

Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council 28th May 2025

This is the third report I have had to write as Chairman of Stoodleigh Parish Council.

Planning:- We have been involved in many planning issues. A number of concerns have been expressed by parishioners, which we have put forward to MDDC.

In all planning requests and concerns we do our best as a parish council to look at every case objectively and to proceed as a collective accordingly.

Footpaths & Bridleways:-

We are delighted with the news that MDDC have given official bridle way status to the track running from Shilhay through to the Dryhill road. We rode the Rifton bridleway last week and found it quite difficult to negotiate the first part of the track past the cottage on horseback. We will forward this to the MDDC byways officer.

Playground:- Many thanks to John Widdowson and all others for their efforts in keeping the playground maintained, and also to the contractors, the Berrys, who as always have done an excellent job keeping it tidy with the hedge trimming and the grass cutting. We are all delighted with the repaired boundary wall, and our heartfelt gratitude was passed onto Chris Whitehead for his generous donation which covered the cost.

Defibrillator:-

The defibrillator has been called into use a couple of times, but very sadly on one occasion to no avail. We now have a second defibrillator located outside The Inn. Both are checked weekly by various members of the parish council on a rota kindly drawn up by John W.

Stoodleigh Inn:-

Lizzie at the Stoodleigh Inn has worked very hard yet again this year, providing all sorts of entertainment, last weekend was a tremendous success, much fun was had and probably a few headaches ensued on Monday morning! The Inn's weekend away trip has become very popular for the locals, and Liz also hosts charity events, and fundraisers for the church and cricket club. The tractor run

has become a very popular annual event too. All in all, it's simply a good local pub where you are always made welcome. I know many holiday makers visiting the area who have commented that the pub is one of the many highlights of their stay, while visiting the village, so a huge thank you to both Lizzie and Mike for their continued efforts.

Church:-

The Church PC continues in its' efforts to maintain a traditional English place of worship, and much work goes on behind the scenes to keep our beautiful church in order, and to fund raise in an ever more difficult economic climate, so our thanks to all the members of the Church Committee, and to all the ladies involved in the flower arranging throughout the year, and to the bell ringing team.

The Garden Club:-

This little not for profit club organises a number of garden trips and craft events year round, and carries out all of the replanting on Stoodleigh drive and other localities, It's a thankless task, but we all enjoy the results, the snowdrops and daffodils are always a welcome sight. Shirley keeps us up to date on the contents of the Swap Box, the old telephone box at Hill Crest.

Cricket Club:- The grounds are maintained largely by Stephen Partridge, who works hard to keep it immaculate. They are short of players this year so any budding cricketers would be made very welcome. The club kindly allows villagers to walk their dogs around the field, so please can all dog walkers be responsible for picking up after their dogs!

Community:-

The community email, Stoodleigh Web, has continued to be a real asset, and a useful means of communication throughout the parish, thanks to Geraldine and her team for keeping this updated. There is also a Face Book page, "Stoodleigh Post", for any interesting snippets of news or photographs, anyone in the parish is welcome to join this group. There is also a very popular Whatsapp group for day-to-day things from lost pets, to trees across the road and other traffic issues. Can I just remind everyone that the Whatsapp group, kindly overseen by Claire Williams is not a platform for rants or personal gripes!

The Stoodleigh Watch WhatsApp Group is also useful tool in crime prevention for reporting any suspicious behaviour, being that any such activity can be

shared very quickly; luckily that hasn't been very active, long may that continue.

Highways:-

We are all aware of the situation as regards potholes. We have quite recently had some extensive repairs carried out around the village, and what an excellent job they have done. Some new surfaces have been put down, and many holes have been filled in, although there are many more yet to be done.

Summary:-

I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their continued support during the past year, and I particularly want to say a very big thank you to our Parish Clerk, Sandra Phillips for her hard work, help and advice, without whom I would not be able to fulfil my role as Chairman.

William H.J. Knowles

Church warden's report 2025

Building and churchyard; we have had our QQ inspection, and we are waiting for the report before we can move forward on a few issues, but the good news is that we now have a date for the flagpole to be reinstated after an immense amount of work from Julian and Paul many thanks to both of them for their hard work. We now have some new doors at the base of the tower paid for by the Friends of St Margarets and some new gates on the south side of the churchyard, paid for by a legacy from Andrew Cunningham, many thanks to Phil for his hard work in organising the improvements. We have also resurfaced the paths around the church yard, many thanks to the Knowles family who all worked so hard to get a lovely finish on the paths. We would also like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support for the churchyard and John and Mandy Widdowson for removing all the grass cuttings for us.

Services; We've had some lovely services this year, and our new "Soup Service" was successful as some people who don't usually come to church, came to the service, which was really lovely to see. We've continued with our reflective services, which are proving popular, and we've decided to move them to 10am so that more people have chance to get to the service. Our Carol Service was very well attended, and we had the delight of the company of Dave Edwards and Levon who led us in our carols. Jeannie Knowles came and played her violin extremely well.

Fundraising; we recently had a very productive meeting to attempt to get some fresh ideas for fundraising, which went very well. So, we have a few new events in planning for next year, including a soapbox rally, which we can hopefully get up and running to raise money. Last year we had some great fundraising, many thanks to Ed Brown and Julian for their hard work in being "the dynamic duo" of comperes at the Bingo and auction.

Future plans; the heating boilers are coming to the end of their life, so we have been investigating alternatives so the church can become more ecological in its running. It's been very interesting, and we've had some really good help from DAC who brought some specialists to visit the church to help make some plans. The general idea is to go over to under pew electric heaters and for them to be installed in 2 or 3 phases.

PCC; It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Julian Mansfield who has not stood for re-election as the couple have decided to move from their present home. I must express my personal thanks to everyone who has served on the PCC this year, for their tireless efforts and great support.

Exe Valley Mission; finally, I must thank everyone who works so hard at EVMC, Steph, Tim, Dawn, Dave and Levon who work so hard at leading us, teaching us and supporting us, particularly during these very trying times.

STOODLEIGH PARISH WEBSITE – <https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/stoodleigh/>

STOODLEIGH COMMUNITY EMAIL – stoodleighweb@gmail.com

REPORT TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 28 MAY 2025

The Stoodleigh Parish website has been hosted by Mid Devon District Council as a free facility via the Parish Council for 15 years. I enjoyed acting as the volunteer administrator ... with others at times but more recently ... just me! Regular updates are provided by MDDC to help the parish website administrators in Mid Devon to ensure information on our websites is as accessible as possible to everyone.

Google Analytic reports can be accessed to check on website use and what users are looking at most. Figures for the top ten most popular pages in the last year to 25 May show approximately 11,160 users on the website. Reports show the breakdown of hits on the site.

The most read top four webpages this year are, in order:

- Stoodleigh home page – 4,040
- Parish Council: general info – 1,960
- Parish Council: MDDC planning applications links – 1400
- News – 1300; and less read

Plus slightly lower figures for

- Useful Info pages: Rainfall – 540
- Stoodleigh Inn – 316
- Parish Groups: Garden Club – 313
- Parish Groups: Walkie Talkies – 265
- St Margaret's Church – 220
- Parish Hall – 200

Information for other pages is available with lower numbers of hits.

As the volunteer website administrator, I find the support and back up from MDDC IT Services is brilliant. Quick, friendly and efficient. The website is really only as good as the news you provide to me to upload and share so please just keep it coming to stoodleighweb@gmail.com.

Community Email, via stoodleighweb@gmail.com, has about 170 people on the email list. Stoodleigh WhatsApp Watch and Stoodleigh WhatsApp Community, where messages are more quickly circulated and responses can be instant, means that less email messages are shared. Community Email continues to have its place and I share duplicate messages when asked and if appropriate. There are news items which those without WhatsApp would not hear or learn about.

I enjoy playing a part in communication amongst our community so keep those messages coming to share with your fellow residents!

We can, of course, talk to one another – although Email and WhatsApp news shares info more widely across the village more quickly!

Geraldine Talbot
Stoodleighweb Admin

Annual Report of the Parish Hall Management Committee

May 2025

The Management committee comprises of a group of volunteers including Linda Brice as secretary, Jan Russell as Treasurer ably supported by Yvonne Lang, Jill Chant, Alex Hannis and Geoffrey Parkman. Hannah Parker helps us whenever she can. Many thanks to Dick Sibley who was our Chairman until our AGM in November. Unfortunately since then we have been running without both the Chairman and Vice Chairman position being filled.

These people donate their time and other resources to ensure that the village hall remains functional and available as a community hub for the village. Without their dogged enthusiasm and commitment this would not be possible.

As you will know the hall raises funds for the maintenance, repair and general running of the hall through hire charges, fund raising events and donations.

Over the last 12 months we have been holding a regular 1st Saturday in the month coffee morning which has gained momentum and we now average 10 to 15 people. Other events have included our Autumn and Spring Markets, we want to thank businesses and crafters for their support as well as the village contributors. The tree lighting event was a great success despite having to rearrange it for the Sunday evening thanks to storm Darragh. It was lovely to see so many families attend. The skittles held in March was a friendly affair with good food and great company. We want to thank all those villagers who help and attend these events which contributes to make these social events a success.

Maintenance completed this year, repair of hall window and looking to replace west facing windows due to water damage. Refurnishment and improvement of the lobby is still on the agenda along with the repainting of the entrance hall.

Huge thanks for the generous, enthusiastic and willing to work of the current marvellous management committee and continued support despite their busy lives.

We are always looking for new recruits to join us on the committee and thank everyone for their support.

News from Lizzie,

I'm happy to report another successful and steady year at the Inn with Weekly Trade being consistent, the monthly Sunday carvery and steak nights are very popular and always well supported - all usually fully booked. The summer music events have proved very successful and enjoyed by many. The annual tractor run is another great day, usually attracting around 50 drivers from surrounding areas - starting their day with breakfast baps and coffee, a jolly around the countryside, homemade Pasty on return and an afternoon in the garden enjoying the music. This event raises money for a chosen Charity.

Another yearly event is the pub v C-club cricket game. This year it's September 6th if you fancy it! It's always competitive and great fun, the pub team usually wins the most beer tins on the pitch award, and not a lot else! But as it's a fund raiser for the cricket club it doesn't matter!

Our usual pub weekend away was another fantastic one. 55 of us enjoyed Torquay for a couple of nights. It was great to see 19 year olds to 84 year olds all partying together.

An ~~excellent~~ excellent evening was spent with ^{the} wonderful guys from PAA, who instructed and more importantly gave us confidence to use the defibrillator which is fitted outside the pub. We also presented them with a

Cheque for £1250.

So as you've heard a lot goes on at the Inn, I'd personally like to thank everyone of our fantastic customers who support us in whatever way, without you it's just a building, with you all it's a great place to be. If you haven't visited yet, give it a try... you may be surprised - Lizzie

From the Trustees:

The Trustees are very happy with how the Inn ~~is~~ is progressing and all is well. We have recently re-fitted the bathroom in the flat, a much needed and over due job done - a sound investment to the building. The next project will be improvements to the front of the building. The club's ^{Solicitors} ~~business~~ are in the process of appointing 2 new Trustees for the club and we look forward ^{to} welcoming them on board once paper work etc is completed.