South Stoke Parish Council Newsletter No 67.
Annual Report 2025-2026

(This and a full range of Parish Council documents are on our website:- www.southstoke-pc.gov.uk)

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

There were no Parish Council elections this year and all Councillors continued in Office.
From April 1st 2026, Geoffrey Davis partially retires as Clerk, reducing his hours to 15 per month for 2026-27. Andrew Walker will assume responsibility as lead Clerk from that date.

Parish Councillors and their individual responsibilities
Councillor Responsibilities will be re-allocated at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 20th May 2025. They are currently listed as:-

Parish Council Members:	Responsibilities
Cllr. Ned Garnett	Bath Preservation Trust Meetings and liaison, Strategic planning and Local planning, BANES Parish Liaison
Cllr. Mark Knowlton - Chair	Midford Highways and Midford Liaison, Newsletter, BANES Parish Liaison, Planning Enforcement
Cllr. Amanda Page	Strategic planning and Local planning, Financial Monitoring, Midford liaison, BANES Parish Liaison
Cllr. Gary Passmore	Sulis Down matters, BathAvon Area Forum, BANES Parish Liaison
Cllr. Andy Peters – Vice Chair	Village Hall liaison, South Stoke Area Highways, Wessex Water, BANES Parish Liaison
Cllr. Anne Ward	Strategic planning and Local planning, Bath Preservation Trust Meetings and liaison, Allotments, Footpaths & Open Spaces, Churchyard, BANES Parish Liaison
Cllr. Jonathan Woodings	Strategic planning and Local planning, Cycle Paths, and Sustrans liaison, Police liaison, BANES Parish Liaison

.**Geoff Davis & Andy Walker** - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, For all other matters – Tel. 07485033897. Email clerk@southstoke-pc.gov.uk

Meetings - The Parish Council met on 6 occasions during the period 2025-2026 which were the 6 normal meetings of the Full Council.
The Annual Parish Meeting or Meeting of Electors took place on 29th April 2025.
Councillors also attended occasional other meetings with other Parish Councils and B&NES at joint forums and with related organisations such as The Bath Preservation Trust.

Police Liaison – Sue Dawson maintains liaison with the Police through the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme for South Stoke Village. A Brian Durston has established and maintains the Neighbourhood Watch group within the Sulis Down development.

Planning - During the year we have considered a number of different planning applications for works in or near the Parish. We only comment on purely 'Planning' grounds, using Local and National planning policies for guidance which still support the purposes of Green Belts and AONBs. Comments are usually agreed via e-mail, with as much consultation with residents as was possible.
Following the dismissal of the Appeal against Refusal of 22/02169/EOUT - Outline application for Phases 3 and 4 for up to 290 dwellings, the developer is proceeding towards the developer proceeding towards an Outline application for Phases 3 and 4 for up to 200 dwellings. Cllr. Ned Garnett will provide a summary and update for the meeting.
Revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) – B&NES Planning Policy are developing the New Local Plan. B&NES Council are currently considering the Responses to the Options for inclusion in the Plan. Ther are NO Options being considered which are of concern to South Stoke. Again Cllr. Ned Garnett will be able to provide an update to the meeting on this important process.

Parish Sweeper - Grant Davis is employed as our Parish sweeper. He keeps the villages exceptionally clean and free from litter throughout the year and continues to do a fine job throughout the Parish. As always a huge vote of thanks is once again due to him. Without doubt he clearly makes a very noticeable difference to the villages and roads as a whole and is one of the most important services we provide. Grant's work is fully funded from Precept.

Footpaths and Open Spaces - Public footpaths are walked regularly and fallen trees and overgrowth of foliage are attended to when reported. The Parish Council continues to take pride in supervising care of the Churchyard. The litter bins provided by the Parish Council, including the large one near the Churchyard are maintained and emptied by the Parish Sweeper. The litter bin on the Village Green wall has been destroyed by an impact from a vehicle and is unlikely to be replaced as there are plenty of other bins nearby. The Village Railings have been repaired, and repainted, by a team of residents, organised by Cllr. Anne Ward. The Phone Box has been re-painted, and is looking splendid again.

Village Green & Millennium Seat
The Parish Council continues to maintain both the Village Green and Millennium seat. The whole Millennium Viewpoint site has been extensively repaired and refurbished, an excellent job with replacement fencing, footways, and repairs to the seat.

Churchyard - The Parish Council continues to maintain the Churchyard with funding from B&NES Cemeteries, who also carry out more extensive works when they are needed. The funding from B&NES is also used for other minor repairs or improvements for the Churchyard and Church.

Allotments – 13 of the 16 allotments are under cultivation, and rents for those are being collected. The three free plots will shortly be allocated to those on the waiting list. Cllr. Anne Ward has encouraged tenants throughout the year to cultivate and maintain their plots to an acceptable standard, as per the tenancy agreement.

Highways Maintenance and Safety – Liaison with B&NES Highways over highway safety in both South Stoke and Midford has continued throughout the year.
The Mandatory 20 m.p.h. speed limit through Midford on the B3110 being fully implemented, together with other signage improvements for the bends, Midford Residents together with the Parish Council have procured RADAR Speed signage, which is expected to be installed in April/May 2026 when B&NES Highways have funding and resource to carry out the work. The signage was primarily funded with a grant from the Avon & Somerset Police Community Road Safety Trust. Together with risdual funds from this, funding from the Ward Councillors Empowerment Fund, and from the Parish Council, Village Gates will also be procured and installed in 2026-27.
Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Boundary Stone – A CNL Boundary Stone is to be installed on the verge of Southstoke Lane at the junction with the B3110 Midford Road. This has been funded from Cotswolds National Landscape Trust and Community Infrastucture Levy.

Village Hall Management Committee – Cllr. Andy Peters is the Parish Council representative on the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). The Parish Council provided significant Community Infrastructure Funds to the VHMC to carry out significant repairs/maintenance/refurbishment. It only remains to refurbish the upstairs Office as Parish Council Offices, which the Council will fund in anticipation of then renting the Office from the VHMC.

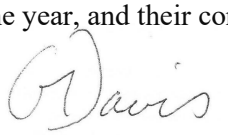
Midford Telephone Box the repair, refurbishment and relocation was completed last year project, and the box has now been fully furnished and equipped.

Defibrillator in Midford –The installation of a British Heart Foundation Defibrillator and Cabinet in the Hope & Anchor Car Park, with the pub providing the necessary power connection, is complete and fully functioning and available. This was entirely funded by generous contributions from Midford residents.

Noticeboard for Sulis Down – Vistry have finally procured and installed a Parish Noticeboard in the Play Area on the estate and it is being used by the Parish Council, the Sulis Down Neighbourhood Watch and Residents.

Parish Council Finances
In the year to 31st March 2026, the Parish Council has now exhausted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. There only remains a small balance of ring-fenced funds for the Churchyard (£1,667), and the Midford Safety improvements (£1,458). At the Year End this leaves the Parish Council with a total Reserve of £26,484, of which £23,359 is unrestricted.
Following careful discussion and debate the Parish Council agreed that a 3% inflationary increase to the Average Household contribution, to £63.19, from the previous years' contribution level of £61.35, was the most sound and prudent giving a Precept of £24,680. This represents an appropriate response to the inflationary increase in costs and addresses reserves at slightly below the recommended threshold. Full details of all the Councils Finances can be found on the website at http://www.southstoke-pc.gov.uk/ under the **Finance** link, where the Audit is currently in progress.

B&NES Ward Councillor support - Finally, we thank our Ward Councillors, Fiona Gourley and Matt McCabe for their ongoing help and support throughout the year, and their contribution of the Ward Councillor Empowerment Fund grant.



Geoffrey Davis – Clerk on behalf of South Stoke Parish Council.