

Stoke Poges *News*



Stoke Poges Newsflash

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From: Stoke Poges Parish Council

Subject: Stoke Poges Newsflash

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From the editor

Parks and recreation

As someone who lives near to one of our village recreation grounds, it's always great to see them being used regularly by so many people of all ages. No doubt, the addition of the exercise tracks in recent years has increased their popularity, together with the Parish Council's continued investment in play equipment. These open spaces are real assets to Stoke Poges.

And after a quieter year, football has now returned to the pitch at Bells Hill – this time for younger players. You can read more about Hibs Stoke Poges on page 11.

Whatever your plans are for the summer, don't miss the Village Fete in June and the Horticultural Society's Summer Show in July – both brilliant community events to be enjoyed and to be proud of. We are lucky to have them.

Rich Huckle
Editor

Autumn issue No 238 – all material to the editor by no later than Friday 31st July.

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

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On the cover

Horticultural Society Summer Show
(see page 26)

The latest updates from our Parish Council

Parish Chair's letter

As we welcome summer with its brighter days and longer nights, it's always good to see villagers out and about, appreciating some of the lovely walks that we have the privilege of enjoying.

In March, the Parish Council held its Parish Reception, where we thanked the many volunteers from around Stoke Poges and recognised their contribution to village life. We presented two cups to worthy recipients.

This year, the Caldecourt Cup was awarded to our flag master, Jim Budd. Jim takes great pride in ensuring we are flying the right flag for each occasion, come rain or shine.



The Jubilee Cup was awarded to Stoke Poges Players, who have been an active part of our village since 1965.

Congratulations to them both!

Planning has been a hot topic for us here in Stoke Poges – you can read more about some of the proposals and our activities in this issue of *Stoke Poges News*.

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

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

Left: The Caldecourt Cup is presented to Jim Budd by Cllr Saera Carter BEM

Below: Stoke Poges Players with the Jubilee Cup



The Parish Council held its annual meeting of the electorate on 7th April, where villagers were invited to speak to us on local issues.

The Chair presented on the following topics.

Thanks to the team

Cllr Carter thanked the parish councillors for their time and pointed out that they are supposed to be a council of 11 members, but they are however working as 7. This is challenging due to the volume of work. Thanks were also given to one resident who is co-opted to the Planning Committee, and has been for the last 12 years.

Precept

What we have saved:

- For 2023/24, the precept was reduced by 5% to £202,336.54.
- For 2024/25, the precept was reduced by 10% to £182,102.89.
- For 2025/26, the precept was kept the same as the previous year, at £182,102.89.
- For 2026/27, the precept was again frozen at the previous figure of £182,102.89.

This equates to a total reduction of £60,700.95 over the last three to four years.

Spending

The Parish Council has worked hard to keep spending down, and most capital projects were completed last year.

- £1,857 was spent on bug hotels (from CIL money).
- £7,150 was spent on footpath and fence repairs in Bells Hill Recreation Ground. This included replacing fencing that is more than 40 years old, ensuring that our boundary line is secure and clearly defined.
- £19,434.00 was spent in both Bells Hill and Plough Lane recreation grounds as we needed to replace some of our timber play equipment which was perishing. These were replaced with sustainable, durable alternatives including a couple of extra pieces. We also spent £4,350 on repairs to existing equipment.
- £3,500 was spent on hedge maintenance in Bells Hill Recreation Ground.
- £9,000 was spent on planning consultancy fees, most of which has come out of CIL money. However, in forecasting that planning was going to become complex we did start to budget for possibly having to work with consultants.

Pavilion

The solar panels that were installed last year are working well – in fact, so far this year we have not received any bills, and it seems we are generating enough energy to cover what we are using.

The Parish Council has been in talks with a new under-15's football team and a hire agreement has now been signed with Hibs Stoke Poges. The intention of the group is to grow children's teams, which in turn will support health and wellbeing as well as mental health amongst our younger residents.

Hibs Stoke Poges will play on Saturday afternoons in Bells Hill Recreation Ground (see page 11 for more information).

Planning

Planning has been challenging, with complex applications. We see more and more applications that are overly large. We also see sheds for beds or conversions of a garage into habitable accommodation or home office and then later rented out as separate dwellings. We are reporting these to planning enforcement as and when we spot them.

Speculative planning applications

Developers are testing the system in anticipation of Buckinghamshire Council's emerging Local Plan and because housing targets are under review via central government. This leads to developers submitting applications to 'test' whether the council might grant permission outside allocated sites. Their argument will be that the council needs housing, therefore sites should be approved now, even in the Green Belt.

The Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan has clearly identified areas within the built form of the village where suitable development might take place, which is clearly brownfield land or previously developed land, therefore avoiding the need to develop any green belt or grey belt sites.

We are seeing that even though Buckinghamshire Council has identified land as unsuitable for development, they are granting planning permission!

The Parish Council is taking this up with Buckinghamshire Council.

We will continue to build our understanding of the evolving planning policies introduced by central government. In doing so, we are working closely with our unitary councillors and our Member of Parliament, ensuring that

we make full and effective use of mechanisms such as the 'call-in' process. At our request, our MP is also writing to the relevant government and local departments to raise our concerns. We are also working with the London Green Belt Council, and the Chair of the Parish Council is joining as many training courses as time will allow.

As a Parish Council we are actively engaging with developers, land agents, residents, councillors, Buckinghamshire Council officers, and our MP. We are also working in partnership with our neighbouring parishes and a planning consultant to support one another. By sharing knowledge and insights, we aim to foster a collaborative approach that avoids duplication of effort and learns from past experience.

Ultimately, planning decisions will be determined by Buckinghamshire Council, the Planning Inspectorate or, in some cases, the Secretary of State. We remain committed to ensuring that our community's voice is clearly heard throughout this process.

Sefton Business Park

The Parish Council considered the two applications for this site for 317 dwellings. We agreed that we needed to object to the development of the whole site.

The Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan identified and understood that that the existing built form would be fair game for redevelopment – however, we do not agree that the remaining 21 acres of unspoilt land should be developed.

The full reasons for objection can be found in the announcements section of the Parish Council website.

<https://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/announcements>

Proposal for development of up to 150 homes on land off Gerrards Cross Road

The Parish Council has received a letter from Catesby Estates, who are acting on behalf of the landowners to promote land off Gerrards Cross Road, Stoke Poges, for possible future residential development and public open space.

Catesby Estates believes that because Buckinghamshire Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, it is considered that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and meets the grey belt criteria as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Catesby Estates held a public consultation, with a leaflet being delivered to local homes and businesses in close proximity to the site. A consultation website was also launched with details and plans, and inviting comment. The consultation closed on Sunday 26th April.

Again, the Parish Council has been very clear in identifying areas in the village that are suitable for development and we will therefore respond appropriately to the application once it is submitted.

Working together

Taking into account of the speculative applications we are seeing as well as those in our neighbouring parishes, we felt we should reach out to Fulmer, Wexham and Farnham Royal Parish Councils to see how we can support each other. This was not as easy as it sounds, and following negotiations we are now working collaboratively on a joint piece of work that will look at the affects of development on our infrastructure, as well as pre-empting what land may well be identified as grey belt and therefore under threat. This approach is unprecedented but very much needed.

Buckinghamshire Council's Local Plan

We contributed to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) consultation held by Buckinghamshire Council. Altogether, 13 possible sites are up for scrutiny. We spent 39 man hours working on a robust reply. It was complicated, and difficult to identify where these areas are located. Subsequently, there have been consultations looking at revised parking standards for new builds, as well as a new Design Code – we have responded to both.

Stoke Poges Neighbourhood Plan

We have found this to be extremely valuable to us in evidencing our objections not only to planning applications but also the HELAA consultation. With the change in planning legislation, we will look to review this at some point this year. If necessary, we will make changes to ensure it is up to date and robust.

Stoke Green Conservation Area

We have agreed with Buckinghamshire Council on the costs to review the Stoke Green Conservation Area with the hope we can increase this to cover areas that are potentially under threat.

There is a charge of £13,000 but we feel this work is vital in ensuring as much protection as possible.

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 endeavour to spend effectively.

Letter from OCU regarding electricity works in West End Lane and Park Road

Working for Scottish and Southern Electricity Energy Solutions, we are building a new 132kV cable route from the new Uxbridge Moor Substation to the Slough Trading Estate. The new cable is required to provide power for local data centres.

We had planned to start in Park Road on Tuesday 7th April 2026; unfortunately we had to delay our start date as other utilities had ongoing streetworks on the diversion route of the closure.

Buckinghamshire Council agreed to extend our road closure at West End Lane until Sunday 19th April.

We will now be starting cable ducting works in Park Road on Monday 20th April. The permit is currently due to expire on Sunday 23rd August. We will be laying ducting, under a three phase, full road closure operational 24 hours, 7 days a week, between the Farnham Road / Beaconsfield Road roundabout along Park Road to the West End Lane junction. The closure will be monitored by our traffic management staff at all times.

Once the ducting has been laid on Park Road, we will return from Monday 31st August until Monday 14th September to connect the Park Road and West End Lane ducting. Two-way traffic lights will be in use on Park Road, and the West End Lane junction will be closed to traffic.

We will update local residents before each traffic management stage is changed. We are sorry for the inconvenience this work will cause.

Ongoing roadworks

Residents will be aware of the ongoing and disruptive roadworks in and around Stoke Poges. The Parish Council has been working to better understand the extent of recent works on West End Lane, as well as the closure of Park Road from 20th April through to 23rd August.

Councillors Carter and Crocker recently met with representatives from the cabling company OCU. We have been informed that these works form part of major infrastructure improvements to support data centres located on the Slough Trading Estate. This includes the construction of a new substation in Iver. As a result, extensive works have been taking place across the local road network, including in the Ivers and parts of Fulmer (Alderbourne), with cabling running beneath railway lines and the M25.

The Parish Council fully recognises the inconvenience these works are causing to our community, particularly given the already challenging condition of some local roads. Further disruption is expected, with additional roadworks planned for Rogers Lane during the summer months. We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

During discussions with OCU, we raised the question of whether any form of community benefit could be secured in light of the ongoing disruption. We are now engaged in conversations to explore potential projects that could bring lasting value to our residents. Details will be shared once these proposals are confirmed.

While it is not formally the responsibility of the Parish Council to negotiate such matters – this falls under Buckinghamshire Council – we believe it is important to advocate on behalf of our residents.

We understand that this news will be unwelcome. However, it is important to note

that the Government has classified data centres as critical national infrastructure, placing them on a similar footing to utilities.

The Parish Council will continue to keep residents informed as further updates become available.

Communication via Stoke Poges News and Newsflash

Stoke Poges News (this publication) continues to thrive under its third year of editorship by Rich Huckle. This is our main way of communicating with the village other than noticeboards and social media, in addition to our *Newsflash* email service which we launched last year. We have been able to utilise this at short notice when dealing with time sensitive news or planning applications. See the inside front cover for details of how to subscribe.

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.

Flagpole events

Remembrance Day, 11th November – more information will be publicised on the noticeboards, Parish Council website, social media and in *Stoke Poges Newsflash*.

Stoke Poges & Wexham Women's Institute

WI's summer outing won't be a stinker!

Our local WI continues to inspire and empower women whilst providing friendship and companionship.

On Wednesday 10th June we welcome Sheila Keatinge for a talk about cruising up the River Douro in Portugal. It is the largest river in the Iberian peninsula, rising in the northern Spanish province of Soria and then mainly flowing west until it reaches Porto on the Atlantic coast.

We have a real treat for our meeting on Wednesday 8th July. Our speaker is Michael Kerry White – a BAFTA nominated actor, award winning writer and an accomplished public speaker. His talk is called 'Tales of an Accidental Actor'.

Our annual summer outing this year is a trip to London to discover how Joseph Bazalgette solved the problem of 'The Great Stink' in 1858, when the River Thames was so polluted that people had to vacate the city to get away from the smell caused by sewers emptying into the river.

We travel by coach to Westminster then sail down to Thames Marshes to see the Crossness Pumping Station – a Victorian design masterpiece of ornamental ironwork.

■ *The Stoke Poges & Wexham Women's Institute meets at the Village Centre (unless otherwise stated) 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 at www.stoke-poges-centre.org.uk/wi



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Hibs Stoke Poges

Football returns to Stoke Poges

Football is back in the Stoke Poges community with the launch of Hibs Stoke Poges.

This is a new team formed in partnership with Bracknell Hibs and supported by Stoke Poges Parish Council.

Led by the Confidence Through Football coaching team, Dwayne McKenzie and Jacob Fowler, with the backing of Bracknell Hibs Chairman Mitch Noble, the club's first team will be an under-15s side.

Dwayne, part of the coaching team, said: "My son wanted to play locally, but there weren't opportunities in the league he wanted. His Saturday team wasn't getting enough games, so he brought together players from his current Saturday team, along with friends from Iver and Stoke Poges – and now we have an under-15s team ready for the new season."

Theon, who will be part of the under-15s team and is already coaching alongside the programme, will help support and inspire the

next generation as the club grows, alongside his teammates.

The team will be based at Bells Hill Recreation Ground, and the club hopes to bring even more football to the community in the future by introducing additional age groups.

Plans are already in place to expand, with under-7s and under-8s set to follow through a Confidence Through Football programme, helping children build confidence before progressing into teams.

The club is excited to bring youth football back to the area and looks forward to welcoming more local children to get involved.

■ *If you're keen to get involved – whether as a player or as part of the coaching or committee team – the team would love to hear from you. You can get in touch by email to admin@bracknellhibs.com*

An appeal to save our heritage

It is always nice to hear about the odd box containing old photos, film and written stories about Stoke Poges in the 20th century.

Please don't just throw them out! We were recently pleased to post on social media an old film about Stoke Poges from the 1990s which was originally compiled by the village Photographic Club.

The Stoke Poges Society strives to preserve archival material and artefacts. Over the years, documents covering several centuries have been donated to us. We have been able to pass them on to the Buckinghamshire County Archives, who store them securely and accurately record what they retain on a database. The records are searchable to anyone with internet access or in person at their premises – most items can be viewed by the public.

This is an important service provided by Buckinghamshire Council, paid for out of our Council Tax. It could not be offered efficiently or cost effectively in Stoke Poges. In due course, the archives will be easier to access from storage in the Eden Centre, High Wycombe, instead of the basement of an old office block in Aylesbury.

- *For further information on The Stoke Poges Society's events this year, please take one of the bright orange leaflets which can be found in the Village Centre, Co-op, St Andrew's and elsewhere in the village, or visit the society's Facebook group or website.*

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

History of Stoke Poges: Part Eleven

In this issue, we turn our attention to World War II.

Not much was published about activities in the village during WWII. However, word of mouth stories, passed down in families, can be pieced together to paint a picture.

National Archive records, Imperial War Museum papers and even local police occurrence book entries give an official narrative, but only in a few areas of life.

The fight for survival, freedom and democracy saw some leading figures coming from Stoke Poges. The quiet, humble, elderly persons worked; children picked fruit and assisted farmers, all doing their bit to support those at the 'sharp end' and the leaders in their field. A great team effort from those in or from Stoke Poges.

Production of food increased as land was turned to grow food. Over 100 acres of Stoke Poges Golf Course was ploughed, by permission of Mr Noel Mobbs. The model farm owned by Colonel Devereux was productive, with a fine herd of prize winning cows. Mr Bruun, a resident in the village bred rabbits for consumption. He even gave advice in a national newspaper about breeding rabbits. Harvest camps for children took place, with them being organised from Stoke Poges School. Children and mothers went out collecting wild fruit, especially rosehips for use further afield.

Crime didn't stop because of war. A burglary of a home resulted in the offender being sentenced by the judge

at the Bucks Quarter Sessions to two years' hard labour. The offender had been on leave from the army to his home in Slough. Meanwhile, Mrs Warren from Stoke Poges was sentenced to two months in prison for obtaining excess supplies of rationed goods from Waitrose in South Kensington.

Traffic accidents were reported. Unfortunately, fatal accidents occurred on the roads through the village, sometimes caused by army lorries. Deaths of those serving from the village are remembered in a stained glass window in St Giles' Church.



Mentioning lorries, it's apparent how benevolent residents were to those less well-off and in support of the military. Lorry loads of furniture and household goods were donated, then despatched to bombed out Greenwich. Money was raised through a variety of activities for schemes such as Salute the Soldier, Fund for the Few (the benefit of RAF crew and pilots) and the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund.

As people fled bombed cities or the military were camped in the village, they soon integrated into village life.

One extraordinary talented sculptor who escaped from London to Farthing Green Lane after his home and studio had been flattened by a bomb was Alfred Hardiman.

Long Dene school relocated to the Manor House and was expanded whilst there. It was non-denominational, priding itself on its own version of 'Back to the Land' and was – at least so far as fruit and vegetables were concerned – self-supporting. The school was known for homing children who had been evacuated from London.

The support to military personnel was outstanding, with servicemen made most welcome in the local pubs. Certainly, the men from an American Division, Polish soldiers and the Scottish 51st Highlanders Division were accommodated in buildings in the village, most notably at Sefton Park.

The Highlanders sang German songs in the Dog & Pot pub. The songs had been captured on a gramophone at Tobruk, North Africa. Once translated, the songs became quite popular.



Gordon Highlanders depicted during the D-Day landings. Prior to the landings they were training and resting in Stoke Poges.



Archive image courtesy of Stoke Park Ltd

Local lore suggested military vehicles could be hidden and maintained in wooded areas, similar to the large scale that took place in Burnham Beeches. Also, local ladies were able to make parachutes in Brockhurst Woods.

A question sometimes asked is: “What happened at Stoke Park?” All the articles in newspapers indicate it remained operating as a golf club and domestic residence. Similarly, Stoke Court seemed to have continued as a residential home. Yet, Framewood Manor for a while was used by the Women’s Royal Naval Service as their Officer Training Centre.

A little-known man called Eustace Watson had been living in Framewood Manor before the ladies moved in. He’s thought to have downsized to next door. He represented the ‘industrial backbone’ of the British war effort. He had been Managing Director of Argyll Cars Ltd and was the Managing Director of Studebaker Ltd. (UK). Watson ensured that Studebaker’s trucks and other parts reached the front lines or were serviced effectively.

Another industrialist, Colonel Wallace Devereux of The Meads in Park Road, ran High Duty Alloys in Slough. They produced the pistons in the Merlin engines used in the Spitfire and Hurricane. He also had the massive logistical task of overseeing the receipt and assembly of American aircraft sent to Britain.

Another major industrial figure was Sir Noel Mobbs of Stoke Park, who was Chairman of Slough Trading Estate and ran a company designing and producing specialist aircraft parts. Can you imagine Mobbs, Devereux and Watson having a drink together, sharing their vast knowledge for the war effort?!

While there are many who lived or had links with Stoke Poges, there are three men who seem to stand out for what they achieved or for being very well-known:

- **Major General Howard-Vyse** of Stoke Place was brought back into active service to serve as the leader of the Military Mission in Paris. It was the ‘Phoney War’ period (September 1939 to May 1940). He had the job of liaising with the French Generals. He also had the onerous task of supervising HRH the Duke of Windsor. Now, former top secret documents reveal he did question the integrity and value of the Duke being in France. Vyse became the Chairman of the Prisoner of War Department.
- **Maurice Buckmaster** grew up in and around Stoke Poges and Gerrards Cross. He attended Eton College, but didn’t go to university and instead became a car salesman in France. He gained intimate knowledge of the geography of France and had sound, trustworthy contacts abroad. He may not be known to many, yet his leadership had a major impact in helping defeat the Nazis in France.

He became Head of 'F' (French) Section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). He wrote an excellent book: *Specially Employed – the story of British Aid to French patriots of the Resistance*. The book can be borrowed from Buckinghamshire Council Libraries.

- **Leslie Howard**, the Hollywood star-actor and producer, owned a house in Stoke Wood. He was shot down when on a flight from Lisbon to England in 1943. He was lost at sea. There is a memorial plot dedicated to him in Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens.

He left the house to Josette R.P. Ronserail. She was a French lady in her 20s who, it transpires, was a courageous brave French lady, working for the French Resistance. She survived a concentration camp without revealing any secrets. But, post WWII, she seemed to disappear off the face of the earth, changing her name and was believed to have moved to Australia, never to set foot in Stoke Poges.

When it comes to the newspapers during the war period, they published many lists of births, deaths and marriages. In some cases, they printed photos of the married couples or elaborated on the death. Therefore, here are two deaths and two marriages which attracted more than a one line entry, often in several newspapers:

- The death of Miss Louisa Boothby-Heathcote of Clevehurst, aged 85, was flagged up because she changed her will 18 times in 9 years and left £150 plus £400 per annum (around £18000 p.a. in 2026 money) to her chauffeur, Gordon Stewart.
- Lt Nigel Irvine, whilst serving on HMS Nottingham in Sri Lanka, drowned in an

accident. Only a few months earlier he had married Mary Banister of Lower Mead, Stoke Poges. His father was the long serving Principal of the University of St Andrews.

- Squadron Leader Jim Parsons, reported in the papers as England's rugby scrum-half, married Stephanie Tanner of Farnham Royal in St. Giles' Church in 1944. That same year, Stephanie's father was Captain of Stoke Poges Golf Club.
- Major Perrott, the only son of Professor & Mrs Perrott of Stoke Poges, married the daughter of Rear Admiral Pirie Thomson. Both son and father were excellent engineers.

A question remains unanswered as to whether Thompson, who was the Chief Press Censor in the Ministry of Information, had meetings with Howard-Vyse (dealing with the Duke of Windsor) or even Leslie Howard, who is known to have been involved in creating propaganda films.

Again, it's quite exceptional for a village what the residents and people from the village achieved in support of the war effort. We will remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The next instalment of our Stoke Poges heritage will be about the period post World War II to the end of the 20th century.

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

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Then and now: Stoke House

Stoke House, a Grade II listed building in the heart of Stoke Green, was built in 1821 and has played many roles in the history of our village.

Originally a preparatory school, it later became a family home before returning to educational use and expanding in the late 19th century.

During the First World War it served as a prisoner of war camp, and in the Second World War it was used by the War Office. After the war, the building became offices and saw various alterations through the mid-20th century.

Following years of neglect, partly due to stalled redevelopment linked to the Mobbs Close housing scheme, the building has now been sensitively restored and converted into apartments.

Located in the Stoke Green Conservation Area, Stoke House is recognised for its architectural and historic significance and remains an important part of our local heritage.



Speeding statistics

The Community Speedwatch team has been out recording speeders and welcomed two new members.

Due to the challenging weather conditions at the beginning of 2026, the team was less active than usual in the first few weeks. However, with signs of spring finally appearing, our volunteers were back out monitoring vehicle speeds on several local roads in the village.

The team conducted 10 sessions between January and April at five different locations within the village's 30mph zones. A total of 3,250 vehicles were counted driving past during the sessions, of which 189 vehicles were recorded over the limit. The top speed recorded was 66mph with 61 of all speeders recorded at speeds over 40mph.

We were also very pleased to welcome two new members to the team in March, who have now received their training and induction sessions.

Community Speedwatch helps to keep our village safe and is fully supported, monitored and regulated by Thames Valley Police.

- *The Speedwatch team is always keen to welcome new volunteers, so if you would like to participate or learn more, you can email theclerk@stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk*

Showcasing their equestrian skills

The daffodils bloomed throughout the spring and thanks to a number of dry and sunny days our riders have been enjoying gentle hacks in the woods and having fun on our outdoor Countryside Challenge course.

The Riding for the Disabled Countryside Challenge is an inclusive competition designed to test riding skills through a simulated rural course. Riders navigate 12 obstacles – such as navigating a bridge, opening a gate, or posting a letter – to demonstrate control, balance and accuracy, making it a key equestrian activity for participants of all abilities.

We held an in-house competition during the spring and our riders have loved getting their rosettes – thank you to our volunteers for helping to set up the course for the spring/summer season.





At the time of writing, we are preparing for two exciting events in May. The RDA Fancy Dress Class at Royal Windsor Horse Show promises to be great fun – two riders and two ponies are coming along and a merry band of volunteers and staff. The theme for this year is ‘Space’ and our creative team is busy sewing and getting into the spirit of the event. Horses, riders and volunteers will all be dressed up!

We will also be taking a number of riders and horses to the South Region Qualifiers at Berkshire College of Agriculture – the day provides an opportunity for riders to showcase their skills in dressage and other disciplines, with a chance to qualify for the RDA National Championships in July. Visit our Facebook page (just search South Bucks RDA) for pictures of both events.

We are always grateful for our community supporting us. Perhaps you could ...

- Volunteer – we are in particular need of volunteers on Tuesdays, Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. We’d also welcome any individuals interested in becoming a trustee.

- Fundraise for us – recent ideas for fundraising have included bake sales and being chosen as the nominated charity for schools and businesses.
- Sponsor a pony – from just £5 a month you can sponsor one of our amazing horses or ponies and get a certificate and fact sheet. Details are available on our website at www.southbucksrda.org
- Send your team to us for some team building – recently a group from Biffa came along to paint some fencing and got to groom some of our ponies and learn all about our work.

■ *To find out more please email enquiries@southbucksrda.org.uk or call 01753 662 796. More information about us can be found at www.southbucksrda.org*

Please also consider following us on social media. Search “South Bucks RDA” on Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn and get involved – every like, comment or share helps us to spread the word about the work we do.

A magical metamorphosis

The year seems to be rushing away from us very quickly at Sunshine Corner.

It won't be long before we will be saying goodbye to our school leavers. It is always a sad time to see them go, but it is rewarding to see how far they have all come.

Sunshine Corner Parent, Baby and Toddler Group

It has been great to see new families join the group – some with very tiny babies – and we are always pleased to welcome back our regulars. Sandra has been helped each week by Michelle who gives up her time voluntarily and together they have been coming up with lots of exciting activities.

It is always tricky to offer activities for such a vast age range but Sandra and Michelle cope with this really well, introducing different things each week. They have been following the 'Mini-beast' theme creating different bugs and they have also continued the 'Planting' theme with French beans. The group also joins our annual trip to Odds Farm.

We meet every Thursday morning during term time from 9.15am to 11.30am in the Main Hall at the Village Centre on Rogers Lane. There is no need to book – you can just drop in between these times.

We hoped to have our new playhouse up and running before we returned after the Easter holidays, but a delay in delivery meant it took a lot longer than expected. We would like to give a big thank you to the volunteers who constructed it for us. There were a few issues in putting it together, but they got there in the end! It is really popular with the children and they have been very busy creating many different role-play scenarios in it.

'Mini-beasts' was our theme for the first half of the term, with a focus on caterpillars, butterflies, spiders, ladybirds and bees. We rounded off the term with our annual visit to Odds Farm where we encourage the children to not only observe all the farm animals but also to look out for any mini-beasts. As part of the theme, the children created their own caterpillars which they put in cocoons they had created and magically, when they took them out of their cocoons they had turned butterflies! We also had real caterpillars that the children were able to observe growing, forming cocoons and emerging as butterflies. The children were really excited when we let the butterflies go in our garden. They often said that they had seen our caterpillars in their own gardens at home.

We will round off the year with a fun week, an awards ceremony, sports day and a party for our leavers.

■ *Sunshine Corner Pre-school is located at Stoke Poges Village Centre on Rogers Lane. If you are interested in a space you can drop in to see us at the Village Centre between 9am and 3pm during the term. Alternatively, please get in touch by email to info@sunshinecornerpreschool.co.uk or call 01753 644 300.*



Rooms for hire at Stoke Poges Village Centre

We have a range of spaces ideal for events such as meetings, classes, celebrations, performances and children's parties.

Special party rates are available, with additional discounts for Stoke Poges residents and Social Club members.



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Exploring a Welsh mystery

Middle Thames Archaeological and Historical Society has just one more talk (and an AGM) before taking a summer break.

The talk will take place on Friday 12th June at 7.30pm and will be given by one of our members, Caryl Travess, who will tell us about 'A small Welsh town with unexpected royal connections'.

Caryl, grew up in Treherbert and from a young age was puzzled about that name. Her quest for answers took in the discovery of South Wales Steam coal, Robert the Bruce, Agincourt, The Tudors, Stuarts, Hanoverians and the prosperity of Cardiff.

Caryl says, "After 60 years of bewilderment, I now understand the origin of the town's name!"

The talk will be preceded by our brief AGM.

- *Join the society at 7.30pm in the Hastings Room at St Andrew's Church Centre on Rogers Lane. The talk costs just £2 for visitors and is free for members. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available after the talk. We will be back on the second Friday of September with a new programme of talks.*

For the latest information, visit our website at e-voice.org.uk/mtahs or email enquiries to sec.mtahs@yahoo.co.uk

A complete change in direction

In July, Stoke Poges Men's Group is repeating an event which always proves popular.

You are very welcome to join us for our Curry Night at the Memories of India restaurant in Farnham Common on 14th July at 7.30pm.

As usual, following our two-course buffet we will enjoy a talk from a speaker. Rob Santer is the London Regional Director for CVM (Christian Vision for Men) – the organisation our group is affiliated to.

In 2010, after 20 years as a financial consultant, Rob felt it was time for a complete change in direction. Drawing upon his wealth of experience in business and his passion for coaching, he decided to train as a certified professional life coach with the Christian Coaching Institute.

After his talk there will be a question and answer session and the evening should finish at approximately 10.15pm.

We are not an exclusive group but very inclusive and guys from a wide area (not just from Stoke Poges) come along. Everyone is always given a very warm welcome.

- *If you would like to join one of these events or would like further information, please get in touch.*

*Tony Shortman
01844 350 014
shortmantm@gmail.com*

*Nigel Lowe
07973 349 721
nigelatsuchlowe@gmail.com*



Stoke Poges Village Fete

Our fete is packed with fun, community spirit and entertainment for all ages

The fantastic Stoke Poges Village Fete returns on Saturday 13th of June.

Hosted at The Stoke Poges School on Rogers Lane, it promises an afternoon packed with fun, community spirit and entertainment for all ages. Gates will open at 12.30pm and activities will run through to 6pm.

A highlight of the day is the ever-popular Stoke Pooches Dog Show, where four-legged friends can take centre stage, alongside the always entertaining Under 12's Fancy Dress Competition.

Visitors can also enjoy a variety of local club and school demonstrations, showcasing the talent and energy within the community.

Car enthusiasts won't want to miss the Classic Car Show, while families can take advantage of the fun fair and a wide selection of stalls hosted by local businesses and community groups.

For those looking to relax and indulge, there will be a beer and prosecco tent, as well as plenty of delicious food options to suit all tastes.

With something for everyone, the fete offers a perfect opportunity to enjoy a healthy dose of village fun and connect with fellow residents in a lively, welcoming atmosphere.

A limited number of stall spaces are still available and can be booked online.

If you would like to volunteer to help at this wonderful community event, please contact the team by emailing us at info@stokepogesvillagefete.co.uk

■ *Stoke Poges Village Fete will be held on Saturday 13th June from 12.30pm until 6pm in the grounds of The Stoke Poges School.*

For updates and further information, or to book a stall, please visit www.stokepogesvillagefete.co.uk



Royal British Legion

Preparing for this year's Poppy Appeal

Since our last update, we have been busy planning ahead for the 2026 Poppy Appeal.

The Farnhams and Stoke Poges Branch of the Royal British Legion continues to remain active across Farnham Royal, Farnham Common, Stoke Poges, Wexham and Hedgerley, supporting our Armed Forces community and strengthening local remembrance.

At our committee meeting in March, we began the preparations with early work already underway on volunteer rotas, collection points and the ordering of poppies and wreaths later in the summer.

We are also pleased to be hosting and joining a number of community events this year. A recent highlight has been our Volunteers' Tea Party in April, bringing together those who gave their time so generously to support last year's Poppy Appeal which raised over £23,000, spearheaded by our Poppy Appeal organiser Chris Leister-Crow.

Events such as these are an important opportunity to say thank you, share experiences and strengthen the sense of community that underpins our work.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on the success of previous years, including another strong Poppy Appeal, and expand its support for veterans of both historic and recent conflicts. We remain committed to ensuring that those who have served our country, and their families, are not forgotten and receive the support they deserve.

If you would like to get involved, whether by volunteering for our 2026 appeal, attending events or learning more about our work we would be delighted to hear from you.

■ For more information, please contact David Moore, Membership Secretary for RBL Farnhams & Stoke Poges Branch, on 07496 025 599 or by email to davidmoore1066@gmail.com

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Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society

Summer's in bloom

It was amazing to welcome so many of you to our Horticultural Society's plant sale in May.

It was yet another hugely successful event! The village hall was brimming with an impressive variety of plants, all carefully grown and tended over many weeks by our dedicated committee and members.

Following a busy evening of preparation, visitors were queuing in the sunshine ready for the doors to open – and it wasn't long before most items had been snapped up, including the ever-popular homemade cakes.

Proceeds from the sale go towards supporting our Annual Summer Show, and thanks to your continued generosity, this year's event raised a fantastic amount. We are extremely grateful for your support.

Do you have any roses in bloom?

The summer months are always a lively time for both gardeners and our society. Before

our main show in July, you'll find us at the Stoke Poges Village Fete on Saturday 13th June, where we will be hosting a stall with a small range of plants for sale and information about our activities.

We would also love you to take part in our rose competition at the fete. Whether you're an experienced grower or simply proud of a bloom from your garden, why not enter? The classes are as follows:

- One large-flowered bloom – fully open;
- One large-flowered bloom – at its ideal stage ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ open);
- One spray of cluster-flowered roses (three or more blooms);
- One stem of a miniature or small-flowered rose.

To enter, just bring your roses in suitable containers to our gazebo between 12.30pm and 1pm. All entries will be displayed for visitors to enjoy.

Entry is free for members, and 50p per class for non-members. Judging will take place once all exhibits are in place. There are prizes in each individual class, and the overall winner will be awarded the Rose Society's Bronze Medal. Last year's lucky recipient was Jon Homan, pictured below receiving the medal certificate from the Chair of our society, Maureen Barton.

Countdown to this year's Summer Horticultural Show

Don't miss one of the highlights of the summer – be sure to mark your calendar for our Annual Summer Show, taking place at The Stoke Poges School on Saturday 25th July, from 12.30pm to 5.30pm. With fingers firmly crossed for sunshine, we're looking forward to a fantastic afternoon!

This much-loved event, with a history spanning well over a century, remains one of the longest-running shows of its kind in the area. This year's theme, 'Celebrating 100 Years of David Attenborough', promises to inspire a fantastic range of imaginative and creative entries!



Now is the perfect time to start planning your entries. From vibrant floral displays and homegrown produce to impressive bakes, photography, and crafts, there's plenty to get involved in – whether you're entering or simply coming along to enjoy the day.

Alongside the main marquee exhibits, there will be plenty to see and do, including family friendly entertainment, a petting zoo, food and refreshments, afternoon teas and a selection of stalls featuring crafts and local groups. We're also delighted to welcome back the Marlow Town Band, whose live music will once again provide the perfect backdrop as you explore the exhibits and soak up the atmosphere.

Time to get baking...

Our baking competition returns this year, and it's always a firm favourite. Whether you're a seasoned baker or just enjoy trying something new, why not take part and put your skills to the test? Our bake-off recipe this time is a Classic Victoria Sponge – you'll find the recipe over the page. Give it a try!

All the details on how to take part in the competition are in the Show Schedule on our website.

Give it a go - everyone is welcome!

You don't need to be an expert to take part in our show. Entering for the first time can feel a little daunting, but everyone starts somewhere and we warmly encourage beginners as well as experienced exhibitors to join in. There are guidelines to follow, but don't worry about getting everything perfect. Our judges are always pleased to see new faces and often offer helpful feedback for next time. We even have a fun 'wonky veg' class!

To help you get started, take a look at the competition schedule which lists all the classes, specifications, how to register your entries 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, you'll find our 'Notes for Exhibitors', packed with useful tips and examples to guide you. If you're new, why not try one of our novice classes? And if you have any questions, our Entries Secretary, Heather Homan (01753 662 166), will be happy to help.

We're keen to encourage the next generation, and there are plenty of children's classes for under-16s to enjoy. Every junior entrant will receive a special rosette – presented by the Entries Secretary when the competitor collects their entry card, before staging their exhibit – so why not encourage them to take part and enjoy the experience?

Please donate to our bottle tombola

We would be very grateful to receive any type of bottle (unopened and in date) for our bottle tombola. If you'd like to donate, please call Janet Cottrell on 07899 750 412.

Volunteers needed

Our Annual Summer Show is a real community effort, and it simply wouldn't be possible without the help and goodwill of our volunteers. As we prepare for this year's event, we'd be very grateful for any support you might be able to offer.

Whether you can spare a little time to help with setting up beforehand, lend a hand during the show, or assist with tidying up at the end of the day, every contribution is genuinely appreciated. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Maureen Barton by email to maureen.barton@live.co.uk or phone 07786 084 813.

■ *You'll find full details of competition classes, entry forms, upcoming events, and membership information on the society's website at www.hortsoc.org*

Classic Victoria Sandwich

Ingredients

- 4 large eggs (weighed in their shells)
- Soft margarine (half the weight of the eggs)
- Softened unsalted butter (half the weight of the eggs)
- Caster sugar (whole weight of the eggs)
- Self-raising flour (whole weight of the eggs)
- A few drops of vanilla essence
- A few tablespoons of raspberry jam
- Additional caster sugar for dusting

Method

Beat the softened fats with the caster sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs a little at a time. Stir in the flour, then add the vanilla essence and beat briefly.

Divide the mixture equally between two greased and lined sponge tins (approximately 8"/20cm). Bake in the centre of a moderate oven (160°C fan or equivalent) for 25-30 minutes until golden brown and springy to the touch.

Cool on a wire rack. Sandwich together with raspberry jam and dust the top with caster sugar.



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What's on this summer at Stoke Poges Church

'Love God. Love People.'

Be still...

'Be still...' is a new prayer session, where we gather to pray in (mostly) silence for our church, our wider community and anything else that matters to you. Sessions will alternate between St Giles' day time and St Andrew's evening options.

Bible study groups

If hearty discussion is more your style, we have two weekly Bible study groups in members' homes – Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings. We read the week's sermon passage in several different versions and unpick them to find personal meaning and application in the 21st century.

Lighthouse Café

The café at St Andrew's is normally open from 12 noon to 4pm on weekdays in term time – just check whether the A-frame sign is out as we occasionally have to close if Pat or our volunteers are needed elsewhere. We have a new bean-to-cup coffee machine (after we wore out the previous one!) and our regular rotation of delicious cakes. We welcome the Simply Walk crew after their circuits on Wednesdays and the Friday Coffee Morning 10am to noon (every week, except Friday Club days) if you prefer your coffee with a regular gang.

Friday Club

Friday Club approaches its 4th birthday and remains a really good thing about living in our village. With a natural evolution of

activities and helpers, we are looking for someone with a suitable qualification and insurance to lead a gentle exercise class for senior citizens. If this is you, please contact the committee at info@spf.org.uk for more information.

Courses

We've just finished our spring course but we'll be rolling out a new series in the autumn following on from a previous one – 'Live Well'. These sessions are aimed at anyone who would like to come and share life's challenges in a supportive environment. You will not be asked to pray (or sing!) and no prior knowledge is required. Watch out for details on our socials.

Knit & Natter

Needing no introduction, a reminder that our Knit and Natter group meets on Wednesdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm at St Andrew's. Got a project? Bring it along. Dropped a stitch? They can help! Undeterred by thieves and with the additional challenge of the new solar panels on some post boxes, the post box toppers will return soon ...

Baby Steps

Our group for 0-3s, their parents and carers continues to meet in term-time at 10am on Tuesdays in the Chapel at St Andrew's. We have a bible story and singing, playtime and refreshments and the last session of the summer term on 14th July will be our annual Teddy Bear's Picnic in the Eco-garden.

Looking after St Giles' Church

A (hidden) gem in Stoke Poges, St Giles' is a beautiful place to catch a peaceful moment, connect with the past or pray for the future. It is open to visitors from approximately 10am to 3pm daily and is entirely managed by volunteers – members of the church and the wider community. If you would be able to spare some time to mow or water outside, dust and hoover inside or arrange flowers, all contributions are welcome. You can join a convivial group or make an individual impact – please get in touch.

Our regular services

With fewer big events through the summer, here's our regular service pattern:

On Wednesdays at 12pm, take 20 minutes to 'Watch & Pray' with us on Facebook @stokepogeschurch or catch up any time. Our double act of Revd Sydney and Nigel unpack the bible passage of the week.

Every Sunday at 11am at St Andrew's, we have a family oriented service – modern worship songs, a sermon, prayers and sometimes an activity to enable us to chew over the theme or support each other on a particular topic.

On the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month at 9am at St Giles', we have traditional Holy Communion or Morning Prayer and our choir leads the hymns. Although quiet and contemplative during the service, we love a good chat both before and afterwards (over tea and biscuits) to share the ordinary things as well as life's big changes.



On the second and fourth Sundays we have Evensong at 6.30pm – a similar pace to our mornings but with a sunset flavour.

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, please visit our website at www.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 return your call.

Alternatively you can send an email to office@stokepogeschurch.org and we will get back to you.




A tribute to Jennifer Pickering

Not every friendship is loud or expressive. Ours was built on steady communication and mutual understanding, rather than grand gestures or dramatic moments that demanded attention.

You showed care through practical help, thoughtful messages, and consistent presence. When something mattered to us, it mattered to you. That reliability created trust that deepened gradually over time and strengthened our connection in ways that felt natural, balanced and sincere.

We will miss the calm reassurance you brought into our lives and the steady support you offered without seeking recognition. Your friendship was defined by loyalty, patience, and quiet strength. The example you set reminds us that devotion expressed through consistency and kindness can be one of the strongest and most enduring forms of love.

Your creations in wool for post box toppers and Easter and Christmas fundraising will always fondly be remembered by all of us. Your ability to have a welcoming chat with new arrivals and the way you put them at ease with a gentle smile was truly a blessing. Thank you Jennifer for being you.

 *The Knit & Natter team*

A tribute to Richard Beckingsale

The space you have left in so many lives is far too great for us to comprehend. Your cheeky smile, the hugs and the little side-eye when we'd overstepped our bounds, that kept us in loving check, can never be replaced.

You lived to serve and helped so many families – both known and strangers alike to grieve, to celebrate, to find their feet in church. Your talent for a rota, making the best spicy chutney and keeping us afloat with the essentials of life, made you the most perfect verger. Your thoughtfulness, in all seasons, reflected a kind heart and loving soul that reached out in word or deed more often than any other person I know.

With a twinkle in your eye, you introduced the world to Winnie-the-Pooh prayers, and the simple Gospel truth – Jesus loved you and you loved Him. You had the intellect of a thousand supercomputers but were too humble to boast, letting us lesser mortals take centre stage. We cannot thank you enough for your friendship and care but we can thank you for being you.

 *The staff team, Stoke Poges Church*



If you have recently lost a loved one, know that you are not alone. We are happy to walk with you. We don't have all the answers to grief, but we love a Lord, who has the compassion, time and grace to meet us where we are. So pop into our Lighthouse Café, St Giles' or St Andrew's – we are happy to share life with you and offer a listening ear, silence, prayer.

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BucksVision

“Variety’s the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavour.”

William Cowper could be describing BucksVision South East Division with his famous quote.

Our members come from a range of backgrounds with different life experiences which is why inclusivity is one of our charity’s core values. The theme of variety was also evident at three of our latest activities.

We are committed to reducing social isolation for people living with sight loss but that doesn’t mean we are limited to tea and biscuits! Activities, workshops, visits and talks are all locally available for the visually impaired, providing the opportunity to meet face to face and build new relationships.

In March, members of the group and their volunteer guides were treated to a fantastic afternoon at the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham. Wonderful care had been given to the needs of those attending; additional seating was provided as well as a range of visual description texts including large print

and a hearing loop available at the entrance. The custodian was very knowledgeable and conducted a fascinating talk, describing the artwork creating a bespoke, user-led experience. It was a truly engaging way to appreciate and enjoy the range of art as well as start to understand the diverse character of the artist.

It was a packed house the following week at the usual venue of the Burnham Bowls Club when 23 members attended a gourmet cheese session. Enchanting flavour combinations allowed us to sample expertly curated



pairings including St Ella and Turkish Delight which evoked the impression of a Middle Eastern-inspired cheesecake. This was a fun filled event which also included a cheese quiz, cheese on toast and cheese performance poetry. In the spirit of variety and poet Brian Bilston, it could be described as brie-lliant!

Ten members, together with their guides, visited the fascinating Waltham Place in April to explore and learn about the holistic philosophy that makes the farm and its gardens unique. The audio and sight guiding experience of our volunteers are crucial in environments like this and demonstrate the understanding relationships that are built within the group.

Everyone walked out across the estate to visit specially selected spots to listen to the host highlighting the seasonal elements of the land, focusing on farming, biodiversity and gardening. Inspiring discussions centred

around healthy ecosystems and the value of wildlife. The breadth of topics was incredible ranging from pigs, trees and vegetables right through to the importance of the invertebrates which play a role in sustaining this oasis. The visit was a perfect example of our core values in action.

BucksVision South East Division is here to make a positive difference for people living with a sight condition and offer support through all stages of sight loss. We provide our members with transport to our clubs, sight guiding as well as social opportunities to connect with others, share experiences and learn new skills.

■ *Contact the local BucksVision South East Division team by email to southeastbv@gmail.com or call 01753 373 638 to find out more about our services, meetings or volunteering opportunities.*

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Stoke Common

Butterflies of Stoke Common

The City of London took over management of Stoke Common in 2007.

Since that time, scrub clearance with restitution of heathland habitat has continued on a regular basis, and the felling of mature pine trees has also contributed to providing more open sunny areas.

Cataloguing the species found on any SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) is clearly of great importance and so in 2017 I commenced butterfly recording on Stoke Common by setting up a butterfly transect. The UKBMS (UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme) has been amassing data for 50 years, and is one of the best insect databases in the world. A transect follows a fixed route, and for butterflies, is walked on a weekly basis between the 1st of April and 30th of September when weather conditions are suitable. Butterfly species and their number are noted within a 5m square in front and to the sides of the walker.

Over the last nine years, some 26 of the UK's 59 butterfly species have been recorded on the common. The majority of these species have been found annually, but some rarer species, notably the White Admiral, Clouded Yellow and Dingy Skipper have only been recorded occasionally.

Clouded Yellows and also Painted Ladies are much more plentiful in years when conditions are particularly suitable for them to migrate over from Europe in significant numbers.

There are five species that overwinter as adults in the UK: the Red Admiral, Comma, Brimstone, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell. These are thus the first species that usually appear in the spring, although sadly the Small Tortoiseshell has declined by 86% in the last 50 years and has not been recorded on the common in the last nine years.

Two other early species are on the wing as I write this in late April, the Holly Blue, a pretty, pale, silvery blue butterfly, and the Orange-tip. Confusingly, only the males have



Opposite page: Brimstone

Above: Orange-tip

orange tips, whilst females look like a rather weakly flying white! Some common species have two broods in the year, appearing in April and again in July. The Small, Large and Green-veined Whites, Brimstone, Holly Blue and Small Heath are all double-brooded.

There are three slightly different areas that make up Stoke Common, each with differing habitats.

The main common area mostly consists of heather, scrub birch and patches of bramble, the latter attracting the Large, Small, and Essex Skippers to feed in the summer.

North of Stoke Common Road there is more grassland which attracts the Common Blue and also an area containing Alder Buckthorn, which is the food plant of the Brimstone. Female Brimstones can be observed laying single eggs on the underside of the new leaves. When hatched, the caterpillars align themselves with the veins of the Buckthorn leaves to camouflage themselves.


The western area attracts the greatest diversity of butterfly species, helped by the presence of a couple of large Buddleia bushes. This area is favoured by the large fast-flying Silver-washed Fritillary.

In terms of annual abundance, the Meadow Brown consistently tops the list followed by the Gatekeeper, with often the Small Heath in third place. These species are well adapted to the grassy heathland habitat on Stoke Common. The Peacock, Speckled Wood and Brimstone, together with the Small and Essex Skippers, vary in numbers but complete the top five from year to year. At this stage, the series is too small and covers too short a time period for us to discern any meaningful local trends from the data.

The Dingy Skipper has only been recorded on a single occasion in 2022 whilst surveying for reptiles! We have planned a special focus on

this species in 2026. The Dingy Skipper favours open sunny and sheltered locations characterised by sparse vegetation, with patches of bare ground, as well as the presence of Common Birds-foot-trefoil, its primary larval food plant. In May and June, at the peak flight season we have a team of volunteers lined up for two days to walk the site to try and determine if there is a colony present, and also the food-plant. It is hoped that the continuing habitat restoration work will further improve the habitat to suit this particular species and increase abundance.

Stoke Common is a terrific asset for local people and everyone who walks there can contribute to the scientific records about the site by using the free 'citizen science' apps such as *iRecord* to report insect sightings. Give it a try!

 Jonathan Jones,
Volunteer (*Lepidoptera*)

Top: Essex Skipper
Bottom: Dingy Skipper



Stars of stage and screen

The sun is shining (some of the time) and Stoke Poges Singers are looking forward to two events with a lighter, summertime feel.

After the drama and scale of 'A Night at the Opera' back in March, we are reverting to a programme of non-classical music for our 'Stars of Stage and Screen' summer concert.

Musical theatre, and film and TV soundtracks have provided a rich catalogue of some of the best popular music written over the past one hundred years or so. We will be delving into this catalogue to bring to the stage a selection of well-known tunes from, for example, *The Sound of Music*, *South Pacific*, *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Forrest Gump*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Ghost*, *As Time Goes By* and *The Vicar of Dibley*. All instantly recognisable and perfect for a warm (hopefully) summer's evening! The concert will be held at St Andrew's Church Centre, Stoke Poges, on Saturday 11th July at 7.30pm.

Before then, on June 6th, we are inviting everyone to an afternoon of community singing with tea and cakes. This is a fundraiser for the choir towards the cost of rehearsing for and putting on our three main concerts a year in aid of nominated charities.

The theme of the sing-along will be 'Old Time Music Hall' and, given the significance of the date in WWII, we will also include some war-time favourites from that era. Do join us for this opportunity to get dressed up and enjoy sing-along classics and cake. What's there not to like? This will also be held at St Andrew's, starting at 2.30pm, and tickets are £12 including refreshments.



And finally, a belated thank you to the capacity audience at 'A Night at the Opera' – your support and generosity on the evening meant we were able to raise £1100 for the Chalfont Dementia Support charity. And what an evening it was! There was a great informal atmosphere with the café style layout and drinks and nibbles served at table. The choir was in good voice and the 9-piece band added considerably to the overall sound befitting such wonderful and dramatic operatic choruses.

There were many highlights, but we doubt the range of ironmongery used by the percussionist in the 'Anvil Chorus' has been seen or heard before in St Andrew's!

■ Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.ticketsource.co.uk/stokepogessingers

Inclusion, determination and enjoyment

We are pleased to share our news from The Stoke Poges School, including some of the exciting activities the children have been enjoying recently.

In April, our children proudly took part in the TCS Mini London Marathon in Schools, a nationwide school participation event linked to the world-famous London Marathon.

Over the course of two days, they completed the full 3.2km challenge, choosing to run or walk at their own pace. The event was all about inclusion, determination and enjoyment, celebrating every child's effort and the love of being active.



We were incredibly proud to see the children cheering one another on, offering encouragement and showing wonderful support for their peers.

A big focus of our summer term was the 100th birthday of Sir David Attenborough. As a school that values nature, wildlife, and caring for our planet, we wanted to celebrate this incredible milestone in a way that reflects his lifelong dedication to protecting the natural world.

To mark this special day, the children took part in a WWF fundraising project. They thoroughly enjoyed learning about endangered animals and discovering how even small actions can make a big difference in protecting our planet. Each class chose an endangered animal to adopt, and the children enthusiastically set to work raising money at home by completing nature and environmentally-focused good deeds.

On Friday 8th May, we celebrated his birthday with a special Science Day themed around endangered animals. The children came to school dressed as endangered animals and took part in a range of exciting science-based activities, including a creative nest building competition. The day was a wonderful celebration of environmental responsibility, inspiring the children to think about how they can help protect the planet and its wildlife.

As the weather improved, we enjoyed getting outdoors and taking part in some of our favourite annual summer activities.

Year 3 had a fantastic time visiting The Look Out Discovery Centre in Bracknell to enrich their science learning. The children explored



a range of interactive zones, including forces and movement, light and sound, and water and woodland. These hands-on exhibits really brought science to life and sparked plenty of curiosity and excitement.

As our Year 6 pupils prepare to move on to their new schools, we send them off with our very best wishes. We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved and know they will continue to shine in this exciting next chapter.



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Scoring 20s

The years go by so quickly at Stoke Poges Photographic Club!

It seems like only yesterday I was typing up our copy for *Stoke Poges News* just prior to the end of the 2024/25 season, and here we are nearly at the end of another season again.

In April, our last competition before the finals was a set print subject of 'Action/Sport' when Neil Griffin and Ken Grant both scored 20s in the Advanced section for 'Over The Hill' and 'The Race Is On' respectively. They both chose a motorised vehicle for their sport.

Another stunning image was entered into the Intermediate section for the 'Bridges' set subject when Judy Giles scored a 20 for her picture of 'The Sanxiantai Arch Bridge'.

We will be having a stall at the Horticultural Show on Saturday 25th July. There will be some prints on show and a rolling display of images that were entered for the 2025/26 season and details of our free to enter competition to win a year's subscription to the club. This year, the subject is 'A Wonder of Nature'. The image could be of one type of thing or even a wonderful view – it is up to the photographer's interpretation. Entries are to be emailed by the closing date of 23rd August.

Please visit our website at www.stokepogesphotoclub.co.uk for more details or come along to our stall to find out more about the competition and our club.

 Linda Miles
Chair, Stoke Poges Photographic Club



'Over The Hill' by Neil Griffin



'The Race Is On' by Ken Grant



'The Sanxiantai Arch Bridge' by Judy Giles

400 years ahead, and still no winning numbers

This spring, Stoke Poges Players leapt 400 years into the future but our theatre fans weren't lucky enough to discover the winning lottery numbers – only fatalities!

Audiences enjoyed interactive murder mystery evenings that kept them guessing until the final reveal in Theatre Fan Fatality, and speculating throughout the sci-fi adventure StarPort 5. Thank you to everyone who supported us and especially to those who joined in with fantastic futuristic outfits.

We'd also like to say a huge thank you to Stoke Poges Parish Council for the honour of being awarded the Jubilee Cup. It's always a pleasure to bring theatre to our local community and meet other society groups.

As we wind down for our summer break, the Players will be busy behind the scenes reading scripts and preparing for our next big production - our winter pantomime. It's the perfect opportunity for anyone interested in a new hobby in the arts, or simply looking to make new friends, to come and give our society a try.

As one member said, "I love coming to Stoke Poges Players as it helps me smile after a long day at work. I hear laughing burns calories, and we definitely do a lot of that!"

■ *We'd love to hear from you! You'll find us at the Stoke Poges Village Fete and the Horticultural Society's Summer Show – do come and say hello. If you can't make it, feel free to get in touch via email at stoke.poges.players@gmail.com or via Facebook or Instagram. Don't forget to follow us for all the latest updates!*



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Another packed programme

The summer months promise an interesting variety of activities for Hedgerley Historical Society.

'Wensleydale Whey – The Grate Cheese Quest' with Mikron Theatre

Tuesday 9th June, 7pm

Join us for Mikron Theatre Company's fifth visit to Hedgerley as they transport us to the Yorkshire Dales for a hilarious quest to revive a lost recipe.

We'll delve into the rich history of cheese, from its humble beginnings to its place on the most sophisticated platters, featuring a cast of characters who are whey out there!

This is an outdoor show (or indoors if wet) with seating provided and light refreshments available. Tickets can be purchased from the Mikron Box Office at www.mikron.org.uk or by calling 01484 843 701.



'A Brief History of Myddleton Street' with Dave Annal

Wednesday 17th June, 8pm

Myddleton Street in Clerkenwell was the home of The Family Records Centre between 1997 and 2008. During Dave Annal's ten years of working there he became fascinated by the history of the street and the surrounding area. This talk aims to bring the history of Myddleton Street to life: from its earliest days as a field path on the outskirts of London, right up to the present day. Find out how water, the theatre and the watch making industry all had a part to play in this fascinating story.

'A Summer Evening at Bekonscot Model Village' with Brian Newman-Smith

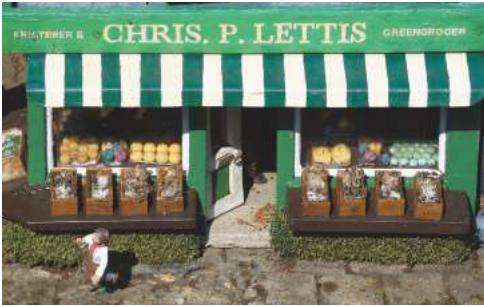
Wednesday 8th July, 6.30pm

Bekonscot Model Village and Railway is the world's oldest and original model village, opening for the first time in 1929.

In 1927, Mr Roland Callingham, a London accountant, instructed gardeners to dig a swimming pool at his home in Beaconsfield.

The pool and tennis courts were used for garden parties, attended by politicians, royals and aristocrats who would come out for a breath of country air.

Local buildings and personal favourites of the staff provided much of the village's inspiration. Bekonscot's founder was never concerned with precision: it was, and always will be, eccentric, fun and full of character.



Join us at Bekonscot on Warwick Road in Beaconsfield, where Brian Newman-Smith, the Managing Director, will describe its history of and how the model village is maintained for all generations to enjoy.

'The English Village' with Dr Jill Eyers

Wednesday 15th July, 8pm

Discover when, where and why villages emerged in the English landscape. A number of good examples provide many interesting insights and dispel some common myths.



Coach outing to Canterbury

Wednesday 5th August, 8.30am

Our coach will depart from outside Premier Hedgerley Hill at 8.30am and we will head east to the historic city of Canterbury.

You will have the opportunity to visit a UNESCO World Heritage Site, including Canterbury Cathedral which dates back to 597AD when St Augustine became the first Archbishop, the ruins of St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church, where St Augustine first worshipped in England's oldest working parish church.

If you like museums, you can visit the Roman Museum, Beaney House of Art and Knowledge, and Kent Museum of Freemasonry. A perfect way to discover interesting facts and hidden gems of the city is by taking a river boat tour, or punts can be hired by the more adventurous!

Guided (or self-guided) walking tours are available and you can relax in Dane John and Westgate Gardens. There are plenty of cafes and restaurants plus retail therapy in the extensive shopping area.

■ *Events take place at Hedgerley Memorial Hall unless otherwise stated. For more details, please contact John Lovelock by email to jdlovelock@btinternet.com or visit www.hedgerleyhistoricalsociety.org*

Quiet moments of comfort

Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens offer a living, welcoming space where the community can come to find quiet moments of comfort all year round.

Open every day, the gardens have become a valued sanctuary for wellbeing, bringing people together through a thoughtful programme of events.

Central to this offering is the Bereavement Café, running once a month. This is a peer-led space providing gentle, informal support for those navigating loss. Upcoming dates for the Bereavement Café are Mondays 1st June, 6th July, 3rd August, and 7th September. The

sessions create a sense of community through shared understanding, conversation, and compassion. All are welcome to attend.

Our Pop-Up Café on Friday 26th June offers a relaxed opportunity to take a moment, enjoy homemade cakes and refreshments, and soak in the peaceful surroundings whilst supporting the gardens.

On Saturday 18th July, the Butterfly Walk celebrates the gardens' natural beauty, encouraging visitors to do something different and connect with the delicate wildlife that calls these beautiful gardens home.





Later in the year, the Bat Safari on Friday 18th September provides a unique and memorable evening experience, blending education with the quiet magic of the gardens at dusk. This family friendly activity is open to all.

The Macmillan Coffee Morning on Wednesday 30th September is where community spirit shines through fundraising, conversation and shared support for those affected by cancer. Again, all are welcome.

Together, these events reflect the gardens' enduring role as a cornerstone of the community, supporting wellbeing, fostering connection and offering a space for everyone.

■ For more information, please contact the team on 01753 523 744 or by email to memorialgardens.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



Stoke Poges Parish Council

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cllrcafter@stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mary Crocker (Vice-chair)

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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

HR Committee

Chair: John Harwood

Vice-chair: Mary Crocker

Saera Carter BEM

Parish Office

Julie Simmonds

Clerk & Legal & Financial Officer

The Village Centre, Rogers Lane SL2 4LP

01753 644 803

theclerk@stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pavilion caretaker: 07881 388 778

Parish Council website

For details of all council meetings, services and initiatives, village information and events calendar.

www.stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk



Stoke Poges Newsflash

Sign up for news and information by email.

www.stokepogesparishcouncil.gov.uk/newsflash



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



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