

# Stanion Parish Council

## *News*

### *Issue 4 – Spring/Summer 2020*

*Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2020 issue of Stanion Parish Council News. **The printing and distribution of this issue was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.***

***Near and Neighbourly...*** During these exceptional and very anxious times, we ask that you are mindful of your neighbours who may be in need help or assistance with routine daily tasks and ask you to offer your support where you are able. Simply dropping a note through their door with your name and number on it and an offer of help will provide reassurance that they are not alone. Your kindness in these times is priceless.

***We Have Been Busy ...*** We set the 2020/2021 Budget and Precept at the close of last year – more on that below, and we co-opted three parishioners as councillors in November 2019. We continued to support requests for s137 grants and awarded a grant to the Village Hall Management Committee to help offset the cost of the Autumn Fayre and another in support of the annual Vic Bright Memorial Christmas Lights Competition 2019. We held a number of discussions regarding the future of Keeble’s Field Pocket Park and an application to renew the lease on the Pocket Park is now underway. In January, we began preparing our application for funding from the Lottery Community Fund to run a three-week sports programme for children from Stanion Primary School this summer, and we began to identify potential funding sources to help cover the cost of the Village Hall refurbishments. In January we developed plans for the dedication of the WW1 Memorial Bench and our part in the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020. And, we negotiated further support from the Community Payback Team, who will help later this year with small project landscape work and litter picking, once the restrictions are lifted. We secured the replacement of worn-out waste bins with new multi-purpose bins and arranged for worn-out street signs to be replaced, and progress with that work will continue during the year. We also dealt with two contentious planning applications and continued to raise our concerns regarding the state of the derelict site of the former Cardigan Arms on the High Street. In late January we oversaw the installation of the new village flagpole at the entrance to the Village Hall car park and on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020 we raised the Northamptonshire County flag.

***The Chairman’s Annual Report ...*** The Chairman’s Annual Report to the Parish can be found at: ([www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net)) under the heading of Parish Council, Agendas & Minutes, Discussion Papers and Reports.

***The Operating Budget & Precept 2020/2021 ...*** The draft estimates for the 2020/2021 Budget and Precept were resolved at the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 meeting of the Parish Council and I am pleased to report that we were able to maintain current services while keeping the request for the Precept at last year's level of £11,838. Details of the new Budget for FY 2020/2021 and the Precept request can be found on the Parish Council website at [www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net) and on the noticeboard on the High Street.

***Parish Council Staffing ...*** The role of the Clerk to the Council is currently being undertaken by a Councillor **unpaid**, and we have engaged a professional Responsible Financial Officer to manage all financial aspects of our work.

### ***Will you Help to Save our Village Hall? ...***

**The Village Hall needs your support!** It is a valuable resource (*construction of the building was funded partly by CBC and partly through our Precept*) and the only facility we have that provides a venue for a broad spectrum of activities, including an array of recreational and educational classes, social and seasonal events, private functions, meetings, and sporting activities. You may recall that it was the venue for the first ever free three-week summer sports programme for local children last year, which was grant funded and organised by the Parish Council. What you may not know is that the Village Hall is run by a very small group of dedicated trustees, or that the lack of volunteers to help them in their work has resulted in the full weight of that work falling on their shoulders. However, that practice is not sustainable, and reality is that without our support as a village community, the village hall may fail, and if it closes, there can be no guarantee that it will re-open. The Parish Council is committed to sourcing grant funding for refurbishments, and we have resolved to provide funds from the Reserves to augment grants to enable essential repairs and necessary improvements to be made, and to include in the

budget each year an amount to cover essential repairs, maintenance, and necessary improvements work. Recently, a grant of almost £10,000 was received to fund the repainting of the interior and exterior of the hall, which is now underway, and we have been working closely with the Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee to identify the priority repairs and improvements needed to ensure the building meets the statutory and safety requirements for it to continue to operate post lockdown. Currently, that work entails improving access into and out of the building, upgrading security and fire safety and improving the disabled toilet facilities, all of which are required to ensure the building is compliant with legislation relating to disability and health and safety. Please don't let our village hall fail. If you are willing to volunteer to help the Village Hall Management Committee, please email Mr Len Farrow at [lenfarrow@yahoo.com](mailto:lenfarrow@yahoo.com)

The Community Meeting planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 to discuss the current and future management and use of the hall has been postponed and a new date will be set as soon as possible.

***Bell Ringers Wanted ...*** If you are a budding campanologist or just curious about the practice of bell ringing and would like to learn more, or develop your skill, then please contact the Tower Master, Thomas Birkett at [trb1961@gmail.com](mailto:trb1961@gmail.com)

***See it – Bin it ...*** We thank most sincerely all of those community spirited residents who routinely pick up litter as they walk around the village. And, while such endeavours make a huge difference in reducing the volume of litter in the village, which helps to keep it tidy and pleasant for all of us to enjoy, there still remains a need for a periodic targeted clean-up to remove litter from identified litter hot spots. If you are willing to help us at these special twice-yearly events, please come along to the Village Hall car park on the published dates, where you will be provided with litter pickers and bags. All you need to bring is a pair of sturdy gloves and your determination to *Keep Stanion*

*Tidy! The special spring litter picking day has been cancelled.* Details of new litter picking events will be published on the High Street noticeboard and the Parish Council website ([www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net)). If you find large quantities of fly-tipped rubbish (*one or more black bags/containers/furniture, etc. dumped in a village location*), **please don't pick it up**. Contact Corby Borough Council with details of the location of the dumped rubbish, and a CBC officer will investigate the find and arrange for its removal.

***Clothes Recycling ...*** We recently arranged with the BIU Group (*Bag it Up Ltd*) for a clothes recycling bank to be sited at the Village Hall car park. A percentage of the profits realised from the sale of the donated clothes will be paid to the Northamptonshire Search & Rescue Charity. The Charity is run entirely by volunteers, it receives no government funding and relies solely on public donations to continue to provide 24/7 support in the search for missing vulnerable people across the county. Please place items directly into the bank and not on the ground around it.

***Planning Matters ...*** We are steadfastly committed to raising objection to unnecessary speculative developments on land in or close to the village (*copies of those letters of objection are on our website, [www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net)*). The latest of which is the proposal to build a logistics park on the **Cowthick Plantation**. In response to this application we submitted a number of letters of objection to CBC Planning Dept, contacted our MP, Tom Pursglove, and wrote to Parish Councils bordering the A6116, asking them to take the same action. On 13<sup>th</sup> January we attended the second public consultation on this proposal and once again raised objections direct with the developer. On 13<sup>th</sup> March we took part in a conference call with our MP, senior CBC officers and representatives from a number of other Parish Councils to discuss the proposal. We wrote to CBC expressing our concerns about the accuracy of information provided to the Development Control Committee (DCC) by CBC Planning in relation to

the application and requested the report be reviewed and amended in light of our concerns. We also objected to the timing of a special meeting of the DCC, planned for the first day of lockdown, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, to consider and decide on the application, following which, the meeting was deferred in line with current legislation.

Following CBC's refusal of the planning application to build 5 houses in Little Lane, the developer submitted an appeal that was scheduled to be heard on March 24. The Appeal Hearing has been postponed and we anticipate that it will be rescheduled for later this year. Once we receive details of the new date, we will publish that information on the Parish Council website ([www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net)) and on the High Street noticeboard.

***Stanion Pocket Park ...*** You may not know that Keeble's Field Pocket Park celebrates 25 years as a Pocket Park this year. The land was leased from CBC for a period of 25 years and the lease will expire in July this year. Until very recently the future of the Pocket Park, and in particular, our ability to renew the lease, was under threat, as the volunteers who had managed it in the past, advised that they were no longer able to do so. Without a group of volunteers to run the Pocket Park, we were unable to renew the lease. Recently however, we were contacted by a small group of parishioners who offered to help, and we are now in the process of applying to renew the lease. However, if the Pocket Park is to be a successful project, those volunteers need your help. The work isn't onerous; you can give as much or as little time as you can spare, and I assure you, your support as a Pocket Park Volunteer will make a huge difference. If you would like to help to manage the natural habitat and develop and promote the use of the Pocket Park, then please send your contact details to the Clerk at [stanion.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:stanion.clerk@gmail.com)

***Unitary Authority Update & Elections ...*** The Shadow Unitary Authority Councils came into being on 1 April 2020, and Vesting Day is planned for 1 April 2021. For the very latest information

on the local government re-organisation for our area at: <http://futurenorthantsnorth.org> and for the west of the county, at: <http://futurenorthantswest.org>

Parish and Town Council elections planned for 7 May 2020 have been postponed until May 2021.

## ***The Vic Bright Memorial Christmas Lights***

***Competition ...*** The judging for the 2019 Vic Bright Memorial Christmas Lights Competition took place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019, and we are grateful to all those involved, especially the children from Stanion Primary School who judged the displays. The award for 1<sup>st</sup> place went to 40 Warwick Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> place was awarded to 63 Willow Lane and 3<sup>rd</sup> place was awarded to 6 Kettering Road. A big thank you to everyone who entered into the spirit of the competition by providing such a wonderful array of light displays and to all those who supported the event from the wings.

## ***VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & WW1 Memorial Bench***

***Dedication ...*** The 8<sup>th</sup> of May this year marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war in Europe, after years of fighting, the end of hostilities was officially announced on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, from the Cabinet Office, 10 Downing Street, London, and that date has since become enshrined in history as VE Day. The Parish Council had planned to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with a short open-air musical tribute provided by a local Piper. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions. And the kerbside dedication of the WW1 Memorial bench on Corby Road planned for the same day, suffered the same fate. However, we hope, that like us, you were able to join countless others across the world, who at 3 p.m. on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 took a moment to remember the Heroes of WW2, including those from our own community who gave so much to ensure that we all enjoy the freedom that we have today.

**Meeting Dates ...** In light of the central government directive, the May Annual Meeting of the Parish Council was held remotely, and the Annual Parish meeting, also scheduled for May has been postponed. Please check the website or High Street noticeboard for information on all future meeting dates ([www.stanionpc.net](http://www.stanionpc.net)).

**Re-wilding and Grass cutting ...** A contractor was selected to commence verge mowing in March. However, a new contractor had to be appointed in late May and they began mowing the verges during the first week in June. Unfortunately, the re-wilding of the three entrances into the village in March proved unsuccessful, with the seeds failing to germinate. Re-seeding of those areas is not planned for the foreseeable future.

**And Finally, .... Hail & Farewell ...** We welcome Cllr Jeff Worts, Cllr Marilyn Worts and Cllr William Heelan to the Parish Council and thank them for their support and efforts as new Parish Councillors and Cllr W Heelan also as the Clerk unpaid. And we thank Mel and Gaynor for volunteering to run the Pocket Park and for maintaining the entrance planters. We say farewell to Cllr Julie Riley and Cllr Willie Colquhoun as Stanion Parish Councillors and thank them most sincerely for their support in that capacity over the past year and for their continued support as our Ward Councillors throughout.

We urge everyone to follow the Government's directives and guidance to stay safe and remain well during these difficult and challenging times. We will be back with more news in the autumn.

*Stanion Parish Council*