

OLD STRATFORD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Report

Here we are once again on the eve of council elections under a new government. What is there for the residents of Old Stratford and Passenham to look forward to?

The first thing is that we have elections on 5th May 2011 and are going to have a new District Councillor. Mary Clarke is the current leader of South Northamptonshire District Council and will be standing as the Conservative Candidate. We await confirmation of any other candidates. A new Parish Council will be elected at the same time.

After the elections are over, we hope to get our village plan under way. This will, when adopted, be a crucial document for the future of our village and will be the 'blueprint' for any future development. That is why we will be seeking everybody's contributions for inclusion.

I would like to remind you all that we have our annual open meeting on Tuesday 19th April 2011 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, 2 Deanshanger Road. It would be nice to see you there.

I would also like to offer my thanks for all the help and support that I received over the year from my fellow councillors and especially Derek our overworked Parish Clerk.

Richard S Whittaker Chairman

APRIL 2011

Results of the SNC Housing Need Survey

The published results show that there is a particular need in Old Stratford for affordable homes for single people and couples. This includes younger households needing to set up home for the first time and older people looking for accommodation that is easier to manage. There is also some need for 2 and 3 bedroom family housing. The actual need demonstrated through the survey is for 17 affordable rented homes and 4 shared ownership (or similar) homes. This can be broken down as follows:

17 units for rent

6 x 1/2 bed bungalow

9 x 1/2 bed flat

1 x 2 bed house

1 x 3 bed house

4 units for shared ownership

2 x 2 bed house

2 x 3 bed house.

It is expected that a significant proportion of the identified need will be met on the proposed new development off Deanshanger Road. This development already has planning approval for 21 market and 14 affordable homes (although the details have again be refused). The information gathered through the survey will help to ensure we get the right mix of affordable housing for local people.

There were a number of concerns raised in response to the survey. In particular, these concerns were to do with a possible increase in traffic as well as pressure on local facilities, such as the local school. Although an affordable housing development would only be for households who already have a connection to the village and mostly already live in Old Stratford; these concerns will be taken into account if any development goes ahead. Other people commented that it is important to help local people stay in the village.

A copy of the report from the Housing Need Survey is published on the council's website. www.southnorthants.gov.uk was compiled by Laura Welch, South Northamptonshire Council housing Officer; 01327 322372 laura.welch@southnorthants.gov.uk.

News from Old Stratford Primary School March 2011

This year has already been a very successful one for our school, both in terms of academic success and recognition for the improvements we continue to make to our school curriculum.

In school performance tables published in the new year, our school was 4th out of over 300 primary schools in Northamptonshire in terms of the standards attained by our 11 year old pupils in their end of Key Stage 2 SATs tests. We were 12th in the county when the progress that our pupils make between the ages of 7 and 11 was measured and compared with other local schools. As I am sure you would agree, we are very proud of these results and the quality of education we are providing for the children who live in Old Stratford.

We were also delighted to be awarded the much coveted International Schools Award in recognition of the emphasis we place on global citizenship and international issues in our new integrated curriculum. In a school and local community which has few families from different minority ethnic groups, it is even more important that we provide all our pupils with an education which enables them to embrace the diversity of British, European and World culture and respect the faiths and beliefs of others. This is an integral part of our school's aims and ethos.

In February we welcomed a team of Ofsted Inspectors to our school and their report has now been published. We were absolutely delighted that many aspects of the school, including equal opportunities, the extent to which pupils feel safe, develop workplace skills and adopt healthy lifestyles were all graded as outstanding. We were very pleased that the staff's commitment to every single pupil at the school was recognised by the inspectors. Their care, guidance and support of pupils was very deservedly recognised as being outstanding. We were obviously delighted that pupil achievement and attainment was also graded as outstanding,

reflecting the very high standards achieved throughout the school, particularly in the last 3 years.

Most importantly, however, the Ofsted inspectors recognised as integral to the school's success the "extremely caring ethos" of the school and the very positive relationships which exist between all members of our "harmonious school community". As part of the Ofsted Inspection, all parents were invited to make comments about the school. These two examples, out of many received by the inspectors, were included in the report:

'Old Stratford is a lovely school, one which our children enjoy coming to every day,' and 'We are very fortunate to have such a great school in our village.'

A full copy of the Ofsted Report can be accessed via our school website: www.oldstratfordprimary.uk.org

As you may know, our school struggles to provide places for every child living in Old Stratford, including brothers and sisters of pupils already at the school. Parents who hope to have a school place for their 4 year olds in September 2011 are currently waiting to see if they have been successful in their applications. The school was originally built to accommodate 140 pupils, and we now have 225 on roll, putting considerable pressure on all aspects of our site, particularly playground and playing field space.

On Friday 4th March we were delighted to welcome our local MP Andrea Leadsom to the school. Her visit had in some part been prompted by the concerns raised by local residents regarding the school's on-going capacity to accommodate pupils who live in the village. As a school, we have a responsibility to provide the best possible educational environment for all children of primary school age living in Old Stratford. Staff do an amazing job within the confines of a poorly designed and constructed building which is now more than 40 years old and in need of very expensive remedial

work. Despite these difficulties, however, we are looking forward to having our own kitchen on site, where school meals will be cooked for our pupils instead of relying on our current delivered-in-hot-service. We hope that this will be completed during the summer holidays.

We are now looking forwards to a very exciting end of term with the school's Theatre Club Production of A Midsummer Nights Dream during the week beginning Monday 4th April and our Street Party to celebrate the Royal Wedding, which is taking place on Thursday 28th April.

Gill Tween
Headteacher Telephone 01908 267700
Email: head@oldstratford.northants-ecl.gov.uk

TADD (Towcester Area Door to Door)

Volunteer Drivers Wanted

We are urgently looking for volunteer drivers prepared to give a few hours per week to help the local community by driving people to medical appointments.

Drivers are reimbursed 40p per mile to medical appointments.

Andy Thorpe

TADD: TEL. 01327 810300

Office Hours 9.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday

Old Stratford Pre-school

For anyone new to Old Stratford, the Pre-School is a community pre-school run by a parental committee. The pre-school meets each day at Old Stratford Community Hall on Dean-shanger Road. It accepts children aged 2 years until school entry.

The pre-school offers sessions 5 days a week and these can be full or half days.

Sessions are Breakfast club 8.00 till 8.30am,
Morning session 8.30 till 11.30am,
Lunch Club 11.30 till 12.00pm,
Afternoon session 12.00 – 3.00pm,
Full day 8.30 till 3.00pm.

Each child must enrol for a minimum of two sessions per week although further sessions, lunch clubs or breakfast clubs can be arranged as availability allows.

Please visit our website for further details at:
www.oldstratfordpreschoolplaygroup.co.uk
or phone Dawn 01908 260 664

So please support our pre-school – we are a charity and all funds raised all go towards improving the preschool.

Our open day this year will be held on Saturday 2nd July 2011 at the Community Centre Old Stratford from 9am - 11am.

Highways issues

A reminder that **highway defects** such as pot holes, blocked drains and other highway defects can be reported to Street Doctor 0845 601 1113 or via the Northants County Council website (www.northamptonshire.gov.uk).

However, the best course of action is to contact the Parish Clerk Derek Everett on 01908 569053 or via the website www.oldstratford.org.uk who will do it for you and can keep tabs on repairs or works required on behalf of the Parish Council. This also applies to any **street lighting** defects.

Dog Fouling Continues to be an issue especially on pavements and verges. The football field and areas around play areas are already designated 'poop-a-scoop' areas attracting heavier fixed penalty fines. As a dog owner myself I would like to think that everyone picks up after their dog (even on public rights of way across fields) but I'm not that naive. In Oxfield Park can we at least keep it off the mown edges to the paths because children play there.

The Parish Council have installed new dog bins at considerable cost. Litter bins can also be used (normally if double wrapped) so there should be no excuse.

Litter The thorny issue of litter around the shop and the route to Kingsbrook School and other areas continues to attract adverse comments, even where we have installed new litter bins.

With a national campaign to 'Keep Britain Tidy' A kindly word or thought could help, or show by example and make Old Stratford a more attractive place to live.

Old Stratford Neighbourhood Watch

Northants risk of being a victim of crime remains at a 30 year low. December recorded the lowest number of crimes in 10 years including

The lowest volume of robbery, burglary, car crimes, criminal damage and violence. Obviously sub zero temperatures in December helped.

In the 12 months up to September 2010 there were 6,265 less victims of crime compared with the previous 12 months.

With lovely weather on the way. (we hope!) there are a few things we should remember to keep our homes safe.

1. If you open windows make sure you close them if you go out.
 2. Keep front and back doors locked at all times;
 3. Keep house and car keys in a safe place but out of sight from Outside;
 4. Keep sheds and garages locked at all times;
 5. Never leave spare keys in a shed or garage.
- After gardening always put your tools away.

If you see anything suspicious please phone the Police.

Police 03000 111 222

Doorstep Crime Suspicious callers 0345 2307 702

Please phone me if you see or suspect something that you are not sure of reporting directly to the Police.

Jacki Ibell
Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator 01908 562677

Old Stratford Karate

"A philosophical art of self defence"

We are your local karate club and we train twice weekly at the Community Hall.

There are classes for adults on Monday (7.30 to 9pm) and Wednesday (8 to 10 pm) evenings and Cadet (child) classes each Wednesday starting at 6 and 7 pm depending on age. You can check us out at the club website www.oskarate.co.uk or just come along and watch to see if it's for you.

Part of the British Karate Association under the guidance of their Technical Consultant, Tony Christian, we teach a style known as Go-Ju-Ryu. We're not about winning cups and competitions.

For the cadets our lessons are all about fitness and self esteem, and a bit of fun. As they move into the older class there's a bit more self defence.

For the adults we do work some fitness into the lessons, but not too much. For them, it's about learning the skills and attitude to defend against attack, but also about gaining the self confidence to be able to choose to face up to, or walk away from trouble, however it presents itself.

If you want to know more, check out the website or call our Senior Instructor, Bill, on 07740 621527.

Tales from the Country side

This winter has been very severe and this has been a very difficult time for many song birds, locally, there seems to be a distinct lack of song thrushes and a decline in blackbird numbers. In past years you could nearly always find a song thrush or black bird nest in your garden or garden shed. Over recent years however this has not been the case. I am not quite sure if it has been the more severe weather over recent years or the influx of magpies. These are a scavenger bird and will take young song birds to feed their own young and the magpie population has increased greatly over the past few years, especially around villages. Also these song birds have to remain secretive and elusive due to the increase in the sparrow hawk population, many times I have found the remains of small song birds or collared doves in the garden, typically pulled apart as sparrow hawks do when consuming their food.

The snowy weather showed that our gardens are visited by many animals, their tracks are a giveaway. Regular visits from foxes can be seen by the tracks they have left behind. In our garden, we have at least one and occasionally two can be seen wondering around the back garden. I have heard them calling to each other, especially when male dog foxes are calling females during the mating season, November—December. At the end of April we may be lucky to see young cubs in our gardens playing in the spring sun.

In an earlier tale from the Countryman I wrote that I had seen a red kite flying around the village. I have seen other kites since my first sighting, including a pair flying over the meadow fields down by the river, great to see them. I am very sorry to say that on my recent evening countryside walks I have not seen the majestic barn owl that used to hunt in the black horse field at the top of the village, great pity. I am not sure if this is due to horses stirring the grass which may have driven small rodents out of the field, which is the barn owls food or that area has become too noisy and populated.

This would drive the owl off to a much more secluded area. I have recently seen a tawny owl along the thick hedge on the canal (Buckingham Arm). This is a bird not very often seen as they fly like a stealth fighter plane and make little or no noise during flight. You may be lucky enough to see this bird when it is sitting in ivy trees at roost, not easy to spot, great camouflage.

Spring is on its way and we should soon be hearing the sound of the Cuckoo, although over recent years I have only heard it once or twice, these are in decline, great shame as this is a smart bird. It mates, lays its eggs and leaves another bird to bring up its young. More about this bird in the next issue of the magazine.

The Country Man.

WHALLEY'S APPRENTICING CHARITY
(Stony Stratford, Cosgrove & Old Stratford)

Applicants of 16 years and over, can claim up to a maximum of £100 towards Books and Equipment required for their chosen profession.

For more information or application form:
please contact

Derek Everett the Parish Clerk on 01908 569053

News from the Community Hall

Over the last year there have been a few changes at the Community Hall to try and make the building and surrounding area more secure for those people who use the hall and residents who live along Deanshanger Road and Dickens Drive. A security company now carry out random patrols with guard dogs and are on call to attend any attempted break-ins at night, as well as additional CCTV cameras installed at the rear of the property to allow for closer recording of any suspicious activity.

The Fireworks Display in November which incorporated the Hall's 10th anniversary was a wonderful event with over a thousand adults and children turning up to watch the display and help our groups with much-needed fundraising. Come and join us again this year on Saturday 5th November. Our senior citizen's Christmas Dinner in December was another great event. A group of young children from our primary school came and sang carols for our guests, who were then treated to a four-course meal prepared and served by the Hall committee and other volunteers from the village. Thank you to everyone who helped make this a special day. The date for your diary this year is Saturday 3rd December. Any resident over the age of 65 is eligible to attend so if you would like to join us this year and have never been before, please contact Lesley Peach at the hall (01908 307461) and we will add your name and address to our list.

The Hall is now buzzing with a wide variety of classes and groups so why not see if there is something to suit you. Leaflets are available in the foyer with all the details or visit our 'Village Hall' page on the Parish Council website at www.oldstratford.org.uk. We are running your community hall so please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions that you feel could make this a better community hall.

Co-chair
Sheila Shepherd

Co-chair
Claire Clayton

**Did you know your Community Hall offered
all these clubs and activities?**

Pre-school sessions - Every week day

Mums & Toddlers group - Tuesday

Tumble Tots - Thursday and Friday

Short Mat Bowls - Tuesday and Thursday

Badminton - Friday

Karate - Monday and Wednesday

Pilates - Monday and Tuesday

Football - Various

Slimming World & Weight Watchers - Wednesday and Thursday

Zumba - Tuesday and Thursday

**For more information on timings, please pick up a leaflet
in the foyer or ring Lesley Peach on 01908 307461.**

**Don't forget, you can also hire the hall for children's parties,
weddings, christenings and other special occasions.
(special rates for Old Stratford residents!)**

OLD STRATFORD RAINFALL
(Compiled by Syd Sharpe - resident)

The total rainfall for 2010 was 23.75 inches,

THE SUMMER of 2010 was close to drought conditions with:

April having a total of 0.3 of an inch of rain

May “ “ 2.25 inches of rain

June “ “ 0.7 of an inch of rain

August coming to the rescue with 5.5 inches of rain

Snow

Started on 3rd January 2010 with 3 inches and continued with small amounts of 1 inch or under until the 24th, with further falls in February on 10th and 21st..

There were further falls of snow in November starting on the 22nd and continuing into most of December with the highest fall being 8 inches.

10 inches of snow = 1 inch of rain

Undisturbed snow is 90—95% trapped air

These figures depend on:

- 1) Crystal structure of snow
- 2) Wind speed and temperature at time of snow fall
- 3) Other factors

Note The BBC say that 2010 was the coldest for 100 years but those who remember 1947 may doubt this.

OLD STRATFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman:

Richard Whittaker Rectory Cottage, Passenham 567895

Vice Chairman:

Tony Pateman 32 Mounthill Avenue 567907

Council:

Ian Baxter 6 Wharf Close 260694

Bruce Clayton 54 Chapmans Drive 562778

Donald MacDonald 61 Deanshanger Road 562035

David Meadowcroft 75 Deanshanger Road 07793516875

Karen Morris 89 Deanshanger Road 07532161875

George Rogers 6 Manorfields Road 262919

Pauline Stevenson 73 Oxfield Park Drive 263905

Susan Tomlinson 30 Dickens Drive 565840

Colin Ward 21 London Road 565138

Clerk:

Derek Everett 10 Deanshanger Road 569053
(de@mk196aw.fsnet.co.uk)

District Councillor:

Lucinda Mobaraki 21 Hall Close 307048

County Councillor:

Allen Walker 17 Porters Close, Deanshanger 260302

Old Stratford Council website : www.oldstratford.org.uk

**OLD STRATFORD ANNUAL OPEN MEETING
to be held in the Memorial Hall
TUESDAY 19th APRIL 2011 AT 7.30PM**

**This is your chance to quiz Councillors on
matters affecting Old Stratford**

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 Minutes of the 2010 AOM (displayed nb)**
- 3 Any Outstanding Matters (includes Development Issues & Allotments update)**
- 4 Petitions or Questions from Electors
(required in writing to the clerk by 12 noon 18 April)**
- 5 Adoption of Accounts**
- 6 Report from Northamptonshire Police**
- 7. Report from NCC Highways**
- 8 Report from District Councillor**
- 9 Report from County Councillor**
- 10 Any Other Business**