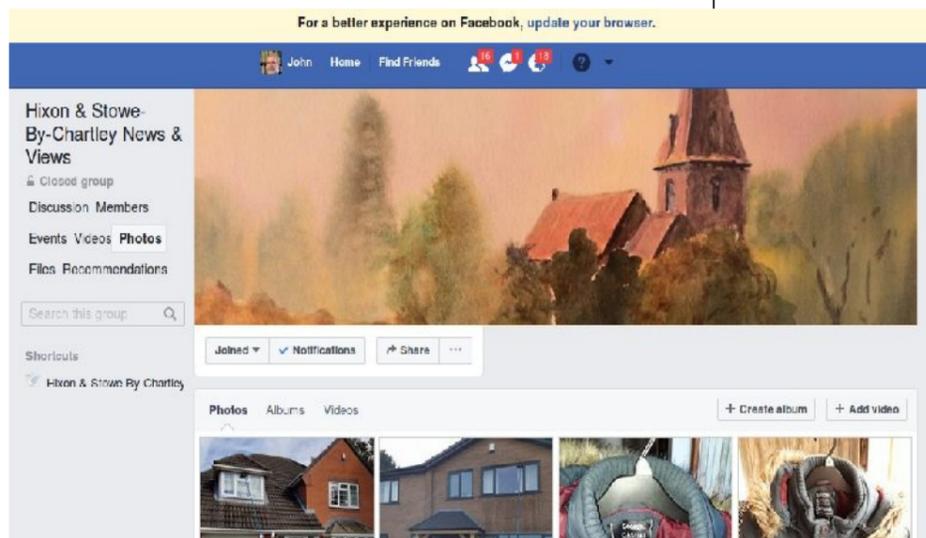


Hixon and Stowe by Chartley News and Views



The Hixon and Stowe Facebook Page has been attracting a lot of comments in the Parish. Originally created by Jan Kelly it is now run by Mark Walker with the help of 3 moderators.

Mark says 'I looked at the other village pages around the area and felt that most of them seemed to be just full of spam adverts and people bickering and arguing amongst themselves. I thought that it was a

Getting Started on Facebook

Signing up for Facebook is fast and free. All you need is a name and email. Once you have an account, you fill in your profile where you can add a profile picture, a cover photo, a bio and other information you want to share. Note, if you don't want the world to know something about you, don't post it on Facebook.

shame that technology had given us an opportunity to build our own online community to help each other out and keep us all in contact. I felt that because Stowe-by-Chartley was so close to Hixon (and it hadn't got a page of it's own) that it would be nice to include it as part of the same community and it would help to increase footfall to events held in both villages and also gives a wider catchment area for anyone who has lost their pets or was looking for a local tradesman etc.

The page is kept private at the request of locals and membership criteria is fairly simple.... you have to either live in Hixon or Stowe, work in Hixon or Stowe or have

connections to the area. There are currently nearly 1000 members.

The basic terms of the site are that everyone must be friendly, anyone intentionally trying to cause trouble is removed. No constant advertising and no political discussions. The emphasis is on communication and involvement. Local businesses are welcome to inform locals of special offers (eg The Bistro in Stowe recently ran a few posts promoting their new menu and points system) but we don't allow constant business posts

Mark thinks that combining the two villages works well and that the being able to post events and issues across the two villages in one place is invaluable but if Stowe wanted to create their own page he would have no problem reverting back to just Hixon.

What do you think? Let the Parish Clerk have your thoughts on clerk@stowe-by-chartley-pc.gov.uk

Hixon Allotments.

Given its association with the airfield Wellington Fields was an inspired name for Hixon's allotments. Hixon Parish Council have asked us to tell residents that there are a few plots available. The site was established about 6 years ago and there are about 35 plots of different sizes.

A standard plot (30m x 5m) is about £68.00 per year and a quarter plot (15m x 5m) is about £35.00. The rents increase in line with the RPI and vary from



year to year depending on the water usage.

If you want to know more then email Jane Garner at fjanegarner@hotmail.com

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Stowe by Chartley Parish Council

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Breakfast Club. Pauline, Jackie and M run a Breakfast Club from 10am to 12 noon in Stowe Village Hall on the first Saturday of every month. The aim is to stimulate community involvement and to build up Parish Councillors for the Council meeting on the following Tuesday.

The menu includes the traditional Full English breakfast with all the trimmings for £5 with as much tea or coffee as you can drink or a Stowe lite version.



Young Farmers receives Royal Recognition.

Staffordshire County Federation of Young Farmers Clubs have been awarded The Queen's Award for



Voluntary Service. The award is given in recognition of the tremendous amount of work which this rural youth

organisation does through its ten active clubs for young people aged 10 – 26 years.

Staffordshire YFC will be organising a fitting celebration later in the year to mark the occasion where the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire will present a Crystal Award and Certificate signed by the Queen.

Chief Executive Principle of South Staffordshire College, Graham Morley said "I'm delighted that Staffordshire Young Farmers Clubs have received this Queens Award in recognition of the outstanding service they provide for young people across the County. The work they do, often unseen, has a massive positive impact upon the young people in our rural communities and I congratulate all those involved".

This announcement has been a great end to a very busy week at the Staffordshire County Show for all young farmers across the county and will give them even more reason to celebrate at the Show Dance on Friday evening.

For information on becoming a member or details of your local Club, contact Julia Taylor, County Organiser, on 01785 248645 or email countyoffice@staffsyoungfarmers.org.uk.

Renewable Energy



In our 2007 Parish Plan we said that with changes in technology the distribution of electricity from large generators is being superseded. There are about 82,000 microgeneration installations in the UK and a recent study by the Energy Saving Trust suggests that 30-40% of the UK's electricity demand could be met by microgeneration technologies by 2050. We said then that the Parish Council had new powers to promote microgeneration. Grindley was probably first to have a wind generator but the generating capacity has been greatly expanded with the new biomass generator serving Grindley Business Village. The biomass generator has been built using the governments Renewable Heat Incentive(RHI) scheme which has been set up to encourage

uptake of renewable heat technologies amongst householders, communities and businesses through financial incentives. It is the first of its kind in the world and the UK Government expects the RHI to contribute towards the 2020 ambition of 12% of heating coming from renewable sources. The Grindley site sits on the high pressure gas pipeline so the gas that it generates can go straight into the gas network. The gas is produced by heating a soup of maize to 90 degrees. Bacteria then work on the mixture to produce methane. This is done in two large digesters that owner, Steven

Hughes, likes to call 'concrete cows'. The plant was built by the Rugeley branch of EnviTech Biogas. Costing £10m to build the plant consumes 350Kilotonne of maize a year and feeds 450 cub m of gas an hour into the grid line. The plant employs local labour and the maize feedstock is sourced from

local farms. Covering 10 hectares the site's surface water drainage has been addressed by the provision of a balancing lake. This reed fringed duck pond is a



Digastate lagoon at Grindley

pleasant addition to the environment as well as coping with excessive water during storms. The liquid from the plant itself, the digestate, is run into a storage lagoon from where it is taken to be spread over nearby agricultural land to complete the virtuous renewable energy cycle. Spare gas is fed into a Central Heat and Power(CHP) unit which provides 0.5Mw of electricity for the adjacent business village and will soon pipe the spare heat into the business units as well. A medium size wind turbine on another part of the site also provides electricity. The wind turbines generate power by rotating a permanent magnet generator which generates three phase AC at the frequency of the turbine's rotation. The AC power from the generator is not only the wrong voltage to be connected to the local power grid, but also, as the wind speed changes so does the rotational speed of the turbine, and therefore the frequency of the power generated. The power from the generator therefore needs to be converted to DC and then fed into a special electronic device called an inverter, to ensure that it is always at the correct frequency and voltage for the local grid. Any power you generate will be first used by your own property, thereby saving you the maximum amount possible on your electricity bill. Any excess energy your wind turbine generates, e.g. on windy days or at night, is "spilled" to the power grid and your electricity supplier pays you for it.

The issue of the unreliability of wind energy is not a consideration at Grindley because of the biomass.



At Yew Tree Farm at Drointon a mid size wind generator is teamed with a solar farm and, because the peak operating times for wind and solar systems occur at different times of the day and year, the system is more likely to produce power when you need it.

There have been concerns about the effect of wind generators on birds but owner, Mike Hurdle, says that at Drointon the only problem was a bird building a nest inside the generator housing! Battery technology is close to the point where electrical storage from renewable energy plants will be economic.

Like the Grindley biodigester site the solar farm is very discrete and sits low in the landscape. Although the cost of solar panels has dropped

considerably so has the governments feed in tariff and the £40k cost of the grid connection has to be factored in. The solar farm produces 240kw of electricity with no harm to the environment. Even the field edges are set aside for wildlife under the Stewardship Scheme. You can do things on a smaller scale such as down the lane at Charltey Chucks where 7 solar panels feed into the property and the grid so that even the Rhode Island Reds are green.



Mike Hurdle on site. The solar arrays and wind turbine are barely visible behind him.