



ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016

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Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to our new style Annual Report. Although not a statutory requirement for Parishes to produce one, it gives an opportunity for us to show the volume and breadth of our work throughout the year. Much of this is ongoing especially in areas such as HS2 which started in 2010 and has been on our Council agenda since that time. In November 2015 we appeared before the House of Commons Select Committee to speak to our Petition. We continue to meet with representatives of HS2 Ltd, local authorities, MPs and Ministers in seeking the best possible mitigation for Stoke Mandeville. This we achieved to some extent with the diversion of the A4010 around the village to avoid the necessity of two large unsightly and disturbing flyovers. In other areas we regret there has been no or little success, for instance in achieving a green tunnel behind Oats Close and Isis Close, adequate screening for our two schools - Booker Park and Stoke Mandeville Combined - and the screening of the Maintenance Loop and for properties along Risborough Road. The debate now nears its completion through Parliament with our petitioning to the House of Lords later this year in pursuance of these unresolved issues. Throughout, we have attempted to keep our residents involved by including information in the Parish Magazine, organising consultation events, the Parish Council website and leaflet drops. Work on the route is planned to start in 2017 and the Parish Council will continue in its lobbying and monitoring until the train is operational and all outstanding issues have been addressed.

Speeding throughout the parish has been of concern for many years as well as on-street car parking. Motor Vehicle Activated Signs have been acquired and are placed at four locations in the Parish in an attempt to reduce speeding. The reduction of the speed limit along Risborough and Lower Roads has been achieved as has also the provision of yellow lines in and around Kynaston Avenue to reduce on street parking. However little headway has been made with commuter parking in village side roads. Unfortunately, this is a common problem for towns and villages along the Aylesbury to Marylebone line.

In the meantime the routine work of the Council goes on as well as special projects as is shown in these pages. Notice Boards have been replaced on all eight sites, additional litter and dog bins provided, work has been done on the playing field with the addition of an outdoor table tennis facility, new seating has been installed for Hawkslade and the Council's website has been upgraded. In April of last year we met with Governors and staff of Stoke Mandeville Combined School which plays an essential part in the life of our community and it is planned that these liaison meetings will continue.

During the year and as a result of the May Parish Elections we welcomed Santosh Kirve as a Councillor for Stoke Grange, Thea Garrett representing Hawkslade and Stephen Pluckwell as a Parish Councillor for Stoke Leys. We also had to say goodbye to Brian Adams who had previously been an active Parish Councillor for Hawkslade.

In conclusion I offer my grateful thanks to the Stoke Mandeville Village Community Association for the work they undertake in managing and maintaining the Community Centre at Eskdale Road to such a high standard; to the Stoke Mandeville & Other Parishes Charity our grateful thanks for their contribution to our work and to the wellbeing of the community as well as the publication of the Parish Magazine valued by many. To my fellow Parish Councillors for their time and endless commitment they give to their role and finally a huge thank you to our Clerk, Sarah Copley, for her quiet efficiency and courteous and conscientious approach to all she undertakes.

Jenny Hunt
Chairman
April 2016

The Parish of Stoke Mandeville

The parish of Stoke Mandeville was established in 1894 and covers approximately 1600 acres and has a population of about 6000. For administrative purposes it is divided into 4 electoral wards: Stoke Mandeville Village, Stoke Grange, Stoke Leys and Hawkslade. Mainly agricultural in nature, there are a number of small commercial and industrial establishments such as village shops, the Weston Park and Triangle Park Business Parks, the Belmore Centre on Lower Road and the Goat Farm Centre at Old Risborough Road with a number of small outlets offering a variety of goods and crafts in a rural setting. Stoke Mandeville is also fortunate in having its own primary school, two Community Centres, playing field, post office and railway station providing good transport linkage by rail and bus.

What is the function of a parish council?

A Parish Council is a Local Authority comprising councillors who are elected for a four year period after which they can be re elected.

Parish councils have powers to provide and maintain certain facilities within their parish. In Stoke Mandeville, these include the playing field and leisure facilities, Community Centres at Eskdale Road and Hawkslade, allotments and burial ground. We also maintain our bus shelters, public seats, litter bins, dog waste bins, the ruins and site of the Old Church off Risborough Road and some street lighting. Stoke Mandeville Parish Council has also entered into a devolved services contract with Bucks County Council for the cutting of the highway grass verges, weed control and other maintenance work previously undertaken by the Highways Authority..

Parish councils play a vital part in obtaining and representing local views on various issues. As a Statutory Body they are consulted by other public authorities such as district councils, county councils, health authorities and government departments on specific issues affecting their parish. They have a legal right to be consulted on planning applications and can be consulted on schools and highway matters. The Parish Council works within a Committee Structure with meetings of the full Council being held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm supported by a number of Committees being Governance and Resources, Planning, Leisure and Environment. All meetings are open to public and press and further details can be found on Notice Boards around the Parish and on our website.

Each parish council has to appoint a Clerk to deal with correspondence, general administration and finance as well as running the Council's affairs.

Council Members

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council has a total of twelve Councillors, elected or co-opted to the Parish Council. The Council meets, usually on the last Tuesday of every month except August. Details of the meetings are on the notice boards within the Parish or can be obtained from the Clerk on request.

Name	Ward Represented	Telephone Number	Committees
Jenny Hunt (Chairman)	Stoke Mandeville Village	01296 613217	Environment, Governance & Resources, Leisure, Planning
David Starr (Vice Chairman)	Hawkslade	01296 613430	Environment, Governance & Resources, Leisure
Richard Butler	Stoke Mandeville Village	01296 614461	Governance & Resources, Leisure
Andrew Clark	Stoke Grange	01296 615828	Governance & Resources, Planning
Barbara Ezra	Stoke Mandeville Village	01296 612560	Leisure, Planning
Thea Garrett	Hawkslade	01296 582550	Environment, Leisure, Planning
Santosh Kirve	Stoke Grange	07466 802946	Governance & Resources
Stephen Pluckwell	Stoke Leys	07519 166577	Environment, Planning
Marcus Rogers	Stoke Leys	07702 490999	Environment, Planning
Richard Swinney	Stoke Mandeville Village	07891 682948	Governance & Resources
Pat Wood	Hawkslade	01296 422217	Environment, Governance & Resources, Leisure

There is still one vacancy for Stoke Grange Ward, if you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor and would like to find out more please contact the Chairman or Clerk.

Clerk:

Mrs Sarah Copley

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

Tel: 01296 613888

Email: smparishcouncil@btconnect.com

Attendance record at meetings of the Parish Council and its Committees

Councillor	Possible Attendances	Actual Attendances	% Attendance
Cllr Jenny Hunt (Chairman)	33	31	94%
Cllr David Starr (Vice Chairman)	22	21	95%
Cllr Richard Butler	17	11	65%
Cllr Andrew Clark	26	3	12%
Cllr Barbara Ezra	25	19	76%
Cllr Thea Garrett	28	6	21%
Cllr Santosh Kirve	11	9	82%
Cllr Stephen Pluckwell	28	27	96%
Cllr Marcus Rogers	27	26	96%
Cllr Richard Swinney	14	13	93%
Cllr Pat Wood	23	19	83%

Review of 2015-16

Speeding Vehicles

Speed Limit Review

The Parish Council successfully applied for a grant from AVDC's New Home Bonus which contributed to the costs of reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph along parts of Risborough Road and Lower Road. The new speed limit was agreed in November 2015 and implemented on 1st March 2016 by Legal Order effected by Bucks County Council. This change was instigated to make our village safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists who regularly use these roads to walk to school, the station and other village amenities.

Monitoring Speeds of Vehicles

The Council shares a Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) with Weston Turville Parish Council, this was provided through funding from the Wendover Local Area Forum and County Councillor Chris Adam's leader's fund.

The MVAS flashes a warning sign to motorists exceeding the speed limit, it also records the volumes and speeds of vehicles which pass it. The MVAS can be moved to various locations around the parish, including Lower Road, Risborough Road, Station Road, Wendover Road and Anton Way.

Data obtained from the MVAS demonstrates that:

Lower Road:	85% of cars travel at, or within 5mph of the speed limit. Speeding tends to be early morning or late evening.
Station Road:	85% of cars travel at, or below, 33mph. Cars exceeding this level tend to be early morning, before 7am.
Wendover Road:	85% of cars travel at, or below, 34mph. Cars exceeding this level are travelling early morning or late evening. The maximum speed recorded was 85mph at 11.30pm.
Anton Way:	85% of cars travel at or below 29mph

The data obtained from the MVAS can be shared with Thames Valley Police in order for them to target enforcement where it is needed.

Street Lights

The Parish Council owns and maintains the street lights in Stoke Mandeville Village and Stoke Leys wards. In 2015 all our lights were tested for structural and for electrical integrity. The structural survey showed that a number were corroding and in urgent need of replacement and the necessary work was carried out in September 2015. A further twelve columns were recommended for replacement when the lamp was upgraded to LED.

A number of the lights were also fitted with mercury vapour bulbs which are no longer available under an EU directive. The Parish Council took this opportunity to assess the future of our street lights taking into account the savings made by other local councils elsewhere and the need to protect the carbon footprint. The two items featured highly in our discussions with electrical contractors and local authorities. It was therefore agreed that replace all two hundred and forty three street (footpath) lights owned by the Parish Council over the next seven years. The replacements are being carried out over a number of years in order to make the project affordable for the Council whilst not compromising spending in other areas such as maintenance of the Council's property and assets and grass cutting.

Devolved Services

The Parish Council entered into a four year agreement with Bucks County Council to undertake some of the services previously provided by BCC under the Devolved Services Regulations which included cutting of grass verges, sign cleaning, small maintenance jobs and weed control. Funding has been passed down to the parish but after the first year the funding reduces and the parish council will have to meet the cost.

The Council joined a cluster of parishes which was led by Aylesbury Town Council, whose team of groundsmen carry out the work. The feedback from parishioners was that the new service was a vast improvement on the previous year with more regular grass cuts resulting in far fewer complaints being received.

Committee Reports

Planning Committee

Membership

Jenny Hunt (Chairman), Andrew Clark, Barbara Ezra, Alethea Garrett, Marcus Rogers, Stephen Pluckwell

The Planning Committee meets frequently based on when applications are received from the Local Planning Authority [AVDC] seeking comments. Parish Councils do not make decisions on planning issues but are known as “statutory consultees”. We look at all aspects of a planning application taking into account highway safety, affects on privacy and natural light to neighbouring dwellings, whether the proposed development fits in with existing surroundings and how this would affect the area for which it is intended. Planning Regulations were relaxed with the Government’s publication in 2011 of the Policy Planning Framework which looks towards housing needs rather than wishes from the local community. As will be seen from the chart below the majority of applications which we have considered during the year are for extensions to existing dwellings. Applications for multiple dwellings have been few and far between in Stoke Mandeville in recent years. However, during the past year this has changed significantly with applications for over three hundred dwelling on sites in Lower Road and also for twenty four houses in Oats Close. Aylesbury Vale District Council does not have a Local Plan (showing sites on which development could be considered favourably) and it does not have a five year land supply which is necessary for housing growth. Being a settlement close to the town of Aylesbury with all the facilities, good transport links, facilities for future residents, employment opportunities and available land it is highly likely that Stoke Mandeville will face more challenges in the future. For this reason it is important that a Neighbourhood Development Plan is produced further details of which are shown in this report. Parish Council Planning meetings are open to the public and we are always pleased to welcome residents and to listen to their views.

Planning Applications received for comment during the past two years from 1st April 2014 to the end of March 2016 are shown below –

Type of application	No. received 2015-16	No. received 2014-15
Extensions/alternations to dwelling	19	25
Change of Use	4	4
New dwelling (single)	2	3
New development (multiple dwellings)	6	0
Commercial/agricultural	7	5
Advertising Signs	1	1
Erection of fencing	2	2
Telecommunication equipment	1	2
Trees/Hedgerows	0	2
A17 – alternative use application	1	1
TOTAL	43	45

Jenny Hunt
Chairman, Planning Committee

Environment committee

Members

Marcus Rogers (Chair), Alethea Garrett, Jenny Hunt, Stephen Pluckwell, David Starr, Pat Wood

Co-Opted Members of the Public

John Reed

It has been a very busy year for the Environment Committee. The Parish Council is now responsible for cutting grass verges across the parish and our contractor, Aylesbury Town Council, have done a great job, recognised by local people. We have started probably the biggest project ever, replacing out-of-date streetlights with LED units. In the next few years this will save both energy and money.

We have reduced the speed limit on Lower Road and Risborough Road to 30mph. We check vehicle speeds across the area with our moveable speed sign. We have provided new benches, bins and dog-bins, and kept footpaths clear. And we are working with other Committees and the local community to develop our Neighbourhood Plan that will play a key part in shaping the local environment for years to come.

Marcus Rogers

Chairman, Environment Committee

Leisure Committee

Members

Barbara Ezra (Chair), Richard Butler, Alethea Garrett, Jenny Hunt, David Starr, Pat Wood

This committee deals mainly with facilities in and around The Community Centre including any repairs that might arise in connection with the building itself. Included are the upkeep of the tennis courts, skate park and playground. It also manages the letting of the Queen Elizabeth II Playing field.

Using section 106 funds we have been able to install a table tennis facility on the aforementioned field.

Following several applications to gain funding for the installation of an area of Adult exercise equipment, we were finally successful in obtaining a grant of £9000 from Community Chest. However as the grant is only a proportion of the monies required we are awaiting further positive responses from other sources before proceeding with the installation. Particular thanks goes to Cllr David Starr for his perseverance in this matter.

Play around the Parishes - As a result of two very successful sessions in the school summer holidays of 2015 the committee recommended that four sessions of play activities run by AVDC be funded for the summer of 2016.

Barbara Ezra

Chairman, Leisure Committee

Governance and Resources Committee

Members

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

This year our committee's work has continued the focus on planning for the major street lights upgrade that technology advances bring to us. The Parish council are responsible for over 200 street lights across the parish. We are budgeting to carry out this work over a seven year period in addition to taking on the significant funding of services devolved from Bucks County Council. At the same time, we are maintaining our record as one of the lowest precepting parish councils in the Aylesbury Vale.

As for governance of the Council, the last twelve months have seen the committee continue its review and update of the Council's formal operating policies to ensure that we operate in accordance with the highest standards.

I thank all members of the committee, and the Council in general, for their ideas and support to ensure the continued operational and financial health of our Council.

David Starr

Chairman, Governance and Resources Committee

Membership of external bodies

In addition to the Parish Council having its own committees, some members of the Council also attend other meetings on behalf of the Parish Council or as a Parish Council Representative.

- **Greater Aylesbury Local Area Forum**

Marcus Rogers is the Parish Council's representative on the Greater Aylesbury Forum which covers Aylesbury Town and the Parishes of Bierton, Buckingham Park, Watermead, Weedon and Stoke Mandeville as well as District and County Councillors and Officers, the Fire Service, Thames Valley Police and the voluntary sector.

- **Wendover Local Area Forum**

Jenny Hunt represents the Parish Council on the Wendover Local Area Forum which comprises the Parishes of Aston Clinton, Buckland, Drayton Beauchamp, Halton, Wendover and Weston Turville along with officers and members of the Authorities mentioned above.

- **Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity**

Barbara Ezra serves on the Charity's board of Trustees and is nominated by the Parish Council. Barbara is currently the Chairman of the Trustees.

- **Stoke Mandeville Village Community Association (SMVCA)**

Members of the Leisure Committee meet with members of SMVCA twice a year.

- **ARLA Liaison Group**

Pat Wood is the Parish Council's representative on the liaison group.

Council Finances

Unaudited summary of the Council's financial performance

Opening balance as at 01/04/15	£83,516
Total Income	£147,690
Total Expenditure	£171,411
Closing Balance as at 31/03/16	<u>£59,795</u>

(£9,000 of the closing balance is a grant towards the cost of providing outdoor exercise equipment)*

Total receipts for the year were £147,690 which included:

- Precept - £97,020
- Charity grant - £11,000
- AVDC New Homes Bonus Grant - £5,000
- Community Chest Grant - £9,000
- S106 funding - £1,224
- Neighbourhood Plan Grant - £2,600

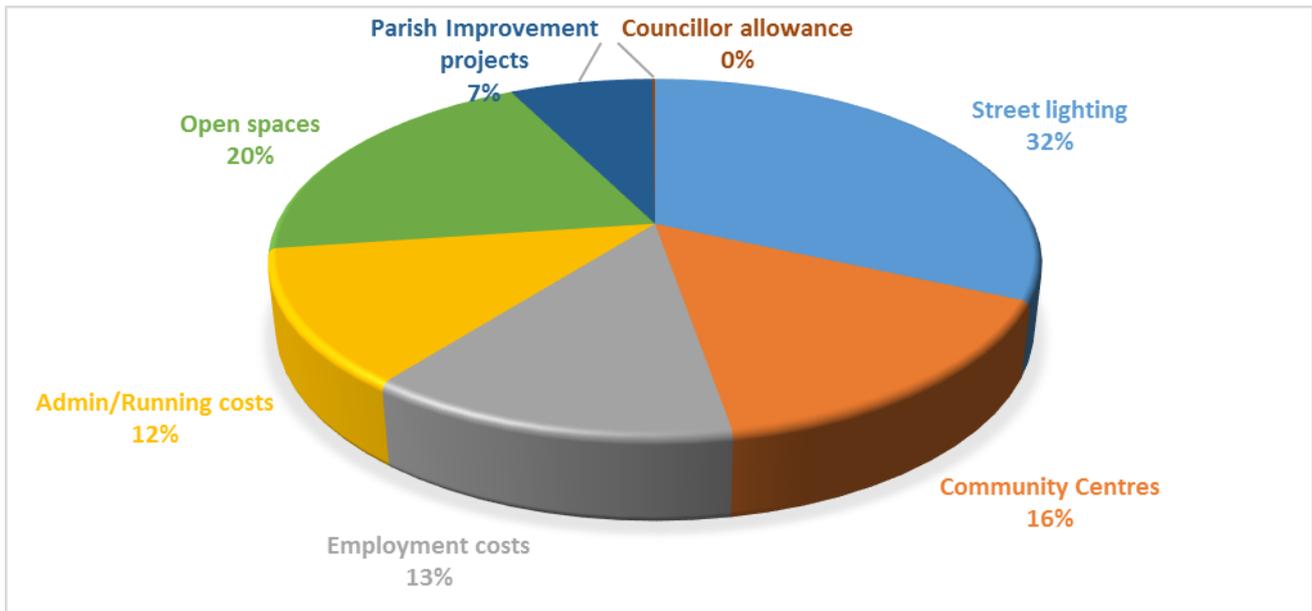
Total Expenditure for the year was £171,411, the highest expenditure items were:

- Street lighting – replacement of columns and upgrade of some lamps to LEDs
- Employment of clerk
- Grass cutting
- Street lights – electricity and maintenance
- Grounds maintenance around the parish

How Stoke Mandeville Parish Council spends 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 2015-16 Stoke Mandeville Parish Council’s precept represented a charge to an average Band D household of £42.31 per annum which is below the national average of £54.12.



Stoke Mandeville & Other Parishes Charity Grant.

The Stoke Mandeville and Other Parishes Charity provide a grant to the Parish Council which helps to keep the precept below the national average and also ensures that all residents benefit from the Charity. In 2015-16, the Parish Council have requested a grant of £11,000.

2016-17 Precept

For the next financial year starting on 1 April 2016, the precept of the Parish Council will increase by just under 16p 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.

- upgrading the street lights for which we are responsible to in accord with current requirements
- 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
- identification and development of a future burial ground for the Parish

Looking Ahead

What has the Council got planned for 2016-17?

The following table is an extract from the Council's Development Plan and demonstrates the work the Council will be focusing on in 2016-17.

Trees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and catalogue all trees which are the responsibility of the Parish Council 2. Establish routine inspection process
Street Lights	<p>Upgrade to LED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 243 lights in total to be upgraded, 43 done to date 2. Stoke Leys lights to be upgraded in 2016-17
Roadside Parking (Commuters) – Village	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with necessary Agencies 2. Work with other parishes who have similar issues
Play Facilities Hawksalde	Identify site for provision of play area for children in conjunction AVDC Leisure services and liaise with AVDC Leisure services over suitability of land and provision of equipment
Facilities at Playing Field Eskdale Road	Establish Outdoor Leisure Facility as Olympic Legacy with disabled access to include other play areas – a grant of £9,000 has been secured towards this project
Burial Ground Swallow Lane	Explore and identify sites for future provision, working with other agencies. e.g. Thames Valley Water Authority, AVDC Planning Authority, Environment Agency and others.
HS2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaison with local authorities and others on mitigation 2. Public Engagement
Local Council Award Scheme	Assess the PC against the criteria and submit application
Resilience Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a resilience plan for Stoke Mandeville 2. Flooding - Identify water courses in the parish and who is has the responsibility
Neighbourhood Plan	Develop neighbourhood plan for Stoke Mandeville Parish.
Vale of Aylesbury Plan	To become involved in the new Aylesbury Vale Plan by continuous engagement with the planning authority.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council has begun work on a neighbourhood plan for the parish. The entire parish was designated as a neighbourhood area by Aylesbury Vale District Council in August 2015. Since then the Council has formed a steering group consisting of Parish Councillors and members of the public, it has engaged consultants to assist with the production on the plan and has begun collating base line evidence.

Anyone who is interested in helping with the neighbourhood plan is invited to contact the Clerk for further information.

Burial Ground

The attention of the Parish Council has been directed towards the need for a new Burial Ground there being only a few plots remaining. Previous Parish Councils had considered this issue in the late nineties but abandoned the search failing to find a suitable site of sufficient size. The need is now becoming more urgent and enquiries to local land owners have failed to identify a suitable site. However, the Council's land in Marsh Lane has recently come back into public use and investigations are taking place to assess whether this could be used as a future burial ground. A number of necessary tests on the land and permission of the Department of Communities and Local Government as well as planning permission are required. Public consultation will also be necessary.

Street light upgrade

The project to upgrade the Council's street lights to LED will progress later in the year with the lights in Stoke Leys ward planned to be upgraded next.

Meetings of Stoke Mandeville Parish Council 2016

The meeting dates for the remainder of 2016 are as follows:

Date	Time	Meeting detail
Tuesday 12 April	7.30pm	Annual Parish Meeting & Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 19 April	7.30pm	Governance & Resources Committee
Thursday 21 April	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 3 May	7.30pm	Leisure Committee
Tuesday 10 May	7.30pm	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
Thursday 12 May	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 24 May	7.30pm	Environment Committee
Thursday 9 June	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 14 June	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 21 June	2.30pm	Leisure Committee
Thursday 30 June	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 5 July	7.30pm	Governance & Resources Committee
Tuesday 12 July	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 19 July	7.30pm	Environment Committee
Thursday 21 July	10.30am	Planning Committee
<i>Tuesday 9 August</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Parish Council (PROVISIONAL)</i>
<i>Thursday 11 August</i>	<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Planning Committee</i>
Thursday 8 September	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 13 September	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 20 September	2.30pm	Leisure Committee
Tuesday 27 September	7.30pm	Environment Committee
Thursday 29 September	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 11 October	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 18 October	7.30pm	Governance & Resources Committee
Thursday 20 October	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 8 November	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 10 November	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 22 November	7.30pm	Environment Committee
Tuesday 29 November	7.30pm	Governance & Resources Committee
Tuesday 6 December	2.30pm	Leisure Committee
Thursday 8 December	10.30am	Planning Committee
Tuesday 13 December	7.30pm	Parish Council Meeting

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council
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