

## **Chairman's Annual Report 2020 for the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 18th May 2020**

I write this report in unprecedented times, with the appearance of Covid-19 and the ensuing lockdown. In this regard, I would like to thank those of you who organised the **Stansfield Covid-19 support scheme**, both by delivering leaflets and setting up the Facebook page and also by offering help to collect shopping and medication for those who have been unable to go out. Particular thanks are due to Mary Evans, Fay Gridley, Jane Sawyer and Sally Bills. A thank you too to Louise Mackrill's Cake Caravan, whose cakes have been delivered by Mary Evans to those who are unable to leave their homes due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Also many thanks to all of you who have helped their neighbours, gone out to do essential work and the many of you who have stayed at home, thereby helping to reduce the spread of the virus. At least those of us who live here are fortunate enough to be surrounded by beautiful countryside.

The Stansfield Parish Council currently comprises myself, Sarah Hopkins (chairman), Robbie Dennis and Ed Cardozo (joint vice chairmen), Fay Gridley, Fran Brown, Julie Ghirardani and John Underdown.

The Parish Council is elected to represent the members of the community, and as such we welcome the views and concerns of Stansfield residents. This should be done by emailing the Parish clerk on [stansfieldparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stansfieldparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk) She will pass on your concerns which can be brought up at the next Parish Council meeting, unless it is something that can be resolved outside a meeting. However, it should be noted that whilst you can speak informally to myself or other councillors, a collective decision by the Parish Council can only be taken at a formal Parish Council meeting.

Usually there are 6 Parish Council meetings each year, and all residents are welcome to attend and speak during the open forum at the start of each meeting. Notice of meetings are placed on the village notice board, giving at least 3 days notice in advance of each meeting, or you can look on the village website and click on the Parish Council link. I apologise that we were unable to hold the March meeting due to unavailability and Covid-19 restrictions. However, we have now been given the ability to hold meetings online. The next meeting on May 18th at 7pm will be the first to be held online and I would ask that you communicate any concerns or comments to the Parish Clerk. This report is being publicised online prior to the meeting so that this can occur. If you would like to attend, please contact the parish clerk.

This year we had two very well attended meetings, which I will now comment on.

### **1. Proposed development at Pippin Post - DC/19/1329/FUL - 12.8.19**

Following two Parish Council meetings last year when we were presented with plans to build five houses in the field adjacent to Pippin Post and a public consultation for the proposed development, we received the above planning application. This proposed the building of five low level, environmentally friendly dwellings. Two out of the five were to be at an affordable rent and were to be prioritised for local residents. We held a planning meeting to review this application. Several members of the public spoke during the open forum with views being aired both in support and against the proposed development. A decision was reached by the council to support the application. However, this was subject to the following:

*The Parish Council recognises that the application in its current form does not comply with planning policy and insufficient information was provided about how it can be classed as an exception site, however the Parish Council supports the principle of affordable housing, **subject to it meeting local need**. The Parish Council would like an S106 agreement put in place to ensure local connection criteria are used to rent out the affordable rent properties. The Parish Council supports the idea of a community space. The Parish Council would like additional visitors' parking spaces to be provided to ensure that visitors do not park in Pippin Post Close. There must be good access to the site via Pippin Post Close with sufficient space for emergency access. The drainage conditions set out in the drainage report should be complied with.*

## **2. Amendment to DC/19/1329/FUL and discussion of the SHELAA - 12.11.19**

**DC/19/1329/FUL** - given that in its current format, the application did not comply with planning policy as the affordable housing did not meet the requirement, we were asked if we would amend our condition that the housing should be for local need. The council declined to amend its previous decision, staying with the premise that the affordable housing should be prioritised for local people.

### **SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability)**

This is a call for sites from West Suffolk for potential inclusion in the next Local Plan. As a result of this, six potential sites for a nominal five houses each were identified for Stansfield in the West Suffolk's call for sites. The Parish Council was asked to comment on the suitability, availability and achievability of each site. At this stage, we were not being asked for any further comments as this will come at the next stage. Inclusion at this stage is by no means a guarantee that sites will make it into the next stage, particularly given that Stansfield is currently defined as an infill village. Nor does it imply the granting of any planning permission. The Parish Council will be asked to submit a response to the Issues and Options Consultation in October 2020.

The Council works hard to support the village with 2019/20 being another busy year.

The Council's other projects during the year were:

- we monitor the cutting of the **roadside verges** by the County council, to ensure visibility and therefore safety. Once again, H.E. Dennis and Son have kept many of the roadsides neat and tidy and we thank them for this.
- **the telephone box** in the High Street is operating well as a book exchange and information point (thanks again to Sandra Lakey for keeping it clean and for sorting out the books)
- We check that all the **dog bins** are emptied on a timely basis (thanks to Julie for this)
- Having raised the funds for an **Automatic External Defibrillator**, this was installed on an external wall at the Village Hall and is fully operational; in the winter we held a training session run by Community Heartbeat Trust (our provider) on how to use it, and this was attended by around 20 people; we have also set up an emergency phone number 01284 277209, which will allow you to call for help if you are a lone rescuer. *I would like to reiterate that you do **not** need training to use the AED as it has visual and audio instructions and that in the first instance you should call **999**, who will tell you how to proceed.*

The Council continued to support village organisations with a donation to the Village Hall towards running costs.

As to our roads, potholes are reported and our County Councilor, Mary Evans has managed to get them repaired with the new machine, which has greatly improved them. We check the sand bins on a regular basis and particularly after a hard freeze, though this was not as relevant this year, given the mild winter we have just experienced.

I would like to thank our local councilor, District Councillor and County Councilor Mary Evans for her continued support. Mary Evans was elected as our District Councilor last year and does an admirable job of fulfilling both roles at District and County levels.

I would like to thank Richard Evans for doing a great job in producing our village newsletter, The Parish Pump, and for keeping us both well informed and entertained. I am sure that I am not the only one who looks forward to the monthly arrival of the magazine, either on my doorstep - thanks to his splendid team of deliverers- or online as it is this month.

Finally, I would like to thank my co-councillors and Joanne Kirk, our Parish Clerk, for helping to make the Parish Council an important regulatory body and an asset to the community of Stansfield.

Sarah Hopkins  
Chairman  
May 2020