

# MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 25 April 2019 at 7.00pm Held at Stanton Community Village Hall.

**Present:** There were 27 people present, these included County Council, Borough and Parish Councilors, Invited representatives from village organisations and members of the public.

**Parish Council Chairman Mr. Francis Hart chaired the meeting.**

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr Alan Kemp, Mike Ronchetti – Stanton Land Fund (Report received), Ian Engall -Stanton Village Trust and Stan Co Co – (Report received). Ginny Lamboll – Village Historian.
- 2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting on 25 May 2018 were accepted as correct.

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### 3. Report of Chairman – Francis Hart

**Councillors.** The Council welcomed new Councillors Alan Kemp and Claire Jay to the Council following the resignations of Neil Chapman and Larry Morris during the year. Both Neil and Larry had contributed a significant amount of work to the Council since joining and they will be very much missed for their enthusiasm and community spirit.

In the forthcoming elections on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Cllr Claire Jay has decided not to stand for personal reasons and I would like to pay tribute to Cllr John Mann who has decided to step down after a phenomenal number of years – over 40 - serving in the Village as a Councillor.

There will be two vacancies advertised for co-option after the election and we are hopeful of getting a good response from the Parish for the vacancies.

**Cemetery.** The churchyards of St Johns and All Saints have been closed for any further burials or cremated remains except where there are second burials in current graves. The maintenance of these areas is now carried out by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

The Parish Council Cemetery has been opened since May 2016. This is still a relatively new experience for the Council who are learning from each occasion that a burial takes place. We would like the grounds to be a quiet and restful place very much in keeping with the Churchyard of St Johns opposite and therefore the rules remain the same as the St Edmundsbury Diocese rules with each application for burial or memorial being decided on its merits.

Charges have not been increased this year and still remain much lower than the West Suffolk cemetery charges. The charges are used towards the maintenance of the Cemetery and includes the gates (which are in the process of being newly painted), hedge cutting, weed killing on the gravel driveway, bulb planting, grass cutting and the provision of water for the use of visitors laying flowers.

The previously planted Spring bulbs really showed off well this Spring and a number of positive comments have been received.

**Flooding in the Village** The Natural Flood Management (NFM) structure (Woody Debris Dam) has been completed but the weather has not really tested it due to lack of rainfall over the Winter months. The dam is still in the hands of the County Council and Councillors keep a watchful eye on any debris swept down towards the village.

The Parish Council has also been working with the County Council to identify areas of flooding and as a result gulleys have been cleared in several parts of the village and a ditch cleared behind the houses in Park Farm Drive. The Council continues to be vigilant in reporting blocked drains and would encourage the public to do likewise.

**Street Cleaning.** We are very lucky to be able to afford the services of a street Cleaner and are grateful to Kenny Brown who continues to turn out in all weathers to keep our village looking nice. You may also have seen our Litter Picker Dylan who does a great job on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Another well organised litter pick was carried out in the Village in March when 24 helpers turned out to litter pick the area. It was great to see so many new faces turning out on the day. Thank you.

**Village Tubs** The tubs have been planted up by Hillcrest nurseries who will shortly be replacing the lovely pansies with another colourful display.

**Village Maintenance.** This year has seen additional expenditure on the Clock tower which after nearly 20 years required an overhaul. A maintenance contract for the next 3 years has been put into place.

The War Memorial was extensively cleaned in readiness for the Beacon of Light Event in November.

Work was carried out on the hedge in Bury Lane to reduce decaying and overhanging trees.

Spring bulbs have been planted on the Grass Verge to enhance the entrance to the Village and the Village sign at Old Bury Road.

A bin was replaced in the Play Area and a new bench and Notice Board installed at George Hill. We are very grateful to the Wooderson family for their kind donation towards the purchase of the bench.

**Recreation Ground.** Councillors keep a regular eye on the play area which continues to be very popular with local children and subject of many compliments. A Play Area Inspector carries out monthly checks to ensure that all the equipment is safe to use.

The tennis court and MUGA are coming to the end of their life in their current condition and the Council, has raised an order for them to be refurbished which will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

An order has been placed for pavers to be introduced onto the recreation ground adjoining the car park. When installed this will allow a further 1000 m2 of parking. The system will be installed on top of the grass and will not be very visible but will prove useful when the car park is at capacity.

The footpaths from Fordhams Close to the Village Hall have been repaired and replaced to make them safer to use.

### **Bonfire & Firework Night**

A very successful night was run in 2018. The cancellation of the display at Bury St Edmunds led to a large influx of people from outside the Village. More and more residents of surrounding villages are coming to Stanton as it is good value and a great display.

Again, our thanks go to Kelvin McDonald and the Councillors who turned out on the night to man the gates and take monies. Also, to our regular helpers who have been personally thanked.

Moving forward we do need to get more residents involved in the organisation of this event if it is to continue.

**Highways Issues.** The Clerk is kept busy reporting signage and pot hole problems and we do encourage the public to do the same directly to the County Council.

The Hedgerow at George Hill was finally cut after a long wait for Highways and at the same time the footpath was 'skirted' which has made this much safer for pedestrians.

A dropped kerb crossing has been approved at the Shetlands entrance off Old Bury Road which will assist wheelchair and push chair users to access the Recreation Ground and Village Hall more safely. This should be installed in the coming weeks.

Council has been working with County Councillor Spicer this year to make the A143 safer and a proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30mph is currently being considered by the County Highways Team after a lengthy report was submitted when residents raised concerns over speed and especially in the area of the Rose and Crown development which is lacking a proper crossing point..

The results of a speed survey recently undertaken on that stretch have not yet been published.

An additional street light has been installed at the rather dark entrance to the Community Village Hall after requests from users of the hall. This should shortly be completed by UK power networks.

The Council is grateful to County Councillor Joanna Spicer for her relentless work to resolve Highways issues.

**New homes and Planning.** Councillors, along with County Councillor Joanna Spicer and Borough Cllr Jim Thorndyke are keeping a watchful eye on the proposed development at Shepherds Grove. A consultation evening took place in February and residents were invited to feed back their views on the master plan. The closing date for comments was at the end of March and so far, there has been no feedback from the developer. Council submitted a lengthy response outlining their concerns which can be found on the website under 'Planning'

Council has very recently been contacted by Bloor Homes in relation to a possible development to the East of Bury Road. No further detail is yet available.

**Liaison with residents.** The Facebook page is proving to be extremely useful for keeping contact with local residents and the Clerk regularly updates any issues that we become aware of that will help keep residents safe. In addition, the website is being maintained by the Clerk which contains all out current policies and procedures and minutes of each meeting.

The Clerk also utilises a Social media site called 'Next Door' which is another way of contacting our residents and is accessed through email for those who don't have a Facebook account.

**Accounts.** At the budget meeting in November 2018 Council agreed on a budget which resulted in a small increase in Council Tax (2.41% or £1.70 per annum per Band D property) for all residents.

The extra money will be used in the Special Projects budget which this year has been allocated to the car park extension, an additional defibrillator to be sited North of the Village, allotment fencing and to contribute towards the costs of changing the Speed limit on the A143, should this be granted.

The end of year accounts are yet to be finalised but early indications are a small overspend mainly due to the War Memorial being cleaned and renovated for the 100<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary of the end of World War One and unexpected repairs to the Clock Tower.

**Special Projects.** A working party chaired by Councillors and involving other village organisations including the Royal British Legion, Blackbourne History Group and the WI ran a very successful celebratory event for the anniversary of WW1 on Sunday 11th November 2018. The event included entertainment from Honington Wives choir, a soup and desert supper and the lighting of a beacon at 7pm on the evening with the Last Post played by a local trumpeter, Peter Dunsdon.

The Clerk is still liaising with Suffolk County Council in respect of a Right of Way application on Park Farm Drive for residents to use the road when the Grundle is in full flow or access is restricted. It is expected that the application will be heard at Committee at the end of April.

The Mother and Toddler Group, set up by Councillors has now been taken over by the Stanton pre -school. The project to increase activities for children has a budget and is ongoing. Anyone wishing to set up a group for children would be welcomed to talk to the Council about financial help to set up the venture.

The Christmas Tree Event at the Church in early December 2018 was very well received and will be repeated again later this year.

**In particular I hope you would agree with me that the poppy display on our War Memorial was fabulous and I would like to thank the WI for their hard work in making that happen.**

### **In the Future.**

Council are currently investigating the possibility of installing Electric Vehicle Chargers on the Recreation Ground. It is hoped that this will soon come to fruition.

The Group of Stanton Village Volunteers did some really good work and it was a pity that we lost this when Neil resigned. Council are still actively seeking a Co-Ordinator to restart this monthly group to do small jobs in the Village and would welcome any volunteers who would like to take this on.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Parish Council who give their time and effort for the benefit of Stanton village.

And especially Joy Hart, our Parish Clerk, Kenny Brown, our Street Cleaner, Dylan Greatrex, our Litter picker and to Councillors Jim Thorndyke and Joanna Spicer for their continued help and support.

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#### 4. Report of County Councillor Joanna Spicer, Suffolk County Council

I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council very much for their welcome to me at meetings. And in particular I would pay tribute to both Neil Chapman and Francis Hart who have served as chair during a very busy and challenging year for the village. Joy Hart has been an excellent clerk and I thank her for keeping me in touch with issues in Stanton.

At this meeting I would like to add my support for the many tributes being paid to John Mann on his retirement from the Council after 40 years.

Jim Thorndyke and I work in partnership to cover the services provided to you here in Stanton with the different responsibilities of our Councils. I welcome the new West Suffolk Council which has my full support

At the County Council I took on a new role a year ago as Chairman of the Audit Committee which has responsibility for all aspects of governance as well as financial responsibility. I also play a role in the constitutional side of the Council.

I am chairman of the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership, this involves bringing together local authorities, the Police, the NHS, Probation and the voluntary sector in establishing joint community safety plans.

In May last year the Council elected a new Leader, Matthew Hicks, who has my full support. The new Deputy is Councillor Mary Evans from Clare and I am really pleased with how she has tackled her role as Cabinet member for Highways and Transport as improvements are now visible. We also have a new Chief Executive, Nicola Beach, who joined us from Essex County Council.

You may have read in the press about “unitary” councils again being discussed. As with previous reviews I would very much support the principal to save money and create efficiencies – but I am not sure the time is right. There is a review of county council division boundaries under way and I suspect my current division of 16 villages and over 8,000 people may increase.

The County Council has had to continue the relentless search for savings with the continuing cut in our grant from Government and with some reluctance we have again put up the Council tax this year.

We have made more than £260 million savings since 2011 and some of the changes have been tough. This year our budget, which excludes money going direct to schools, is around £520 million.

The biggest budget pressures continue to be adult care services and child protection. This represents 75% of our expenditure. It is interesting that whenever we do surveys although the people of Suffolk recognise the importance of our statutory duty to protect the vulnerable and elderly they continue to suggest highways should be our highest priority.

Which leads me on to Highways! The contract that SCC have with Keir is considered to be working better now and the programme for potholes using new technology is making progress. It is really important that the website reporting tool is used.

Specifically, this year my involvement in Stanton matters has included:

Changes that have been agreed to the **provision of school transport**. This will mean that Stanton children will no longer get free transportation to Thurston Community College – only to Ixworth Free School. This only effects new year 7 children from this September

The **Stanton Primary School** is proving very popular and was again rated as “Good” by Ofsted. Its popularity is such that for this September 7 children were refused places 4 of which were in the school’s catchment area

Another big issue on the horizon for Stanton is the possibility of a **significant development in Shepherds Grove, Stanton**, involving houses and light industry and a new spine road to a roundabout on the A143. I am keeping in touch with the developers jointly with County Council officers. I have ensured that the impact on Stanton – especially village facilities and access to the village is included in the County Council’s formal response as well as my own.

The development of the **former primary school** site in Bury Lane is, I am embarrassed to say, something of an eyesore and has not yet sorted out planning permission. (More about this will be reported to your next Parish Council meeting)

I remain frustrated at the delay in establishing a **safe crossing point over the A143** at the former Rose and Crown site. Despite a meeting I called with highway officers and SEBC enforcement team there seems little progress.

However, we have made some progress in our application for **lowering part of the 40 MPH** speed limit to 30 MPH

I am pleased **George Hill hedges** have now been cut and the pavement cleared.

There are several other SCC led schemes in hand including a **claimed footpath at Park Farm Drive**.

Progress on all these issues is reported monthly to the Parish Council Meetings.

#### **QUESTIONS**

A member of the public asked Cllr Spicer about school places for the future. Cllr Spicer responded by saying that if a large development was built then the PAN (Pupil Admission Numbers) would be reviewed for the school as there is sufficient room for the school to expand in the future. However, there is a bigger issue in relation to parking for the site and that will have to be taken into consideration.

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### **5. Report of District Councillor Jim Thorndyke, West Suffolk Council**

This has been the last year in the life of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, after 44 years it has joined together with Forest Heath District Council to become West Suffolk Council, so gone is the Mayor and the heritage associated with it and instead we have a new district council with a Chair. There will be an opportunity to apply for Borough Status but only if the new council support it.

For several years the two councils have been working closely and for the last couple of years we have had one workforce across the two authorities and now following a year or so of work by two panels putting together the way in which the council will operate and revising the constitution to be fit for the future, we are now all set to go forward as a single authority.

The main four committees will still be covering scrutiny, policy and finance, licensing and the development control - planning. We will be operating from both West Suffolk House in Bury and the council offices in Mildenhall.

So what will change? Well hopefully for normal day to day operations, very little, but instead of having the current 72 councillors the make-up will see 64 councillors. For Stanton, Ixworth, Bardwell and Barningham wards there will be no changes to their areas as they already have around 2,000 electorate each but several of the old Forest Heath wards were nearer 1,000 so there are extensive changes to the ward areas there.

I could go on with events for the last year but think it probably better to focus on a topic which has the potential to have a considerable impact on Stanton.

At the end of last year, the Borough and District councils carried out a call for sites asking developers to put forward land for future housing and business. Sadly, to date, although this has been a Borough Council initiative, I have not been told which sites have been submitted in Stanton, but from various happenings I would like to pass on what I think will be up for assessment to judge which if any will meet the criteria required.

First we know is on Shepherds Grove Industrial estate for a potential 380 homes, the master plan process is under way. Next is the land between Honeymeade Close and the tree belt, approx. 70 homes with access from Wyken Road. Next the Fordhams Farmyard and the field from Bury Lane to the A143 bordering the recreation ground – 320 homes and hopes of an access onto the A143. (Which could ask more questions as the parish council were refused an access onto the A143 when they extended the recreation ground to the West).

Then there are two small sites north of A143 in Duke Street/Old Barningham Road area with around 30 planned and the remaining site of note backs onto the Hilltop Way area and could see another 70 plus homes.

There is still the old primary school site for 10 awaiting planning consent so we are looking at around a potential of around some 900 homes developers could be wanting to drop on Stanton. This on the back of a primary school that is apparently turning away Stanton children, health facilities that are in need of improvement and various traffic issues.

I will be reporting progress on these issues monthly to the Parish Council.

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## **6. Reports from Village Organisations**

### **a. Report on Stanton Steamer – Mr Peter Palmer**

The Steamer is now in its 22nd year of publication delivering over 1300 households every month by its team of volunteers.

The Steamer team was proud to have supported the Local Branch of the Royal British Legion with a new stone plaque which was unveiled last November in All Saints Church, commemorating the village men that gave their lives in the Great War.

The Steamer also sponsored the first print of BLHS publication of the village booklet which recorded the research on the same subject. Following these village sponsorships, the Editors have produced a Steamer Constitution/Code of Practice which is currently subject to ratification.

**A member of the public thanked the Steamer team of Peter Palmer, Chris Thorndyke and Jim Thorndyke for their work in producing the magazine on a monthly basis.**

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### **b. Report on Stanton Community Speed Watch – Mr Peter Palmer**

The Speed Watch radar gun was deployed 4 times this year reporting 90 vehicles speeding on George Hill to the police. Hopefully we can improve the situation this coming year if volunteers come forward.

The data captured by the two Speed Indicating Devices (SID) are recording recorded that 10% of vehicles are speeding at over 35mph and of those 10% the average speed is 39.4 MPH. Speeds in excess of 40mph and up to 95mph have been captured by both SIDS. The average speeds on George Hill would certainly be higher if it was not for the diligent drivers that observe the 30-mph limit and create convoys.

Approximately 5000 vehicles transit George Hill, with the village count roughly at 1600 on weekdays with peaks at 8-9am and 5-6pm

The speed watch team is grateful to the parish clerk for her help in recovering the SID machine that was stolen just after midnight on the 21st October last year.

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**c. Report of the Blackbourne Local History Society – Mr Peter Palmer**

The Society, founded in 1982, normally meets on last Tuesday of the month at the Church Rooms from September to April with talks on local and national history events. In addition, a Spring/Summer trip is arranged.

Last year the society enjoyed a visit to the Buxhall museum.

Last year’s delightful talks included, ‘Who’s Buried under your House in Stanton’, ‘Stanton’s Working Past’, and ‘Jane Austen, my sister’.

The BLHS was pleased that its publication ‘They Shall Grow Not Old’, a centenary reflection of the brave men of Stanton who lost their lives during the great war of 1914-1918, was well received by the public.

The BLHS was also pleased to have supported the Parish during its Great War century remembrance evening event, and the lighting of the beacon on the 11th November 2018.

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**d. Report of the WI – Stephanie Papworth**

Stanton W.I. is a thriving group with a robust membership and a very active committee.

Our monthly meetings include speakers on a wide range of topics, activity evenings, poetry and prose evenings, and various well supported competitions. During the summer months we enjoy outdoor activities such as our picnic and our ever-popular Safari Supper. As well as this, our workshops cover a wide range of craft related themes, usually led by one of our talented members. Our Craft and Chat afternoons are open to all, including nonmembers, during which we either carry on with our own craftwork or knit for one of the charities that we support. As well as all this our coffee shop mornings are very popular when we visit local coffee shops and also enjoy some retail therapy.

We are proud that last year was our centenary year when we included many other special events to mark this amazing milestone.

We are pleased to organise and support village events and our charity fundraising is something of which we are especially proud.

One of the highlights of our centenary year was the fabulous Flower Festival in All Saints Church. Well, we are doing it again in July so please all join in and support us.

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**e. Report of Stan Co-Co Trust - Mr Ian Engall – Presented by Claire Jay**

Stan Co Co began the year with 250 members in the monthly tote but despite recruiting new members during 2018 sadly, we lost several long-standing contributors who had passed away during the year. We finished the year with a net membership of 242.

Income for the year dropped by £60 but we are still able to maintain the prize levels - £100 for first prize, £40 for second prize and £20 for third prize for tote members for the time being.

Our collectors do a wonderful job collecting the tote money but we do need to be mindful of the need to encourage more new members to join. We are currently looking for a collector for the Shepherds Grove Park area.

During 2018 the Trust donated £250.00 to the Parish Council to be used as a contribution towards the cost of a defibrillator for the village.

Our available funds carried forward should suffice for expected needs though we would welcome either more members to the tote (our main source of income) or any donation to the Trust funds. We would also welcome any applications from village organisations for help in funding community projects within Stanton.

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**f. Report of Stanton Village Trust - Mr. Ian Engall – presented by Claire Jay**

The Trust received one application for funding during 2018 and were pleased to be able to give £500 to the Parish Council as a grant towards the cost of one of the defibrillators for the village. The balance of funds held is deemed sufficient for present purposes.

We welcome applications from village organisations for assistance in funding projects during 2019.

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**g. Report of Stanton Land Fund – Mike Ronchetti – presented by the Clerk**

The value of vouchers paid was slightly more than the previous year (£5180 in 2018 against £4700 in 2017) but we had anticipated a higher take up due to the increase in housing within the Village. It is probable that this trend will continue as the Village population increases. It may also be, but cannot be proven, that the change of name from 'Poors Estate' may have encouraged some who had previously perceived the 'Poors' element as something of a stigma.

There were no hardship claims this year.

The system, using vouchers, to be exchanged for goods solely within the Village continues to work very well and the Trustees intend this method to continue into the foreseeable future.

A copy of the Audited Accounts has been submitted to the Charity Commission.

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**h. Report of the Friendship Club – Alan Johnson**

The friendship club is thriving and attracting new members, with some from the surrounding villages. The Club still meets on the first Monday of each month in the Village Hall at 2.15pm. The meetings have an organised speaker every other month, with a social and games afternoon in between.

Two successful outings were arranged last year, the first being a coach trip to Wroxham which included a boat trip. The second a trip to Gorleston Pavilion Theatre to see their Summer Laughter Show.

At this years AGM it was agreed to keep the Annual membership at £5 which covers the attendance to all meetings. Also, it was agreed that the committee would increase from 7 to 9, this is to enable us to spread the work load and cover for any illness or disability, which has been a problem in the past. It was very heartening to have people come forward and volunteer for a position on the committee.

This year so far, we have had two speakers, the first was Mr Brian Heard who did a talk on forensic science that he was involved with at Scotland Yard and the second was Mr Martyn Taylor, who, with the use of slides spoke

to us about the hidden secrets of Bury St Edmunds. We have also arranged a coach trip to Taverham Gardens and shopping centre on 14 May. Other trips will be a boat trip at Cambridge and a visit to a Theatre, both of these are still in the process of being finalised.

Speakers for 2020 have already been booked.

We believe that the Stanton Friendship Club has a rosy future.

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**i. Report of the Stanton Woodland and Wildlife Action Group – Mark Papworth**

For those of you who haven't come across us before the Stanton Woodland and Wildlife Action Group (SWWAG for short) is a small charity created to encourage an interest in and access to green open spaces, to animals, birds, insects and plants, for the residents of Stanton and thereabouts.

With this in mind some ten or more years ago we bought a small piece of land, along the Upthorpe Road, called Sid's Piece. Since the purchase we have managed the land to create a diverse set of habitats intended to attract a wide variety of wildlife and plants. It is open to the public and we encourage visitors to tell us about what they see, and also to get involved with the work we do to develop the site.

The last twelve months have seen us promoting access to Sid's Piece and developing a cycle of annual coppicing which is designed to encourage a wider set of habitats and associated species.

To fund our activities we organise an annual plant and craft fair at Wyken Hall, and coincidentally this year it takes place this coming Sunday (28th April). We're open from 10 until 4pm so please come and visit us, and help us continue developing green open spaces for the people of Stanton.

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**j. Report of Stanton Musicians – Colin Bedford**

We are still running regular fortnightly music sessions in Stanton Church Rooms when we usually have around 14 players in attendance.

We have Piano accordions, fiddles, guitars, flute, concertina, drum and anything else that turns up!. We continue to add more tunes to our repertoire in order to make our playing varied as we often get repeat bookings, such as the blind and partially sighted Club at Pakenham where we now have a 4<sup>th</sup> booking and Wyken Plant Sale for the 5<sup>th</sup> time. Our Annual Music Café in aid of the Stanton Friendship Club is still well supported. The money is used to subsidise trips and events such as the Christmas lunch.

During 2018 we did about a dozen gigs, mainly in and around Stanton. Enjoyed them all and despite saying we play for free; we often get small donations which help with printing and buying the chips!

We recently played all the music for a wedding in All Saints Church which was a real privilege and the most exciting invitation we have had so far.

We shall play on...

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**k. Report of the Royal British Legion – Mr Brian Bartrum**

The Stanton Branch of the Royal British Legion has a membership of approximately 62 men and women which is 1 more than the previous year.

Sadly, I have to report in the last year, the death of Mrs L Hillion, a valued member of the Branch.

Meetings are held in the Cock Inn, Stanton on the second Tuesday, monthly. Average attendance ranges between 11 and 20.

The Branch Standard has been 'paraded' at the Suffolk Show and several funerals throughout the year as well as Newmarket Race Day on 11 August 2018, the festival of Remembrance at Bury St Edmunds and Remembrance Sunday at Walsham Le Willows.

Other events were –

Coffee morning at Walsham Le Willows on 20 April 2018.

Coffee mornings in the Church Rooms, Stanton on 23 July 2018 and 23 March 2019

Annual Branch Dinner at The Cock Inn, Stanton on 15 May 2018

Annual Poppy Day Race at Newmarket on 11 August 2018

Fund Raising Evening (S & M nite) on 2 October 2018

Dedication of Memorial Plaque in All Saints Church, Stanton on 10 October 2018

Christmas Lunch at the Cock Inn, Stanton on 18 December 2018.

Members of the Branch have been invited by the RAF Association to their Annual Christmas Dinner (5 December 2018) and a cheese and Wine Evening (21 March 2019), both events at RAF Honington.

Members of the Branch were invited to a series of Games nights in Feb and Mar 19 by Ixworth and District Branch culminating in their Annual Dinner for the prize giving on 23 March 2019.

For the Centenary of the Armistice on the Western Front World War 1, Stanton Branch were 'tasked' by RBL Suffolk County to liaise with schools to remember the fallen in the following cemeteries - Bardwell (2), Rickinghall (1), Walsham le Willows (2), and Wattisfield (5) on 8 November 2018.

The Branch was represented at RBL Suffolk County Conference held in the Community Centre at Needham Market on 26 January 2019.

The Branch have been represented at 4 Quarterly (Jul, Oct, Jan & Apr) Group Meetings.

Any monies donated/gifted to the Branch, or raised by the Branch are used for welfare work. As we are a small branch, we transfer all such monies to the County Benevolent fund. Donations which the Branch receives including that from the Parish Council, are greatly appreciated.

**The Chairman added his personal thanks to the RBL for their work in the Village and especially for the Beacons of Light event in November 2018.**

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## **I. Report of the Stanton Community Village Hall – Jim Thorndyke**

Another steady year for the hall

Eleven weekly bookings plus three or four regular monthly bookings, and children's parties and other celebrations ensure we can keep the hall financially sound, we still space for more but care needed to avoid clashes between noisy and quiet activities, there is little to stop the noise from Zumba in the main hall obliterating a quiet group in the small hall.

During the year there have been lots of maintenance and upgrades.

Repaint of main hall, corridor and foyers at a cost of just over £5,000 has been appreciated by most hirers but sadly not by the one recently that used yards of selotape to stick some banners up with the resulting damage to the paintwork when the tape was removed.

Electrical repairs and improvements costing over £2,000 including changing some lights to LED and PIR switching to several more lights, new battery packs for emergency lighting and timed switches to water boilers, much of this work to counteract for hirers who are incapable of turning off what they earlier turned on.

We have also repaired and replaced guttering all around the hall and at the same time had the roof cleared of moss and other debris. So, in all we have invested nearly £10,000 in the hall in the last year.

Also, with 50% financial assistance from the borough council we purchased 200 new chairs at a cost of some £4,250 for use in the main hall, a bit more comfortable than the ones purchased in 2010 but we have retained 100 of those for use in small hall and the old hard plastic chairs sold on.

We are now looking to replace main lights in the big hall with LED variations as around 25% of existing 96 tubes have failed, cost of this will be around £2,000. Currently looking at Green energy grants to help with this.

As a means to cut our overheads we now have a solar array on the hall roof, this has been done under a rent a roof scheme whereby it costs us nothing nor are we liable for any equipment on the roof, the gain is less than with some feed in tariffs but ensures we get a better deal for our electric supply.

All this is achieved with a committee of just five active members and we could do with a couple more workers, sadly it seems they are hard to come by, the parish council did a recent social media advert for somebody to join us which gained zero response so we will have to soldier on.

**A member of the public wished to comment that the Villagers were all very proud of our Village Hall and thanked the Committee for their work.**

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**m. Report of the Cinema Club – Alan Shelton**

We have just had our 80th film night having shown a film every 2nd Friday of the month for nearly 7 years.

Our average monthly audience is between 45 to 50, best every around 143, lowest was 10. Recently shown Bohemian Rhapsody to 117 audience, when we were able to showcase the full benefits of our sound surround audio system, which was upgraded about 18 months ago.

Pleased to see at our show in April (Stan and Ollie) two members of the audience came in costume as laurel and hardy complete with bowler hats!

We are a very small team running the not for profit evenings for the benefit of Stanton. I would like to thank Jim Thorndyke for his technical input and also the dedicated team of caterers who provide tea, coffee and other refreshments every month.

Also thanks to the box office and raffle volunteers and to Nigel for providing a licensed bar. I am pleased to say that we have not increased our ticket price since we started.

We meet every 2nd Friday doors open at 6.45pm.

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The Chairman thanked all representatives for their reports and their hard work in the Village during the year.

**Presentation of Community Recognition Awards**

At the conclusion of the reports the Chairman announced the Community Recognition Award and explained that the awards are given annually to people or organisations to recognise their work in the community of Stanton, or who make environmental achievements or in some other way contribute to the life of the Parish. Anyone could nominate their friends, co-workers or suppliers of good service to receive an award and Councillors then considered and decided the award winners for the year.

This year we had 2 nominations which were presented by Reverend Cathy Bladen -

## Citations for Community Recognition Awards 2019

**Coleen Carpenter** – Nominated by Gemma Arnold and seconded by Anthony Sewell who say

“Coleen has been raising money for several individuals – a local child who is undergoing treatment for medical reasons and a young person who had ambitions to volunteer in Africa. In order to do this Coleen arranged a fun day in the Village in 2018 which was a great success and all monies raised has gone to these good causes. The event was greatly appreciated by young families especially.

The event was so successful that she has agreed to organise another fund-raising fun day to take place later this year. In addition, Coleen has been a registered childminder for a considerable number of years. She adores children and treats them all as if they are her own. Her patience and love for children is obvious and she is very highly thought of throughout the Village”

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**Lisa French** – nominated by Tom Forster and Stephanie Sharpe and seconded by Jess Forster and Steven Salisbury who say

“Stanton Pre-school has become a very popular, not for profit, charity within the Village. They give an excellent service to many young families. The Pre-school has recently taken over the running of the Stanton baby and Toddler group to help the village and provide much needed support and Community integration.

Lisa is a very good Manager of the Pre-School and is one of the nicest people I have met in Stanton. My children attended and loved it there. They both excelled once they started at the Pre-school due to Lisa’s professionalism and patience and their behaviour has changed for the better. My daughter is now excelling at primary school.

Lisa also has the time for parents and nurtures, advises and helps where she can, no matter what the problem might be. She has made a big difference to the lives of several families in the Village”.

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**There being no further business the meeting concluded at 8.45pm**

Minutes signed as correct .....Francis Hart (Chairman)

Dated.....