



Stonehouse Town Council Annual Report

April 2015

Introduction

The Council elected Cllr Chris Brine as Chair of the Council and Cllr Theresa Watt as Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2014-15 civic year. During the year we were joined by Councillor Jan Dyer who was co-opted to represent North Ward.

The Council were very sad to lose one of its dedicated, hard working members upon the death of Councillor Anthony Howarth. Anthony was instrumental in the creation of the new youth centre at Oldends Lane.

The Council has had a busy year delivering new services and facilities. The Council has also been working towards the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. This increased activity has brought its own challenges to staff and councillors who have shown determination to cut through the

workload to bring benefit to the community.

During the year the Council has lobbied Network Rail to bring about improvements to the station at Burdett Road and the County Council to restore our High Street. We have also worked hard together with neighbouring parishes to reduce the adverse impact of changes to the Local Plan.

The residents of Stonehouse have turned out in large numbers to community events such as the Remembrance Parade, the Horticultural Show, and High Street celebrations which are very popular.

We are continuing to celebrate Stonehouse with an active part in the Heart of England in Bloom campaign.

Finance & Strategy – Committee Convenor : Cllr Simon Lewis

The Committee has carried out a review of policies and accounting methods. This work is ongoing as central Government makes additional bureaucratic demands and in rising to the challenge we will be seeking Quality Status. Having consulted you on a possible merger with the library, we are continuing to observe and take account of any threat to this service. Making changes to the Town Hall to make it a venue for meetings and exhibitions is still a work in progress. This Committee took on the responsibility for the management of the Youth Club and has formed an alliance with Cainscross Parish Council to bring about effective joint working arrangements. An extra session for a younger age group will now be provided. Grants have been received from Gloucestershire County Council Childrens Activity Fund £2000

towards youth leader provision and Stroud District Council Youth Activity Fund £1000 towards equipment and activities.

The Committee has purchased a defibrillator jointly with Stonehouse Rotary and this will be stationed inside the Co-operative Store for use in emergencies.

The Committee recognises the commitment of councillors and staff who have attended training sessions or seminars this year:

Councillor Vicky Redding
 Councillor Rob Waite
 Gill Jennings
 Alastair Shankland
 Raymond Kaye (congratulations are due on his attainment of City & Guilds Chainsaw Operation)

Summary of Accounts		
Expenditure	Past Year 2013-14	Current Year 2014-15
Open Space/Playing Field Maintenance/Youth Services/ Recreation Facilities Youth Centre Skate Park	378353	139443
Stonehouse in Bloom	3295	3714

Neighbourhood Plan	0	3221
Festive Lighting	4580	5654
Administration, public advice, Town Hall maintenance, consultations and grant aid	154039	138922
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	540267	290954
TOTAL INCOME	502456	366390

The Town Council contributed £2000 to the Citizens Advice Service and £1000 to the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme. Grants were also made available to:

Lunch Club £240, Transition Stroud £500, Glos Army Cadets £90, Stroud Canals Knowledge £150, Navy Training Corps £350, Royal British Legion £25, Stonehouse Dementia Group £480, Stroud & District Visually Impaired £200, Insight Gloucestershire £100.

The Town Council is subject to two audits per annum as follows:

Internal Audit is carried out by Iain Selkirk FCA

External Audit is carried out by Messrs Grant Thornton of Bristol

Regeneration & Environment – Committee Convenor: Cllr Carol Kambites

The Committee has considered 35 planning applications through the Development Control Panel. The Committee has strived to ensure that Stonehouse preserves its character and rural aspect and we have campaigned very hard against unwelcome development such as the incinerator at Javelin Park, and a large scale housing development at Westend. The Committee has met with First Great Western to discuss improvements to the station at Burdett Road and continues to try and obtain better communication with Network Rail. The Committee will also continue to monitor the redevelopment of the Ship Inn site and Bristol Road station site with the aim of bringing benefit to the town.

The Committee has met with The Police & Crime Commissioner and neighbouring parishes to discuss the reduction in HGV traffic on the B4008 and new signage has now been provided at junction 12.

Our plans for next year include looking at renewable energy sources within the redevelopment of Oldends Lane.

The Committee recognises the commitment of councillors and staff on additional consultee external groups:

Cllr Vicky Redding – Standish Partnership Board

Cllr David Drew, Cllr Carol Kambites and Gill Jennings – SPA Group

Amenities, Recreation and Tourism – Committee Convenor: Cllr John Aldis

The Committee were pleased to obtain S106 funding for a Boules/Petanque court at Laburnum Field which has now been complimented with an Outdoor Gym funded from an Active Living Grant of £20,000 courtesy of Gloucestershire County Council. The Committee have tried to further the transfer of Court View public open spaces into Council ownership from Taylor Wimpey but for the 5th year in a row this has not happened. The Committee do however keep a close watch on the maintenance of the newt ponds.

An additional pond has been installed at Stagholt allotments to attract wildlife and enhance biodiversity. The allotment tenants have also planted an edible hedge alongside the sports field. The Committee have been clearing deadwood from trees, maintaining hedges and ditches and improving play surfaces. A great deal of expenditure was incurred removing travellers from our playing fields and increasing security.

The pavilion has been enhanced with new patio doors, shutters, fixtures and fittings.

The Committee is now working closely with the football clubs, Magpies Social Club and others to renew facilities in order increase sports participation and social cohesion.

Members of the Town Council as at 31 March 2015

North Ward

John Aldis	822325	Chris Brine	825917
Simon Lewis	825229	Gary Powell	826527
Vicky Redding	822933	Paul Stephens	791142

South Ward

Janis Dyer	767786	Neil Gibbs	828430
Roger Govier	826926	Rob Waite	825627

Central Ward

David Drew	825603	Carol Kambites	827929
Pam Swain	822998	Theresa Watt	821428

