



Stoke Parish Council

www.STOKE-PC-WORCS.GOV.UK

Issue 2016.3

PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER WINTER 2016

Chairman's Message

I would like to wish all parishioners and councillors a Very Happy Christmas and Prosperous 2017.

Due to family commitments I was very disappointed to miss the Remembrance Day Service this year. Last year's service was very moving for me. My thanks go to John Ellis and Sue Abel who were there to represent your Parish Council.

This year we are again celebrating our Carols in the Park on the 10th December at Stoke Heath Recreation Area. The service will begin at 5.00pm. There will be free hot drinks and mince pies. Please do wrap up warm and join us for a great family occasion.

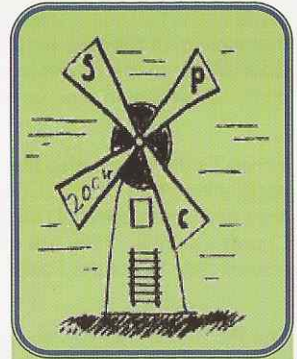
Regarding the development of the former Polymer Latex site, we are hoping to have some news over the next few months to share with you in respect of a start date.

Our new Parish Council website is currently under development and will hopefully be available before the end of the year and I hope that you will find it helpful and informative. The website address will continue to be www.stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk.

What is the purpose of a Parish Council?

The Parish Council is a small local authority. Its councillors are elected for a four year term. Vacancies do occur on the Council between elections and are filled either by a by-election or co-option.

Each year the councillors choose a Chairman from amongst their number. There is also a Vice Chairman and a Clerk who is the Proper Officer and the Responsible Financial Officer of



Inside this issue:

Chairman's Message	1
Chairman's Message Continued	2
Carols in the park	3
Christmas Lights Competition	3
Look After Yourself This Winter	4
Safety at christmas	5
Autumn scenes from around the Parish	6
Liz Miller—Parish Councillor	7
Forthcoming Parish Council Meetings	7
Councillors' Surgeries	7
Contacts	8

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Council. We are very lucky to have John Ellis and Neil Gulliver who fill those roles admirably.

Parish Councils have a number of formal powers to look after playing fields, play areas and village greens. They maintain and guard things such as rights of way, bus shelters, public seats and small scale street lighting. The Parish Council can either provide these things themselves or allocate funds to others, such as charities, volunteers etc to do so. Parish Councils have the power to improve the quality of the community by spending sums of money on things which, in their opinion, are in the interests of the Parish or its inhabitants.

Parish Councils are also the focal point for local consultations on matters such as planning applications and District Council strategic planning. The Parish Councillors know the local area and can represent the Parish with its views to other authorities such as the District and County Council. They are entitled to be consulted on things like schools and roads. They are also eligible to put the Parish's case at public enquiries.

The Parish Council funds come from a small part of the council tax. There is no general government grant, so the Council are very aware that funds do need to be distributed wisely. The accounts are strictly audited every year by both an internal and external auditor.

The Parish Council meets on the first Monday of every month (except August) at 7.30pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre. Every parishioner is welcome to attend and there is a public question time at the start of every meeting. In addition there is a Parish Assembly which is held in May each year which is also open to all Parishioners.

St Michael's & All Angels Church Tower Appeal

Just 12 months ago a Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Gary Stokes to raise funds for the restoration of the tower at our Parish Church. Since then numerous fund raising events ranging from coffee mornings to a grand midsummer ball, as well as poetry readings and a visit by Henry Sandon of Antiques Roadshow fame, who gave a very interesting talk followed by valuations on various items of porcelain. In the first year of the appeal, the grand sum of £28,000 has been raised thanks to the enthusiastic work of the fund raising committee.

It is hoped that during the forthcoming year an application will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (with the help of our local MP) in order to raise in excess of £200,000.

Again, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas.

Peter Williams
Chairman

CAROLS IN THE PARK

You are all invited to attend the Parish Council's 'Carols in the Park' event being held on Saturday 10 December 2016 starting at 5.00pm at Stoke Heath Recreation Area.

The carols will be conducted by the Revd Wyn Beynon

and will be followed by

free hot drinks and refreshments provided by the Parish Council.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION

The Parish Council will again this year be running a competition for the best external Christmas lights in the Parish. The display must obviously be Christmas related and in good taste.

A prize of a gift voucher towards the cost of a meal at a local hostelry will be given to the winner. There will be a prize for both the best display in Stoke Prior and Stoke Heath.

You do not need to register your entry as Parish Councillors will tour the parish on an unspecified date in December to choose the winners.

Winners will be announced in the Spring Newsletter



LOOK AFTER YOURSELF THIS WINTER

Keeping Well in Winter Yourself:

- Check daytime and bedroom night time temperature. Maintain at a minimum 18-21 degrees. If you are restricted to one room make sure you can maintain it at the minimum temperature. (Seek local service support if necessary).
- Keep active. Get up and move around regularly, remove hazards that may cause a trip or fall.
- Dress warmly, eat hot food and take warm drinks.
- Make sure slippers, shoes and boots are a snug fit and have non-slip soles.
- If you have health concerns, call your GP or 111.
- Ensure you are stocked up on medication and food. Order prescriptions/groceries in advance or ask friends and relatives. Contact the Foodbank on 07542 102649 in an emergency.

Going outdoors:

- Tune into the local weather forecast – www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast.
- If you have to go out dress warmly and wear non-slip footwear, hat, gloves and scarf to cover your mouth.
- Tell someone where you are going and what time to expect you back.
- If you have a mobile phone, keep it with you at all times, keep it charged and ensure that emergency contact numbers are on speed dial.
- Take the weather into account when planning outdoor activities. Avoid exposing yourself to cold and icy conditions if you are at higher risk of illness or falls.
- If essential, discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow from outside your home.

Winter Ailments:

- Get a FREE flu jab if you are over 65 or in a high risk group. Ask your GP or local pharmacist for details.
- Find reliable health information online at NHS Choices www.nhs.co.uk/staywell
- Dress warmly, eat hot food and take warm drinks.
- Make sure slippers, shoes and boots are a snug fit and have non slip soles.
- If you have health concerns call your GP or 111
- Ensure you have stocks of medication and food.

Have your home prepared:

- Contact Act on Energy for free, impartial household energy advice 0800 988 2881
- Contact Age UK for a FREE home energy check with £90 of FREE equipment to make your home warmer 01527 871840.
- Check your heating is working and get it serviced annually by a qualified Gas Safe engineer. www.gassaferegister.co.uk.
- Have your chimney swept at least once a year to reduce the risk of chimney fires.
- Contact your local fire and rescue service for a FREE home safety check 0800 032 1155.
- Get electric blankets tested, test smoke alarms and change their batteries regularly.
- Make sure you can access sufficient fuel supplies. Book oil, gas, LPG or log deliveries in advance.
- Always have a torch ready in case of emergencies.
- Protect your pipes from freezing, draught proof around windows and doors avoiding blocking ventilation points. Contact Act on Energy for advice 0800 988 2881.

SAFETY AT CHRISTMAS

Don't let burglars take the sparkle out of your Christmas!

If you go away over Christmas, even just for the day, make sure your home looks occupied and do not tempt the opportunist burglar. By taking the following advice you can prevent crime this Christmas.

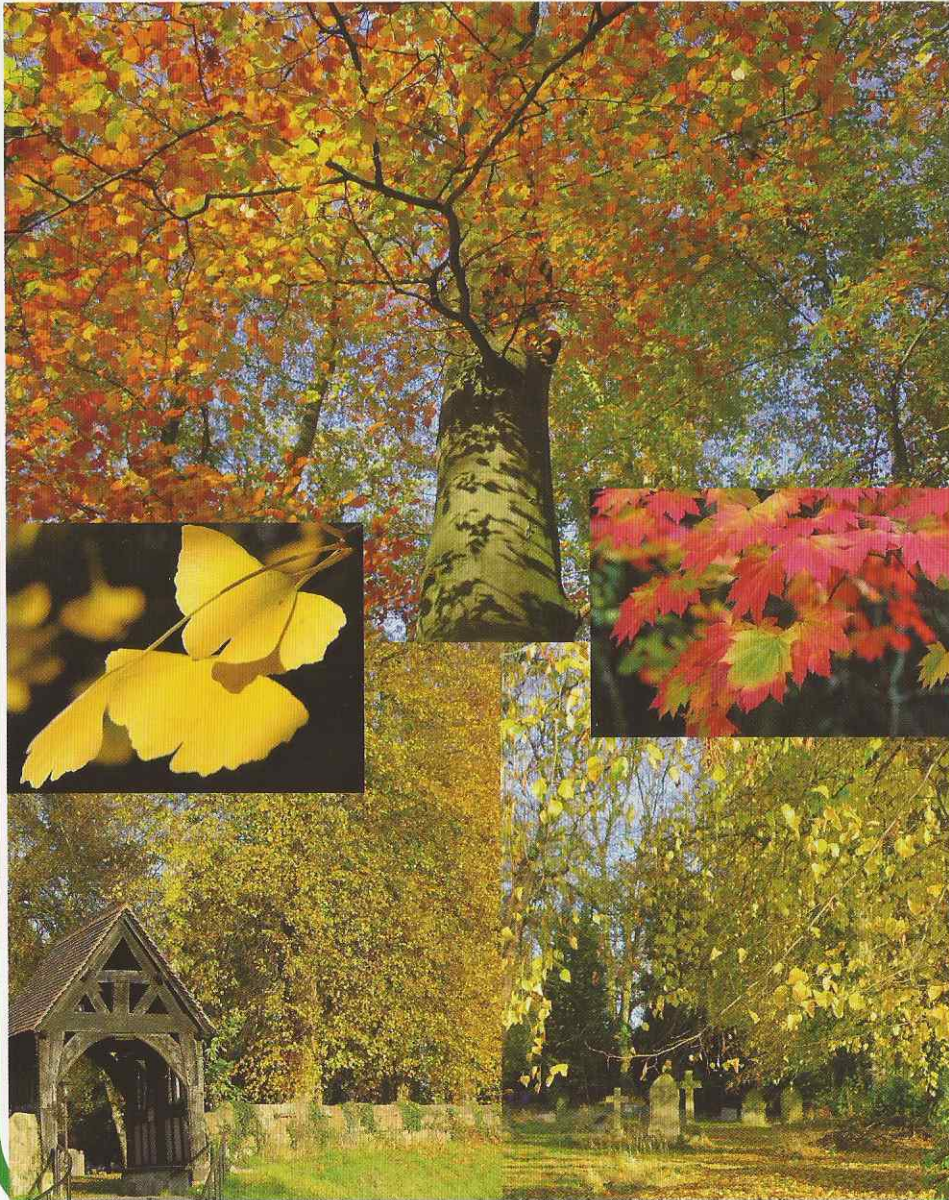
- You may need to keep those presents that Santa has dropped off early, out of sight of inquisitive little ones, but don't be tempted to store them in the garden shed, in the caravan or the boot of the car. Keep them in a safe place inside the house or ask a friend if they can keep them for you.
- Do not put your Christmas presents under the tree too early. They may look pretty but you are not the only person they will appeal to. Burglars have been known to break in and steal ready wrapped gifts from under the tree. Keep them out of sight until Christmas morning.
- If you go out to visit friends or family or know you will not be home until after it has gone dark leave the radio on and use the timer switch to make the lights come on so it looks like someone is at home.
- Your Christmas tree may look lovely with its bright lights, but don't leave the curtains open overnight for everyone to admire it. Burglars are attracted to twinkly lights too!
- Make sure all your doors, patio doors and windows are locked and secure, even when you are at home and make a special point of checking they are all locked before you go to bed at night. In 30% of all burglaries, the thieves don't even have to break in. They get in through unlocked doors and windows.
- Before you wrap your Christmas presents write down the model and the serial numbers and keep them in a safe place. You can also register your new things free on the national property register – <http://www.westmercia.police.uk/cms/www.immobilise.com>. If you are unfortunate to be burgled any property recovered by the police, which is registered there can be returned to you. It will also help to secure a prosecution for the burglar as the police will be able to prove that the item was stolen.
- If you are buying bicycles, ask the shop about post coding schemes for your bike. Most bike shops will also let you store the bikes with them until nearer to Christmas Day. Your local Safer Neighbourhood Team will also be able to advise about property marking.
- Do not keep large amounts of cash in the house. Go to the bank as and when you need money or use debit cards.
- Finally if someone offers you something at a tempting price, ask yourself "Could it be stolen?". Not only may the quality be substandard but it could be stolen. By buying stolen property you are supporting criminals and committing a crime yourself.

And just imagine how you would feel if you knew that someone else was opening your gift this Christmas.



'AUTUMN SCENES FROM AROUND THE PARISH'

Photos taken by Cllr Jill Howe



LIZ MILLER – PARISH COUNCILLOR

I have recently joined Stoke Parish Council, attending the last couple of meetings.

I have lived in Stoke Prior all my life and older members of the community will probably know me as Jack and Elsie Neal's daughter. As a child I attended Stoke Works School, then Meadows School in Bromsgrove. I then transferred to Bromsgrove High School and then to Matlock Teacher Training College. I married my husband Brian in 1974 and we have a son, Jonathan, who was a Parish Councillor up until his marriage last June, when he moved out of the area.

I have been very fortunate in my career spending many happy years at Charford First School and then as a Reception teacher and Early Years Co-Ordinator at Meadows First School, the school I had attended as a child.

Now that I have retired, I find that I have some free time for reading, walking and enjoying various country sports, not to mention visits to various garden centres for coffee with friends.

I hope that I will be able to serve the community by becoming a member of the Parish Council as it endeavours to develop and improve conditions and facilities for the people of the parish.

FORTHCOMING PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Parish Council will meet at 7.30pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre on the following dates over the next few months in 2017:

Monday 9 January 2017

Monday 6 February 2017

Monday 6 March 2017

Monday 3 April 2017

COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

May I remind you that Councillors' surgeries continue to take place on the first Saturday of each month at 9.30am at the Parish Council Office, 17B Ryefields Road, Stoke Prior (next to Capelli Hair Studio) on the first Saturday of every month between 9.30am and 10.30am.

These surgeries are attended by John Ellis, Vice Chairman of the Parish Council together with your local District Councillors. These meetings are your opportunity to let us know about the issues which affect you. If you are unable to attend but still want an issue addressed please let Neil Gulliver, the Parish Clerk know by calling 01527 757190 or email clerk@stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk

Contacts

8

Peter Williams (Chairman)	07970782690	Planning (Chairman), Communications, Fete Working Group,
John Ellis (Vice-Chairman)	01527 570287	Planning, Communications, Finance & Resources, Fete Working Group, Stoke Heath recreation area, Worcs CALC representative
Diane Brown	01527 821692	Planning, Finance & Resources, Fete Working Group, Picnic Site, Worcs CALC representative
Jillian Howe	01527 570274	Planning, Communications, Finance & Resources, Fete Working Group
Susan Abel	07808053556	Planning, Communications (Chairman), Fete Working Group
Dean Smith	07956609500	Planning, Communications, Fete Working Group, CPRE representative
Keith Shakespeare	07808173400	Finance & Resources, Fete Working Group (Lead), Stoke Prior Village Hall Management Committee
Paul Eden	07801922860	Finance & Resources, Fete Working Group, Stoke Works recreation area
Alyson Jewson	01527 578821	Fete Working Group
Chris Jewson	01527 578821	Parish Footpaths Officer, Fete Working Group
Liz Eden	07803764360	Fete Working Group
Liz Miller	01527 831942	Fete Working Group

Parish Clerk	Neil Gulliver Parish Office, 17B Ryefields Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4NA, Tel 01527 757190 E-mail: clerk@stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk
Parish Website	http://www.stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk
Comments and Articles	clerk@stoke-pc-worcs.gov.uk
District Councillors	Malcolm Glass (Conservative) 07791 187901 Mike Thompson (Labour) 07861 739942
County Councillors	Bromsgrove South Division Christopher Bloore (Labour and Co-operative) Tel 07905 612710 E-mail christopherbloore@hotmail.co.uk