

Stratton St. Margaret

First steps taken to installing peace memorial

A ground-breaking ceremony to mark the start of the building of the new Peace Memorial has taken place in Stratton St Margaret. Parish councillors and parishioners gathered to see the first sod turned at the corner of Grange Drive and Ermin Street, where the memorial will be built. Planning permission for the structure was approved in April and it is hoped that the memorial will be built in time for August 4 – the anniversary of the start of the First World War. John Foley, chairman of Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, said: "It's a great moment for the parish, a lot of hard work has gone into bringing a peace memorial to Stratton in this centenary year. We wanted to install a memorial to commemorate the people who lost their lives fighting for peace in the First World War." The memorial, which was designed by Tony Currivan, an architect with Swindon Council which footed the bill for the fees and architectural services, will be built by Beard Construction. The memorial comprises three elements including a zigzag path, a grail sculpture for focus and reflection and a brick structure representing Stratton St Margaret and the dragon protecting the grail. There will be a dedication service held at the memorial on August 3 from 3pm by the Bishop of Swindon. The Royal British Legion will lead a parade from Grange Leisure to the site, and all residents are invited to attend.

Doing things by the book

Stratton residents can now borrow books from Grange Leisure Centre after the Parish Council introduced the new facility at a launch ceremony on Monday. Stratton St Margaret Parish Council introduced the new facility – which will run on an honesty basis – after residents indicated a need for the service. John Foley, chairman of the Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, said: "It should provide a very good and much needed service to the parish. Residents have been coming to us for years saying that they want a library. There isn't a library really in the area down there and not everybody can go out to the mobile library. Sometimes it's there at a time which isn't convenient and they just miss it. So it was definitely something that was needed. We approached Swindon Libraries and asked what they thought about putting a community library in Grange Leisure and they loved the idea, they jumped at it. So we set it up and now there is a selection of books that people can choose from. We will hopefully expand the library over time but I think it's already quite popular. People had started to use it before it had been officially opened." Visitors can go to the Leisure Centre, browse through the 450 titles, and book it out in the available sign out book. They then will have to sign it back in on their return. But the library is unable to take returns from other Swindon Libraries. Councillor Keith Williams, cabinet member for corporate services and leisure, said: "I am really pleased that we have been able to support the Parish Council in providing additional library provision for people in Stratton. Library collections in community centres have been very successful in other towns and cities and it is a blueprint which can work very well, particularly if there is strong demand for the service. I look forward to seeing how this new service develops and I would urge people in Stratton to visit the collection for themselves."

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