

**Minutes of the Meeting of Stanford Dingley Parish Council held on
Tuesday 28th January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Club Room, Stanford Dingley.**

Present: Cllr. E. Hanrahan (Chairman); Cllr. A. Bucknell; Cllr. S. Logan; Cllr. T. Rudd; District Cllr. C. Read; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).

Five members of the public.

1 Public Session.

1.1 Children's Play Equipment.

Parishioners commented that the "log pile" in the Village Field looked rotten and that there wasn't very much for children to do in the Village. The "log pile" has an annual RoSPA inspection in the spring each year.

It was suggested that if the facilities for children are to be improved, there needs to be sufficiently motivated parents to lead the project and raise funds.

The landlord of The Bull has talked about having a children's play area, which SDPC is generally supportive of.

2 Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Fullerton.

3 Declaration of Interests.

3.1 Updates to the Register of Interests.

There were no updates to the register of interests.

3.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items.

There were no other declarations of interest in any agenda items.

4 Approval of minutes of the SDPC held on Tuesday 26th November 2024.

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2024 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

5 Planning.

5.1 Planning Decisions made by WBC:

No decisions have been made by WBC on applications in Stanford Dingley since the last SDPC meeting.

5.1.1 Update on any other Planning Matters.

It was noted that a decision is still awaited on application 24/00701/FUL for Ivinghoe.

5.1.2 Peripheral Matters around Planning Applications.

Following the refusal of planning application 23/01276/FUL at The Bull for retrospective permission for the tented dining space, trailer bar and refrigerated storage trailer, the landlord has been trying to work with WBC to resolve the situation. WBC is continuing to insist upon an exhaustive noise survey on the refrigerated storage trailer, is claiming that the trailer bar is parked on, and will damage tree roots and that the tented dining space must be removed because it is a permanent structure having been there for longer than 28 days. It would appear that a local business is being challenged with bureaucracy rather than given support.

It was suggested that SDPC approves a motion requesting WBC to support the pubs in the village rather than tying them with red tape.

District Cllr. Read commented that he is hoping to get Olivia Bailey MP to visit the Bucklebury Ward and particularly the pubs.

Proposals for development on the site of a redundant barn have not been received favourably by WBC, although the local community would welcome them. The land owner will be put in contact with District Cllr. Read.

6 District Councillor's Report.

District Cllr. Read reported that consultations are currently running on: pharmacy provision (West Berkshire has the least number of pharmacies per head of population across the UK), admission arrangements for West Berkshire schools, carers breaks and there are three days left for the consultation on the main modifications to the Local Plan.

In green matters, WBC is expanding its kerbside plastic recycling collection, making additional recycling bags available and offering invoicing of green bins online. Following a government white paper in December, it is proposed that the country be split into unitary authorities of approximately 500,000 population and mayoral authorities of 1,500,000 population. West Berkshire, already being a unitary authority is understood to be at the back of the queue for consideration in a new unitary authority, but at the front of the queue for a mayoral authority. Mayoral authorities will have powers for: planning, business and research, climate, transport and housing. Whilst there are several options being considered for the unitary authority covering West Berkshire, it is likely that it will join with Reading and Wokingham. The setting up of each authority is expected to take between two and three years.

7 Flooding.

The Pang Valley Flood Forum (PVFF) are working with Thames Water (TW) to help resolve the sewer flooding issues in Stanford Dingley. Infiltration testing is scheduled, but can only take place when the water levels go down. New telemetry is in place to help identify the location of the ingress into the sewer.

The new gulley has helped the flooding situation and as a result, the road has not flooded since the gulley was dug.

Following Cllr. Logan's conversations with the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), he has completed the form for Olivia Bailey MP to raise the issue with the parliamentary ombudsman.

The Environment Agency (EA) pays for the CCW and OFWAT, however neither has any teeth to get things done.

8 The Club Room.

A replacement induction hob has been purchased and installed. An extra three years of warranty on the hob has also been purchased.

It was noted that there are no pans suitable for an induction hob.

Cllr. Hanrahan will talk to Cllr. Fullerton about the cleaning rota. There has been no change to booking management.

9 Finances for FY25/26.

9.1 Budget for FY25/26.

The Clerk circulated a budget prior to the meeting with an expenditure of £6,800.96 from income, including £1,000 on maintenance of the Club Room.

It was agreed to ring fence reserves of £3,000 for the Club Room, taking the total for the Club Room to £4,000. This budget was approved by SDPC.

9.2 Precept for FY25/26.

It was agreed to raise a precept of £6,000, this being the same as that raised in FY24/25.

10 Projects.

10.1 Generator.

Cllr. Hanrahan is the only person, so far to have received training. Instructions for use of the generator still need to be printed and laminated.

The generator was run during a recent power outage; however a flue needs to be fitted so that fumes from the generator don't fill the Club Room.

There was a discussion about what situation needs to occur for the generator to be started.

It was noted that if there is no power, the majority of parishioners don't have any mobile signal either and therefore in the case of no power, parishioners should go to the Club Room.

11 Reports.

11.1 Dredge Gang.

There was a litter pick before Christmas.

There has been an issue with debris from hedge cutting filling the drains. If notice could be given to the dredge gang of when hedges are due to be cut, the group can go out behind the hedge cutter and sweep up.

11.2 Events Committee.

EH
HF

EH
TR

Sixty people enjoyed the Christmas Party on the 7th December which became a candle-lit Christmas Dinner due to the lack of power. The event was a great tribute to those who pulled together to make it happen and in particular the organiser and the team at the Bull. A well-attended, post-Christmas walk took place on the 29th December. There was a discussion about how to encourage more children and families to participate in community events. More walks and treasure hunts were both suggested.

12 Clerk's report.

12.1 Grit bin and grit.

It was agreed that the Clerk would get two new grit bins delivered to Meadowside and Cllr. Rudd will then install them in position. Twenty bags of grit will also be ordered from a local supplier.

12.2 Annual Assembly.

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Assembly will take place on Tuesday 13th May. It was agreed that there wouldn't be an outside speaker this year.

12.3 Finances.

12.3.1 Financial Statement dated 28/1/25.

The Clerk reported a balance of £4,587.79 in the Treasurer's account once all cheques and lodgements have cleared. This was reconciled to the last bank statements dated the 31st December 2024 when the Treasurers account had a balance of £6,145.49 and the Business Instant account a balance of £6,622.24.

The West Berkshire Council's Members bid for works on the Village Field totalled £2,775.98 and this has now been received.

12.3.2 Authorisation of Payments.

The following payments have been made since the last SDPC meeting:

Cutting the Village Field	£230.00
Post Office (SSE 2/9/24 – 30/11/24)	£246.83
Salary & PAYE (1/7/2024 – 31/12/2024)	£728.00
CB Heslop & Company Ltd (Payroll)	£18.00
Thomas Landscape Services Ltd (bin emptying)	£85.79
Greenham Trust Ltd (WB CAB)	£100.00
Pang Valley Flood Forum	£100.00
Bradfield Parish Magazine (NewsLink)	£50.00
West Berkshire District Council (Libraries)	£100.00

12.3.3 To review expenditure against budget to the 28/1/25.

The Clerk warned councillors that the cost of electricity for the Club Room to the end of December is £628.33 and that the expected end of year figure is likely to exceed the budget.

The Clerk is exploring a new contract with a lower standing charge than is currently charged under the SSE variable rate.

The Clerk will verify the ring fenced funds still available from the grant for community resilience.

12.4 Correspondence.

12.4.1 Bradfield College – closure of Ashampstead Road.

Ashampstead Road will be closed to all HGVs and partially closed to for smaller vehicles from the 19th February until the 21st November 2025.

13 Round Table Comments.

13.1 Mill Footbridge.

The footbridge by the mill is very slippery and the boards are beginning to rot. This will be reported to WBC.

Meeting Closure.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Date of next SDPC meetings:

Ordinary meeting: Tuesday 25th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Club Room.

Signed:

Date: