

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of Stanford in the Vale held on Wednesday 22nd 2009 in the Millennium Hall.

Present: Cllr.P.G.McMorrow(Chair) Cllr.B.Burls Cllr.G.Hughes
 Cllr.P.Gill Cllr.Mrs G.McMorrow Cllr.M.Isa
 Cllr.M.Tilley(County Councillor) Cllr.R.Sharp(District Councillor)
 D.M.Dew(Parish Clerk) M/s C.White(PC Internal Auditor)
 2 Parishioners

1. Apologies

Cllr.S.Bambury

2. Report of Thames Valley Police (Read by Parish Clerk)

Please accept my apologies for being unable to attend. Offences from 1st April 2008 until 1st April 2009 broken down as follows:

Burglary:	Dwelling 1	Non-dwelling 2	
Criminal Damage:	Vehicles 8	Dwellings 3	Other 5
Assault:	10		
Drugs:	3		
Public Order:	1		
Harassment:	5		
Theft:	Cycle 1	From Vehicle 8	Other 17

Any crimes that have been reported and then retracted or have been proved non crimes have been omitted from all offences, 26 have been detected, these being all the assaults and harassments, the public order, and some thefts. Almost all of the other offences that we have had in Stanford we have had suspects but unfortunately not the evidence to support our findings. Some of the thefts, criminal damage and non-dwelling burglary are from White Horse Business Park and The Quarry, which we suspect are targets, and some groups have been sited in the area trying to obtain diesel and scrap metal.

We have had two families move into our village that have proved to be problematic and are being monitored by us and any offences being dealt with. Since they have moved here our crime figures and reporting of anti-social behaviour have increased.

I would like to thank all of the members of our community who through reporting or sharing information with the police, example within the neighbourhood watch, we are keeping on top of crimes in our village and some of the anti-social behaviour that it is subjected to.

3 Finance

Parish Council Clerk and Finance Officer reported on year end finances. There had been an increase in income and also in the cost of mowing and village maintenance. Combines with the huge drop in interest and less grants received this had led to the bank balance dropping from £46750 to £33023. (Appendix A). The village in its excellent condition costs a lot of money but even bearing this in mind the precept had

been reduced. Projects and capital purchases had been greatly funded by WREN and TOE and to them especially to the Public Purposes Charity we give our grateful thanks for their continued financial support of village projects.

It is envisaged that at last the audit of council accounts will be completed within the next few months to bring to an end the saga of unaudited accounts that has existed since 1987. Thanks must go to M/s C.White for unrelenting work on our behalf to finalise these accounts.

Cllr. Hughes asked that a vote of thanks be recorded for this work.

Regarding the grass cutting, a parishioner asked why the grass was being cut so short. It was explained that it was a new machine and the grass cutters were cutting short in an attempt not to have to cut so frequently. The Clerk read several letters that were of interest to the village – possibility of mains gas supply, Norfolk Football Competitions centenary, County Council suggestion of street lighting hours reduction and South Eastern Development Area plans.

4 Report of Parish Council Chairman

This has been yet another successful year for our Council and Community. We continue to reduce the deficit whilst spending three to four times the amount the precept raises. The lowering of tax on each household has been achieved in each year since 1999.

The Parish Council gained another acknowledgement in the Village of the Year Competition for flood prevention initiative – This is the thirteenth award gained since 1999.

We acquired - with a fifty% grant from the Public Purposes Charity, a heavy duty grass cutting machine able to cut longer and wetter grass than our present machines. The new cutter will save labour, fuel and wear on our existing machines. Grateful thanks to the PPC for their generosity.

An initiative launched twelve years ago has since been revisited in respect of access to the landfill site and reclamation of safe areas. Fuller details will be published in the autumn. Thank you to our County Council for her determination to ensure our points were vigorously delivered in the right quarters and also thanks to the County Conservation Officer.

M/s Cheryl White, internal auditor to this Council waives fees and expenses in correcting past financial accounts and is bringing them up to date. Although the financial accounts of the Parish Council have met audit requirements since 2000, prior accounts and their correction dating from 1987 have impacted and continue to cause additional work altering the opening balances of subsequent years. No serving Councillors are responsible for the mixed funding, failure to invest or disperse charity funds correctly and the losses incurred by PPC and since recovered by serving councillors. Cheryl will complete the final outstanding two years of audit in the next few weeks, in doing so this will bring to an end the irregularities first raised in 1993. M/s White's work has saved thousands of pounds of tax payer's money. For example from 1997 the then trust to the village were paying a Chartered Accountant £100 per hour duties included minute taking. Almost £20,000 of village funds were spent without that accountant able to produce acceptable accounts.

Making the countryside more accessible and amenable – improvement to stiles, bridges and paths have been proposed by Councillors to County who are at present working on implementation in those areas under their authority. The Parish Council will work with land owners and grant awarding bodies to ensure improvements that lie outside the County Council responsibility.

We continue to work towards extending the leisure facilities for our community and hope to acquire more with this aspiration in mind.

The public have been vociferous in the praise on the condition of the village, the grass, hedgerows, absence of litter and general upkeep. Your appreciation has been passed to all those responsible for the sterling work. I commend the achievements for the past year.

Cllr. Hughes spoke of the situation of parking on Greens and verges and stated that he had spoken to the Upper Green and Van Diemens warning them of the consequences.

5 Report of Cllr. Isaacs regarding footpaths, gates and proposed woodland area

Cllr. Isaacs spoke of the Strategic Plan and the progress of the footpaths with County Council subject to land owners agreements and hoped for completion within 4 – 5 months as with the proposed woodland site at Lane. It was part of the medium term plan to have footpaths right around the village and to create more woodland and also included were plans for a cycle path and green energy.

A parishioner asked about financing such plans. Chairman replied that it was proposed to be paid for by the Council and explained the position of WREN and TOE and the PPC. Cllr. Gill asked for clarification on the road mentioned regarding the time of the present lease holder. County Councillor to enquire.

6 Report of County Councillor

Reported County Council plans for 20mph speed limits in towns and villages although Council will not apply. There had been no further developments regarding Earthline although many complaints were being received especially about unsheeted loads. The A420 accident diversion plan was in operation although it had not diverted as per plan at the last incident. The Government plans "Better Schools for the Future" dealt with Primary schools for deprived areas – Oxfordshire had received grant aid. There were no school closures within this area.

7 Report of District Councillor

Spoke of the new Faringdon guide a copy of which he gave to Council. Listed businesses etc which it would be of economical help to the area

8 Report of Parish Council Recreational & Leisure Chairman

Equipment- Pyramid Climbing Frame and Picnic Tables erected in Village Hall Play Area.

- ***Proposed- : More benches for Recreation Ground by Skate Park and Junior Football Pitch and picnic tables at Village Hall Play Area.***

Projects-

- ***Higher fence at Football Club to assist residents at Perrys Road-flying footballs/damage and nuisance. Costs to be shared by Football Club/ District Council Grant / PPC Grant / Parish Council/ Vale Housing. We now have planning consent and await a completion date.***
- ***Have other costings for Lockable steel vault- to house tennis nets , netball posts etc. This will improve the accessibility and safety of our equipment.***
- ***Also costings for cricket nets and surfaces, football posts wheel-away etc.***

A sincere thank you to all our sponsors but in particular Trustees of the Village Charity (PPC) for their generous financial support for village projects.

Maintenance

- All grass cutting / strimming / hedge trimming has been well under control.
- Skate Park Ramps have all been repainted.
- Health and Safety checks on our equipment continue as normal.

It would be appreciated if dog owners could make sure all dog mess is always collected where ever you are walking- pavements/ grass verges / village footpaths /wayside. It is an offence to leave behind and notices have been placed all around the village by the Dog Warden (Vale District Council). Please don't let it be you who is prosecuted.

Any ideas you may want to share to improve or extend our leisure facilities will always be welcomed. Thank you to all who do many things to care for our village in ensuring our facilities are well used and looked after.

8 Questions and Comments from Parishioners

A Parishioner asked about the Strategic Plan and village involvement. Cllr. Isaacs said that any help would be appreciated especially in badgering other people to help.

Clerk warned that in these days of insurance claims the Council had to be careful re the insurance position when carrying out tasks such as litter picking. Whereas larger Councils had teams of legal

aides to protect their interests we as a Parish Council were in a different position and are only able to take advice from our national organisations.