

Christmas News Update December 2019

The Parish Council carries out regular door drops as well as constantly updating the noticeboard and website (www.strattonaudley.org). We do this to encourage involvement in the community and appreciate your feedback. There is a vacancy on the Parish Council as we have recently increased our official numbers from five to seven Councillors and at the moment have six serving members. If interested please make yourself know to any councillor.

New Vehicle Activated Sign

Following extensive research we have selected and ordered a new fixed solar powered speed awareness sign which will be placed on the Stoke Lyne Road at the entrance to the village. This has been funded in part by a grant from our District & County Councillor Ian Corkin (£1800) from the closure of an old village fundraising account administered by three residents (£675) and with an additional contribution from the Village Improvement Fund (£870). The sign will be installed towards the end of January.

Food Beer & Music Festival 2020

It is with regret that the Food, Beer & Music Festival 2020 has been postponed because logistically it is too big a commitment for the small number of people prepared to take leading roles. We appreciate that it is difficult to commit time to such an event but a successful template exists and anyone interested in organising it for 2021 will get the full support of the Parish Council. We know that this will be a disappointment and hope that other smaller events will take its place across the year.

At the same time, Anthony Flack has decided to stand down as Chairman of the CLP & Fund Raising Committee and we thank him wholeheartedly for all his hard work over the years. This group was set up six years ago by the Parish Council and has organised many events both fund raising and social get-togethers. Whilst other activities are organised by the church on a regular basis with which he has also been involved, the CLP has been very successful in raising money for the village, the church and other charities. His dedication has been exemplary and he will be a hard act to follow.

Power Cuts

As most people will be aware, we have experienced multiple power cuts recently but following investigations, Scottish & Southern tell us that no single cause is to blame. Several of the outages were due to third party faults and they are closely monitoring the matter. They agree that it has been unfortunate and have apologised for the inconvenience. To report an incident or find out what's going on when a power cut occurs you can phone 154 or 0800 954 0693.

Footpaths

We note with pleasure the increased use of the footpath on the Cross Bucks Way now that two gates have replaced stiles. Encouraged by this, we have reached agreement with OCC regarding the restoration of a short piece of unusable footpath just beyond the Hunt Kennels which connects back to the Bicester Road which will provide another accessible circular route. This work will be carried out in the very near future by the County.

Additionally, concern was raised about the footpath off the Stoke Lyne Road which is now only accessible via a stile over the fence, whereas previously an unofficial path had been created through private property. The Parish Council has reached agreement with the landowner to install a gate through the fence and has managed to find funding for this from The Oxfordshire Field Paths Society. Installation will be paid for out of the Village Improvement Fund.

The public path from the bottom of Cherry Street leading down to the pond will be renovated to improve access and as previously reported, permission has been received from the land owner. The County Council has agreed to carry out the work and partly fund it, together with a small amount of money from a discretionary fund held by Cllr. Ian Corkin, on the basis that the village makes a contribution of some £500 from the Village Improvement Fund. This is great news and work will commence early in the New Year, weather permitting.

East West Rail

Test Holes have recently been drilled and core samples taken on the road leading from the A4421 to Poundon in order to establish what needs to be done prior to the construction works. The original plan was that the go-ahead would be granted before Christmas but with the general election and uncertainty over HS2, no decision to approve the EWR scheme has yet been given by the Secretary of State.

EWR intend to commence works at the Bicester end of the scheme as soon as possible after being granted the necessary authority and have indicated that midsummer is their best estimate. However with compounds in the area secured it is possible that site traffic may be evident on the roads around Stratton Audley in advance of this time. The official route for large lorries is along the Park Road/Poundon Road and if you notice what you regard to be large construction lorries on any other roads in the area do try and take a photo so it can be investigated.

Pot holes in the village

Following a recent meeting in the village with the Senior Area Manager for roads from the County Council, it has been agreed that multiple pot holes in the village will be repaired in strips rather than individual holes. This is known as patching and is more effective. As everyone knows the Launton Road is particularly bad and so OCC is making an application to close the road for a short period and works are likely to take place in March/April. Although disruptive in the short term this is again good news.

Elm Farm Quarry

The Parish Council recently attended a meeting at County Hall and were told that Oxford County Council intends to withdraw the restorative enforcement order and simultaneously Bicester Heritage will withdraw its appeal to the Secretary of State. New plans are being developed by BH for a sustainable development, and the obligations and legal responsibilities to provide permanent public access and protection will remain a central requirement, given that it is a designated local wildlife site and an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

The Express Highway

Oxford County Council have announced that they are opposed to any of the proposed routes out of Oxford and are no longer in favour of the project. So there is a good chance this will not proceed.

Commercial Signage

A number of conversations have taken place with local businesses recently with regard to directional signage within and around the village. The County Council are balancing the legitimate needs of the businesses concerned, with what is likely to be acceptable to the community.

Village Improvement Fund

As previously published the total fund available was £3700. Allocations against this fund have now been made as follows: £870 for the Vehicle Activated sign on Stoke Lyne Road, £300 for lights in the Pound, £500 contribution to improving the Pond path, £200 for the gate on the path behind the Green Barn development and circa £1000 towards the cost of the Pound Pocket Park. Total £2870. Funds remaining circa £830.

Christmas Church Services in the village

The "Carols by Candlelight" Service is on Sunday 15th December at 6pm. The Crib Service is at 4pm Christmas Eve. The Christmas Day Family Service is at 10am. Please note that there will be no midnight service on Christmas Eve this year. Additionally at Godington Church there will be "Carols by Candlelight" on Friday 20th December at 7pm.

Carols Around the Village

The church is once again organising carol singing around the village on Tuesday 17th December starting at the Red Lion at 7.00pm. As in previous years monies raised are in aid of Homeless, Oxfordshire. All are welcome and the more the merrier. If you cannot participate but wish to make a donation, just pop it in an envelope through the letter box of Timbertop in Cavendish Place.

Homeless in Oxfordshire

Christmas is a particularly difficult time for anyone on the streets. Homeless, Oxfordshire is the largest supported accommodation provider for vulnerable and homeless people in the County and if you would like to make an individual donation direct to them you can do this by visiting their website: <https://www.oxfordhomelessmovement.org.uk/donate> Additionally Stratton Audley church will be a collection point in January for items of clothing etc. and a flier will be door dropped to all in the parish advising what specific items are required at that time.

Christmas Lights in the Pound

The Parish Council are delighted to draw your attention to their decision to place lights in the small oak tree in the Pound in order to add to the Christmas festivities. Power has generously been provided by Pound House with our grateful thanks and we hope everyone will pay an early evening visit to see how our new community space comes alive after dark.

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone the very best Season's Greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

