

STOURTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 1 May 2024

This report is a brief summary of some of the routine and other matters the Parish Council has been managing on behalf of our residents.

National Trust

The Parish Council continues to work with the National Trust on behalf of the village and we appreciate having Cllr Niemand on the Council keeping us updated and being supportive with our concerns. We liaise with the National Trust and local residents in respect of the annual Christmas Lighting event allowing a co-operative approach to issues as they arise.

Litter Pick

This year we had another successful litter pick organised by Cllr Hoare. The day itself was a wonderful example of community cohesion. Cllrs and other residents regularly litter pick in addition throughout the year. Sadly this has to be an ongoing requirement as it takes very little time for litter to reappear.

Thanks are due to the National Trust for providing a dog waste bin at Alfreds Tower, following a complaint brought to the attention of Cllr Gray.

WC Winter Salt Scheme

Cllr Fearon has secured an additional salt bin and shovels which should make it easier to salt the road to Gasper in icy weather.

My Wilts App and Parish Steward

Many problems such as fly tipping and pot holes should be reported on the MyWiltsApp which is the quickest and best way to get issues sorted. The more times a problem is logged the higher on the list it may go. We also have a visit from the Parish Steward for up to a day a month. Cllr Hoare keeps a list of issues reported to him in order to brief the Steward when he comes. In essence if one man and a van can undertake the work without mechanical assistance, it is within the Parish Steward's scope.

Public Access Defibrillator

We are grateful to Erik Ruane who completes the essential monthly checks of the Parish Council defibrillator. Our defibrillator is situated under the arch from the car park into the Spread Eagle Courtyard, near the Parish Council Noticeboard. The nearest What3Word position is [fish.traffic.unloaded](#). What3Word is the most accurate way to direct the emergency services.

Stourton Lane

Cllrs Gray, Fearon and I represent the Parish Council at the LHFIG – Local Highways & Footpaths Improvement Group meetings. They and I have attended several meetings regarding safety issues along Stourton Lane. Two new Oncoming Traffic in the Middle of the Road signs have at last been installed. Repainting faded speed limit road markings should await the results of our campaign to reduce the speed limit along Stourton Lane.

Cllr Gray researched and put together a comprehensive case on policy grounds to extend the reduction of the speed limit from 40 to 30 mph towards the B3092 from the point the Atkins report recommended ending it at the entrance to Home Farm. Cllr Gray has spoken at a succession of LHFIG meetings and numerous letters have been written. The process has been long and difficult. There has been a lack of any response or any communication from the Wiltshire Council portfolio holder and the proposal to extend the 30mph limit has apparently been refused as we have been told the Atkins report has been accepted, but we are appealing

and continue with efforts to support the residents in that part of the village.

Website

We have a new website which is managed by our clerk. She has taken over from Cllr Hoare who set up and managed the previous website for several years. The address remains the same www.stourton.org.uk We now have new email addresses for all councillors compliant with GDPR regulations. The details are under our councillor names on the website.

Donations

The Council made donations to Mere Link Scheme, St Peters LCC for churchyard upkeep, the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, the Dorset branch of Citizens Advice which covers our area of Wiltshire, and also Carer Support which operates in our local community.

Thanks

Finally I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Stourton with Gasper residents to thank George Jeans for his work for our village on Wiltshire Council, Fran Hill her for work as clerk, and especially thank all our Cllrs for everything they do for the community.

Parish Councillors work without payment and give much of their time on behalf of all residents.

Stourton Memorial Hall Report - Helen Baker

Good evening to all and my apologies for not being able to join you in person.

Bookings

The hall continues to be a very popular venue for weddings and events.

Bookings are steady with 8 weddings this year and 6 already booked for 2025 and 2 for 2026. Craft fairs continue to be a regular booking and catering days are always popular with the local schools, churches and charities.

All local residents of Stourton and Gasper, receive a substantial discounted rate on hall hire with some non profit/ charitable events free of hire charges.

Please contact Helen if you wish to use this fabulous facility for a wedding, event or party.

Update on Sound System

This is being upgraded this year and will be a much more simplified and user friendly system. The proposal is an iPad with several inbuilt settings for different use - eg a music setting, for weddings etc a speech setting, a cinema setting for film night. This will be secured permanently but allowing access to hall users.

We have received a very kind donation from Audrey Hoare towards the sound system upgrade.

New Screen

We have a very lovely motorised new screen which is operated by the remote control found in the 'floor box' along with the HDMI cables and projector remote. This has proved very popular at film nights and private event hire.

Maintenance and decorating

SP8 cleaners continue to do a great job - they will be doing a deep clean in the kitchen once a month during wedding season (May to end September)

Hall, woodwork and radiators (including kitchen door and skirtings have been freshened up so we are in tip top condition for the coming year.

There is still a fairly substantial patch of water damage near the kitchen door on the ceiling, which will be repaired and painted by the NT. We have a painter on standby when the NT have completed the remedial work required to ensure the leak has been repaired.

Hall

Have requested a quote to have the hall floor sanded and treated as now looking a little tired and stained - watch this space!

Thank you all

Kind Regards

Helen

Kilmington & Stourton CC 2023/2024 – David Barton

We are hoping that the 2024 season will be an enjoyable one for all teams. We have approximately 70 members (over half below the age of 18), 3 Junior teams, 2 Adult sides on Saturday playing in the Somerset League, and a Women and Girls softball team.

We are offering a bit less than usual for members this year as some players have moved on (work and university etc.). We are down from 3 teams on Saturdays to 2 and have reduced the number of junior teams from 4 to 3, partly because we lack volunteers to manage these activities.

Our facilities are in good order and we recently received a grant of £7,000 from the England and Wales Cricket Board and £2,600 from Wiltshire Council to refurbish our practice nets. Stourton Memorial Hall kindly donated £1000 in 2023 to assist with this. Catering days in the Memorial Hall took place at Easter 2023 and raised £1,800 for the club.

We have no paid employees, with the exception of an occasional coach, and the club survives because of the dedication of a small group of volunteers. We like to think we make an important contribution to the Parish providing young and old with the opportunity to exercise in an attractive and safe environment. There is a cricket match every Saturday at The Park from May to September (weather permitting) and supporters and spectators are always welcome.

David Barton
May 2024

Councillor George Jeans - Wiltshire Council

Is sit on the Wiltshire Police and Crime Panel, Audit, Pensions, Southern Planning and the South West Wilts Area Board. I sit on Mere Town Council and I regularly attend Zeals, West Knoyle, Stourton with Gasper and Kilminster Parish Councils.

I spend many hours visiting local function across the Division from Kilminster to West Knoyle. I find this is a good way to find what people want, number one being good roads and housing. At Easter I was alerted to "The Welcome to Mere" sign on the B3092, which is the Mere to Frome Road, was coming adrift, has to be holiday time, therefore I personally secured it as best I could and I must thank the Mere Town Council for quickly repairing it. Also, at Easter someone parked over someone's entrance which I did do what I could to resolve.

I spend time supporting the wishes of the locally elected Parish and Town Councils which sometimes is over a long period of time. An example being Combe Barn junction with the B3092 in Kilminster. It is a matter of continually raising the subject when the opportunity arises to get the potential danger resolved by getting it placed on a highways improvement list, even a very long term one.

I have had recent training in Trowbridge to enhance my knowledge when sitting on Wiltshire's Pension Fund committee. While in Trowbridge that day, I note one of the shopping centres is almost devoid of shops, looking in need of rejuvenation. Wiltshire Council is working in partnership with town councils around the county to develop projects that will attract more visitors to town centres. The project starts with a regeneration scheme in Westbury, where both Wiltshire Council and Westbury Town Council are developing a scheme for a future funding bid that will look to improve the town's library, high street and the surrounding areas, much needed in some Wiltshire towns in my opinion.

How life is changing when young everyone knew locally where there councillor resided as my memory extends. The Government minister has issued a statement In response to recent concerns from elected members about intimidation in public life. It makes councillors aware of the sensitive provisions in Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011. The sensitive interests' provisions provide for details about a registered interest to be excluded from versions of the Register of Interests available for public inspection (or published online) where a member and monitoring officer agree that the disclosure of that interest could lead to violence or intimidation of them or their family. The Government encourages monitoring officers to look sympathetically at accommodating requests for the withholding of home addresses from published versions of the register of interests where there are legitimate concerns of violence or intimidation.

Wiltshire Council's budget for 2024/25 was formally approved at a meeting of Full Council on 20 February 2024. The council is forecasting a small underspend of around £634,000 for the 2023/24 financial year. This coming financial year, 2024/25, an additional £36m has been added into the council's service budgets. Overall, the council's budget for 2024/25 stands at around £490m. More than half of that is spent on adult and children's social care services. The most significant spending in 2024/25 will be on: Adult services - £179.4m, Families and children - £70.8m, Environment - £49.6m, Highways and transport - £43m, Education and skills - £38.9m

Wiltshire Council has allocated an extra £10m over the next two years to spend on filling potholes and a road resurfacing programme that will help to prevent potholes and other highways defects in all areas of the county. The investment will also fund more small, local repairs to the highways and verge repairs on rural roads. This is in addition to the £20.7m the council receives from the Government's Highways Maintenance fund for 2024/25, plus the £5.2m from the Department for Transport's recently announced Road Resurfacing Fund. The budget puts in an additional £1m investment into extra gully cleaning work and reactive pothole filling. This is on top of the £1m that was invested into improving drainage in 2022 and will effectively treble drain-clearing work since 2021.

The rolling out of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is a project that will revolutionise the

way support services may be delivered to adults, which will deliver savings but ensure people are still empowered to live good lives.

The capital programme for 2024/25 has been budgeted at around £285m. Some of the capital spend in 2024/25 will be on: Building and refurbishing council houses - £45m, Structural maintenance and bridges - £21m, Trowbridge and Salisbury Future High Streets - £11m Highways investment plan - £7m, Property carbon reduction programme inc. solar canopies - £5m, Investment in leisure centres - £3m.

The council will also Invest an additional £10m in creating additional SEND school places including creating resource bases at mainstream schools to provide young people with access to enhanced support, spending time in the base for specialist intervention while also joining mainstream classes. There is particularly high demand for adults' services, children's social care and SEND.

The footpath from Hazzards Hill to Burton over the years I have been questioned on. In the last few years, I had a sign fitted displaying private road with footpath over. The path created by the enclosures act, has a definitive width of six feet maintainable to on foot standard by the local authority which is Wiltshire Council. I am aware you can drive over a footpath to your own property in many if not all cases, that precludes anyone not invited or authorized. Wiltshire Council Highways which is not the responsible body for this path as I understand, it would be Wiltshire Council Rights of Way who have got little finance, they often persuade the landowner to keep footpaths to a standard. Both bodies have recently acquired a common head of service.

The resurfaced footpath across the Meads which I have and will continue to support, now called Eric Mitchel Way has been well received by the majority of people locally. It is pleasing that Wiltshire Council, Mere Town Council and Mere Footpaths Group have worked together to achieve this supper enhancement , which I was not sure if I would have seen in my life time. It has been made possible by developers' money and grants from Wiltshire Council and indeed Mere Town Council and The Mere Footpath Group.

Peter Binley, Head of Major Highways Projects who has been with Wiltshire Council for as long as I have at a minimum, has retired, I am sorry he has left it feels like another connection to the past has gone. Steve Wilson is now dealing with Head of Major Highways Projects. Also having been with Wiltshire Council for 13 years, Wiltshire Chief Executive Terence Herbert has accepted the post of Chief Executive with Surrey County Council and will be leaving Wiltshire Council in the summer.

A further reminder from last month, remember you now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections, including Parliamentary elections, general elections, local elections and by-elections, Police and Crime Commissioner election – which takes place on 2 May. If you want more information on Voter ID and what to do if you don't have photo ID, please visit Registering to vote - Wiltshire Council.

Building Digital UK (BDUK) has entered a contract with Wessex Internet to build gigabit capable infrastructure in South Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council have welcomed the appointment and look forward to developing our working relationship with Wessex Internet, providing operational support to enable the build. Wessex Internet anticipate connecting 14,500 premises over the next five years. BDUK and Wiltshire Council are currently in the process of analysing the deployment phases and where Wessex Internet plans to start and finish infrastructure in South Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council is hopeful for further flexibility through the BDUK Gigabit Voucher Scheme (GBVS). This scheme can provide vouchers worth up to £4,500 for homes and businesses in the hardest to reach rural areas to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections to their doorstep when part of a group. Currently the voucher scheme is paused in Wiltshire and many other parts of the UK, although this can change. The following e-mail can be used to raise specific enquires: broadband@wiltshire.gov.uk. Find out more about Project Gigabit and BDUK: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/project-gigabit. Anyone in South Wiltshire can check their status with Project Gigabit and/or register their interest and ask questions: <https://www.wessexinternet.com/project-gigabit-south-wiltshire/>

As part of its continued zero tolerance approach to tackling fly-tipping, Wiltshire Council has successfully prosecuted a Calne woman who had dumped waste on a public footpath.

A Melksham man was given a 24-month Conditional Discharge and ordered to pay £1,465 in costs for significant fly-posting across Wiltshire. I am hoping enforcement do not see some of our very worthy local community groups impacted by this, they do not fly post across Wiltshire. However, I have made you all aware.

More additional school places for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will be available in Wiltshire following a successful bid by Wiltshire Council to secure a new free school.

Update on the next stages of Local Plan and Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan.

Wiltshire had a huge response to the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, which closed on 22 November 2023. Since then, Wiltshire have been working through more than 10,000 comments from many different stakeholders and all parts of the county. Wiltshire are working to identify potential sites for allocation as part of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan, which is taking time.

Wiltshire Council is encouraging families to access healthy lunchtime free school meals in reception and years one and two if eligible, and to check if they remain eligible in year three and above. The initiative helps to save families more than £350 per year.

Wiltshire are still short of placements for foster children and looking for those interested.

There are situations that arise unexpectedly which mean young people need emergency care and support at short notice. Foster carers under this scheme provide temporary emergency care to any child or young person needing a safe place to stay until a suitable home is found. Young people in this situation are dealing with uncertainty and may also be traumatised and will need extra support. Emergency foster carers receive £900 per week per child when they have a child to stay with them and £500 per week when they don't have foster children to care for. The council would like to recruit more carers to help meet the demand.

George Jeans george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk 07710441599

PCSO – Stewart Hunt

Please find below the policing report from the last year ranging from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

There has been a total of 6 crimes recorded in your area which is an increase from last year where 0 were recorded.

We have had 1 report of RTCs in your area and 0 road related offences.

There have been 2 burglaries reported in your area this year, both reports are for businesses.

You have a very low level of antisocial behaviour occurring within your area which is good news, there has been 0 reports for the year.

There has been 0 Reports of Criminal damage for the area over the past year

There have been 4 reports of Theft for the area they include 2 reports of theft of agricultural equipment from local businesses and 2 reports of thefts from a motor vehicle.

Crime data released by the Office for National Statistics shows a decrease in overall recorded crime across Wiltshire, with significant reduction being seen in areas identified as priorities for the force by Chief Constable Catherine Roper - burglary, violence and safer public spaces.

The local neighbourhood team will be increasing their presence in the rural community which will involve a higher level of patrols in the area. This gives local communities the opportunity to engage with officers and express any concerns they may have and also to ask for any advice they may require.

Please be aware of the Bobby Van Trust, a registered charity who work alongside Wiltshire Police and offer a completely free service to anyone over 60 (or over 18 and registered disabled). They offer a free Home Security service which includes checks for door and window locks, lighting, dummy CCTV cameras and more. They also offer a Stay Safe Online service which will help prevent any fraud related offences occurring. Their contact number is 01225 256867 and their website is BobbyVanOnlineSafety@wbvt.org

Lastly can I encourage everyone to sign up to the Community Messaging service, where you can get up to date information on what is going on in your area (QR code on the next page)

PCSO Stewart Hunt.
Stewart.hunt@wiltshire.police.uk



WILTSHIRE POLICE
Keeping Wiltshire Safe

Get to know Community Messaging

Alerts from Wiltshire Police

YOUR FORCE, YOUR AREA



SCAN HERE

- Receive alerts from your local Community Policing team and partners
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- Receive alerts by email, text or voicemail
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READ EASY – Murray Walker

READ EASY TALK TO STOURTON AND GASPER PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MAY 1ST 2024

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you couldn't read easily or not at all.. Surveys show that 7 in every 100 adults in England have this problem. They cannot fill in a job application, read notices, menus, timetables, newspapers, signs or directions and struggle with shopping in supermarkets.

They cannot assimilate health information and have worse health and lower life expectancy. As young people, they can become isolated from their peer group as they struggle to use social media. Many live in areas of social deprivation in large cities but the same problem is encountered in rural areas like ours.,

95% of jobs nowadays require literacy. To work on a farm today, you have to be able to read the operating instructions for tractors and other machinery and understand the safety instructions.

So people with reading difficulty may become unemployed when they leave school, and may drift into anti-social behaviour or crime.

50% of English Male prisoners can't read at entry to prison. If they fail to learn to read when they are serving their service, they are less likely to get a job when they are discharged and may resort to crime again. This may at least partly explain the present high re-offending rates. ReadEasy is committed to helping prisoners to continue the reading coaching they get in prison when they are subsequently discharged

The economic cost to the country of these reading difficulties has been estimated as running to many millions by KPMG

Read Easy is a voluntary service dedicated to helping adults to read fluently. People often tell us of the miserable time and humiliation they may have suffered in school when they fail to make progress with reading. Sometimes this may result from lack of educational opportunity, such as the children of travellers going from school to school and teacher to teacher if their parents move frequently.

But more of our learners have dyslexia, a specific learning disability, which may have an underlying genetic basis. But, it can be successfully overcome, and people with dyslexia can be of normal or above-normal intelligence and motivation as individuals like Richard Branson and Bill Gates, given the right help, have shown.

ReadEasy uses Turning Pages, essentially the same type of same phonics textbook as are used in schools.. But where formal schooling may have failed for some people, ReadEasy usually succeeds in time because of our free one to one coaching by our trained volunteers in a secure and confidential setting.

The challenge Read Easy faces is in persuading those people with reading difficulties to come forward, even though all the help we offer is entirely free.

Did you see the BBC TV documentary earlier this year about Jay Blades the television presenter? Jay came with his mother from the West Indies, was raised in a tough London environment and never learnt to read. At the age of 51, he came to Read Easy as he desperately wanted to read to and write to his teenage daughter. The programme followed his progress with ReadEasy and the triumph when he at last could read to his daughter and understand her letters to him.

But there are many Jay Blades out there who have not had the courage to put their hands up and at the age of 40, 50 or older and admit they can't read even if they would love to learn. Another of our readers, Sarah, sought our help because she desperately wanted to read bedtime stories to her children and help them with their reading. She learnt to read and then went on to give national TV interviews on BBC, ITV. Remarkably, she then wrote a book about her experiences of learning to read with Read Easy which we helped her to get

published .

Another dyslexic mother Vicky described how she once served dogfood to her children because she couldn't read the labels on the tins. If she went out for a meal with her friends ,she would always ask them to choose what they would have to eat and then have the same , simply because she couldn't read the menu. So the difficulties non-readers struggle with in their daily life are as basic as that.

I well remember the 80 year old gentleman who learnt to read with us.He described later sitting down outside the bank in Shaftesbury and striking up a conversation with a lady who came to sit on the same bench. This was the first time he had ever had the confidence to do so.He no longer dreaded going to the supermarket ,because he could now read the labels.So reading is a life changing experience at any age and not just useful for passing the time.

,So we would like anyone who knows of a person whom they think can't read, to encourage them to contact our friendly ReadEasy coordinator Judy ,tel 07990 711880 Our group serves Shaftesbury,Mere, Stourton,Gasper,Gillingham, Sturminster Newton, Marnhull,Wincanton , Sherborne and surrounding villages. We raise funds through a wide variety of events but we also need financial support from councils.

Murray Walker,
Leader , Read Easy Blackmore Vale North Dorset Management Team
(a registered charity and branch of our national organisation, ReadEasy UK -see readeasy.org.uk)