

STRETTON & STOCKEN NEWS

Newsletter for the residents of Stretton, Stretton Woods, Stocken Hall and Stocken Mews: February 2022

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY HUB IS FINISHED (At last!)

Work to transform St Nicholas Church into a combined church and community hub has now been completed. With the pandemic and material shortages it has taken far longer than expected, but now the parish has a facility that can be used for community as well as church events.



St Nicholas' Church in Stretton has undergone a complete refurbishment and update so that it can become a combined church and community hub. The church last underwent such extensive work in 1881. The leaking roofs have been repaired and the old floor, with its rotting timbers and pew platforms has been replaced with a raised, wheelchair friendly oak floor right across the church. The porch and threshold have also been lowered to maintain the even levels throughout. As well as this, a modern, remotely controlled heating system has been installed, a kitchenette to provide hot refreshments and a much needed loo with baby changing facilities have been added.

Thanks to a generous donation from Jill Lessey we were able to purchase some high quality, pre-owned chairs

from Christ Church Oxford Cathedral (Julian Lessey's old college). With the open plan flooring and stackable chairs it will be possible to hold many types of event as well as the regular church services. These could range from Parish Council meetings to local private hire, to concerts, coffee mornings, hobbies, keep fit and jumble sales. We have also added Wi-Fi so that services can be broadcast and, for example, films can be shown. I should add that all of the works have been done with the greatest of respect for this wonderful building which is well over 900 years old – giving it a renewed mandate to remain at the centre of village life well into the future.

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QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



A meeting will be held at the new Church Community Hub on 24th February at 7.00pm to discuss what format the village celebrations for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee should take over the extended Bank Holiday from June 2nd to 5th 2022.

Parish council leader, Paul Finlay, will chair the meeting and the council has voted £1,000 towards the celebrations. However, it is not intended for the parish council to run the celebrations and we will need to form a committee. For the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 there were several events over the weekend including a family bonfire and barbeque. Already, nationally, for the Platinum Jubilee there are plans for beacon lighting on 2nd June and "The Big Lunch" on Sunday 5th June.

Please come along to the meeting, have your say and help organise the events.

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The project could not have been undertaken without the incredible grants from many agencies and local people. In particular the FCC Communities Foundation granted £100,000 and Mick George donated a further £35,000. There were many others, including Rutland Historic Churches Preservation Trust (who gave us the all-important first grant), the National Lottery, the Joseph Rank Trust and the Laing Foundation, with over £250,000 being raised altogether.

Also, importantly, contributors from the parish donated a total of nearly £30,000. This included £14,000 from the Friends of St Nicholas and several large donations from local businesses, as well as generous donations from many residents, particularly the Leefe family.

A huge thank you to all.

The Formal Opening. An opening ceremony is planned for 22nd /23rd April. The formal thank you to the donors on the Friday evening will, unfortunately because of numbers, have to be by invitation only. However, it is also planned to have an open day/launch on the Saturday between 2pm and 5pm to which all parishioners are very welcome to attend. As well as refreshments, there will be an historical display showing the village over the past 100 years as well as the history of our beautiful 900 year old church.

What next for the project? Well, in many ways we have only just started. The community hub will need to be run by a committee of volunteers. The church and the community hub will need to work together for the

benefit of all parishioners. Most importantly, this facility is now available for us and we can make of it what we wish. For its survival, however, it must have a regular income and, as well as the usual fund raising events, there are several ways that we can all help contribute to the upkeep. In law, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) have the responsibility for the upkeep of the church and pay the bills! Within the village the PCC is helped by the Friends of St Nicholas (FOSN). FOSN is a non-religious organisation which, for many years, has raised funds to help out the church with repairs, insurance and churchyard maintenance. Indeed, as already said, FOSN has already donated £14,000 towards the cost of repairs and the modernisation. With the advent of the joint Church and Community Hub, there are still big roles for both organisations, but importantly, they will need to work even more closely together in order to make the joint facility a success.

As well as considering purchase of souvenir mugs and tea towels (please see below!), on the back page there are some suggestions as to how you can further help.

The Friends Chairman, John Leefe, who is also on the PCC will lead the work to consider what, if any, changes will be needed in order to manage the new facility. If you are able and interested to help please contact him on 410321.

For more details of the project, visit our website at:

www.stnicholasproject.co.uk



Church Views

The new chairs being set out in the nave



.....the servery.....and.....



.....the much needed loo!

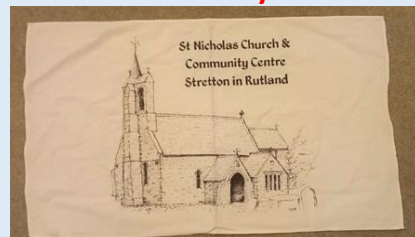
MUGS AND TEA TOWELS FOR SALE

To celebrate the re-opening of the church as a Church and Community Hub we have commissioned bone china mugs and cotton tea towels. The items feature a drawing of the church which was done by Tim Seal, who used to live in the village, specifically for this event. The mugs are standard size (300ml) and the tea towels are machine washable and a generous 78cms x 48cms (31 x 19 ins)

Mugs are £9 each; tea towels £5 each, with all profits going to the Church and Community Hub



To order your mugs and Tea Towels please contact Penny Isaacs penny@pennyisaacs.com
01780 401 676 / 07879 337 714



.....Parish News....

A1 Noise Pollution

At last the good news that the work to re-surface our stretch of the A1 with 'quiet asphalt' is about to begin. Highways England (HE) has confirmed that they will start the work in February (8th Feb), doing the north bound carriageway first between Wothorpe and South Witham. They hope to complete northbound by May and start the southbound carriageway in July. The work is being done overnight, but still there is likely to be disruption for some months. However, at the end of it we should benefit with a significantly quieter A1. Low noise surfaces typically reduce noise by 3 decibels (half).

Speeding in Stretton and Stocken A successful Community Speed Watch exercise was held in September 21. A total of 151 letters were sent out to speeding drivers. Of real concern was the safety of the footpath that leads from the village to George Henry Wood on the Clipsham Road. The Parish Council has asked RCC to consider placing Speed Indicator Detectors (SID) on the road, but we have been informed that this could take many months if not years to install. The matter was discussed at the last Parish Council meeting and it was agreed that, whilst continuing to press RCC, the parish would apply for an additional £2,000 of precept to pay for two SID, one towards Clipsham and one away from Clipsham. The meeting also recorded their thanks to John Leefe for cutting back the hedge alongside the footpath to George Henry Wood.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is planned for 12th May starting at 6.30 pm in St Nicholas Church and community centre

George Henry Wood

The Woodland Trust (WT) has, last autumn, cut the perimeter path around George Henry Wood (GHW), opening up many more options for walks. WT were reluctant to do this because of concern that the area is being used by scramble and quad bikes. However, they agreed to cut the pathways and, at the same time, have asked us to remind users of GHW that it is for pedestrians only and they also ask that any sightings of scramble or quad biking are reported.

HMP Stocken Expansion Project

By Simon Wallace, HMP Stocken

HMP Stocken is in the planning and preparation stage on an expansion project to build a new Houseblock, housing a further 214 prisoners (current maximum is 1056) as well as an extensive 'ancillary's' package, which will include a new workshop, education classrooms and a new gymnasium.

The construction work is due to start in June 2022 with completion scheduled for December 2023 with the first prisoners scheduled to arrive in January 2024.

The expansion will bring a number of job opportunities at HMP Stocken with a staffing increase of approximately 60 and the construction itself may open up sub-contractual work for local construction businesses.

The project lead has met with the parish council representatives to ensure local residents are kept up to date with ongoing developments. We are aware of concerns raised regarding the sewage system and the increase in traffic. HMP Stocken has been working closely with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) design teams and Anglian water to ensure that the necessary and most appropriate systems are put in place, so that there is no adverse effect on the local village and also the establishment itself. The establishment will also work closely with the contractors and outline our expectations of speeding and travelling times so that it has minimal impact on those who live near the establishment.

For us, the expansion is an exciting project to enhance the current facilities and offering new job opportunities. We will continue to keep the positive ties with the Parish Council and will always be open to any feedback that is received. A letter will be delivered to all local residents in the coming weeks, which will have a local contact point, if anyone wishes to discuss any matters regarding the expansion

New to the Village?

Did you know that you can download a copy of the village Welcome Pack from the village website?

The village website can be found at www.strettonvillage.co.uk. If you would like to publish an article on the website, please contact Penny Isaacs by using the link at the foot of the home page.

Parish Council business can be found at www.strettonparishcouncil.co.uk. Here, you can find all of the minutes, agendas and important notifications received by the Parish Council.

You can also keep in touch with others in the village via our Facebook Page.

Just look for: [Stretton In Rutland](#)

Community Hub Support

Whether you are a regular member of the congregation or not, I hope you would agree that the new facility provides an opportunity to do more within the parish to bring our community together and improve well being. Inevitably, with additional heating, cleaning, WiFi and other running expenses, the new facility is going to cost more to run and a regular income will help meet these costs.

Please consider one of the following options:

Several people within the parish already make regular monthly donations to the PCC via the Parish Giving Scheme (for details, contact Mr John Leefe on 410321). The PCC is able to claim gift aid and this adds a further 25% to any donation.

If you do not consider yourself to be a regular church goer you can join The Friends of St Nicholas, a non-religious organisation which aims to support the church. Membership is £12 per year (for details, please contact the Treasurer, Mr Richard Foster on 411020). If you wish also to make a regular payment towards the community hub, arrangements are being put in place via The Friends for you to do this. Again, please contact the Treasurer.

Finally, please also consider joining our Easyfundraising group. Our band of 23 Easyfundraisers has now raised £530 in about 18 months for the Community Hub! Easyfundraising is a scheme that enables you, as you shop on line, to raise automatically free donations for the Stretton, Rutland, Community Centre. Online retailers including Amazon, John Lewis, Argos, M&S, eBay, insurance, Sky and even oil deliveries are ready to give a free donation every time you shop online. Businesses can also claim donations. Many donations are only a few pence, but there are much larger donations available, for example, on comparison sites, BT and travel firms. You can also download an app reminder – it is a bit annoying, but worth it! The money is transferred to a ring-fenced bank account and will be used exclusively for use by the community hub.

The easiest way to join is to enter and follow this link:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/strettonrutlandcommunitycentre/>



A message from The Knowles Family at The Jackson Stops

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone for supporting us through some very difficult and crazy times over the past two years. Hopefully we are now through the worst and can look forward to better times this year.

Best wishes for the New Year from Rob, Mandy, Richard and all the staff



NEWS FROM THE EWES

As many of you are aware, Andrew and I keep a herd of Castlemilk Moorit sheep in our fields on the Clipsham Road, Stocken Road and in our home paddock at Appleyard.

Our ram has been working hard this year and we have, hopefully, 12 ewes in lamb. So come the Spring, expect to see lots of lambs gambolling around the fields!

In addition to showing the sheep we also sell the meat, mostly to The Olive Branch, and we have also started selling the sheepskins, which are most unusual, being brown. They are cured organically in one of the 2 remaining sheep tanneries in England, down in Somerset. The advantage of organic curing is that they do not leach out poisonous chemicals, like many of the cheaper skins cured in China.

If you are interested in purchasing a sheepskin, please do contact us.

Penny Isaacs – penny@pennyisaacs.com

Should you have any comments or contributions for future newsletters, or better still, if you would like to become the editor (!) please contact the current editor, Greg Harker on 410117 or grillandegg@hotmail.com