

# Stanion Parish Council

## *News*

### *Issue 1 – Autumn/Winter 2018*

*Welcome to the first issue of **Stanion Parish Council News**. It is our hope that this new publication will grow over time, and we ask that you bear with us as we strive to develop the Newsletter into a comprehensive source of information relating to Parish matters. We hope that you find this first offering interesting and informative, and we would welcome your feedback. Please send your comments to the Clerk at: [stanion.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:stanion.clerk@gmail.com). Thank you.*

***To be or not to be ... a Parish Councillor*** We currently have five Parish Councillor vacancies and would very much like to hear from you if you are interested in becoming a Stanion Parish Councillor. Though some may view the role of a Parish Councillor as a big responsibility, it is regarded by many as more of a responsibility with big rewards. Each member of the Parish Council brings their own unique skills and experience to the role, and it is this diversity that makes a successful dynamic team, able to address a wide range of topics and issues.

While there are no specific skill requirements needed to become a Parish Councillor, if you are interested in local current affairs, want to serve your community and make a positive difference, then we would love to hear from you.

You will find the application form within the Co-option Policy on the Corby Borough Council website (Corby.gov.uk, by searching under *Stanion Parish Council*), or alternatively, email the Clerk at [stanion.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:stanion.clerk@gmail.com) and she will be happy to send an application form to you. If you have any questions, or would just like to chat about the role before making your decision, then please contact the Clerk at the email address above, and she will be pleased to arrange for you to speak with a member of the Council.

And finally, if you would like to help the Parish Council, but would rather do so as a Volunteer, then we would also be happy to hear from you. We have a number of projects due to start in the new Year, and your help as a Volunteer assisting with any of those projects would be most welcome.

***Then and Now*** Stanion Parish Council re-formed as a standalone Parish Council in April of this year following a 2017 Community Governance Review. The outcome of the review resulted in a resetting

of the Parish boundary and the creation of two standalone Parish Councils.

As is often the case with major change initiatives, there are benefits and challenges. We believe that one benefit is that the new Stanion Parish Council is now able to focus solely on the Parish of Stanion and the needs of its residents. However, the split in the Parish boundary resulted in our Precept being reduced from £25K to £11.5K per year, which presents us with the challenge of identifying ways in which we can meet the needs of the Parish with such a greatly reduced Precept.

The Budget and Precept for 2018/19, and forward to 2021, was set in December 2017. The spending plan in that Budget relied on a £4000 per year subsidy from the Reserves to fund the cost of maintaining the current operating model. In June of this year, the new Parish Council unanimously agreed that the spending plan was untenable; that relying on the Reserves to cover administrative costs was not something they believed reasonable to do, and that immediate action was needed to bring expenditure in-line with income and protect the Reserves from erosion.

A Working Group was set up that month to review the spending profile and identify administrative and clerking support requirements. The Working Group delivered their findings to the Parish Council the following month, presenting a number of options for change with varying levels of cost savings and benefits. The options were considered by the Parish Council in July, and they resolved to adopt a new operating model, which provided for a greatly reduced level of clerking support, reduced administrative overheads, and established new and innovative ways of working.

Change is a slow process, and we knew that we could not achieve all that we hoped for in the short-term, but we have continued to make small improvements in the past few months, realigning the remaining

funds in this year's Budget to provide us with the legal basis on which to spend the Budget, addressing a number of procedural concerns, and strengthening our governance procedures.

In July we were faced with finding new staff to undertake the roles of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). While we were successful in securing the services of an experienced locum RFO to provide us with the necessary advice, scrutiny, and financial oversight on how we spend and plan our finances, finding a suitably qualified Clerk at short notice proved impossible. One of our Councillors stepped into the breach and is temporarily undertaking the role of Clerk, unpaid.

We are in the process of developing a staff recruitment drive and we hope to be able to commence interviews in January 2019.

We have worked hard to eradicate the predicted overspend of approximately £4000 in this financial year, but unplanned tree work had to be undertaken in-year, which has resulted in our target having to be adjusted. At this time, I can report that we are currently on track to reduce the predicted overspend by approximately 50%.

When we meet on 12th November to consider the estimates for the Budget for 2019/20, we will ensure that future expenditure remains in-line with income and that the Reserves are used appropriately.

**Our Mission** As a new Parish Council, we believed that it was important to first establish a clear focus for our decision making and agreed that our focus should be that:

*Our purpose is to represent the needs of our Parishioners and this focus is the foundation of our decision making*

We will ensure that our Mission Statement is central in our considerations and decisions in all of our work going forward.

***The Website – Old and New*** The hosting agreement for the Stanion.net website expired in September, at which time development of our new website was already underway. However, the planned autumn launch was unavoidably delayed, for reasons beyond our control, and we found it necessary to make contingency publishing arrangements to breach the gap between the loss of the old website and the launch of the new one.

We are required to publish certain statutory information, for example, Minutes and the Agenda for meetings, on a freely available website, in addition to making that same information available on the Parish noticeboards. As a temporary measure and to ensure compliance with this requirement, we arranged for the Stanion.net website to continue to remain visible to provide all of the Parish Council historical information, and for current information to be published on the Corby Borough Council website.

We know that this is not an ideal situation, but it is only a stop-gap measure until the new website is launched, which is now planned to be in early 2019 at the latest. We would ask you to bear with us for a short while longer, and if there is any information that you cannot find on either site, please contact the Clerk at: Stanion.clerk@gmail.com.

***The Operating Budget & Precept*** The Parish Council will be meeting on 12th November 2018 to review the estimates developed by the RFO, and to discuss funding requirements for the financial year 2019/2020 through to 2022.

Details of the resolved Budget and Precept will be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and the draft Minutes will be posted on the Village noticeboards and on the Corby Borough Council website.

Information relating to Stanion Parish Council is available on the Corby Borough Council website by searching under 'Stanion Parish Council'.

***Stanion Parish Council is Looking for SPOC*** We would welcome your help in distributing our future seasonal Newsletters, and occasionally, other important information flyers. We are looking for volunteers in each street throughout the Village who are willing to act as a **Street Point Of Contact**. If you would like to help, please contact the Clerk at [Stanion.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:Stanion.clerk@gmail.com)

***The New Parish Council Office*** The Parish Council recently secured the agreement of the Village Hall Management Committee to establish a Parish Council Office within the Village Hall. We have been busy preparing the room and we hope to have the office open by the Christmas holiday period. *Details of the opening date will be advertised on the Village noticeboards.*

We feel that it is important to improve accessibility to members of the Parish Council, and that the establishment of a Parish Council office in the Village Hall will enable us to achieve that aim. If you are one of the many regular patrons at Village Hall Coffee Mornings, you may already have met some members of the Parish Council. And while it is our intention to continue to attend the Coffee Mornings, once the new office is open we plan to hold routine surgeries and drop-in sessions to further increase access to members of the Parish Council.

We are grateful for the support of the Village Hall Management Committee in assisting us to make a Village based office a reality. We look forward to meeting many of you at our new office in the Village Hall in the New Year.

***Wi-Fi Capability*** The establishment of a Council Office will require us to have internet access and we intend to provide for this by

installing a wi-fi system. In order to gain the most from this system, wi-fi access will be available to all users of the Village Hall. We hope this will be a welcome additional facility and that it will provide business development opportunities, thereby increasing the use of the Village Hall and the potential for income generation.

## ***Communication, Consultation and The Neighbourhood Plan***

A Communication and Consultation Strategy and Plan is currently under development and the draft document will be finalised ready for consideration by the Council at the meeting of the full Council in January 2019. If you have any ideas on how we may communicate better with you, then we would welcome your input. Please send your ideas to the Clerk at [Stanion.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:Stanion.clerk@gmail.com)

The Council will begin the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Stanion in 2019 and we will be writing out to you in early 2019 with full details of the process, the Consultation Plan and the timeframe for this work, and we will be asking for Volunteers to help us take this work forward over the next two years.

***Meeting Dates*** Meetings of the full Parish Council are planned for Monday 14 January 2019 and Monday 11 March 2019. Meetings are always held on the second Monday of the month and will continue to be held bi-monthly throughout 2019. All Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall and commence at 7 pm. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

***Stanion Village Hall*** The Village Hall provides a range of activities for all ages and interests, including: Yoga and Pilates, Indoor Bowls, and Step 'n Groove Dance. A number of groups meet there regularly each month, including Cubs and Beavers, The Corby Photographic Club, the Ladies TLC, and The Stanion and Northants

Astronomy Club. In addition, The Ladies Fellowship/Knit and Natter meet on a Thursday afternoon, Coffee Mornings are held twice each month on a Wednesday morning, and Quiz nights are held on the last Friday of the month, *except during the summer months*, and finally, the FC Siam Football Club play each Saturday.

The next planned special event is on 25 November, when the Christmas Fayre will be held between 12 noon and 4pm. There are still stalls available, so if you would like to book a stall, please use the contact details below.

The Village Hall is available for special events.

For more information, or to make a booking, please call:

07749 836 584, or email: [Bookings.svha@gmail.com](mailto:Bookings.svha@gmail.com)

***St Peter's Christmas Services*** The Christmas Services this year will begin on Friday 21 December at 6pm with The Christmas Story, a wonderful event with carols for families and the young at heart. The Christingle Service will be held on Monday 24 December at 4.30 pm, and the First Mass of Christmas will be held on Monday 24 December at 10 pm.

***And Finally....*** As we approach the close of the year, the Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and encouragement. We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2019.