

Stanion Parish Council

News

Issue 2 – Spring/Summer 2019

*Welcome to the Spring/Summer issue of **Stanion Parish Council News**. We hope that you find this edition interesting and informative, and we welcome your feedback and ideas for topics for inclusion in future editions. Please send your comments to the Clerk at: stanion.clerk@gmail.com. Thank you.*

Ask not what Stanion can do for You ... Councillor numbers are now at the minimum number required to operate as a Parish Council. Expressions of interest for co-option received over the last few months didn't mature into applications, and we were left with no option other than to request support from Corby Borough Council to ensure a quorum is maintained and we are able to transact all

business on the agenda at our meetings. Two CBC councillors have been appointed to assist us, and while we are very grateful for their help, their support is only temporary. As you read this Newsletter, you will see that although we are only three in strength, we have managed to achieve a number of note-worthy successes in the short time that we have been operating as a Parish Council. We want to continue this work, and we would like to do more, but, if we are to meet those aims, and continue to function as a Parish Council, we need more councillors. The work of a Parish Councillor isn't onerous. It doesn't take particular skills or knowledge, it just takes a genuine desire to make Stanion an even better place to live, coupled with the determination to do what is needed to preserve and grow the Parish, along with the ability to work effectively in a team. Parish Councillors come from all walks of life, and it's that variety of background, experience, skills and knowledge that make a Parish Council a powerful force for good in a community. Considering matters from an individual and team perspective, and being open to contrasting views and diverse opinions, means that debate is inclusive and comprehensive. It is this diverse approach that enables open, fair, and balanced decision-making. If you are interested in joining us to help to preserve and protect the history and assets of this Village and to shape and grow this small Parish, I would urge you to apply for co-option now. Please contact the Clerk at: stanion.clerk@gmail.com to request an application form.

And finally, if you would like to help the Parish Council as a Volunteer, please do get in touch. We have a number of projects planned for the coming year and would welcome your help with any or all of them. Please contact the Clerk at: stanion.clerk@gmail.com for more information on becoming a Parish Council Volunteer.

The New Stanion Parish Council Website ... Parish Council Websites has been busy over the past few months developing

our new website, and we are pleased to report that their work is almost complete, and that we plan to launch the new website in April. We have almost finished loading content, but just in case we don't get everything right on launch day, I would ask you to bear with us in the coming weeks as we fix any glitches and continue to publish new content, to develop the website into what we hope will be regarded as a comprehensive and useful information and communications tool.

The Operating Budget & Precept 2019/2020 ... By the time you read this you will have received your Council Tax bill for 2019/20. If you read the section on how the tax is arrived at for a Band D property, you will see that the amount attributable to Stanion Parish Council is showing a negative percentage increase of -0.2% over last year. However, that didn't happen by accident. In setting the Budget and Precept Request for 2019/20 we focused on three objectives: (1) to develop a budget that was based on justifiable operational requirements, (2) to focus our spending on services for the Parish, not on administration, and (3) to achieve value for money in all expenditure. Historically, the highest cost has been staff wages, pension and staff related expenses, followed by general administration and subscriptions. Armed with that knowledge and working to the new Operating Model agreed July 2018, we split the roles of Clerk and RFO and established the role of Clerk (unpaid) (*and a big thank you to Cllr Neville for undertaking that role for the past 8 months*) and based the paid role of the RFO on a verifiable work load and time requirement. The results were dramatic. We reduced the contracted hours, producing a saving of over 55% on staff wages and eliminated pension costs, and we reduced staff travel costs by 75%. We reviewed subscription requirements and changed providers, which reduced those costs by over 50%. We halved the cost of administration and identified free sources of training, coupling that with in-house training opportunities, which reduced training costs by 70%. Details of the 2019/20 Budget and Precept are posted on the Village notice boards and on the Corby Borough Council and new Stanion Parish Council

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

Dog Fouling – Not my Problem – Not True ... Regardless of whether you own a dog, dog fouling is a problem that has the potential to affect everyone. It is a form of anti-social behaviour and it is important that irresponsible dog owners know that it is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Dog faeces that are not picked up and disposed of responsibly have the potential to cause serious and potentially life-threatening diseases to humans and animals. Canine faeces constitute a major risk to health. The faeces may contain eggs of the *Toxocara* round worm, which can cause infections in the body that can lead to headaches, nausea, epilepsy, asthma, and even blindness. Recently, that hazard has increased because of the potential transfer of E-Coli 0157 infection from dogs to humans. The symptoms of E-Coli 0157 range from mild to severe, and include bloody diarrhoea, acute abdominal pain, vomiting and fever. And, if the infected grass is eaten by pregnant cattle, can cause the cattle to abort their young.

While the vast majority of dog owners who walk their dogs in the Village and who use the public footpaths across Church Piece and the surrounding fields, behave responsibly and pick up and dispose of their dog's waste, there are a few who do not. Leaving dog faeces on the ground or bagging it and throwing it in a hedge or hanging it on a gate or branch is selfish and offensive. And leaving dog waste to be picked up by someone else is perverse and wholly unacceptable. We ask individuals guilty of such behaviour to consider the potential dangers that their irresponsible and inconsiderate actions may pose to others, and appeal to them to act responsibly and pick up and dispose of their dog's faeces properly and safely.

Road Cleaning in Stanion ... We recently agreed a programme of road sweeping and sign cleaning with *Street Scene*, the organisation responsible for managing that work in this area of the county. Road sweeping of the High Street, Corby Road and Brigstock Road is planned to start in late March/early April, with other roads included in the schedule in the coming months, and sign washing is planned for early April. In addition, old and rusty multi-purpose waste bins are being replaced and additional bins installed at a number of locations across the Village. We hope that you will agree that these measures are a small step towards improving the appearance of the Village. We are awaiting details of the road sweeping schedule and will advertise that information as soon as we receive it.

The Great British Spring Clean in Stanion ... You may have recently read in the media about the tremendous success of the British Spring Clean campaign organised by Keep Britain Tidy (22 Mar – 23 Apr). Events planned across the country mean that this will be the biggest clean-up this land has ever seen, and we too have pledged to take part, along with the thousands of other volunteers, including over 144,000 school children who want to rid their environment of litter. Please lend us your support and join us for an hour or more on either or both of the scheduled Village litter picking days in April – **Saturday 13th and Saturday 20th**. Please come along to the Village Hall at 10:30 am on those days, and we will provide you with litter pickers and bags. And finally, to those residents who routinely pick up litter as they walk through the Village, we thank you for your public spirit, consideration and efforts to keep Stanion tidy.

Speeding on Stanion Roads ... If you travel along Corby Road you may have noticed the TVAS unit on the lamppost close to the junction of the A6116. While we await the data from that unit, we already know that the unit's flashing warning sign has resulted in some drivers reducing their speed, and even the smallest success in this

campaign is welcome. We share the TVAS unit with other neighbouring villages and we plan to install the unit at different locations across the Village in the future. The 30-mph speed limit on our village roads isn't a target, and observing the limit is not only the right and lawful thing to do, it may mean the difference between life and death to a pedestrian involved in a collision with a vehicle. While the chances of a pedestrian surviving an accident at 40 mph is very slim, the chances of survival increase the slower the vehicle is travelling.

Corby Road Hedgerow and Footway ... The problem of the overgrowth onto the footway along Corby Road has been with us for a very long time. Over the past few months we repeatedly raised our concerns with NCC Highways and are pleased to report that they have agreed to restore the footway to its statutory minimum width, and that the work will start soon. However, removal of the ivy, brambles, and weeds, and cutting back the overgrown shrubs is a separate problem. Due to the spending moratorium imposed at NCC, it is looking most likely that the Parish will have to bear the cost of this work.

Still Looking for SPOC ... We are still looking for volunteers in each street in the Village who are willing to act as a **Street Point Of Contact** for the delivery of this hard copy newsletter and other important notices. Thank you to those residents who very kindly helped to deliver the last newsletter and for their commitment to help with future deliveries. If you are willing to act as a *SPOC* and help us to deliver these periodic publications, please email your details to the Clerk at: Stanion.clerk@gmail.com

Parish Council Surgeries ... The Parish Council will hold drop-in surgeries in the Parish Council office in the Village Hall for a trial period beginning in May 2019. The surgeries will be held on

Wednesday, May 7th and 21st between 10 am to 11:30 am. No appointment is needed – just turn up.

Village Hall - Wi-Fi Capability Live Free wi-fi is now operational in the Village Hall. We hope that it will prove to be a popular and worthwhile addition to the range of services on offer. To book the Village Hall or for information, please email or call Len Farrow at: len.farrow@yahoo.com or 07504-859334.

Stanion Pocket Park The Parish Council urgently needs volunteers to form a Management Committee to run the Pocket Park. Without such, the Pocket Park will be forced to close. To volunteer, please email the Clerk at: stanion.clerk@gmail.com

The Neighbourhood Plan The Parish Council had hoped to begin the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Stanion this spring. Regrettably, this work is now on hold until such time as councillor numbers increase and we are able to effectively manage the significant amount of work that this two-year project will entail.

Neighbourhood Watch Across Stanion ... Neighbourhood Watch is an internationally recognised organisation that enables communities to work in partnership with the police and other agencies to help prevent, reduce, and detect crime and disorder, and raise awareness regarding crime prevention. A public meeting will be held in the Village Hall on 7th May 2019 at 7 pm to discuss the potential expansion of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme across the Village. To find out more about the Scheme and how you can participate in it, please do come along to the Village Hall on 7th May.

The Vic Bright Christmas Lights Competition ...
Congratulations to all category winners of the 2018 Christmas Lights

Competition, and a very big *Thank You* to all who took part in the competition, and especially to the children from Stanion Primary School, who very kindly judged the 2018 competition.

Parish Council Elections ... Parish Council elections have been postponed until May 2020 due to the planned move to Unitary Authority status.

Easter Services ... At **St Peter's in Stanion**, an informal service for All Ages will be held on Friday, 19th April at 11:15 am. On Easter Sunday an All Age service with Holy Communion will start at 11:15 am, followed by an infant baptism. In **Brigstock**, on 14th April, Holy Communion is at 9:15 am; on 16th April, Stations of the Cross are at 7:30 pm, and on 18th April, a Share in the Last Supper service will take place at 7:30 pm. On 19th April, a quiet, reflective devotional service will be held at 2 pm, and on Easter Sunday, 21st April, an Easter Celebration with Holy Communion will start at 9:15 am. In **Sudborough**, on 21st April, New Fire and Eucharist will begin at 6:00 am and an All Age with Holy Communion at 9:15 am. The new Benefice website may be found at: www.harpersbrookanglicans.org.uk

Meeting Dates ... The **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 13 May 2019** at 7 pm, with the **Annual Parish Meeting** planned for **Monday 20 May 2019 at 6 pm**. Information on the other planned dates may be found on the notice boards and the website. All meetings are held in the Village Hall.

And Finally, Hail & Farewell ... We welcome Mrs Nicki Phillips as our new RFO and Mr Bill Heelan as our new Clerk (*unpaid*) and say farewell to Mrs Hannah Surtees, who has been our locum RFO for the past 8 months. We wish all parishioners a peaceful Easter and a happy and enjoyable summer and we will be back with more news in the autumn.