

## Stanton-upon-Hine Heath Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Stanton-upon-Hine Heath Parish Council held on Tuesday, 5th May 2015 at 7.00 p.m. in the Stanton Village Hall, Booley Lane, Stanton.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr's Simon Chapple, Claire Crackett, Derek Fildes, Nuria Gray, Jackie Knight and Chas Warren.

Also in attendance:

Mike Cauchi from RAF Shawbury and Katrina Baker (standing in for the Parish Clerk).

In the Chair: Cllr Simon Chapple.

### Action

#### **AP1.15 Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ashley Orme (holiday), The Parish Clerk (Family commitments) and Major Barney Griffiths from the PCC.

#### **AP2.15 Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council.**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Simon Chapple gave the following report:

2014/15 has been another busy and successful year in the Parish with Councilors active on number of fronts. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Councilors for their enduring commitment to the community. The list of achievements is extensive and includes an updated and excellent Parish website and re-invigorated Parish magazine. All this would not be possible without the help of local residents and for this we are also thankful. I love living here and seeing the village and surrounding countryside used for leisure activities. This past Bank Holiday weekend while playing in the park with my own children I thought how lucky we are to have these facilities and a group of people willing to ensure they remain open and accessible.

This last year also saw the official formation of the Rivers Action Group who under the watchful eyes of Chas Warren and Doug Dee have coordinated and carried out the huge task of clearing the main channel of the River Roden as it passes along the Parish boundary. This winter, despite not insignificant rainfall, the river level was noticeably lower and this must be in part due to the work of this group who along with local landowners deserve our thanks and congratulations.

The Parish Council has had to make some difficult decisions this year too balancing the needs of our local farming economy with the concerns of local residents. There have been some difficult planning decisions to make but I like to think we continue to take a balanced and informed view on these matters. Road conditions in the Parish remain a constant problem

and repairs seem to last only days or weeks; we will continue to lobby Highways to keep on top of repairs.

In February, Shropshire Council announced that they had to find £80million in savings and by not passing on the Local Government Grant they can save £500k and protect budgets like adult and children's services. Given that Shropshire Council decided not to pass on the Local Government Grant we took the difficult decision to increase the Parish Precept to cover the shortfall in funding. This means we can continue to provide local services like ongoing maintenance of the play area, grass cutting and street lighting while still balancing the books and keeping a sensible reserve for emergencies. We did not take this decision lightly and realize the increase is above inflation and indeed above the 2% cap that the main Council Tax is bound by. We will continue to review the Parish budget carefully in light of the above.

I am looking forward to the next year in the seat as Chairman and relish the challenge.

### **AP3.15 Report on Parish Accounts.**

The Parish Clerk had submitted the following report:

Balance Sheet		
Balance Brought Forward 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014		£18,368.07
Plus (+)		
Precept 2014/15	£8,461.00	
Total Income 2014/15	£8,461.00	
£8,461.00		
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£26,829.07</b>
Minus (-)		
Expenditure 2014/15		£7,389.79
Balance 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2015		<b>£19,439.28</b>

#### **Ear Marked as follows:**

Street Lighting	£7080
Play Area	£2638
Minor Highways Maintenance	£2376
Churchyard	£1091
Elections	£500
General Reserves	£5754

Members requested more explanation on these figures at the next meeting.

### **AP4.15 Report from our Shropshire Councillor.**

Shropshire Cllr Karen Calder would be asked for a report for the website.

**AP5.15 Report from the Neighbourhood/Rural Watch Scheme.**

Cllr Chas Warren gave the following report:

The Neighbourhood & Rural Watch schemes have continued this year as in previous years. The main means of communication is via email to local co-ordinators (who then talk to neighbours & friends), periodic meetings in the Stanton Arms, telephone calls and occasional short items in the Parish Magazine.

Fortunately we live in a relatively low crime area and benefit from alert neighbours who keep a watchful eye on anything suspicious.

We do need to be vigilant and aware of suspect vehicles, poaching, thefts from out-buildings, oil thefts & vehicle crime.

However increasingly crime is moving to hidden "scams" online, by phone & in person. We all need to be particularly on guard for these insidious crimes.

We have continued to enjoy & appreciate the support of PC Mick Sturland, & his team of PCSOs. However this year Mick has taken on additional responsibilities and therefore has not been able to spend as much time in the Parish. Therefore it is all the more important that we are all vigilant.

The Police boxes continue to provide a means of communication, although there has been some minor ongoing vandalism.

Our next meeting is on Monday 22nd June at 7.30 pm in the Stanton Arms. All are welcome, as are additions to our email circulation list.

***Please remember if it makes you look, or think, twice, it is suspicious & must be reported urgently.***

**AP6.15 Report from Stanton Village Hall Committee.**

Sue Young gave the following report:

There had been a limited number of events during the year. However there were regular bookings from dog training and Shawbury Players plus the Parish Council. Still need more regular bookings. The finances show a surplus on the year of £1349 with an income of £3041.

**AP7.15 Report from Stanton Church.**

Barney had submitted the following report:

**Sunday Church Services** – These have continued to be held on a weekly basis at St Andrew's Church throughout the last twelve months, with one Songs of Praise, one Morning Prayer, and two Holy Communion Services each month.

Where there has been a fifth Sunday in the month there has been a joint service with Shawbury and Moreton Corbet at one of the three Churches.

**Other Services** – During the twelve months there have also been additional services for Christenings (5) and Funerals (1), as well as Christmas (2) and

Easter (3) – see para 3 below.

### **Attendance**

**Sunday Services** – There has been an average overall attendance for Sunday Services of just over 13. (This is an increase of 2 over the previous year's average figure)

### **Other Services**

**Christmas** – Christingle (105) Christmas Day (20)

**Easter** – Maundy Thursday (21) Good Friday (29)

**Note:** The Bishop of Shrewsbury came to Stanton Church to celebrate Holy Communion on Easter Day, when there were 42 present at the 9.30 service.

**Clergy** – The Revd David Humphries has unfortunately been on sick leave from January, which is now expected to be extended to June this year. Mrs Barbara Holt has continued to cover services as our only lay reader presently as Miss Catherine Mason retired in December 2014.

During the absence of the vicar eight different clergy or lay readers have taken services at Stanton. It is difficult to say for how long this level of assistance can be sustained. The intention in the meantime, however, is to keep the church running unabated.

**Church Wardens and P.C.C. Members** – As a result of the P.C.C. Annual General and other meetings held on 20 April 2015 membership dropped from 8 to 6. Mr & Mrs Ray White, and their son Ryan who had assisted where possible, retired as they have now lived outside the parish since October 2014. Miss Ros Anwyl has joined the PCC, and has also taken over the appointment of Treasurer. Further to that she has agreed to be one of the two Church Wardens, Major Barney Griffiths continuing as the other.

**Fabric** – The work to provide an under seal beneath the ridge tiles on the roof of the church was not carried out as hoped for during 2014, but Mr David Oldfield who made the original arrangement is pursuing this matter so that work will be completed during 2015. The building of the church wall is 2/3rds complete, but there was a hold up during the winter due to frost and an inability of cement therefore to set properly.

**Churchyard** – Mr Ian Wellings continues to do excellent work with the grass cutting contract and keeping the churchyard in good order generally. The PCC are grateful to the Parish Council for this invaluable help.

**Graves** – Major Hayes has confirmed the granting of a faculty for the removal of stones around the Hayes plot in the church yard. This is a very helpful move in making space for several more graves. As reported previously there is also limited space available on the south side of the church, which has already been earmarked for this purpose.

## **AP8.15 Report on Parish Magazine**

Cllr Jackie Knight gave the following report:

The past year has seen a change of Editor, after Sharon McLaughlin decided that she could no longer devote the time needed to produce the magazine. Firstly, I would like to thank Sharon for agreeing to take the magazine on when no one else wanted to and for producing it for the past two years. Secondly, I would like to thank Ruth Dee for agreeing to take

over and having successfully produced her first two editions!  
 I would also like to thank Judith Pitts for the many years she acted as the magazine's treasurer. Since my last report she has stepped down and we were very lucky that Louise Bedford responded to our pleas for a replacement. She is an accountant and has already streamlined the process of collecting advertising revenue, as well as bringing our banking arrangements into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! Currently, the magazine is self-funding, via the income it generates from advertisements. The cost of these has risen to £15 this year, which is still good value for 10 issues a year into 185 households plus those who receive it by email. The Parish Council however, have maintained a small contingency fund in their precept, recognizing the importance of 'keeping the magazine running' should this situation change, through increased production costs for example. Thank you also to Beverly Orme, who helps distribute the magazine, as well as delivering to half of Stanton Village and the other volunteer deliverers around the parish.

### **AP9.15 Report on Broadband**

Cllr Claire Crackett gave the following report:

Fibre to cabinet has now reached Shawbury and made very little change to speeds in the village. Given the approach adopted by Shropshire Council to work with BT only, it seems unlikely that any part of the parish (served over 3 different routes) will see much improvement in speed in the near future. I will remain involved in the local groups seeking to improve coverage and will inform the parish council of any ways in which we can exert pressure for improvement.

### **AP10.15 Report on Parish Website**

Cllr Chas Warren gave the following report:

Originally the Parish Website was conceived as a way of distributing the Parish Magazine to those houses in the Parish that we are unable to deliver to by hand.

The Website has been regularly kept up to date by Jackie, Claire & I, ensuring that current village events, the parish Magazine & relevant topical news items are available to a wider audience.

However readership was at very low levels, probably due to the site's non-existent Google ranking. Since the PC agreed to regular ongoing maintenance & initial Google ranking work, Peter Acs has done great work in getting the site into the top three for a relevant Google search, modernising the background structure & backing the site up.

He has also helped us to meet necessary legal requirements. Peter continues to make regular monthly improvements & his work is a great asset to us. As a result the hits on the site are now looking much healthier & it is clear that both local & international traffic is growing.

The site's promotion via the magazine is also I'm sure helping to drive

traffic. We now need to seek relevant links with other websites to further improve our position.

We continue to publish all PC business on the site & so help to meet our democratic obligations. We are also broadening the usefulness of the site by including for example the Stanton Walking Guide, in pdf download form. In order to plan forward in terms of usefulness & ongoing development, a small sub-group comprising Claire, Jackie & myself met recently to propose changes to be implemented in the coming months. These are detailed separately and with Peter's help, we hope that they will be well received so that the site becomes a widely used, valued facility in its own right.

### **AP11.15 Report on Rivers Action Group**

Cllr Chas Warren gave the following report:

Following the previous year's extremely heavy rain and discussions with both the Environment Agency & Shropshire Council, the Rivers Action Group was formed and is now in its second year.

The poor condition of the River Roden, with many blockages, caused largely by fallen & growing trees in the river bed, together with a complete lack of effective maintenance over the last 20 or so years is beginning to be addressed. Local landowners have, I am pleased to say, been very supportive, as have both Shropshire Council & the Environment Agency. A huge amount of progress has been made this year with excellent work being carried out by Griffiths Farms from N of Stanton Bridge to Papermill Bridge & I would like to express the PCs appreciation of this work. Volunteers, in particular Doug Dee and Chris Floyd with various others have also removed many large trees from Anne Millingtons woodland & Roger Pinches land. Doug in particular has generously provided both tree surgery expertise & heavy machinery. A major exercise has also been carried out on the Old Mill site involving a huge community effort & supported by GT Access and Stuart Flood in terms of providing a tracked cherry picker. Huge progress has been made here, although there is a little more to do. I would again like to express the PC's appreciation of the exceptional efforts of all those involved.

However there remains a vast exercise still to be addressed particularly opposite the Old Mill site, downstream of Stanton Bridge & throughout the woodland area downstream.

A second survey of the river from Weston under Redcastle to Moreton Mill has taken place. It is clear that the river is flowing more freely already, but numerous blockages remain.

The idea of using volunteers from the Parish, and supported by land-owners has been tested in practice & found to work extremely well.

There is ongoing activity required to maintain the improvements & another big effort is required to clear the remaining sections. We must continue to encourage riparian owners to meet their legal obligations & support this with community effort where needed to achieve rapid results.

We do however need more keen volunteers please to assist with this important work.

**AP12.15 Report on Emergency Planning**

Cllr Nuria Gray gave the following report:

Need email copy.

**AP13.15 Report on Public Transport/Community Cars**

Cllr Claire Crackett gave the following report:

Stanton Community Car Scheme has a single driver who is also the co-ordinator. This year, with no promotion, the scheme has been used by one resident for fortnightly trips to a day centre on the instigation of a health care professional. More drivers would be most welcome and the duties are ~~no~~ not onerous or time consuming – anyone can always turn down a request to drive if they are unavailable.

**AP14.15 Report from the Police**

There was no report.

**AP15.15 Report on Trees**

Cllr Chas Warren gave the following report:

The Shropshire Council Tree scheme has again run this year, with trees being requested online via the Shropshire Council website in the autumn, for delivery in February. Details were promoted in the Parish, but as applications must now be made individually, rather than being aggregated as before, I am unable to report on the total numbers for the Parish. I can only advise that everything seemed to go smoothly, receiving good quality trees, canes & guards in February, most of which seem to be doing well. I hope the scheme will run again this year and so I would encourage everyone to take part, even if you only plant one tree – that alone will help to improve our environment.

It is also important to look after existing mature trees. In particular we should all try to remove as much ivy from living trees as possible.

**AP16.15 Report on Play Area**

Cllr Jackie Knight gave the following report:

In July, the play area will have been in place for 4 years. It continues to be used regularly by the local children and I am not aware of any issues

relating to its use during the last 12 months.

Last year, we decided to pay for regular inspections and maintenance with Shropshire Council and for them to carry out our annual RoSPA inspection (due in June). They have commented on the deterioration of the wooden rings used as steps to climb the mound and the potential slipperiness of the wooden boards on top of the mound. These should be addressed this year, using some of the funds ring fenced in the precept for the repairs we always knew would become necessary as the park aged.

Jim Grundy, who has been storing the basket-ball hoop for us, contacted us recently to ask that we remove the basket-ball hoop from his barn, having very kindly agreed to store it for us over the past 4 years. This gave me the impetus to start the process of having it installed. I advertised in the Village Magazine that we would be talking about it at the November meeting and had comments re it's positioning from two local residents. After discussions with other Councilors it was decided to put it behind the mound. My husband and Simon Chapple have kindly agreed to install it. I contacted Mike Simms, who carries out our inspections and he is currently trying to locate a specification for the basket-ball hoop's installation, make-made difficult by Monster Play having gone out of business.

Hopefully, when writing this report next year I will be commenting on a successful installation and its regular use!

#### **AP17.15 Report on Footpaths**

Cllr Chas Warren gave the following report:

We are fortunate in the Parish to have many miles of accessible pathways and bridleways with plenty of opportunity for circular walks in the beautiful North Shropshire countryside. The successful maintenance of the pathway system is in general supported by landowners and farm managers sympathetic to the enjoyment of the countryside by all. In the last year we have had to write to only one landowner to encourage them to reinstate public rights of way where these have been obstructed by crops and electric fences; we continue to monitor the situation.

The Parish paths are generally in good order, and many of the old stiles have already been replaced by galvanised gates. At this time there are only another three to be replaced that we are aware of.

We are fortunate to have a small group of local volunteers prepared to carry out ongoing maintenance & improvements. Shropshire Council has also been instrumental in enabling the improvements by providing advice, materials, equipment and Rights Of Way enforcement action where needed. However the degree of support for the latter has reduced significantly in recent years.

We have had for many years an ambition to re-publish the Stanton Walks guide previously printed in 2000 and circulated widely. Thanks to the kind assistance of Beverley Orme & Peter Acs this is now available in pdf format

on the Parish Website. The walks are all still open, but some of the minor detail has changed. We plan to fully update this guide over time & hopefully make it available in paper format as well. I would welcome any help in walking the routes & noting changes required please.

We do have one major issue with the uni-lateral closure of one green lane in the Parish by a local landowner and are working with Shropshire Council to address this. We do need the support of people who have lived in the village for some years with this please.

I should like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to local pathway volunteers, landowners and to Shropshire Council for their continued support in helping protect and maintain these valuable rights of way.

**AP18.15 Report on the village Defibrillator**

Cllr Simon Chapple gave the following report:

I am happy to report that we finally have a community defibrillator (AED) installed in the Stanton Arms, which can be accessed in case of emergency in conjunction with West Midlands Ambulance Service. We have a group of 12 volunteers who have been trained in basic life support and use of the AED and are just awaiting confirmation of the telephone cascade system for volunteer call out. In the next few weeks we will undertake some training with volunteers to trial the call-out system and establish procedures for finding properties in a timely way should we be called out. Let's hope that we only ever have to use the AED for training but the facility now exists if the worse should happen.

**AP19.15 Parish Matters**

There were none.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their reports and declared the meeting closed at 20.10 p.m.

Signed .....

Date .....

Chair