew's Church
Rogers Lane, Stoke Poges SL2 4LN**

The walk will be a gentle 30-45 minutes on good paths and flat ground.

We will return for coffee and a chat at the Lighthouse Café.

This is a great opportunity to meet people while getting some gentle exercise.

Before attending your first walk, please register online via our website
buckinghamshire.gov.uk/simply-walk

If this is not available for you, please don't worry, you can register on a form on the day

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***Please note:** Everyone is welcome, but we are unable to provide 1-1 support.
Anyone needing additional assistance should bring someone to walk with them.*



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Birthday celebrations at Friday Club

Stoke Poges Friday Club has had a very positive and busy start to the year.

We have six new members that have joined us. We are very much enjoying getting to know them, and their feedback is that they wish they had joined earlier!

At our April meeting, our guests enjoyed fish, chips and mushy peas for lunch, followed by apple crumble tart and custard. There was the opportunity to do some gentle chair exercise and for crafts, making Easter cards, and our guests were entertained by The Herschel Ukulele Band. Each month, we always celebrate the birthdays of our guests and volunteers. April was no exception – it was a big month, with 13 birthdays including a special 90th!

We are looking forward to marking our third anniversary with a relaxing boat trip on the River Thames in May. Of course, trips are not easy to organise and we have to undertake a thorough risk assessment to ensure we can cater for all abilities and needs. Our actual anniversary is in June, when we will be celebrating with a glass of bubbly and a two-course lunch, with entertainment after.

Of course, the running of Stoke Poges Friday Club takes a lot of organisation in the background to ensure that things like insurance, risk assessments, GDPR, ordering of food, craft materials, entertainment and so on are all in place to ensure it runs smoothly for all. We would like to thank our volunteers who turn up monthly and work extremely hard as a team – we could not do this without their support.

We would also like to thank St Andrew's Church for allowing the use to their hall and donating £100 per month towards our food costs. We also received a very generous grant of £3,000 from The Stoke Poges United Charity towards our annual food costs and a grant from Stoke Poges Parish Council to pay for our insurance and first aid training.

As we grow and need to have statutory processes in place, it's very reassuring to know that we have support from local organisations and personal donations.

What is Friday Club?

We are a not-for-profit organisation that does work in partnership with St Andrew's Church, the Parish Council and the Good Neighbour Scheme but we are not a religious group – we are overarching and both persons of faith and no faith are very welcome.

Our committee is:

- Ann Sibley – Chair;
- Saera Carter – Secretary;
- Julie Simmonds – Treasurer;
- Sue Lynch – Committee member;
- Julie Cawood – Committee member.

The club meets on the first Friday of every month from 10am to 1.30pm. It is for any villager who lives in the parish of Stoke Poges who may be lonely, vulnerable or who would like to meet up with other people in the same situation, meet friends or make new friends. We currently have around 60 members and 25 volunteers.

We have an arrangement in place with Stoke Poges Good Neighbour Scheme who can

arrange lifts for those that are unable to get to St Andrew's by themselves.

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 and making new friends. 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 £5 for everything, and every penny goes back into the running of the club.

We want to ensure that our guests have an enjoyable time and are always looking for ideas for entertainment – if anyone in the village has any contacts or suggestions, please get in touch.

■ *If you live in Stoke Poges and think you might be interested in joining Friday Club or would like to volunteer then please contact Ann Sibley by email to info@spfc.org.uk or by calling 01753 901 374 and leave your name, address and contact number and we will get back to you with a registration form.*



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Singing their greatest hits from the past nine years

It is with excitement tinged with sadness that Stoke Poges Singers approach our summer concert.

This will be Andy Langley's last concert, ending nine years as our Music Director.

Andy is retiring and moving to Scotland. He leaves a legacy of many memorable shared musical moments, and the opportunities given to singers and players to perform music of different genres, and pieces both familiar and unknown.

Under his direction, the choir has grown in number and musically and the concerts have attracted an increasing, loyal following. Audiences are appreciative of the relaxed and sociable atmosphere and the 'something for everyone' music on offer.

The Best of SPS, 2016 to 2025

It is very fitting, therefore, that our summer concert will be a selection of the greatest hits from the past nine years. The pieces were selected by Andy from which the final programme was chosen by a poll of the choir.



Stoke Poges Singers at their spring concert in St Giles'

Could you be a volunteer driver?

The Stoke Poges Good Neighbour Scheme is looking for more volunteer drivers.

We have 80 clients all living in the village. We do offer other services but most of our requests from them are for lifts to GP, dentist, optician or hospital appointments.

We have 22 volunteer drivers and on average we get about three requests a week. This is therefore not a heavy commitment and you only need to do a journey if the timing suits you. We sometimes have to go as far as Stoke Mandeville and may need to make arrangements to wait for the client. If an appointment is more local you can return home and pick up later. The clients pay an agreed sum to cover your expenses (at a nationally agreed rate). This does not affect car insurance.

We also give lifts to people attending the monthly Friday Club at St Andrew's in Rogers Lane. Many can walk or drive themselves, but we pick up the people who cannot make their own way. Friday Club is greatly appreciated by our older population.

We are a friendly group of volunteers and meet up twice a year. We also put on two social events for clients each year which are enjoyed by both clients and volunteers.

■ If you would like to volunteer or would like more information or a chat about it, please contact Sue Lynch by email to SPGNS@outlook.com and send your phone number if you wish.

They include works from the classical repertoire by Brahms, Mozart, Jenkins and Elgar together with more recent songs by the likes of Sting, Carole King, Andrew Lloyd Weber and Joni Mitchell.

The choir will be joined by instrumentalists who have played with us regularly over this time.

'The Best of SPS, 2016 to 2025' is on Saturday 12th July 2025, 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Stoke Poges. Ticket sales (£15 per adult) will be in aid of a local charity to be nominated by Andy.

Spring concert raises £1,400 for charity

We'd like to send a big 'thank you' to all who supported us at our last spring concert – a programme of choral works for choir and organ held at St Giles' back in April.

Your generosity with ticket sales and donations on the night meant that we were delighted to have raised £1,400 for Lindengate, a mental health and wellbeing charity based in Buckinghamshire.

■ Tickets for the concert are available 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

Unforgettable images

Time goes by so quickly, and I can't believe that I've been Chair of Stoke Poges Photographic Club for three years!

This is the maximum number of years a person can hold this position before having to stand down or change roles. I have had a lot of help from the committee and club members, so it has been a pleasure. Someone else will be taking up the reins following our AGM on 20th May.

As we are nearing the end of the season, we are holding our finals competitions when members can enter what they think are their best three images from this season's entries.

Our first competition, 'The Best Projected Image in a Set Subject', has taken place. The Advanced winner was Paul Mothersill with 'The Shambles' and from the Intermediate members it was Penny Mayhew with 'Double Trouble' – both superb images.

Do you enjoy taking photographs and have been thinking about joining a photographic club?

If so, then why not enter our competition where you could win a year's free subscription* to the club?

Your image should show the subject 'UNFORGETTABLE'.

What is your unforgettable? An item, an event, a place or even a person? Your picture can have been taken on a phone or camera, it doesn't matter, just your vision. An unforgettable image of mine is of a nephew's wedding when the happy couple took a few

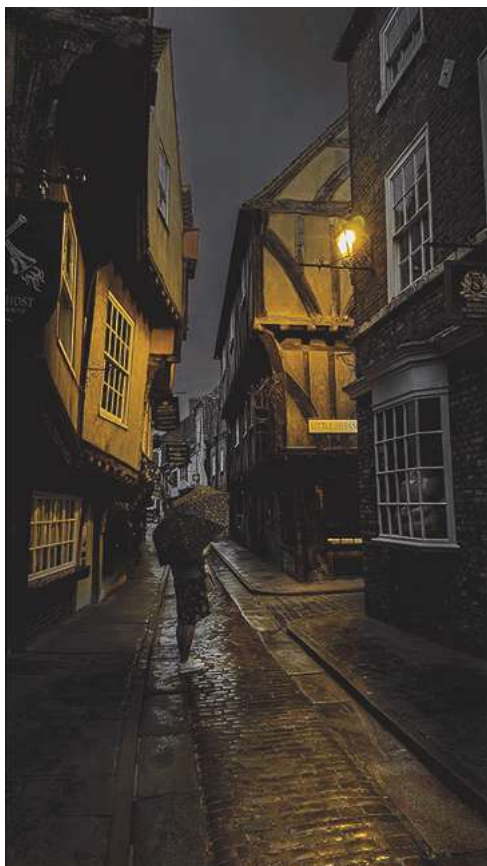


moments to share their thoughts with each other after coming out of the church.

Entries in the form of a jpeg should be emailed to chair@stokepogesphotoclub.co.uk by 23rd August 2025 – please also include your name, address and (optional) phone number. The results will be announced at our Welcome Evening on 2nd September. Family of club members are not eligible to enter.
*There is no monetary alternative.

The club's annual trip this year is a visit to the Chiltern Open Air Museum on 31st May. They are holding a Napoleonic Living History Weekend where there will be spectacular displays with muskets, cavalry and artillery. Hopefully the weather will be good so we can capture some great photographs.

We will round up the season on 3rd June with an end of season social, when winners



Far left: 'Daniel and Emily' by Linda Miles

Left: 'The Shambles' by Paul Mothersill

Below: 'Double Trouble' by Penny Mayhew



will be presented with certificates. We will review some of the high-scoring images and discuss (over a cup of tea or coffee, and maybe cake) what we will be doing over the closed summer months and plan some evening walks.

If you are going to the Flower Show on the 26th July, pop along to our stall and have a chat, or visit www.stokepogesphotoclub.co.uk for more information about the club.

 Linda Miles, Chair
Stoke Poges Photographic Club

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Showcasing the stars of the future

Two talented young dancers from Stoke Poges recently took to the stage at the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre alongside internationally acclaimed professional dancers.

Following highly competitive auditions, Amaya Iraola Jones (10) and Leora Rose (11) both successfully earned a place to join an elite cast in the English Youth Ballet production of *Cinderella in Hollywood* – a glamorous and captivating ballet inspired by Grace Kelly’s real-life fairytale romance with Prince Rainier of Monaco.

The pair were immersed in 80 hours of rehearsals to refine their skills in preparation for an unforgettable performance, experiencing the life of a professional dancer. English Youth Ballet (EYB) is a prestigious

platform for rising stars, providing aspiring young dancers with professional performance experience alongside international principal artists. Over 1,500 young dancers auditioned to be part of EYB in 2024, and only 88 of the most talented young dancers (ages 8-18) from the local area were cast in the production.

EYB Principal, Ann Wall, who starred as Cinderella in the production, said: “Teaching the young dancers is incredibly rewarding as I get to see them learn new steps and grow in confidence. It is magical to see how they progress and blossom on stage and it brings me great joy to dance alongside them. In a sense, it feels like we all inspire each other. When I watch the children and young people dancing, it reminds me of why I dance – to bring joy, to feel joy and to connect through dance.”

Following the amazing experience, Amaya (pictured left), who goes to the Ondine Academy of Dance at Stoke Poges Village Centre, reflected: “To be able to participate in English Youth Ballet has been one of the best experiences I have ever done. From the rehearsals to the fabulous show there is no way that it could have been any better! All of the dance teachers were kind-hearted and made sure you never felt left out.

“To me, English Youth Ballet isn’t just about performance, it is also about making friends and being able to dance on a stage with a large audience watching you. I definitely recommend EYB to anyone who likes to dance.”

A fantastic achievement - well done to both!



Stoke Poges United Charity & Stoke Poges Hastings Community Fund

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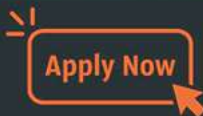
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Have you heard of 'The Gerrards Cross Cowboy'?

Details of Hedgerley Historical Society's summer talks.

'The Gerrards Cross Cowboy' with DJ Kelly

Wednesday 18th June, 8pm

Though few people nowadays have heard of him, Captain Thomas Mayne-Reid was an adventurer and novelist who, in his day, had been a teacher, journalist, soldier-hero, slave overseer turned abolitionist, buffalo hunter, actor and playwright.

2018 saw the bi-centenary of the birth of this well-connected cowboy who sold his enthusiasm for America's wild west to several generations of boys and who inspired many of them to seek their fortunes in the Commonwealth and colonies.

More famous in his day than Rider Haggard and Captain Maryatt, he chose to build a massive Mexican-style mansion in Gerrards Cross for himself and his child bride. His is a tale of adventure and derring-do, of romance and riches and finally, poverty and obscurity.

Based in Chalfont St Peter, best-selling author Denise Beddows has lived in more than 20 countries across several continents during a 37-year career in government service. With a background in research, investigation and intelligence analysis, she nowadays writes true crime, cozy crime and spy thrillers as Denise Beddows, and biographical fiction and local history as DJ Kelly.

'The Regent's Canal' with Charlie Forman

Wednesday 2nd July, 8pm

Get the feel of a waterway that was once one of London's main transport arteries as horses trudged the towpath hauling heavily loaded barges. At the turn of the 19th century, the massive new set of docks on the Thames didn't connect with the inland waterways network which ended at Paddington just eight miles away. It was a no-brainer to build a canal to join them. The Prince Regent gave his name to this new London by-pass and in 1820 the Regent's Canal was born.

This talk tracks its history from the dog days of near bankruptcy during the Napoleonic wars through its heyday, when it joined up the goods yards of many of London's grand new railway termini to its post-war decline and rebirth as the city's great linear park. Let your mind take the journey from the elegance of Little Venice past the old industrial warehousing of East London to arrive on the Thames at Limehouse.

As a London walking tour guide and lecturer, Charlie Forman highlights the social, architectural and artistic history of his home city.

■ Both talks take place at Hedgerley Memorial Hall.
For more details please email John Lovelock,
Secretary of Hedgerley Historical Society:

jdlovelock@btinternet.com

www.hedgerleyhistoricalsociety.org

Seeing the legends of Brands Hatch

One of the most famous and iconic motor racing circuits in the UK is the venue for our next event.

If you are interested in motorsports, why not join our trip to Brands Hatch on 12th July? We'll see some of the best historic racing cars from the past in both qualifying and actual races, all organised by the Historic Sports Car Club.

Our visit will be on a Saturday – the first day of a busy weekend of motor racing – and is being organised by the Motorsports Coordinator for Christian Vision for Men in conjunction with a racing team who travel the UK visiting various race tracks with their classic Formula Ford car (in brilliant red and completely rebuilt last year).

You will be provided with transport to and from Brands Hatch, departing from Stoke Poges on Saturday morning and returning in the evening. During our visit, we will be joining the racing team inside the paddock. As this is a restricted area not open to the public, we have had to place a limit on the number of guys we can take.

■ *If you would like more information or would like to join us for a great day of motor racing, then please get in contact with us.*

Tony Shortman
01844 350 014
shortmantm@gmail.com

Nigel Lowe
07973 349 721
nigelatsuchlowe@gmail.com

Deadly serious fun

The Stoke Poges Players have already served up some nights to die for this year!

It's been a delightfully deadly season, with not one but two interactive murder mystery evenings that had the whole village talking (and sleuthing) and left audiences guessing – and grinning – all night long.

First came the suspenseful 'Murder at the Manor', followed by the twist-filled 'Coach Calamity'. Audiences enjoyed dinner, drama, and plenty of detective work as they helped question the players and uncover the culprits. The events were a resounding success!

Audience reactions say it all...

"The players put on some killer performances."

"Stoke Poges Players put the 'Drama' in 'Deadly'."

"SPP kept the drama – and the bodies – piling up!"

As the group winds down into our summer break, the Players will be busy behind the scenes reading scripts and choosing our next big production – the winter pantomime.

New members are always welcome! Whether you'd like to perform, help backstage, or just enjoy some friendly company while lending a hand, we'd love to hear from you. We'll also be at this year's Stoke Poges Village Fete – stop by and say hello!



■ You can contact Stoke Poges Players by email to stoke.poges.players@gmail.com or follow them on social media for latest updates. There's also more information on their website.

www.stokepogesplayers.org

‘Spot the church’ in Stoke Poges

Many years ago, I needed my grandpa to explain ‘spot the ball’ competitions in the newspaper.

I just couldn’t see a ball no matter how hard I tried and I couldn’t decide whether I was relieved or annoyed to find out that there was no ball in the picture! Of course you were supposed to guess where the ball should be, based on what else is happening in the picture and we’d like to think this is how the church operates in Stoke Poges – even if you don’t know where our buildings are, you know we exist by our actions. Here’s what we’ve been up to this spring.

Baby Steps

Baby Steps is our group for 0-3s, their parents and carers. If you have recently had a baby or are grappling with a toddler (or both!) there’s nothing like getting to know others in the same boat, giving the children a chance to socialise and move around in a safe environment. Knowing how difficult it is for busy families to get to church on Sundays, we include some Christian songs and stories to introduce important elements of our faith like loving your neighbour and following Jesus’ example in the world. We had a cute Easter party featuring fruit and melted chocolate!

Fridays at St Andrew’s

For the other end of the age range, Friday Club (see page 36) approaches its third birthday in June. We continue to be grateful for the big heart and gentle leadership of Ann Sibley and the support of the Parish Council, Good Neighbour Scheme and the villagers who commit to helping every month.



On Fridays when there is no Friday Club, a friendly group meets for coffee (and tea and biscuits) and a chat in the Lighthouse Café from 10am-12pm and anyone who needs a bit of an outing is most welcome to come along.

Lighthouse Café

Before Christmas, we were delighted to be almost overwhelmed by donations to send to Ukraine via the Kindness Club based in Chalfont St Peter.

Collections paused whilst shipping arrangements were made, but are now open again. If you are not sure what can be donated, pop in and have a chat to Pat, our Community Work Manager who runs the café. Whilst you are there, why not grab a great value bean-to-cup coffee, tea or beautiful cake? Our volunteers are always happy to chat or leave you in peace with your book or laptop. Normally open 12-4pm on weekdays.

St Andrew's Eco Garden and St Giles' Churchyard

The 90 roses we planted at St Giles' last year and the eco garden at St Andrew's should be in full bloom (and vegetables well on the way) by the time you read this, so please stop by and enjoy a moment or two. Our outdoor spaces are as much about prayer and spending time with God as our indoor spaces. Some people prefer to sit quietly and others to keep busy so please feel welcome to sit on a bench, do a little watering or weeding or come and join a sociable working group.

Knit and Natter

Our Knit and Natter sessions are open to anyone who wants to socialise over some stitching or learn how. We've had penguins, polar bears and bees so far this year. Look out for their VE Day celebration coming to a post box near you soon! They also sell seasonal decorations and soft toys to support local charities such as Alexander Devine Children's Hospice.



Raise the Roof

As we don't have the luxury of live worship music at St Andrew's every Sunday, it has been a real joy to welcome friends from other churches to create a band occasionally. If you see the black and pink 'Raise the Roof'

graphics going up on the railings and on our socials, listen out for our pop-rock-country-gospel fusion that Sunday night or better still, come and immerse yourself in the uplifting sounds.

We have similar music but with recorded tracks at our 11am family services every Sunday at St Andrew's.

St Giles' Choir

If you prefer your church music from a traditional choir and organ, join us for 9am services at St Giles' on the 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays of the month or 6.30pm on the 2nd & 4th Sundays. For many people the calm and contemplative pattern of prayers, readings, sermon and hymns at St Giles' is just what they need to reset for the week ahead.


St Giles' welcomed a full congregation on Easter Sunday, followed by our Easter egg hunt in the churchyard. There was even a decadent chocolate slab reserved for the adults!

And finally...

Don't forget, church activities are open to everyone, every day of the week. They are either free or we ask for a small contribution towards costs.

If you'd like more information about when and where these activities are on, you can find all the details on our website at www.stokepogeschurch.org

You can also email office@stokepogeschurch.org or phone the church office on 01753 642 331. Please leave a message if we are out – we can only be in the office a few hours per week, but we will get back to you.

 *Rev'd Natasha & Rev'd Sydney*

Stoke Poges Parish Council

www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Saera Carter BEM (Chair)

cllrcafter@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mary Crocker (Vice-chair)

cllrcrocker@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Manjit Bassi

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Keith Finan

cllrfinan@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

John Harwood

cllrharwood@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Kim Pritchard

cllpritchard@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Rod Wilson

cllrwilson@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Planning Committee

Chair: Saera Carter BEM

Vice-chair: Mary Crocker

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

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Manjit Bassi, Saera Carter BEM, Mary Crocker,
Keith Finan, John Harwood, Kim Pritchard,
Rod Wilson

Parish Office

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

01753 644 803

theclerk@stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pavilion caretaker: 07881 388 778

Parish Council spokespersons

Allotments – Rich Huckle

Planning – Saera Carter BEM

Flagmaster – Jim Budd

Website – Rich Huckle

MVAS coordination – Vacancy,

Keith Finan *ad interim*

Appointed representatives

Stoke Poges News Editor – Rich Huckle

Stoke Poges Village Centre – Saera Carter BEM,
Kim Pritchard

Community Speedwatch – Anne Frank

Buckinghamshire Councillors for Farnhams & Stoke Poges ward

Dev Dhillon

dev.dhillon@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Thomas Hogg

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David Moore

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Member of Parliament

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