

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of Stanford in the Vale held on Monday 24th April 2006 in the Millennium Hall.

Present: Cllr. P.G.McMorrow(Chair) Cllr.G.Hughes
 Cllr.P.Gill Cllr.B.Burls
 Cllr.M.Isaacs Cllr.Mrs.F.Shires

Cllr.M.Tilley(County Councillor) P.C. M.Holder (TV Const.)
 Clerk M.Dew 2 Parishioners

Report by PC Holder

Due to other commitments PC Holder addressed the meeting first. There had been 50 reported crimes in the village in the previous 12 months which included:

8 violent crimes which included bullying by children

4 burglaries (2 in empty houses)

16 concerning car damages

7 criminal damage which was a third of other villages averages.

He felt that the youth shelter, graffiti wall etc helped in Stanford. He explained the new policing methods which will concentrate on problems until they disappear. The meeting proposed a vote of thanks to PC Holder for his continued help for the village. This was endorsed by the Chair on behalf of the Parish Council

Report of County Councillor

Also due to other council engagements the councillor addressed the meeting at this point.

Councillor stated that things were quite quiet. There was discussions regarding residents parking fees in Oxford. The hospital PCT's were in discussion with the County Council regarding the future and said that there was great resistance to any closures. Answering a question regarding diversion signs etc on Church Green , it was explained that it was the responsibility of the builders through the insurance companies of which there were 4

1. **Apologies:** Cllr.S. Bambury Cllr.Mrs. G.McMorrow

2. **Report of Chairman**

Report of the Parish Council Chairman to the Annual Parish Meeting April 2005 – March 2006

Your Parish Council have successfully completed yet another outstanding year of improvements and achievements. The year began with the seventh successive reduction on taxation to fund expenditure planned at a level well above our income.

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This was achieved again by securing grant funding. We continue to spend/invest in excess of £60,000 per annum with approx. one third being raised by precept (rates). In addition the PC have increased, once more, our financial reserves. These now stand at our highest ever level.

My grateful thanks to all Councillors and to our part-time employees for their generosity in waiving financial entitlements, in the interest of our community.

Particular gratitude is due to Oxfordshire County Council in providing our new road safety crossing, dropped kerbing and resurfacing to pavements and roads. To date these improvements exceed £60,000 in cost. Further improvements have been promised, scheduled for this financial

year with Huntersfield high on our list for attention. Persistence by Councillors in chasing these investments were finally achieved by a timely request from the Clerk to the Council, whose damning description of the road surfaces, brought about the long needed improvements to Cottage Road and Joyces Road. Signage on the A420 has now been re-instated for heavy goods vehicles. This year was marred by the fire damaging the Church Green cottages. I meet on a monthly basis with the owners, who have asked me to convey their gratitude to the village for the help and assistance they have had and continue to have. The occupants of these properties attended the presentation ceremony to the four persons receiving awards for their part in the evacuation of the burning buildings. The certificates were presented by HM The Queen's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Hugo Brunner. In attendance also were three representatives from the Royal Humane Society, three Logistic Corps Officers, County and District Safety Officers, Chief Fire Officer, Thames Valley Constabulary, County, District and Parish Councillors and relatives of the award winners. The media were there in force with BBC, ITV and local newspapers present.

The extension to the Jubilee Garden has been completed with involvement of the Rainbow and Brownie Guides to plan and execute planting. The modifications to the Youth Shelter are being completed prior to reinstatement and further improvements and additions to the playareas are planned.

The Parish Council's Internal Auditor, M/s Cheryl White, has revisited past financial accounts (1997 onwards). These were not produced by nor were any serving councillors responsible for them. Review followed the accounts being rejected by this council and the Audit Commission alike. Cheryl has donated considerable hours correcting and proving these accounts that have now been unanimously accepted by the Parish Council. The internal auditor believes that this community deserves nothing less. We are very grateful for her dedication and expertise especially in undertaking the shambles we inherited. Insult has been added to injury with financial penalties being imposed by the Audit Commission for the appalling condition of the accounts. I extend thanks to the Clerk to the Council for his work to correct issues on behalf of the Parish Council and the Public Purposes Charity. To date some twenty four years in respect of the accounts of the aforementioned organisations have been corrected, audited and have been proven publicly acceptable. Confirmation of this work will result from acceptance of Cheryl's work. Stanford in the Vale was selected as County Village of the Year for the second

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time. We received a £500 prize in respect of this distinction and are eligible on three counts for the newly organised Winners Category. This new competition is open to all winners for the last decade. Subsequent to this years success we have become one of the "elite" to feature in a central government booklet (published by DEFRA) that selects one village per county. The Parish Council continues the search for additional land for recreational purposes. Since there is a strict limitation on housing development within the "Village Envelope" (the built-up area) we continue to hope land will become available. Given our current population we require Twelve acres at least to meet the national guidelines determined by the National Playing Fields Association and other bodies. Such acreage would enable us to provide picnic areas, dog walking opportunity, tree planting and conservation considerations plus more sporting facilities. Legally the Parish Council has no authority over temporary road signs. Permission to erect this signage requires Oxfordshire County Council procedures to be adhered to by applicants. Anyone noticing vandalism or wind damage should report such to the building/construction contractor, the police, O.C.C. Highways Dept. or the various utility organisations. Street lighting is the responsibility of the County Council and all lights carry a number that is of considerable assistance in bulb replacement. Dog and litter bins on streets are emptied by contractors employed by the District Council, Abingdon. Telephone numbers for many of the above are listed in the updated information booklet distributed to all householders.

The Best Kept Village judges will be visiting us in the coming days. Thank you to all who maintain verges, pavements and clear litter voluntarily. Your efforts have made a quite considerable contribution to our successes in these competitions, in addition to your example of

community pride and good citizenship. Anonymity is guaranteed to those reporting litter louts and dog fouling, and there may also be financial reward following successful prosecution.

Chair invited questions:

Litter along pathway Cottage Road/Van Diemans – Acts as a wind tunnel - Will be cleared

Height of dog bins – Mainly sited by DC probably to protect children

The meeting proposed a vote of thanks to the chair for his continued unceasing work on behalf of the community.

3. **Report of County Councillor**

- As reported above

4. **Report of District Councillor**

- Nil

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5. **Finance Report**

- Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer reported that there was a £4000 excess income over expenditure and this despite the £3200 audit commission fees and penalties for previous incomplete accounts which the present council inherited. The interest account had earned over £600 in interest during the financial year and with the grants successfully applied for and the agency work carried out on behalf of other organisations it has enabled the Council once again through careful budgeting to hold the precept at virtually the same level . In fact although the precept has risen slightly, due to new build, the amount levied per household has decreased.

Closing balances 31.3.06

Stanford PC – Current a/c	9469.93
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Investment a/c	<u>30773.88</u>
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-	<u>40243.81</u>
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The meeting thanked the Finance Officer for his efforts and this was further endorsed by the Chair on behalf of the Parish Council.

6. **Recreation and Leisure Report**

- Recreation and Leisure committee chairman Cllr. Gill reported:

By our past standards this has not been such a busy year for new projects. Two items of equipment have been installed, the Aerial Runway at the Recreation Ground and a Bouncy Bongo on the Village Hall Playing Area. Now we have more equipment to maintain re Health/Safety, following RoSPA guidelines and yearly inspections an overall budget for these areas must be appreciated. The Youth Shelter is being improved and will return soon. Two other items of

maintenance have still to be completed in the Toddler's Area and the fencing on the MUGA.

Possible projects to be completed in the summer months :

- Replacing swings in Village Play Area
- Skate Park Ramp extension
- Replacement of one item in Toddler's Area
- Consideration of "Stone" Climbing Wall
- Pertanque (gravelled area for playing Boules)

If Parishioners have other ideas please let your Parish Council know.

There were no further questions from Parishioners and the meeting closed at 9 pm