



# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2025 at Stanton Village Hall

### 1. Welcome

The Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr Harvey-Evers, took the Chair for the Meeting. He opened the meeting and welcomed all those attending.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Suffolk County Councillor, Joanna Spicer, and West Suffolk District Councillor, Jim Thorndyke.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Parish Councillors in attendance were:

Cllr Brown	Cllr Marlow
Cllr Frizzell	Cllr Meadwell
Cllr Harvey-Evers (Chairman)	

### 4. Presentation of the Community Recognition Awards for 2025

Community Recognition Awards for 2025 were awarded by the Chairman to the following worthy recipients:

**David Sexton (Individual)** – Nominated by Ivor Bowden, seconded by Sidney Kent

In recognition of his enthusiasm, energy and support to the Stanton Branch of the Royal British Legion, as Chairman for over 20 years. But also his compassion, providing comfort and support for others in times of need. He fully represents the Royal British Legions bywords "Service before Self".

**Julie Pritchard of Stour Sort and Sparkle – (Business)** Nominated by Martin Stubbins, seconded by Patricia Leger

In recognition of embracing village life by setting up her business which employs local staff and being flexible with staff working hours. She goes the extra mile for clients by running errands. She is also actively involved with local churches and the W.I.

**Paul Field** – Nominated by Alan and Maureen Johnson, seconded by Rosemarie Croft

In recognition of his dedication to preparing the newspapers for delivery and helping to deliver them when needed. He is always reliable, helpful and cheerful.

### 5. Report of Parish Council Chairman, Councillor Charlie Harvey-Evers

**Councillors** – It has been another year of changes with councillors joining and leaving. Se sadly said goodbye to councillors, Martin Wright and Phil Smith, and I would like to thank them for their contributions during their time with us. We have welcomed two new councillors, Greg Meadwell and Keith Marlow, who have already been making valuable contributions to our work. We currently have 2 vacancies for new councillors and details of these vacancies will be posted on the village website soon for anyone wishing to apply.

**Staff** – Fiona continues in her role as our PC Clerk and has been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of council matters. Tina Mardel-Ferreira continues as our village caretaker and deserves special thanks for her dedication in keeping the village clear of rubbish, leaves and weeds in all weather conditions. The village is looking great thanks to her continued hard work. We also have our weekend litter picker who concentrates on clearing away any litter at weekends.

We have a Village litter pick arranged for later this spring. Anyone who would like to volunteer for a few hours, please check the village website or notice boards for details.

**Flooding in the Village** - The structures in The Grundle remain the responsibility of Suffolk County Council. We continue to be vigilant in reporting blocked drains and would encourage the public to do likewise. We are grateful to the Maddox family for their efforts in clearing debris during heavy rain to avoid flooding problems in The Street.

**Village Tubs** – The planters in The Street have been filled with seasonal bedding plants supplied by Hillcrest Nurseries. In both spring and autumn, we make the village look nice by planting seasonal flowers in the village tubs, adding colour and charm to our community spaces.

**Recreation Ground** - We continue to maintain good play area facilities on the Recreation which remain very popular with local children. Monthly checks are carried out to ensure that all the equipment is safe to use. The tennis court and MUGA have been cleaned regularly, and we continue to monitor these facilities.

**Highways** - The SIDs in the village and on the A143 continue to work well. While we will never completely stop determined speeders, there has been a noticeable reduction in speed on the A143. We are hoping to make some of the reports from the SIDs available for the public to view on our website.

We continue to address parking issues around the doctors' surgery in The Chase and work with Councillor Spicer to explore options for improvement. We also continue to report potholes as and when we find them and would encourage residents to do the same using the Suffolk Highways reporting tool.

**Public Toilets** – I'm pleased to announce that the refurbishment of our public toilets is scheduled to begin this summer. This project will address the ongoing issues with damage and vandalism we've experienced and will provide improved facilities for residents and visitors alike.

**Village Green** – I'm pleased to announce that we have now signed the lease for the old primary school playing fields, which is now known as 'Old School Park'. A naming ceremony is planned for May. We are currently exploring various design options to make it a tranquil location for all the family. We continue to work on improvements to this area with landscaping and benches planned. More details on this exciting project will be shared with the community as plans develop.

**Security Improvements** – I'm pleased to report that new CCTV has been installed at the village hall. This important security enhancement will help protect this valuable community asset and provide additional peace of mind for those using the facilities.

**Fireworks** – Our annual fireworks event was a tremendous success this year, welcoming around 1,000 people to the village. This community celebration continues to be one of our most popular events, bringing together residents of all ages. I would like to express my

gratitude to all the volunteers who made this event possible through their hard work and dedication.

**Christmas Tree and Festive Activities** – The Christmas Tree Lights continue to be a popular feature in the village. This year, we were delighted to have Father Christmas attend the tree lighting event, where he handed out sweets to the children, making it a special occasion for our youngest residents.

**Allotments** – We continue to work with allotment holders to address security concerns and maintain this valuable community resource. This year, we have funded several cameras and locks to help improve security at the allotments, demonstrating our commitment to supporting allotment holders and protecting their hard work.

**Planning** - Bloor Homes have resubmitted their application for homes adjacent to the Recreation Ground. With the current government's push for new housing, it's looking increasingly likely to be approved. While the land is now owned by Bloor Homes, it is NOT included in the current Local Plan. However, it is included in the new local plan which, with no material objections raised, is likely to be adopted.

The Parish Council has offered qualified support for this application. We recognise the need for housing in Stanton, particularly affordable housing, and the potential benefits of increased residents for local clubs and societies. However, we have raised several concerns including:

- Safety issues regarding traffic entering and exiting the development
- Increased congestion on the A143, particularly between Stanton and Ixworth
- Pressure on local services, particularly the doctor's surgery which struggles with staffing and parking
- Similar issues with parking at the primary school

We have requested several conditions including early completion of planned changes to the Ixworth roundabout, funding to improve recreation facilities, support for local bus services, and careful management of road diversions during construction.

**Looking Forward** – I'm pleased to announce that we will be installing EV chargers in the car park of the village hall later this year. The installation is expected to include two 22kWh fast chargers and two 7kWh chargers. This initiative reflects our commitment to supporting sustainable transport options for our community and visitors to the village.

**Conclusion** - I would like to thank all Parish councillors for giving up their time and energy to the benefit of Stanton Village. Also thanks to County and District Councillors for their help over the course of the last 12 months. Finally special thanks to Fiona, our clerk, Tina, our village caretaker and our weekend litter picker for their dedicated service to our community.

**6. Report of West Suffolk District Councillor Jim Thorndyke** (Report read out as not able to attend in person):

The administration at the West Suffolk Council is still the West Suffolk Alliance comprising 19 Independents, 17 Labour, 1 Lib Dem and 1 Green Councillor joined together to form the West Suffolk Working Group.

I am currently on the Development Control Committee and on Cabinet with responsibilities for planning which has included seeing through the new West Suffolk Local Plan which now theoretically runs to 2041 and which is now heading for adoption in

July 2025. Even before the ink is dry on that plan we will be starting on the next local plan as the goal posts have been moved again by the current government and is intended to be completed in 30 months – just about time to complete a Neighbourhood plan for the village!

West Suffolk Council overview of the last year:

- 4.3 million black and blue household waste bins emptied
- 2,495 determined planning applications.
- 839 food safety inspections carried out.
- Still more West Suffolk households assisted with adaptations to their homes through disabled facilities grants at a cost of £1,879,394.

My locality budget for 2024/25 has gone towards youth football, play equipment on the Abbey estate and work on the heating of the village hall, I have a locality budget each year to assist any community groups, if your group many need assistance please contact me.

Planning applications, 26 applications were made in 2024 in Stanton and around ten so far in 2025. Most applications have been approved enabling people to build extensions, make alterations to their property or carry out works on TPO trees. One of interest at this time is from Bloor homes for two large boards on their site opposite the R&C advertising their development in Thurston.

We still have Bloors application on the land opposite the Rose and Crown running since Christmas eve 2019 now with a traffic light layout for the entrance off the A143.

As hinted above I am hoping work can start on a neighbourhood plan for Stanton so we have a real idea of where we are, what the village needs now and also on what the village would like to see is planned for the future. Another incentive is that WSC are looking to change the system used to levy a charge on most developments, this could bring 15% of the grant pot to the parish/town in the area of development – increasing to 25% if they have a Neighbourhood plan.

Government plans are going ahead for Simpler recycling which will see the bin system changing with a new food waste bin being emptied weekly, recycling, including glass in two bins on three-week collection, black bins remaining at two weeks.

I would like to thank the Community for their support and everyday help in assisting me with my Councillor duties, my thanks go to the Parish Council, Fiona the Clerk and C Cllr Spicer for their help and assistance over the year.

**7. Report of Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer** (Report read out as not able to attend in person):

I would like to thank the chairman and members of Stanton Parish Council for making me welcome at their meetings throughout the last year. Stanton residents can be reassured that myself as county councillor, West Suffolk District Councillor (Jim Thorndyke), parish councillors and the parish council clerk (Fiona Osman) all work together to secure the best outcomes and services for your village.

This has been an eventful year for Suffolk County Council and the future looks somewhat uncertain. The county council was approached by the new government last November to be part of a priority area for devolution and local government re-organisation. This proposition has progressed rapidly and, currently, the government is consulting on a plan to having a new combined county authority for Norfolk and Suffolk with election for a Mayor for this new body to be held in May 2026.

Simultaneously the government are wishing to move to just unitary authorities for local government. This means abolishing county, district and borough councils in Suffolk and the creation of unitary local government. I, like the County Council, support the bid for one unitary for Suffolk but I am quite comfortable with any proposal for 2 unitaries (as long as they are East and West Suffolk). Government will conduct a consultation on their preferred model in the Autumn.

Otherwise, it has been business as usual for the county council. We are relentless in our search for savings to ensure we balance the books. The budget set this year is over £800million. We actually have responsibility for over £billion with Suffolk partnerships. As has been the case for some years our budgetary pressures are almost all around supporting vulnerable children and adults. 77pence of every £ we spend is for services for child protection, special needs (SEND) older and vulnerable adults. This leaves only 23 pence for fire and rescue service, highways, waste management, libraries and bus services and many other smaller services including county farms, trading standards, emergency planning and of course environmental issues

Turning to Stanton

This has been a very busy year in many ways! There was an unexpected crisis in July when Simonds buses announced huge cuts to bus services between Diss and Bury St Edmunds which left Shepherds Grove with no buses and no service going to Thurston Community College. All credit to Bardwell Parish Council for hosting a meeting within a few days attended by almost 100 people. We at once set up a "save our buses" task force. I persuaded the county council to agree a short-term rescue package and then in November our bid for funding a service for the next year was agreed. Re launching the services (70,70A, 73 and 73A) has not been straightforward with timetable adjustments made at the February half term. But the task force is working with Simonds and SCC to settle the service down. Moving forward we are now "support our buses" and will be working hard to increase daytime usage and possibly make a case for a Saturday service.

This year I have worked with the parish council to progress some minor highways improvements working together to look at problem issues. This involves some new and replaced safety road signage. Work in underway for some work along the A143 prior to resurfacing and replacing the road markings. I am keeping in touch with the parish council as the Bloor Homes planning application progresses

It is disappointing that the sale of the former primary school site is not signed off which has held up the plans for the new village green.

A priority for me in 2025 is the improve the footpath and bridleway network and to encourage more use of them

## **8. Report from Peter Palmer, Stanton Steamer**

Now in its 29th year the Steamer is struggling to reach its annual publishing target for March 2026 of £8,000.

### **Reasons**

1. Commercial companies are leaning towards setting up their own websites.
2. Local trades people are oversubscribed with business and cannot take on additional trade and therefore no longer wish to advertise.
3. In order to reduce the number of pages printed charity and regular event advertisements will continue to be included but some subscribers will be asked to reduce their formats from full to half page submissions. The parish council has also been asked to consider precisising their minutes.

### **Concerns**

New house building over the last 12 years has slowly increased the print numbers. The proposal to increase the village housing by 30% is a major concern. The publishing cost of the Steamer is £0.53p per copy per copy which cannot be sustained by the current commercial income. Searching for new commercial subscribers is an ongoing process, if you know of any trades people please ask if they would like to contact the Steamer to advertise.

HELP is Urgently Needed. Without question, all three of the current Steamer editorial staff, will retire at the end of this year. I cannot stress and elevate this point strongly enough; The Stanton Steamer is in urgent need and would welcome a new team with new ideas, progressive planning, before the village newsletter becomes history in January 2026.

Jim and Christine Thorndyke have maintained the Stanton Steamer since April 1997 for 28 years and their probation is well overdue! Their outstanding service deserves recognition for providing the best local village newsletter in this area and beyond.

On a personal note, age creeps up on us all, I no longer have the motivational steam I had when I joined Jim & Chris 17 years ago. I have enjoyed the challenging times and taken pleasure in enabling Jim and Chris to produce the Stanton Steamer which has supported several local charitable events.

Once again, the Stanton Steamer is most grateful to all the volunteers who deliver the Stanton Steamer every month to the 1350+ village properties.

To reiterate, The Stanton Steamer needs editorial volunteers right now. Please pass the word around!

#### **9. Report from Peter Palmer, Blackbourne Local History Society (Stanton**

A successful year with a surprising number of guests attending the 6 talks given during the September to April season.

Although the Society was created in 1982 for researching local history in and around the Blackbourne area, life has moved on. Now with the availability of technology and media the society has enjoyed history speakers and even actors with a new array of subjects to talk on. Unfortunately, I missed the talk on lady's fashions through the ages titled 'Fig- Leaves to Feather Boas', in the future I'll make sure I avoid visits to A&E on the last Tuesdays in the seasonal months especially as one of the future talks might be, "The Fashions of the Roaring 20's".

Thank you to all our members and visiting guests for supporting the local history society.

#### **10. Report from Ian Engall, Stanton Village Trust / Stan Coco Trust (Report read out as not able to attend in person):**

##### **Trustees**

Ian Engall – Chairman & Treasurer

Deidre Siddaway – Secretary

Trustees – Angie Burrows, Annabel Matthews, Barry McDonald (Barry is the designated nominee trustee on behalf of Stanton Parish Council.

One trustee shall be nominated by Stanton Parish Council and the remainder (not less than two) shall be elected by members attending the AGM, and not more than two may be co-opted.

##### **Membership**

1. The Trustees of the Stanton village Trust ex officio
2. Any resident of Stanton Parish who has subscribed not less than £7 to the Stan Coco Tote or by donation to the Trust during the previous financial year.

### **Objectives**

1. The provision of grants to any or all of the voluntary organisations operating within the civil parish of Stanton for the general purpose of improving the amenities of the said parish in health, education, sport, leisure pursuits, social intercourse, and facilities for youth, the elderly and the disabled.
2. To enable and assist any voluntary group in the village, regardless of status, in any purpose directed to the furtherance of the purposes of that group [consistent with (1) above] in whatever way the Trustees deem appropriate.

### **Treasurer's report for the year ended 31 December 2024**

During 2024 Stanton Village Trust gave out a record number of grants to Village organisations totalling £2,156.42. Funds to pay these grants comes from the Stan Co Co Trust and the monthly tote it runs in the village.

Beneficiaries of these grants were Stanton, Village Hall, Stanton Primary School, Stanton Friendship Club and the Charity Café.

Stanton Village Trust welcomes applications for grants from village organisations. Regretfully we cannot give grants to individuals.

## **11. Report from Ivor Bowden (Hon Secretary), Royal British Legion**

The branch continues to meet at the Cock Inn on the second Tuesday of every month. We have 56 members, and a good number of those are regular attendees at our meetings. We also have a good proportion of ladies both as members and serving on the committee.

Since the last annual meeting we have had a number of fund-raising events. Our annual dinner in May was followed by a tabletop sale that was drowned in an unexpected July downpour. Despite that we still made a profit but suspect that most of it came from soaking wet stall holders selling to each other.

These events along with two popular fish and chip suppers, a second tabletop sale, this time indoors, our annual Christmas dinner and a successful coffee morning have been supplemented by a generously organised Stanton village quiz night and a raffle at Walsham alongside the village bingo organised respectively by individual members Peter and Hubby. We thank them both.

The various forms of fund raising over the last year have allowed the branch to donate £2,000 to the RBL Charity. In addition, monies raised during the closed Remembrance period have resulted in a further £500 being allocated to the Poppy Appeal and yes, once again, we won the Suffolk small branch award for contributions made this year.

The Remembrance services at both Stanton and Walsham remain our responsibility with the branch parading at each village on alternate years. On Remembrance Sunday a senior member will cover the village that is without branch attendance for that particular year. It is always rewarding to see so many members of the public at both memorials but last year at Stanton was especially memorable and heart warming as we noted the arrival of what turned out to be the vast majority of the pupils at the primary school. Their excited chatter, the poems that two pupils read at the memorial and the planting of their home made poppies gave all of us hope for the future of remembrance in the coming years.

In the last 12 months we have had a good fund-raising year, had our first car boot sale and at long last have joined the 21<sup>st</sup> century with our very own Facebook page. Now we can

look forward to joining the Parish Council in celebrating the forthcoming VE80 Anniversary and hopefully a fruitful year ahead.

## 12. Report from Maureen Johnson, Stanton Charity Café

The Thursday morning Charity Café continues to be well supported both by visitors and volunteers. We still only charge £3.50 for a hot drink and sweet or savoury snack, but since it began in its present form (2021), we have given away over £11,500 to local charities.

Apart from the fact that these worthwhile charities benefit, we are pleased to welcome so many people into a warm and comfortable space when so many benefit from the company and companionship. It is lovely to hear all the chatter and laughter, although sometimes it is a little noisy!

Most of the equipment we use has been donated. For example, the large urn was paid for by the Stan Coco trust, the toaster by a customer, and other items from our District Councillor's locality budget. To name a few.

We would like to thank all our volunteers who not only serve but donate all the cakes and savouries. We thank our customers, many of whom come very week, also, various other people who help putting out the chairs & tables and the sign each week and help in so many other ways. Please call in and enjoy the charity café on a Thursday morning and see for yourselves.

### Stanton Charity Café Donations

Date	Charity	Amount
Nov 21	Salvation Army	£211.00
Jan 22	St Nicholas Hospice	£1,000.00
Mar 22	Women's Refuge	£500.00
Sep 22	SARS	£1,000.00
Nov 22	Salvation Army	£307.10
Dec 22	Gatehouse	£358.05
Dec 22	Bury Drop In	£349.20
Feb 23	Dogs Trust	£452.91
Mar 23	St Nicholas Hospice	£261.36
Apr 23	East Anglia Air Ambulance	£318.50
Jun 23	Bury Drop In	£625.80
Aug 23	BLESMA	£524.60
Sep/Oct 23	Suffolk Sight	£470.60
Nov 23	Salvation Army	£751.00
Dec 23/Jan 24	SARS	£351.00
Feb 24	Suffolk Wildlife Trust	£358.55
Mar/Apr 24	RNLI	£524.45
May 24	East Anglia Children's Hospice	£220.45
Jun 24	Women's Aid	£281.30
Jul-Sep 24	Bury Drop In	£726.11
Oct-Nov 24	Salvation Army	£456.00
Nov24 – Jan 25	St Nicholas Hospice Care	£634.70
Feb 25	Crohns & Colitis UJ	£251.82
Mar-Apr 25	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service	£658.15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£11,592.68</b>

## 13. Report from Jane Duffield (President), Women's Institute

The Women's Institute has been present in Stanton since 1918 and is still going strong. There is a perception that you need to be an old lady who is good at making jam to join the WI but that is no longer the case, if it ever was. The WI has always been a campaigning organisation, boosting food supplies during both World Wars and groundbreaking campaigns on housing conditions in 1918, women on jury service and in the police, equal pay for equal work, a founder member of Keep Britain Tidy and AIDS awareness. In the 60s and 70s we were raising the issue of plastic pollution, and it is one of this year's resolutions again, along with Climate Change, Dental Health, Keeping Women Safe and Clean Rivers.

Stanton WI has a range of activities, with speakers at some of the monthly meetings. Last year there were talks on knife making, Suffolk crime novels, metal detecting and leather repairs. In the coming year we have talks on medical detection dogs, demonstrations of spinning and canal art and another local author. In October the meeting will be open to everyone when Elizabeth Talbot from Gaze auctions in Diss will talk to us.

Some monthly meetings are garden visits or games evenings and, in the summer, there is an alfresco meal, either a safari support or a buffet in a member's garden. Saturday morning workshops are planned for the Autumn.

Each month there is coffee or lunch in a local café or pub, and we have made visits to the Ipswich Regent theatre and The Apex with the January 2026 trip to the Apex already booked. We aim to be part of village life and take part in the Stanton show each year. We are providing cakes and singing at the VE day celebration in May.

Our numbers have dropped slightly this year due to the increasing frailty of one or two members. There is a recruitment drive for new members, trying to encourage women of all ages to give it a try. Our meetings are mostly held in the evening, to make them accessible to younger women who are working during the day.

#### **14. Report from Elizabeth Marlow, Stanton Land Fund**

The Stanton Land Trust distributes vouchers to means tested applicants on one morning each November.

The money is obtained from rent from church land together with one electricity pylon.

Applicants need to show proof of the benefit they receive and sign for the vouchers.

Vouchers can be used in local retailers and are given in £10 denominations with no change given. The Trust pays the relevant local company by the end of January the following year.

In 2024 there were 75 recipients of £80 vouchers. This left the accounts a little short for emergencies – the Trust aims to leave around £500 in the account.

Due to the cost of living crisis, it is anticipated there will be more applicants in 2025, so the Trust is arranging for 80 vouchers of £50.

The Trust has recently appointed a new accountant who currently prepares the accounts for Stanton and Bardwell Churches. They have asked for a small donation to Bardwell Church in lieu of payment.

#### **15. Report from Colin Bedford (Stanton Village Cinema)**

Colin reported that the numbers attending the Stanton Village Cinema were down compared to previous years and their reserves are low. They need more people to attend to ensure it can continue.

**16. Report from Pip Bedford (Stanton Folk)**

Stanton Folk is still going strong with around 18 musicians, including 2 new accordion players, and we have a good attendance at our fortnightly sessions in Stanton Church Room, where we often have a small audience of locals who pop in to listen and have a cuppa with us.

Over the past 14 years or so our standard of play has vastly improved, and we continue to entertain at various local events in surrounding villages. These are often repeat bookings, for example we have played at Wyken Open Gardens most years since 2014, and Pakenham Water Mill now plan their events when we are available. We are trying to be less busy from now on due to the ages of our players at least six of whom are now in their eighties and most of the rest of us are catching up fast apart from just four 'young' people under 60!

We have recently been working hard in preparation for Stanton VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, earning lots of songs and tunes from the forties including some Glenn Miller – not our usual fare and right out of our comfort zone but it's been fun. Village Voices plus some WI ladies will be forming a 'choir' to lead the singing.

We continue to play for free helping to raise money at local events whilst enjoying ourselves and supporting each other at the same time and hope we are able to carry on doing so for a few more years to come.

**17. To receive issues from members of the public present –**

There was a brief discussion regarding the Bloors planning application with attendees raising their concerns about the doctor's surgery, school capacity, parking and developments in other villages along the A143 having a further impact on traffic.

Cllr Marlow reported that 4 parish councillors had already expressed an interest in pursuing a Neighbourhood Plan for Stanton but would need additional support from villagers. This would be discussed at a future Parish Council meeting.

**18. Meeting concluded at 8.12 pm**

**19. Date of next meeting –** the next Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 23 April 2026.

**Signed by:**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_