



# ANNUAL REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019



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## Chairman's Foreword

This year has been one of many uncertainties and yet a number of our plans and projects have come to fruition as will be seen throughout this report. I feel, however from the comments and feedback we receive the item which stands out as of most concern is the number of planning approvals granted and subsequent building which is taking place in our parish as part of the Government agenda for growth. Whilst recognising that we are not alone in this and support additional housing to meet the needs of local growth, this must be done in an appropriate manner and with the necessary infrastructure in place. However, this is not happening and our public services such as education, roads and health services are vastly overstretched. The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications and is realistic in its responses but ultimately the decision rests with the Local Planning Authority. Whilst developers have the right of appeal against those decisions unfortunately parish and town councils do not.

Progress with HS2 has not been as anticipated and various views are expressed from time to time that this project could be abandoned but we must not become complacent. Exploration of earthworks and trenching is being done around us and work should, we understand start on the route in earnest within the next eighteen months. The drop-in sessions held at the Community Centre on the last Friday of the month have now ceased due to lack of take up but information on how to contact HS2 Ltd is available on our notice boards, website or from the Parish Council Office.

In September of this year we were pleased to welcome Stoke Mandeville Junior Football team to their new home ground at the Playing Field in Eskdale Road due to their having to relocate from the BCC Sports and Social Club in Lower Road. The team plays home matches on Sundays and details of fixtures can be obtained from the Parish Council Office. I am pleased to report that one of the teams has reached a cup final, which is due to be played on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April at Flackwell Heath.

Progress on the establishment of a new Burial Ground in Marsh Lane continues albeit slowly with the need for obtaining funding, archaeological trenching and planning permission but we hope that the considerable work entailed for this development will begin shortly.

We strive to keep our community involved and informed of our activities. Our meetings are well advertised and open to the public who have the opportunity to challenge the Council and raise any issues they wish to be addressed. Our website is up to date giving ongoing information on the work we are doing and the quarterly Parish Magazine is another medium we use to reach out to residents.

Due to the changes in the Buckinghamshire Local Government Administrative structure in becoming a Unitary Authority in 2020, the four yearly elections for Parish Councillors will now take place in May 2020 and not 2019 as planned. It is hoped that potential Councillors will come forward to become a Councillor for the Parish. Details and advertising will take place in the new year. In the meantime, information on the role and responsibilities of being a Parish Councillor can be obtained from the Clerk.

My thanks to fellow Councillors during this busy and eventful year; to the Trustees of the Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity for their financial support; Stoke Mandeville Village Community Association for their hard work in maintaining and running the Centre and for their patience with the building work to provide a new Parish Office within the building. Also, the co-operation of our District and County Councillors for their interest and for attending our monthly meetings.

David Starr our longstanding Vice Chairman resigned as a Parish Councillor for the Hawkslade Ward at the end of March. Not only had David been the designate Councillor for our financial affairs but he had been actively involved in many of the improvements of services. To our staff Tony Skeggs our Clerk and Ann-Marie Davies, Parish Support Officer, my gratitude to you both for the work you undertake in supporting the Council often beyond the call of duty. More importantly to our parishioners for their input which makes our work worthwhile.

*Jenny Hunt* - Chairman - April 2019



## Council Members

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council has a total of twelve Councillors, elected or co-opted to the Parish Council, although there are currently vacancies in the Stoke Grange and Hawkslade wards. If you are interested in becoming a councillor, please contact the Chairman or Clerk.

The Council meets, usually on the third Tuesday of every month except August. Details of the meetings are on the notice boards within the Parish and can be obtained from the Clerk on request.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Ward Represented</b>	<b>Committees</b>
Jenny Hunt (Chairman)	Stoke Mandeville Village	Environment, Governance & Resources, Leisure, Planning
David Starr <i>(Resigned 31 March)</i>	Hawkslade	Environment, Governance & Resources and Leisure
Vacant	Stoke Grange	
Richard Butler	Stoke Mandeville Village	Governance & Resources, Leisure
Andrew Clark	Stoke Grange	Governance & Resources, Planning
Barbara Ezra	Stoke Mandeville Village	Leisure, Planning
Keith Gomm	Hawkslade	Environment, Planning
Santosh Kirve	Stoke Grange	Governance & Resources
Stephen Pluckwell	Stoke Leys	Environment, Planning
Marcus Rogers	Stoke Leys	Environment, Planning
Gillian Watts	Stoke Mandeville Village	Planning
Pat Wood	Hawkslade	Environment, Governance & Resources, Leisure

### Clerk: Tony Skeggs

Community Centre, Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury HP22 5UJ

Tel: 01296 613888

Email: [smparishcouncil@btconnect.com](mailto:smparishcouncil@btconnect.com)

## Attendance record at meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees

Councillor	Attendance		
	Possible	Actual	%
CLlr Jenny Hunt (Chair)	35	32	91.43%
CLlr David Starr (Vice Chair)	25	24	96.00%
CLlr Richard Butler	20	15	75.00%
CLlr Andrew Clark	26	17	65.38%
CLlr Barbara Ezra	26	21	80.77%
CLlr Pat Wood	25	23	92.00%
Vacant			
CLlr Keith Gomm	27	25	92.59%
CLlr Santosh Kirve	16	12	75.00%
CLlr Stephen Pluckwell	27	22	81.48%
CLlr Marcus Rogers	27	22	81.48%
CLlr Gillian Watts	22	13	59.09%
	<b>276</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>81.88%</b>

## Committee Reports

### Environment Committee

#### Members

Marcus Rogers (Chair), Keith Gomm, Jenny Hunt, Stephen Pluckwell, David Starr and Pat Wood.

The Environment Committee has had a successful 2018/19 year over a range of areas.

After identifying the disused allotment land in Marsh Lane as a suitable site for a new burial ground progress has been slower than hoped. The council has requested its surveyors to prepare a detailed design for the new burial ground. This will enable us to complete the detailed planning application which has been requested by AVDC. In the meantime, we have managed to put the majority of the financing in place thanks to a grant from the New Homes Bonus fund. We are continuing to maintain the site in reasonable condition so that once we have the go ahead an immediate start will be possible.

Aylesbury Town Council has continued to carry out grass cutting and maintenance services across most Parish wards this year on a contractual basis on behalf of the Council. Again, their work has been complimented by residents who praise its frequency and quality. We are pleased to have been informed that the subsidy towards the devolved services will be continued for at least the next year. This relieves some of the pressure on our finances for this forthcoming financial year.

The Parish Council owns and maintains the street lights in Stoke Mandeville Village and Stoke Leys wards. The Council has a programme in place to upgrade all its street lights to LED lamps. Although, it decided in February that those lights that hadn't been upgraded should all be done at once. So, over the next couple of months the remaining lights will be converted to LEDs. The financial savings to the Council in revenue costs will be considerable.

If you notice any issues with street lights please report to the Clerk, giving the street light number and street location. Residents in Hawkslade and Stoke Grange should contact Transport for Bucks to report any street lights out in their road – 0845 230 2882.

During the year the Committee undertook an audit of the condition of its noticeboards and as a consequence new noticeboards were installed at the Community Centre, the railway station and at the bus stop on the Wendover Road replacing those that were there. Very recently a new bus shelter was installed opposite the Post Office in Station Road, which has been well received. Also, in Station Road the wooden shelter outside the church has been repaired, cleared of moss and given a coat of preservative.

The council is responsible for the footpaths that run through the parish and during the year the foliage was cut back on a number to make them more accessible and the stile next to the Woolpack was repaired. The council has a map of all the parish footpaths, which is available from the clerk.

The Committee also has responsibility for maintaining the allotments and during the year new plot markers were installed and recently additional water tanks have been added. Interest in renting an allotment remains high with only a couple of plots vacant.

My thanks go to all Committee members for their support and input throughout the last year.

Marcus Rogers  
Chairman

## Governance and Finance Committee

### Members

David Starr (Chairman), Andrew Clark, Richard Butler, Jenny Hunt, Santosh Kirve, Pat Wood.

### Report on Activities in the Financial Year – 2018/2019

#### Street Lights

Your Parish Council has decided to reinvest the savings made on the cost electricity for the street lights in the renewal project. This means that the project is now scheduled to be completed in the financial year 2019/2020, at least one year ahead of schedule.

#### Governance

We have continued to monitor our policies and procedures including a detailed annual risk assessment. We have used the introduction of GDPR during 2018 as a driver for us to undertake a thorough review of how we operate as Council. We have started by looking at our structures and organisation. 2019/2020 will see some changes which we believe will enable us to remain a quality council offering excellent value for money.

#### Annual Audit

Each year the Parish Council is subject to an external audit of its finances and I am pleased to say that the Parish Council was given a clean bill of health with no issues being raised.

I offer my thanks to my fellow committee members for their efforts during the year and to you, our precept payers, for your support.

David Starr  
Chairman

## Leisure Committee

### Members

Barbara Ezra (Chair), Richard Butler, Jenny Hunt, David Starr (resigned March 2019) and Pat Wood.

Over the past twelve months the Committee have been successful in completing several projects, these being:

- New signage at the entrances to the playing field.
- A new noticeboard has been fitted outside the community centre.
- The basketball hoop and backboard on the playing field has been replaced.
- Following receipt of the annual ROSPA inspection, some minor repairs have been carried out on the play equipment.

A new Community Centre front door with side panels has been ordered and is due to be fitted in April. There are also plans to extend the community centre car park and update the present CCTV system.

Following on from the success of “Play Around the Parishes” in previous years, two sessions have been booked for the summer.

One of the most pleasing additions to the village is the Stoke Mandeville FC ‘Under 13s’ football team who play their home games on the playing field. We were extremely pleased when they agreed to take the Stoke Mandeville name.

The playing field continues to be a welcome attraction in the village. It is great to see our resident playgroup regularly using the playground.

Last but not least, the Parish Council now has its own office. This has been a lengthy process but well worth the wait. The finishing touches are presently being completed.

My thanks go to all Committee members for their support and input throughout the last year.

Barbara Ezra  
Chairman

## Planning Committee

### Members

Jenny Hunt (Chairman), Andrew Clark, Barbara Ezra, Keith Gomm, Stephen Pluckwell, Marcus Rogers and Gillian Watts.

The Parish Council meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Community Centre at 7.30pm when members of the public are welcome to come along to listen to the discussions on applications and make comment. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications large and small and has a set period of time in which to undertake this function; sometimes a matter of days. If the comments of the Parish Council differ from those of the Planning Officers who have delegated powers to decide the outcome, the application is referred to the AVDC Development Control Committee for a decision. National guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework is critical in this respect.

This year there has been an increase of 28% in the number of applications which we have received and made a response. By far the largest increase has been in the number for extensions to properties. Noticeably applications for sites of multiple dwellings has also increased which includes changes made to development applications through the planning process known as “Amendments”. We frequently invite developers to our meetings to present their proposals either at pre application stage or after an application has been submitted. In the latter case we would make comments. We always encourage potential developers to undertake public engagement to give local people an opportunity to express their views. This year we have heard from Kier Living for Thornbrook House; Land Improvements for land at Lower Road; Gleeson concerning development proposed for SW Aylesbury [Hawkslade] and Bucks County



Council concerning new street lighting along Lower Road East. We are also requested by the local planning authority to provide street names for new developments. The planning authority and Crest Nicholson have agreed to the council's suggestion that the development next to the hospital should be named after host cities of the Olympics.

Our work also includes studying and commenting on changes to planning structures such as the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan which still has not yet been resolved and is due for resubmission to the Planning Inspectorate to include suggested changes made by the Inspector. A proposal has emerged from the Neighbourhood Plan SG for Stoke Mandeville to become a 'Garden Parish'. Little is known to date as to what this will actually involve. The Parish Council has overarching responsibility for the Neighbourhood Plan which has eventually to be agreed by the Council and the local planning authority before a local Referendum and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for final agreement.

**Planning Applications received for Parish Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to the end of March 2019 are shown below:**

Type of application	No. received 2017-2018	No. received 2018-2019
Extensions/alternations to dwelling	23	38
Change of Use	1	8
New dwelling (single)	7	2
New development (multiple dwellings)	7	13
Change of Materials	0	3
Commercial /Agricultural	9	4
Tree Preservation Order	0	1
Advertising signs	1	0
Erection of fencing /Environment	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>69</b>

Jenny Hunt,  
Chairman



## A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR STOKE MANDEVILLE

It has been a busy 12 months for the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as we have been addressing areas that are required to complete The Plan. We are determined to finalise the Plan and have it "Made" by the end of this year if at all possible.

We have engaged Oneill Homer as our consultants as they have vast experience in working with local communities to compile neighbourhood plans. We have been working with them to draft a framework for the parish which we have decided to call "The Garden Parish of Stoke Mandeville" so as to reflect the concept of Aylesbury Garden Town.

We needed to have further consultations with the residents of Stoke Mandeville so that they were fully informed of what was happening in their Parish. An event was held in all four wards of the Parish in September 2018 to obtain further feedback on our proposals.

Following the September event, we used the information we had gleaned from the residents to design a Concept Plan and Map showing all the areas in the Parish that were already built on, and

the areas for potential development. In doing this we had to remain cognisant of the VALP that is, at this time (April 2019) still being amended to comply with the Inspector's findings.

The SMNPSG Chairman and Vice-Chairman met with the AVDC Planning Department in July 2018 in an effort to engage with them in drawing up plans for Stoke Mandeville. In a frank exchange of views we did not manage to reach an agreement on collaboration. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group decided to forge ahead with a Concept Plan for the Parish which was completed in January 2019.

In February 2019 we held two further Public Consultation events in having delivered a leaflet containing comprehensive details of the concept plans. The map that it contained showing areas of the Parish that were available for development elicited many reactions as the residents finally realised what was being planned.

We did have to explain to the residents that much of the development planned for the Parish was contained in the emerging VALP, but we were also able to offset the many concerns expressed by the residents by informing them that it is the declared intention of AVDC to maintain 50% green space in all new developed areas.

A copy of the Concept Plan was sent to all known Developers and as a result we have had meetings with those that responded so that both parties are aware of the planned future actions.

We have also had another meeting with AVDC in March 2019 which was much more positive and it has been agreed that will have a further meeting with the AVDC Garden Town Team in May 2019 at the latest.

We have met with the BCC District Councillor for Transport who was very supportive of our efforts thus far and agreed to co-operate with us in the coming months, and we had a meeting with the SEALR Project Team as this project will have a lasting effect on the Parish.

The result of all this hard work in the last 12 months has resulted in a major decision to be made about how the Masterplan for the Parish will be compiled. At the time of this report (16<sup>th</sup> April 2019) negotiations are still ongoing with stakeholders.

Laurence Prestage, Chairman and Andrew Clark, Vice Chairman.

## Membership of external bodies

The Parish Council enjoys membership to a number of external bodies to which nominated Councillors attend as elected representatives in order to represent the views of their communities as follows:

- **Greater Aylesbury Local Area Forum**

Marcus Rogers acts as the representative for Stoke Mandeville Parish Council which includes the parishes of Bierton, Buckingham Park, Coldharbour, Watermead, Weedon and Aylesbury Town Council as well as Aylesbury Vale District Council, Bucks County Council, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Thames Valley Police and the voluntary sector. Meetings are held three times a year and allow a wide debate from around the area of the Forum. Members of the public are welcome to attend, to petition for services and ask questions. The Forum also has an allocated budget for improvements to the community and to take account of bids from voluntary groups and organisations in the area.

- **Wendover Local Area Forum**

Jenny Hunt represents the Parish Council on the Wendover Local Area Forum which has the same remit as that of the Great Aylesbury Local Forum outlined above but includes the Parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland, Drayton Beauchamp, Halton and Weston Turville as well as Aylesbury Vale District

Council, Bucks County Council, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Thames Valley Police and RAF Halton.

- **Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity**

Barbara Ezra is nominated by the Parish Council to serve on the Board of the Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity and is also the elected Chairman. The Board of Trustees are nominated by the Parish Councils of Stoke Mandeville, Prestwood and Great Hampden, which are partners within the Charity.

- **ARLA Liaison Group**

Pat Wood is the Parish Council's representative on the liaison group, which serves to benefit local communities.

## Council Finances

### Unaudited summary of the Council's financial performance

Opening balance as at 01/04/2018	£139,300.16
Total Income	£176,171.10
Total Expenditure	£150,352.20
Closing Balance as at 31/03/2019	<b><u>£165,266.29</u></b>

Total receipts for the year were £176,171 which included:

- Precept - £140,870
- Charity grant - £15,000
- Neighbourhood Plan Grant - £5,200
- Section 106 funds - £3,174
- Reclaimed VAT - £8,276

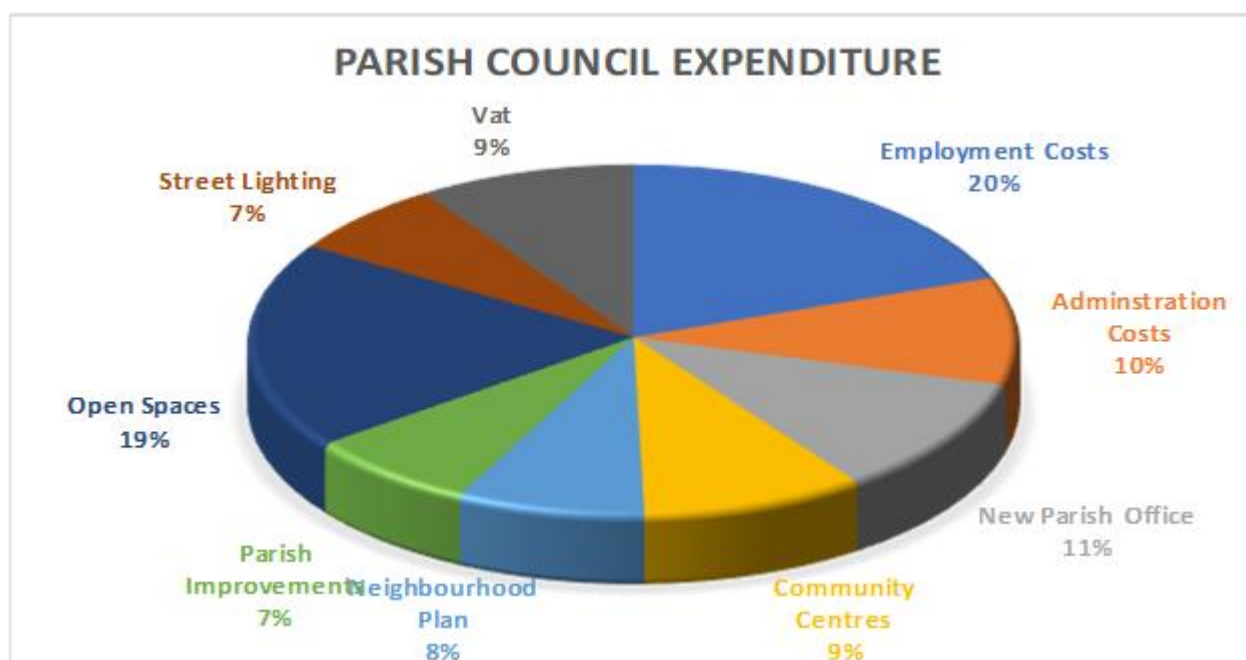
Total Expenditure for the year was £150,352, the highest expenditure items were:

- Creation of a Parish Council office
- Employment of clerk and support officer
- Development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Street lights – electricity and maintenance
- Grounds maintenance around the parish and mowing of the playing field
- Grants towards the running costs of the two community centres.

The under spend from 2018-19 is largely earmarked for the provision of a new burial ground for the parish, as well as improvement/security works to the Community Centre, Neighbourhood Plan and Parish Council election costs.

## How Stoke Mandeville Parish Council spent your Council Tax

The work of Parish Councils is funded by the precept which is collected by district councils through the Council Tax levy. For 2018-19 Stoke Mandeville Parish Council's precept represented a charge to an average Band D household of £59.16 per annum.



## Stoke Mandeville & Other Parishes Charity Grant.

Currently the Charity provides numerous grants for the inhabitants of Stoke Mandeville throughout the age spectrum. Included is a sum of £15,000 which has been awarded to the Parish Council for the year 2019 – 2020 to assist with the cost of non-statutory items.

All of the grants are renewed on an annual basis. However, as the population of the Parish increases, due to the ever-growing amount of new housing developments these grants will be under constant review.

Full details of grants and summary of the accounts are published in the Parish Magazine.

Barbara Ezra  
Chairperson  
16th April 2019

## 2019-20 Precept

For the next financial year starting on 1 April 2019, the precept of the Parish Council will increase by just 5.5p per week for a property falling into council tax band 'D' and will vary from that upwards or downwards according to which council tax band your property falls within. The increase is necessary to deal with a number of high cost projects which have to be completed over the next three to five years as listed below:

- completion of a Neighbourhood Plan to help to manage the future growth and development of our Parish
- continued delivery of services devolved from Bucks CC with reducing subsidy
- development of a future burial ground for the Parish
- extension of the community centre car park
- provision of a pathway around the playing field

## Looking Ahead

The following table is an extract from the Council's Development Plan and demonstrates the work the Council will be focusing on in 2019-20.

<b>Street Lights</b>	Completion of the LED street lights conversion programme.
<b>CCTV</b>	Update the CCTV cameras in and around the Community Centre.
<b>QE Playing Field</b>	Create a pathway/track around the playing field to allow for disabled access, leisure and general exercise.
<b>Burial Ground</b>	Develop the site in Marsh Lane, now that the archaeological trenching has been completed, in conjunction with other agencies. e.g. Thames Valley Water Authority, AVDC Planning Authority and Environment Agency.
<b>Resilience Planning</b>	Produce a resilience plan for Stoke Mandeville.
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	The completion and publication of the Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Mandeville Parish.
<b>Website</b>	Develop a new informative, user friendly website.

## Meetings of Stoke Mandeville Parish Council 2019

The meeting dates for the remainder of 2019 are as follows:

Month	Date	Time	Meeting
<b>April</b>	9 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Environment Committee
	16 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 pm	Annual Parish Meeting
	16 <sup>th</sup>	8.00 pm	Parish Council
	25 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>May</b>	21 <sup>st</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council (AGM)
	28 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Governance and Resources Committee
	30 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>June</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Leisure Committee
	18 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	27 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>July</b>	9 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Environment Committee
	16 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	25 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>August</b>	29 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee (provisional)
<b>September</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Governance and Resources Committee
	17 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	24 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Leisure Committee
	26 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>October</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Environment Committee
	15 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	24 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>November</b>	12 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Governance and Resources Committee (Budget)
	19 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	28 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee
<b>December</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Leisure Committee
	17 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Parish Council
	19 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Planning Committee (provisional)

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council

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