

# MINUTES OF STANFORD DINGLEY ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

## HELD ON

**Tuesday 25th April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Club Room, Stanford Dingley**

**Present:** Cllr. Edward Hanrahan (Vice Chairman);  
Cllr. Ash Bucknell;  
Cllr. Stuart Logan;  
Cllr. Charlotte Plank;  
Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk);  
District Cllr. Graham Pask;  
Nine Parishioners.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

**1. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr. Fullerton.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the Assembly held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

The minutes of assembly on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Celebrating Stanford Dingley's Heritage (Sue Ellis Secretary of West Berkshire Heritage Forum).**

Stanford Dingley started as Stanford, meaning stoney ford and possibly has its origins in Roman times. Local finds suggest that there could be an unfound Roman villa nearby. The Manor was held by Lord Gilbert of Englefield on behalf of King Edward; the mill was a very valuable asset. The Manor which was originally moated was home to the Dingley family.

The village was clustered around the junction of roads. The Bull, the church and a number of farms are a small distance from the centre of the village on higher ground.

The parish is home to a number of nationally listed buildings showing many styles of architecture. The Pheonix plaque on a number of the buildings was evidence that there was insurance in case of fire. Many of the buildings use decorative tiles on roof gables and at first floor level.

St. Deny's, the church is one of the oldest churches in Berkshire and has three bells in a wooden tower.

The K9 listed telephone box outside The Bull is home to a defibrillator and a book library. Local listing was introduced in West Berkshire in 2012 and allows local items, of significance to the community, to be given a level of protection. Possible candidates for local listing in Stanford Dingley include:

- The Water pump on Jennets Hill which is largely complete with its original handle, water tank and cap.
- The old smithy opposite The Bull (now Rose Cottage).
- The Club Room.

A group of buildings can be considered together for local listing such as The Mill, Mill House and Mill Cottage. Local listing is about what the community values.

The criteria used for Local Listing is broad. The process to attain local listing is independent of the West Berkshire Heritage Forum, but the Forum provides a panel to look at each proposed item, to listen to arguments in support/against listing and then, if recommended for listing, submit them to WBC for further consideration.

Local listing is a planning consideration, but it only affects the appearance of an item.

The parish could consider a blue plaque scheme, to identify buildings of particular interest or people who have contributed to the parish, as is being used in Thatcham and Newbury. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century barn at Jewells Farm may be a candidate for a blue plaque. Thatcham is one of the oldest villages in the country, but sadly most of its old buildings were lost in the 1950s when there was no proper protection in place. Stanford Dingley is worthy of preserving!

It was questioned how nationally listed buildings can be modified to meet the modern eco requirements; it was noted that national listing doesn't always act reasonably!

Stanford Dingley has a large conservation area which should be accompanied by a Conservation Area Appraisal, the production of which is a significant piece of work.

Cllr. Hanrahan thanked Sue for her very informative talk.

#### 4. **Parish Council Chairman's Village Update (Cllr. Hanrahan).**

Life in Stanford Dingley during 2022 returned to something approaching normal with a number of events and gatherings allowing the community to come together and meet old and new friends. From cabbage walking stick competitions to emergency road clearance of fallen trees the community worked together. The Jubilee lunch was one such opportunity and thanks were extended to the Events Team for organising this event.

During 2022, the PC initiated a village survey to try and help identify what the priorities of residents. The top three priorities were:

1. Planning – a regime to protect the parish.
2. Traffic and speeding in particular.
3. Flooding.

The demographic of the parish is changing; newcomers have arrived, a few people have left and some long-standing village elders have been lost. As a result, there are more families and children, so a community for a broader mix of generations needs to be considered. However, the contribution of long-standing former residents should not be forgotten and the blue plaque process may be a way of commemorating their involvement in the community. The parish is also a place of business with a number of farms and two pubs. Whilst these may cause strife to some residents, they are an important part of village life. The village is lucky to have two pubs which remain as hubs for the community. The community has the benefit of a vibrant and busy church with a strong congregation.

Most planning applications have been to improve properties and make them more suitable for day-to-day living. The key is to communicate with neighbours and listen to any concerns they have. A small amendment to initial plans may help prevent an application being refused.

SDPC, and in particular Stuart Logan has made real progress with Thames Water in terms of engagement on flooding, although there is still much to be done.

The community has the benefit of a great voluntary spirit both formal and informal. SDPC has seen Chris Dent stand down and Charlotte Plank will be standing down at the election in May. Both were thanked for their contribution to the council and the village as a whole. District Cllr. Graham Pask, who is also standing down in May having served the parish patiently for many years, was thanked for his service. The Events Committee, the Dredge Gang, the Friends of St. Deny's, the Pang Valley Flood Forum, Neighbourhood Watch, NewLink deliverers, the Poppy Appeal and all people who clear trees and those who support neighbours, are all volunteers who help cement the bonds of community in the village. Thanks were extended to all who volunteer in whatever form to help support the community and make it a better place.

#### 5. **District Councillors Report (District Cllr. Graham Pask).**

District Cllr. Pask, reflecting on having represented Stanford Dingley as a District Councillor for 20 years, commented that WBC doesn't always get everything wrong!

COVID triggered a lot of changes including more working from home, which has reduced the opportunities for "water cooler/coffee machine" moments. WBC employees are now in

the office for 2 to 3 days a week. Overall WBC is doing quite a good job; if you have something you're not happy with, keep reporting it.

He commented that he was proud of what WBC had achieved in terms of the COVID hub, which became the Ukraine hub and is now the cost-of-living hub.

He closed his reported by saying that it had been his privilege to work with Stanford Dingley Parish Council over the years and under three different Chairmen.

**6. Stanford Dingley Events Team (Hilary Dent).**

The Events Team exists to organise social events for Stanford Dingley and generally includes Tutts Clump. The vibrant, enthusiastic committee give freely of their time but the majority work full time and are unable to commit to every meeting and the planning of every event. If any other parishioners are interested in being involved, please let a team member know.

The focus of the Events team in 2022 was the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Considerable time and effort went into the planning and organisation of all the events over the weekend which included:

- The Village photograph on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, when 132 people and several dogs turned up at The Bull.
- A Jubilee Beacon at The Bull Inn with food and dancing to a live band.
- An Afternoon at the Races held at the Old Boot Inn in the tepee on the Saturday.
- A Big Jubilee Lunch street party which took place along the road outside the Old Boot Inn, where everyone enjoyed their lunch to the sound of the Pangboure Silver Band.

All of the events were a huge success, but thanks must go to all of those involved in the enormous amount of planning and organisation.

A Village Picnic was planned for mid September but had to be cancelled as it was immediately after the death of her.

The Christmas Party, which sold out, was held at The Bull Inn; fabulous food and dancing to City Nights Disco was enjoyed by all.

The first event of 2023 was the children's Easter Egg Hunt on Good Friday held in the amazing fairy garden of Peter Trentham. The sun shone on the 16 children who attended. Plans for the coming year are focused on the Big Coronation Lunch to be held in the Manor Farm Barns (courtesy of Peter and Anne McCurdy) on Sunday 7th May. We hope everyone will attend and celebrate this momentous occasion.

Other events planned for the coming year are:

May 29th Village Walk – 'Beating the Bounds' with a light hearted quiz along the way.

June 17<sup>th</sup> Village Picnic on the village field.

The village marquee will be put up if poor weather is forecast so the event can go ahead.

Other events being discussed include:

- Casino Night at The Bull Inn
- Race Night at The Boot Inn
- Gin Tasting
- Big Charity Fund raising event (2024)

The Stanford Dingley Events Team current account balance as of the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 stood at £857.60.

**7. Questions and Comments from the floor.**

**7.1 Communication from the Parish Council.**

There was criticism of the Parish Council over the level of communication. Some parishioners were unaware of the meeting. It was noted that the Events Team has a team to distribute paper flyers to all of the dwellings in the parish which could be used. Paper copy

is required for those who don't use modern technology. It was suggested that more regular updates should be submitted for inclusion in NewsLink.

SDPC will aim to improve communication and will discuss it further at the annual meeting of the Council.

Questions were asked about the constitution of "the ladies" and "the gents" Whatsapp groups which are used to socially to share information amongst the community

**7.2 Tree Planting.**

Questions were asked about community tree planting. The planting of some trees on the Village field is being planned, but a commitment to water newly planted trees in dry weather needs to be obtained.

**7.3 Black Barn.**

The John Simmonds Trust, which helps children who come from challenging situations, is attempting to raise £160,000 for the rethatching of the barn. It was questioned whether a donation could be made to the Trust.

**7.4 Defibrillator.**

There was a request for a defibrillator training course.

**7.5 Neighbourhood Watch.**

Steps are being taken to set up a Stanford Dingley Neighbourhood Watch area.

**7.6 Lambing.**

The fields surrounding the village are currently full of sheep and lambs; all dog owners were requested to keep dogs on leads.

**8. A big thank you was extended to all those who had joined the meeting.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9pm.