



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2026 at Stanton Community Village Hall

1. Welcome

The Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Greg Meadwell, took the Chair for the Meeting. He opened the meeting and welcomed all those attending.

2. Apologies - None

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer and District Councillor Jim Thorndyke were in attendance.

Parish Councillors in attendance were:

Cllr Frizzell

Cllr Meadwell (Vice Chairman)

4. Presentation of the Community Recognition Awards for 2025-26

Community Recognition Awards for 2025-26 were awarded by Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer to the following worthy recipients:

Jim Thorndyke (Individual) – Nominated by Ann Pennington, seconded by Emma Drew 'Jim has been heavily involved in Stanton village life for many years, working on District Councils and County Councils, overseeing planning and working on the new Local Plan Working Party. Since May 1999 until the present day, he has been a West Suffolk Councillor. He has also taken a keen interest in Stanton Community Village Hall, which runs quiz nights, a cinema night along with other village events.

But I would like to nominate Jim for a 2025-26 Stanton Community Recognition Award not for any of the above, but for his commitment to the Stanton Steamer Magazine, for the past 29 years he has been the person behind the success of the magazine delivered to each of the households in Stanton every month. Despite a busy life with wife Christine (who sadly passed away in July of last year) his two children Michael and Carol, and a love of cacti! He has produced a local magazine of interest, information, businesses and news, reaching 346 issues.

Having met him a few times, he is a quiet man, who just does what he can for the village of Stanton and I believe if he were to receive an award like the Stanton Community Recognition Award he would be over the moon!

Peter Palmer – (Individual) Nominated by Ann Pennington, seconded by Emma Drew

Peter has been involved in Stanton village life for many years. His life as an engineer saw him working at nearby RAF Honington. Peter is a member of the Blackbourne Local

History Society (Stanton) and his love of local history is clearly shown in the talks that he gives in the church rooms, with some sessions being over subscribed.

But I would like to nominate Peter for a 2025-26 Stanton Community Recognition Award not for his love of local history, but his commitment to helping Jim Thorndyke in the running of the Stanton Steamer Magazine for the past 19 years. They have produced a local interest magazine, full of information, businesses and news, which is widely loved throughout Stanton Village.

5. Report of Parish Council Vice Chairman, Councillor Greg Meadwell

Councillors

It has been another year of changes with councillors joining and leaving. We sadly said goodbye to two councillors, Charlie Harvey-Evers and Brian Brown, and I would like to thank them for their contributions during their time with us. We have welcomed a new councillor, Sue Foulds who is already been making valuable contributions to our work. We currently have three vacancies for new councillors.

Staff

Fiona has continued in her role as our Clerk and has been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of council matters, although will sadly be leaving in the coming months, so we are searching for a new Clerk.

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. A special mention must also go to the two very kind young men who kindly presented Tina with a box of chocolates in recognition and appreciation of her hard work. Thank you both

We also have our weekend litter picker who concentrates on clearing away any litter at weekends.

We have our annual Village litter pick arranged for Saturday 16th May. 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 remain grateful to the Maddox family for their efforts in clearing debris during heavy rain to avoid flooding problems in The Street. Following a recent meeting, it is hoped that further maintenance work by Suffolk County Council will hopefully see not only a further improvement to the drainage and collection pools, but also in making the lower path/bridleway safer for horses. Regular walkers to the upper path will also have noted the recent repairs to the guard rails, with further repairs to follow

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. We are looking at expanding these to other areas of the village, as well as starting an annual autumn bulb planting.

Recreation Ground

We continue to maintain good play area facilities on the Recreation Ground which remain very popular with local children. Monthly checks are carried out to ensure that all equipment is safe to use. The tennis court and MUGA have been cleaned regularly, and we continue to monitor these facilities. We are also in the process of obtaining designs and quotations to improve the range of play facilities which we will consult the village on in the coming months, before agreeing a final design and seeking funding.

Gates to the skate park and young children's areas are, as I hope you've seen, away for repairs. In addition, new gates are to be installed from the carpark onto the fields.

We are currently looking at improving facilities for older children and adults of all ages.

Highways

The SIDs (Speed Indicator Devices) 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.

The temporary, and very much enforceable 40mph limit currently in place is to remain until works to strip and relay the poor surface dressing undertaken in the autumn are completed. We eagerly await a date for this work to be undertaken

We continue to seek ways to address parking issues around the doctors' surgery in The Chase and work with Councillor Spicer to explore options for improvement. In the meantime, we would ask all users of the surgery to be respectful when parking such that driveways and junctions remain clear, and remind everyone that FREE, off-street parking is always available at the village hall.

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 has been completed, a little later than intended owing to the need to also replace a 40m long section of the drainage.

Village Green

"Old School Park" as it has been named (at the rear of the old primary school) is open and our thanks and gratitude go to Cllr Burdett for progressing the design with Anne Marie Stevens, a landscape designer and Stanton resident. More on the design and sponsorship opportunities will follow throughout the year. More details on this exciting project will be shared with the community as plans develop.

Fireworks (and other) Events

Our annual fireworks event was a tremendous success in 2025, welcoming around 1,500 people to the village, with some travelling from as far afield as Norwich and Sudbury. 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.

The village is also establishing an 'Events' group to expand the number and range of events that we have in the village, including Armed Forces day, youth club and much

much more. Please get in touch if you're interested in being involved.

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 additional locks to help improve security and we are committed to supporting allotment holders and protecting their hard work.

Planning

Bloor Homes have commenced works on their development of 210 homes adjacent to the Recreation Ground.

The Parish Council 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. Concerns raised last year were addressed at various planning committee reviews, and more recently, we have engaged with Bloors regarding the design and appearance of the estate, with the majority of our requests being enacted – more trees, use of local materials (flint, weather boarding, fencing as well as a more varied range of render colours, bricks and tiles).

The developers' entrance has been formed, and the main estate entrance is to be constructed in August.

The two large mature oak trees that have been felled, are to be relocated to Old School Park, just as soon as we can arrange for / manage to lift the 5ton+ weight of each trunk!

In addition, with West Suffolk District Council already working on their next 10yr neighbourhood plan, and having recently called for potential development sites to be proposed, it is now even more important that Stanton develops its own neighbourhood plan, so that as a community we are able to have greater influence in the future of our village, including having costed and identified projects to make full use of any Section 106 payments required as a result of expansion.

Looking Forward

As we move forward, we're looking forward to introducing more community engagement activities, bulb planting, sign clearing, verge tidying – we all want to be proud of where we live and how it looks and feels. We'll be introducing a community book exchange at the clock tower, looking to introduce more planting to brighten village streets.

We're also calling on all residents to help us in identifying what matters to you, reporting issues i.e. damaged benches, overgrown footpaths etc., as the parish councillors are all volunteers, and most of us work, we need you, our community to be our eyes and ears, to report issues to us, and if it's not the parish's responsibility, we'll raise it with the responsible body to resolve.

Conclusion

I would like to thank all Parish councillors for giving up their time and energy for the benefit of Stanton Village. Also thanks to District Councillor, Jim Thorndyke his help

over the course of the last 12 months and to County Councillor, Joanna Spicer, you after 27 years of service has decided to step down at next months elections, thank you Joanna for your many years of support, we hope you enjoy your retirement. 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 Suffolk County Councillor Joanna Spicer

Reflecting on the past 37 years, the parish council has met in the Church Rooms, then at the Village Hall in the Terry Bray room and finally in the Small Hall. In 1989, there was no email, mobile phones and very limited internet. Stanton parish, consisting of distinct areas, such as north of the A143, Shepherds Grove Park, Upthorpe, Wyken and more recently Goldsmith Grove.

- Stanton has unique challenges including the two industrial estates that has no link between them. It is hoped that in the future the proposed relief road could be built.
- There are challenges with access to a GP surgery and a previous plan to build a new surgery/Health Centre on County Council land next to the Primary School could be a solution.
- Pleased that we were able to move the primary school from its previous site to that of the Middle School.
- Awaiting the installation of new road signs along Grove Lane and Upthorpe Road.
- The Bus service to Shepherds Grove Park has always been minimal but the threat of this stopping galvanised the creation of a 'Save Our Buses' group which helped to reinstate the service, albeit for a limited period of 2 years.
- In future, the Local Government Reorganisation review will see the loss of Suffolk County Council and all District Councils and the creation of three Unitary Councils which will take on the work of both previous councils for their areas.

7. Report of West Suffolk District Councillor Jim Thorndyke

The controlling administration at the West Suffolk Council is the West Suffolk Alliance comprising a somewhat unique mix of councillors, 15 Independents, 3 Reform, 3 Spectrum, 16 Labour, 1 Lib Dem and 1 Green all joined together to form the West Suffolk Working Group.

I am still on the Development Control Committee but gave up Cabinet position with responsibilities for planning after seeing the new West Suffolk Local Plan which now runs to 2041 through Council on the 15th July 2025. The next local plan process is already under way with a current call for sites then we will be starting on the content as the goal posts have been moved again by the current government with a demand for 1,200 new homes each year from the government and a timescale to complete the plan process in 30 months – so work needs to proceed to complete or at least move forward with a Neighbourhood plan for the village!

My locality budget for 2025/26 has gone towards Stanton indoor bowls club Stanton Primary school SPUFS and to the Village Hall for work on the audio system now giving more availability for hall users, I have a locality budget each year to assist any community groups, if your group many need assistance please contact me. This grant is now available from May to January – a recent cut from the year long timescale and last year the steamer carried details before the end of the year, the only response came in after the deadline so the village hall was very much a use it or lose it scheme that was needed but

somewhat accelerated to protect some £1,600 of funding which would otherwise gone into the general pot at West Suffolk and effectively lost to the village.

Planning applications have come and gone most are not contentious, most applications have been approved enabling people to build extensions, make alterations or carry out works on TPO trees. Bloor homes has not fitted in that category but the outline was approved by committee at west Suffolk last September and the reserved matters application which was approved recently and building has commenced on the first 137 homes.

We still have planning enforcement looking at a few issues in the village and hopefully these matters will be resolved soon.

As mentioned already work on a neighbourhood plan for Stanton needs to move on so we can have more influence on the West Suffolk future local plan. Again another incentive is that WSC are still looking to change the system used from the section 106 system they have used to the Community infrastructure levy which is a charge on most developments – or a combination of the two - sadly this may be delayed by the governments devolution plans , this as I said last year 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 moving ahead for Simpler recycling which will see more bins and a new food waste bin being emptied weekly, recycling, including glass in two bins on three-week collection, black bins remaining at two weeks but inevitably some changes to which bin should be presented when but dates will always be available on ‘find my nearest’ on the west Suffolk web site.

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.

Thank you.

8. Report from Peter Palmer, Blackbourne Local History Society (Stanton)

Subject to next weeks society AGM, if there are no forthcoming volunteers from the existing membership to replace the current officers of the society then the society will change its current format in that, the current social annual talks will unfortunately cease. The society will not disband but will remain in name under the guardianship of volunteer custodians to maintain the following actions:

1. Point of contact for information requests and research of Stanton other than that currently published online.
2. For a possible future restart of regular talks
3. Maintain accounts and the constitution of the society
4. Maintain annual membership of Suffolk Local History Council
5. One off local history talks in and around Stanton and Suffolk
6. Publication of local history i.e. a village information walk via places of historic interest with photographs of the past, Stanton’s industrial and social past, the 2 ½ churches of Stanton, their history, architecture reasonings etc.
7. Maintaining Stanton past photographs, research documents, newspaper articles and maps.

9. 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!

10. Report from Ian Engall, Stanton Village Trust / Stan Coco Trust (

The Stan Co Co Tote is 25 years old this year and has raised in excess of £30,000 for village organisations. The tote is the fund raising operation for The Stanton Village Trust – a registered charity – that gives money to the village. Our constitution does not allow us to give money to individuals but we welcome requests for funding from any village organisation.

Year ending 31/12/2025

A total of £1194.77 was given to village organisations during the year. We started the year with 239 members and at year end we had 228.

This figure had reduced to 217 by the end of January this year. Sadly the main reason for this was that the Tote lost far too many existing subscribers who had passed away. One or two people had moved away and regretfully we had a few who decided to end their £1 subscription each month because they had never won anything.

The Trustees have never promoted the Tote as a draw or competition to win cash prizes but as a vehicle to raise much needed funds to support village organisations. This remains our mantra to this day. But we do realise that maybe some people do not have spare cash in these difficult times the country is now experiencing.

However, I am pleased to announce that following a concerted effort to increase awareness of the Tote and the Village Trust within the village - at the end of this month our tote subscriber numbers will have increased to 240 members. We are so grateful to all existing members and offer a special thanks to all in the village who have just joined – or re-joined this year. We can continue to offer financial support to village organisations in the same way we have done for 25 years.

I have been asked in the past – where does the money go - I can tell you that apart from the monthly prizes all monies go to the village. Any member can have a copy of our financial report on request. We have already paid out £500 in grants this year.

Currently total cash funds at our bank are in excess of £3,000 . This figure is down a little compared to previous years but the Trustees see little point in having a larger bank balance - our mantra is to support the village and not necessarily to have a large amount of funds just sitting in a bank.

The Tote subscriptions are collected by a very willing group of unpaid volunteers who call every month to collect your subscription. We also accept payments via bacs direct to our bank. This has proved very popular in recent times and to date almost 30% of our subs are paid this way. Which ever way you choose to pay we can accommodate you.

11. Report from Maureen Johnson, Stanton Charity Café

Our café continues to open in the Church Room every Thursday morning from 10 until 12.

Although our main aim is to welcome visitors to meet and enjoy the company of others in a comfortable environment with lovely home-made refreshments, we are very pleased to be able to donate substantial amounts to various local charities. I have brought along a list of our donations for you to see (below).

We have a wonderful group of volunteers who not only serve the drinks and home-made cakes & savouries, but donate them free, not even taking their expenses.

Most of the other items are also donated. In fact, the only expense that we have is the rental to the church for the use of the church room. At the moment, though, we are grateful to one of our generous visitors who is paying the rent for the year.

We hope that we will be able to carry on with our café, as we feel that the benefits are appreciated.

Please come and join us.

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
May 25	Bardwell fire family support	£434.70
Jun 25	Trimengal Neuralgia Support Group	£305.80
Jul 25	Dogs Trust	£265.74
Aug/Sep 25	East Anglian Childrens Hospice	£600.10
Oct/Nov 25	The Bury Drop In	£808.00
Dec 25/Jan 26	Salvation Army	£691.39
Feb 26	WISH Charity	£320.50
Mar 26	SARS	£312.50
TOTAL		£15,331.41

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

We have been pleased to welcome some new faces to our group and sad to say goodbye to Angela Smith who was a long-time member at Stanton.

When I began to write this and looked at our programme for the past year, I was reminded of what an interesting and varied programme it was. We started with Brenda's talk on the Silk Roads. There were practical activity evenings, then talks on dyeing and spinning, Canal Art, a local author and most recently Peter Palmer talking about Capel Lofft, a misunderstood local character. Normal Howel brought along her lovely dog and explained about the use of medical detection dogs. We had our open evening with Elizabet Talbot, who kept us enthralled with insights into the auctioneering world.

There was an evening visit to a private garden in Kenninghall, where we were welcomed with cake! There was more food and cake in July when we had our summer supper meeting in a member's garden, where the sun shone for us. December saw more food, in the shape of our Christmas lunch at the Dun Cow in Bardwell.

We had two meetings where we entertained ourselves, first with our own collectables and then a games evening. These meetings, as well as the summer supper, provide an opportunity to talk amongst ourselves and catch up on the news and they are always among the most popular events of the year. The café visits serve the same purpose, as well as providing retail therapy. Sometimes there are just a few of us, sometimes quite a group, but it's always enjoyable. In June, we took the café to Ashmore, to celebrate June Miller's birthday with her and a few of the residents.

In January a group of us went to The Apex for the Simon and Garfunkel Story which took us back to our young days. The follow up will be a trip to the Pantomime in November at the Theatre Royal.

Last April, Brenda and I attended the SWFWI AGM at Thurston College, where we were entertained by several speakers including the lovely Adam Frost.

Over the year, we have been involved with village activities, including baking for the VE Day celebration and singing along to the folk group. We had a presence at the Village Show and baked for a cake stall at the tractor run. As part of the Bystanders can be Lifesavers initiative, we hosted a CPR and defibrillator training session lead by SARS at the Church Rooms in October. Viv presented our wreath at the Remembrance Day service at the Memorial. In November there was a session making Christmas tree decorations, in preparation for our very successful Christmas Tree Festival in December, for which Maureen and Stephie were the driving forces.

When it's all written down, one can see what a busy WI we are and how we have been entertained and educated over the year, as well as taking part in village activities. Let us hope 2026 is as successful.

13. Report from Angie Burrows, 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 2026 there were 69 recipients of £40 vouchers. The Trust aims to leave around £500 in the account.

The Trust has more funds in the account than last year and once again, we are anticipating there will be more applicants in 2026. We will be arranging for vouchers of £50 this year which will be distributed at the end of November.

14. Report from Pip Bedford (Stanton Folk)

Stanton Folk continues to meet twice a month in the Church Room - we now have 16 active players, 12 of whom enjoyed our annual Christmas Lunch at Stanton Cock using up our donations. We have lost 3 players over the year through moving house and ill health but recently gained 2 replacements so continue to thrive. However, age is catching up with us! 3 musicians are already in their eighties and 4 more will join them next year, only 4 are under 60. Younger fitter players would be most welcome!

During this last year we have played for a private party on Shepherd's Grove

Park, our 11th year at Wyken for their annual Wildlife Fund event, VE Day in Stanton, Oxlip House, a care home for elderly people on Moreton Hall, supported a craft day at Pakenham Watermill and played our usual Christmas Carols in Stanton Church.

The VE Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations on 5th May, organised by Stanton Parish Council, was a really different kind of gig for us, completely out of our comfort zone, music, dancing, games and singing, for which the WI got together a “choir”, so helpful as we don’t do singing! Nigel, our local landlord, organised a bar and great food to which the WI added lovely cakes. Christine Major did her usual sterling job on the tea urn! Charlie and Barry from the Parish Council did as they were told - perfect! We couldn’t count the number present - we gave up at 120 - a very successful event.

15. Report from Sharon Hughes (Shepherds Grove Park)

Shepherds Grove Park Residents Association was created in 1983 and has continued in some form ever since to support residents on the park with presenting issues. We organise activities and events to enable over 50s to maintain a social life preventing isolation with a network of friends to support them over their advancing years. No one is alone unless they want to be.

We realised over time that village residents could potentially benefit from our outings, coffee mornings and holidays if they wished. So in 2022 we opened those activities to over 50s who live in Stanton.

Communication.

We improved communication using notice boards, post boxes, the news sheet and Facebook Group. The main notice board has been replaced and used to publish minutes of committee meetings so that people could discover what we were doing on their behalf. We place posters in the village. We hope that this has led to you knowing what is going on.

Community Room Use

Activities at Shepherds Grove or locally are Bingo, Ladies afternoon, Men’s Afternoon, Art Group, Rummicubs and Darts. Coffee mornings are making a real difference to our Income as they are well supported. Coffee mornings continue to take place on Tuesday and Friday mornings 10 -12. September we held a coffee morning over two days and raised £600 for McMillan Charity In November we held a Christmas Craft morning that was enjoyed by many.

Activities on the Park field.

We held a BBQ in May funded by the residents Association. We also held a park Summer Faye with fish and chips in August. With Gemma and Jo as entertainers. Both of these events were well attended by residents who enjoyed the entertainment. I also formally retired and provided a birthday BBQ and entertainment for everyone.

Petangue continues to be a firm favourite for many people with impromptu picnics and coffees or fish and chips and some thing a little stronger to share with friends.

We organized Christmas Dinner, and Sally Army Christmas Carols. Tea, Coffee, Christmas Cake and Mince Pies with free Bacon Rolls at coffee morning. Santa toured the park giving some visiting Grandchildren a ride, with some refreshments afterwards. With the usual Christmas fare of mince pies, sausage rolls, cake, mulled wine, tea and coffee. We ended the year with New Years Eve party with a night of games, raffle, with what can only be described as a banquet.

Holidays:

We enjoyed holidays in Torquay and Weymouth in 2025. We are going to Llandudno and Scarborough in 2026 all using Daish Coach Holidays.

Outings

We moved the monthly quiz to the Dunn Cow pub with lunch if required.

The current practice of block booking into trips provided by coach companies worked to enable outings to continue. Regardless of the difficulties we went to Sheringham and Wells, Clacton on Sea Great Yarmouth, Hunstanton, Dunwich and afternoon teas at Bressingham

We use local entertainers, businesses and services where possible, and encourage Stanton residents to join us. We endeavour to remove the invisible divide between the village and the park; to encourage friendships and remove isolation where we can for those in their senior years.

16. Report from Rev Paul Mellor (Byways)**Introduction**

This report outlines the development and impact of the Byways project in Stanton over the past year. The initiative has focused on assessing community needs, improving a local facility, and piloting activities aimed at reducing isolation, strengthening community connections, and exploring the long-term viability of a sustainable community space.

Project Initiation and Site Preparation

In June last year, approval was granted by the Methodist Church's New Places for New People initiative to begin pilot activity in Stanton. The purpose was twofold:

- To assess local community needs
- To evaluate the potential for developing a viable community hub

Initial efforts focused on preparing the site to a safe and usable standard. This included:

- Volunteer-led work parties to clear and restore the outdoor garden space
- Internal redecoration to bring the building up to a baseline operational condition

These improvements enabled the building to safely host community events. Particular thanks are extended to Paul Field and Aubrey for their practical support during this phase

Community Engagement and Early Events

The first major community event was a Light Party held at Halloween, which welcomed approximately 100 attendees. This strong turnout demonstrated both interest in local activities and a lack of accessible community provision within the village.

Importantly, this event highlighted a gap in provision for young people, which has since become a key area of focus.

Youth Engagement Development

In response to identified need, the project launched a trial youth initiative ("Pizza & Youth Club"), currently running through to June. This pilot aims to:

- Provide a safe and structured social space for young people
- Build relationships and trust within this age group
- Assess ongoing demand for youth provision in Stanton

Evaluation of this programme will inform decisions about future youth work.

Warm Spaces Initiative (Winter Provision)

With support and sponsorship from West Suffolk Council, the project delivered a weekly “Wednesday Warmer” programme during the colder months. These sessions provided:

- A free, warm, and welcoming space
- A soup lunch
- Opportunities for social interaction and support

Additional activities were integrated into these sessions, including:

- Communal jigsaw puzzle activities
- Informal talks from West Suffolk outreach workers
- Seasonal events such as Christmas karaoke

This initiative addressed issues of social isolation, cost-of-living pressures, and community wellbeing, particularly during winter. Attendance and engagement indicate that this provision met a clear local need, and there are plans to repeat it next winter

Ongoing Community Engagement (Spring–Summer)

To maintain and build on relationships established during winter, the project is transitioning to Wednesday afternoon tea gatherings over the summer period. These will:

- Continue regular social contact
- Provide a lower-cost, informal engagement opportunity
- Sustain community cohesion outside of the winter months

Additionally, monthly Soup Church gatherings will continue through May and June as part of the project’s regular rhythm of activity.

Staffing Developments

In February, the project was strengthened by the appointment of Sarah Hawes, who is contributing:

- 70% of her time working with RAF Honington
- 30% within the Stanton community

This role is helping to expand outreach capacity, strengthen partnerships, and support both civilian and military-connected communities in the area.

Our hope is to find funding partners who can work with us in providing another full time position running the Stanton Byways facility.

Sustainability and Future Planning

All current activities are being delivered on a time-limited pilot basis. This reflects an understanding that long-term sustainability will require:

- Capital investment in upgrading the building
- Refurbishment of key facilities, particularly the kitchen and hall
- Development of a financially viable operational model

As a result, the project anticipates a temporary closure period in the future to allow for refurbishment works necessary to support long-term use.

Key Outcomes and Impact

Over the past year, the Byways project has:

- Activated an underused community space
- Engaged a wide cross-section of the local population
- Identified unmet needs, particularly in youth provision
- Delivered targeted support during winter through warm space initiatives
- Established partnerships with local authorities and community stakeholders
- Begun to build a sustainable model for ongoing community provision

Conclusion

The Byways project has made significant progress in a short period, moving from initial site preparation to delivering a diverse programme of community activities. Evidence gathered through these pilots is informing the next phase of development, with a focus on sustainability, facility improvement, and continued responsiveness to local needs.

The project remains committed to working collaboratively with the council and other partners to ensure long-term benefit for the Stanton community.

- 17. Formal for future Annual Parish Meetings** – the Chairman asked if any changes should be made to the format for future meetings. It was felt that most residents didn't know about the meeting and it was difficult to understand what the purpose of the meeting was. The following were suggested:

- Publish details on social media including local Facebook groups
- Consider how the meeting is described, including that it is **not** a Parish Council meeting, that all residents are welcome and that it is an opportunity to 'have your say'.
- Consider holding the meeting at a different time such as a Saturday morning¹.

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

A resident raised concerns about abandoned rubbish bins in the cul de sac at Grundle Close which were being frequented by rats. They had not been collected by the bin lorries as they were thought to contain contaminated waste. This had been an ongoing problem over a number of years, and the resident had contacted West Suffolk Council and D Cllr Thorndyke but had seen no action. D Cllr Thorndyke could not recall the report but asked that the resident send information, including photos to the Parish Clerk who would determine who this should be reported to.

Another resident was having difficulty identifying where to find out certain information regarding a number of issues, such as the planned resurfacing of the A143, the timing of the work by Bloors on the main entrance to their development along with when the Reserved Matters Application for Phase 2 would be submitted, the proposed relief road mentioned by C Cllr Spicer in her report.

The Parish Council were arranging a meeting with Bloors to discuss potential road names for the housing development and a resident asked if members of the public could attend. This would be discussed with the Parish Council Chairman and invitations issued as appropriate.

- 19. Meeting concluded at 21:10 pm**

¹ The Local Government Act 1972 specifies that the parish meeting should be held annually between 1 March and 1 June each year and it cannot commence before 6pm.

20. Date of next meeting – the next Annual Parish Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 22 April 2027.

Signed by:

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT