

STANFORD DINGLEY PARISH PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

This Parish Plan is the culmination of work undertaken over a 3 year period by a number of dedicated volunteers who generously gave the project much of their time. However, more importantly, it is the product of extensive consultation with parishioners through numerous public meetings and the production and distribution of a questionnaire. It is essential that every resident of Stanford Dingley feels that they had a part to play in the production of the Plan since it is a record of their collective aspirations and concerns for their parish.

Based on the level of response to the questionnaire, we parishioners can be proud that there is clearly a strong collective sense of involvement in the welfare of our community since we achieved a better than 90% response rate to the adult questionnaire and more than 95% response rate to the youth version, both figures substantially above national averages. The working party would, therefore, like to thank all the parishioners of Stanford Dingley who contributed to the consultation process by completing the questionnaires and attending some or all of the meetings.

Our thanks also to everyone who contributed to the joint Bradfield and Stanford Dingley Working Party from September 2005 until November 2007, particularly Dave Swan and David Crawford from Bradfield. We must particularly thank the staff of Bradfield College who kindly printed, free of charge, the joint questionnaire and those residents of Stanford Dingley who delivered and painstakingly collected those questionnaires.

The Plan was supported throughout by the Stanford Dingley Parish Council and Community Action West Berkshire, whose Parish Plan Development Officer Sarah Ward was a consistent source of excellent advice.

A fuller list of supporters, sources, volunteers and providers of funds is attached as Appendix 1.

Needless to say this is only the start of a long journey. We now have a Parish Plan which has and will continue to guide us in developing a set of "Actions" to meet the aspirations of people in the parish and the opportunities and challenges that we shall face in the years to come. It will also help to guide us in the development of appropriate contingency plans to deal with possible emergencies in our area.

These "Actions" will need ongoing (and more) participation and commitment from the people in the parish. This will require anticipation of and response to changes affecting our community over time and close cooperation with other organisations in West Berkshire.

Michael Vaughan-Fowler

Chairman,
Stanford Dingley Parish Plan
Working Party



VILLAGE VIEW FROM FOOTPATH 18



VILLAGE GREEN



RIVER PANG



STANFORD DINGLEY HISTORY

Stanford Dingley, located in the North Wessex Downs "Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty" is known variously as "the Jewel in the Crown of West Berkshire" or "the most immoral village in Berkshire". It has an enduring appeal, as evidenced by the fact that it has had a church for over a thousand years and a pub for over five hundred years. Lying equidistant between Reading and Newbury, the earliest map, dated1838 shows most of the village centred on the River Pang.

Agriculture has been the main source of employment in Stanford Dingley throughout its long history, indeed probably until the last half century. The census of 1851 recorded 6 farmers and 24 labourers, but one industry in particular which would have depended on the Pang was the tannery, which thrived in the middle of the nineteenth century. That same census recorded a Master Tanner, 5 tanner labourers and 5 journeymen tanners employed in Stanford Dingley. The oak bark used in the process was probably crushed in the mill, which was first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as "...rendering 12 shillings. It is and always was worth £4".



ST. DENYS' CHURCH - c. 1750



ST. DENYS' CHURCH TODAY

Perhaps the most important building in the village is the church. Our church is one of the few churches in England to bear the name of St. Denys, the patron saint of France. It is believed to be one of the oldest foundations in Berkshire, a church having been built on its present site before the Norman Conquest (1066). Some of this original stonework still stands, though the main part of the present building dates from around 1200. Hailing from the same period is the door and the ancient wall paintings and frescoes all of which would have been used or appreciated by Margaret Dyneley (a possible origin for Dingley) who was buried in 1444 in the church and whose inscription in part states "Beneath this stone lies buried Margaret Dyneley....but now food for worms.... Therefore Jesus do thou remember her".

No village can be complete without a pub and Stanford Dingley has two: The Bull Inn, a listed 15th century coaching inn with 19th and 20th century additions, and The Old Boot Inn, which, though younger, is reputedly haunted by a man who hanged himself in its orchard.

Many of the houses in the village are listed, dating back over 500 years in some cases. In the evolving life of any dynamic community, some houses are of more recent build and many dwellings - including several of the older ones - have undergone change or expansion. To keep the village identifiable to those 19th century farmers while making it relevant to 21st century living is the challenge the parishioners must accept and this Parish Plan will hopefully provide some assistance with that challenge.

Much of the historical and archive material used in this brief history was gleaned from the excellent millennium book "Stanford Dingley - Stories of a Country Village" by Mary Platt and Maureen Park to whom we owe a large debt of gratitude. Our thanks go also to Dorcas Ward and Dick Greenaway whose writings on local history were further sources of information.



THE BULL



THE OLD BOOT INN



ONE OF THE OLDEST HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE



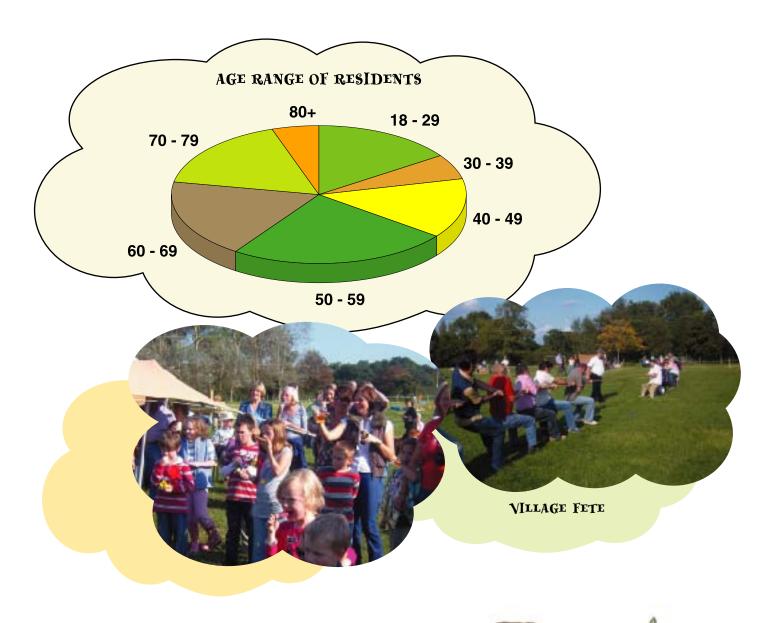
ONE OF THE YOUNGEST HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE



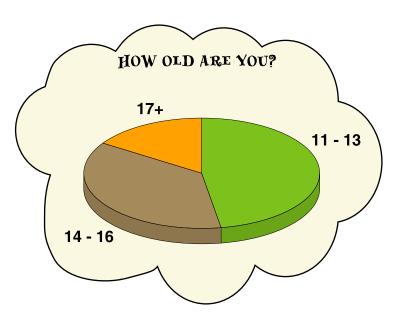
STANFORD DINGLEY TODAY

In 2007 when the questionnaire was completed, Stanford Dingley had 73 households and an electoral roll of 139. Census data is available from 1801 when the population was 133 and this increased to 178 in 1851 when Victorian farming reached a peak. At this time there were 40 children in the village. By 1901 the population had reduced to 130 as a result of a decline in agricultural and rural employment.

The demographic profile of the parish today presents an almost equal gender split of respondents. However the age of the respondents suggests an older population as 77% of respondents are aged 40 or over with 40% being 60 or over.

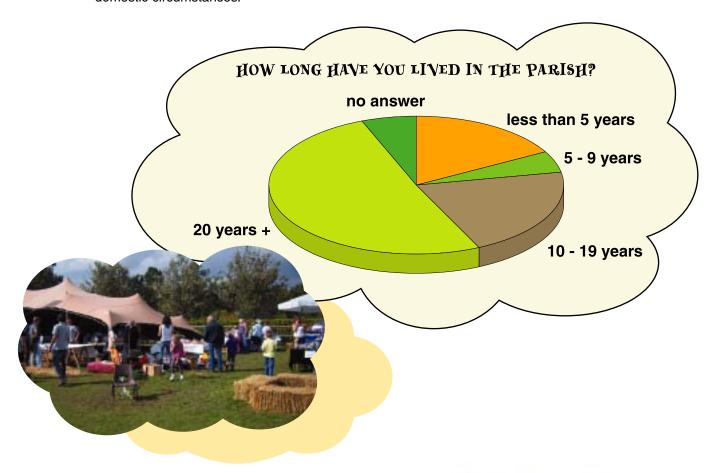


There are few children in the parish but 19 between the ages of 11 and 18 responded to the questionnaire. The age breakdown is illustrated in the chart opposite. There are another 10 children under the age of 11 years that live in the parish.



In terms of property, the majority of respondents (76%) own their own home and only 24% of properties have less than three bedrooms. 50% of respondents have a broadband link for internet access.

Over 50% of respondents have lived in the parish for 20 years or more. For those leaving the parish in the last ten years the main reason has been as a result of a change in domestic circumstances.





TRAFFIC, ROADS AND TRANSPORT

TRAFFIC

Whilst Stanford Dingley does not have a serious traffic problem, primarily because its roads don't appear to be used as rat runs, there was considerable concern (71%) about speeding traffic. The current level of signage was considered by (66%) to be sufficient "to control and direct traffic through the village" but a range of options for traffic calming, including speed restriction signs, received strong support. In a question which asked for opinions of the most serious traffic problems, heavy goods vehicles came just after speed as a major concern.

KEY ISSUE

Slow down traffic through the village, and consider restricting HGV's.

ACTION PLAN

Approach WBC about introducing speed limits in Stanford Dingley.

Approach WBC about restrictions for HGVs.



ROADS

The poor condition of the roads, their lack of maintenance (74%) and the lack of hedge trimming (52%) were high on people's concerns.

The need for more/improved passing places on the approach to the village on the narrower roads was also well supported (58%).

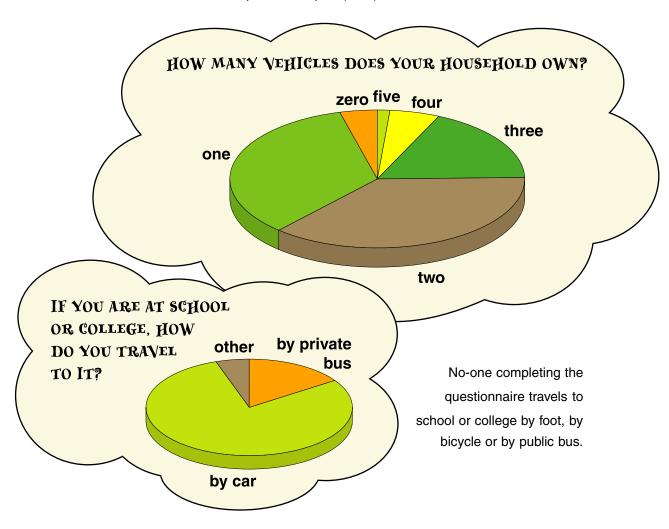


ACTION PLAN

Approach WBC about implementing a more regular maintenance programme for all aspects of our roads, and the improvement of passing places.

TRANSPORT

There is a high usage of private cars (82%) as the main method of transport in the village. Hence there is little demand for public transport (<8%).



There could be more support for a bus service, but there would need to be a much improved service. Cycling is not a favoured means of transport, even though it would be more environmentally friendly. Hills of various gradients on all approaches to the village could be a contributing factor.

KEY ISSUE

Improved service would engender improved usage

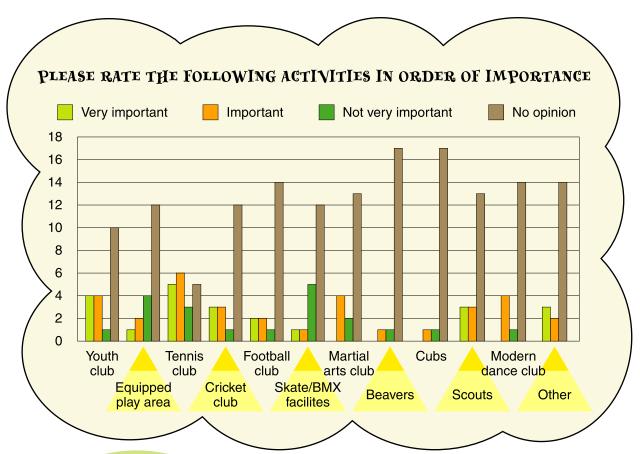
ACTION PLAN

Approach WBC concerning an improved bus service.





YOUTH ACTIVITIES



KEY ISSUE

From the results of the survey over 85% of those questioned said there was little for the youth to do in Stanford Dingley. There is no suitable park/playground or football pitch in the village. More than 50% of the youth said they would like a village hall as a base for their activities, which points to the fact that the existing hall doesn't meet their expectations. The conclusion of the survey is there is no focal point in the village for its youth.

ACTION PLAN

It is felt that the building of a more useable village hall and an associated playground, where various activities can take place, will help act as a focal point for the young people of Stanford Dingley.



FACILITIES

ST. DENYS' CHURCH AND THE VILLAGE HALL

A very strong majority - 98% think St. Denys' Church worth preserving and almost as many - 92% support its use for more community activities, but there are considerable drawbacks to using it in this way - see opposite.

Unfortunately, the existing village hall does not appear to meet parishioners' expectations for relevant village activities either.



53% don't think the village hall is big enough for the village and 86% favour either a facelift or the construction of a new building on a larger site. Only 12% want no change to the village hall.





KEY ISSUE

St. Denys' Church is very important to the residents of Stanford Dingley, whether church-goers or not, so its continued survival must be ensured. Though not owned by the village, Stanford Dingley residents have a crucial part to play in helping its owners - the Diocese of Oxford - give it a viable future. Following dialogue between Stanford Dingley Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council for St. Denys' Church, the Diocese began consultation into possible changes to the church's interior to accommodate more secular activities. This consultation included the possible installation of lavatories, a kitchen, make it more handicapped accessible and removing the pews to replace them with chairs. The Diocese's conclusion and decision was that the size and shape of the building and the historical sensitivity of the interior made it unsuitable to adaptation.

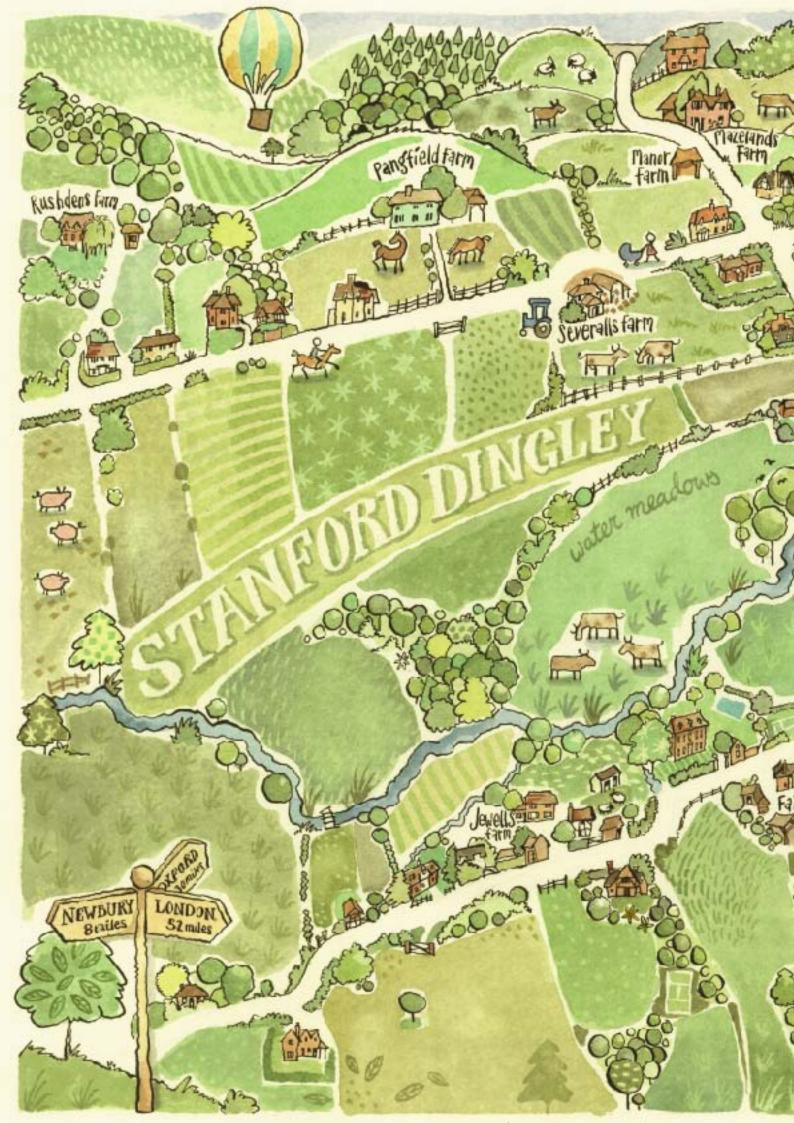
A village hall, therefore, will still be needed to house most of the secular community activities which might be contemplated.

Many of these were listed in the questionnaire:

- 47 residents would have liked gym facilities
- 36 residents would support exercise classes
- 97 residents would support adult education, local history and gardening classes.

ACTION PLAN

Given that the existing village hall is considered too small, another building has to be contemplated on another site. Since the village already owns a sufficiently big parcel of land and certainly couldn't afford to buy another, a key action point for the Parish Plan must be to build a replacement village hall on the village field.







RECYCLING

Stanford Dingley currently has a kerbside recycling collection fortnightly. This is a free service and the items collected are: newspapers and magazines; food and drink cans and glass bottles and jars.

The questionnaire asked residents what additional recycling they would like to see in the village and answers showed a desire to increase the level of kerbside recycling.

From the materials suggested, the collection of plastic bottles was most popular with 63% of respondents and all plastic collection was next with 62% of respondents. The next most popular was cardboard with 55% of respondents requesting that this should also be collected.

A new service has been introduced during summer 2008 by WBC which includes the collection of plastic bottles. Recycling is collected fortnightly and each household is entitled to two green boxes and one sack. One green box is for paper and cardboard and the other for glass bottles and jars. The sack is for plastic bottles and cans. Textiles will continue to be collected if put out for collection in a carrier bag.

Later in the summer, green waste collections were also introduced and each household was given a green bin for garden waste.



RECYCLING IS COLLECTED FORTNIGHTLY



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

There are two parts to this issue.

Part one is about the performance of different public bodies in handling planning matters.

A sizeable minority of residents (48%) thought planning matters got insufficient publicity. Generally Stanford Dingley Parish Council got a better score than WBC on dealing with planning applications: - 53% of respondents said Stanford Dingley "assessed" them extremely well or adequately, while 32% said WBC did so.

Monitoring or enforcement of planning matters were viewed as poor by 42% of respondents and only 22% thought handling was extremely good or adequate.



VILLAGE HOUSING



KEY ISSUE

Typically, unless it involves a near neighbour, residents aren't concerned about planning matters. When it involves a site of 'public interest' (e.g. a pub) then interest rises and the Parish Council needs to be mindful of ensuring such applications get sufficient publicity throughout the village.

ACTION PLAN

The Parish Council needs to be very diligent in working with WBC in its monitoring of the implementation of consents and its handling of enforcement matters, since the questionnaire shows widespread disillusionment with how applications are policed once consent has been obtained. The Parish Council needs to ensure that our Ward District Councillors are aware of, and involved in, enforcement debates.

Part two is about development.

The largest number - with a 40% response - of those who expressed a single opinion, when looking at what type of development might be acceptable opted for no further development.

However 31% supported local facilities or shops and 35% supported small infill sites within the village or redevelopment/intensification of existing housing sites, so it could be argued that more people support some change - albeit on a small scale - than want no change.

When asked what type of housing the village needs or should support the largest number - 44% said none, but affordable housing, housing for specific needs (like the elderly) and small family homes were supported 134 times, though the question allowed multiple answers.

A clear majority of respondents - 71% - supported 'balanced' enlargement or redevelopment of existing sites.

The balance of the questions was asking for opinions IF development was permitted, not whether it should be allowed. These questions were focussed on infrastructure support for redevelopment or for new affordable housing and a clear majority of respondents (63% - 71%) thought that the developer should bear responsibility for this.

KEY ISSUE

Clearly the Parish Council, when considering planning applications must bear in mind the clear preference for no or little change in Stanford Dingley and any such change should be in keeping with, or sympathetic to, the character of the village.

ACTION PLAN

Development of a Village Design Statement will identify key characteristics of design, materials and density for any potential developer or improver to consider when contemplating planning permission.





THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENT

The Stanford Dingley parish is one of outstanding natural beauty with conservation area status and thus attracts many walkers and visitors. The questionnaire showed that a large majority of residents felt more could be done in order to keep the parish clean and tidy. The Parish Council has replaced the rusted litter bin on the village green and an additional one will be installed when a suitable site has been identified. The PC has also recruited a caretaker for the village green who will mow the grass regularly and generally keep it tidy.



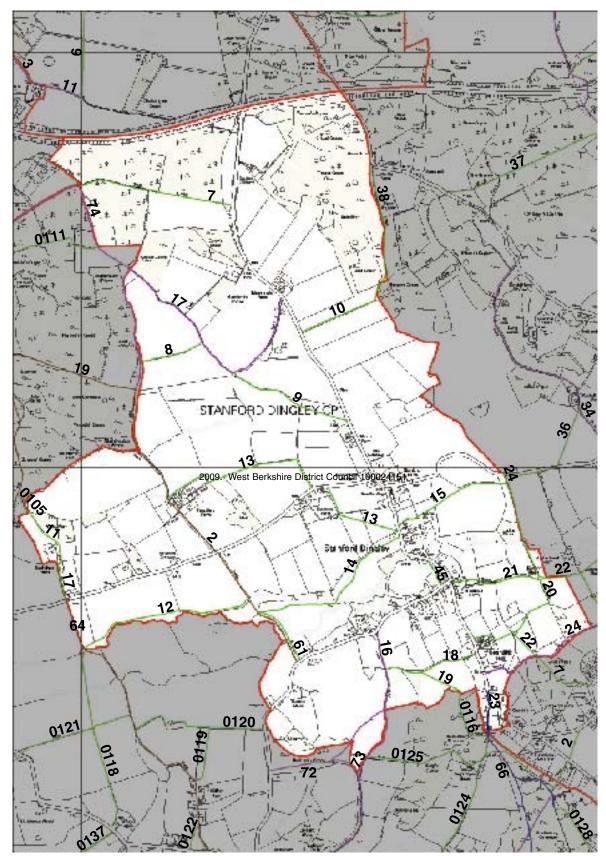
FOOTPATH 14

Approximately one third of respondents felt that recruiting volunteer litter wardens, providing dog litter bins and entering a best kept village competition would be good ideas.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

A large number (73%) of respondents use the footpaths, bridleways and byways for pleasure ranging from daily to occasionally. Of this total 30% use the paths for dog walking, 14% use the routes for cycling and 7% ride along the bridleways.

Many of the respondents have concerns about the antisocial use of 4 x 4 vehicles and scrambler bikes (72%), the restriction of access to previously accessible parts of the river and countryside (68%), use of barbed wire and stock fencing along bridleways and footpaths (66%), the misuse of footpaths by cycles and horses (55%) and 47% of respondents are concerned about the condition and maintenance of the footpaths, bridleways and the styles and gates thereon. The suitability of the latter two is also of concern.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.(c) Crown Copyright

KEY ISSUE

Keep the Parish clean and tidy.

Improve the general condition of public rights of way and maintain them.

ACTION PLAN

Establish a fencing policy with full involvement of landowners. Encourage maintenance of gates/styles by landowners. Include guidance on bridle gate design in Parish Plan (see Appendix 2). Encourage parishioners to voice their particular concerns direct to the landowner, via the footpaths and bridleway representative or to the WBC Senior RofW Officer.



Public footpaths: may be used by people on foot. There is no public right to push a bicycle or lead a horse, but a push chair may be used.

Public bridleways: may be used for riding, walking, leading horses or pedal cycling. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians and horse riders. There is no public right to use a horse-drawn vehicle.

Byways: open to all traffic - may be used by vehicular and all other type of traffic, but are used mainly for walking or riding horses or cycles. Vehicles should give way to other users, and comply with all driving regulations as for ordinary traffic. They must be taxed, insured, roadworthy and properly silenced.

Restricted Byways: these may be used for walking, cycling, horse-riding and carriagedriving. They cannot be used by mechanically-propelled vehicles.

CONSERVATION

The questionnaire asked residents about improvements that could be made to the local landscape. The village is centred on the River Pang which is a small chalk stream and is believed to have inspired Kenneth Grahame's Wind in the Willows.

The youth of the village were encouraged to conduct a wildlife survey of Stanford Dingley and its surroundings. The results are to be found in Appendix 3.

The Pang and its tributary the Ingle are integral features of the parish and 79% of respondents felt that the relevant landowners should be encouraged to protect and improve the general river habitat.

The 2002 Countryside Agency report "Our Countryside, Our Future" recommends working in partnership with local farmers and landowners particularly with regard to managing hedgerows and set-aside for wildlife. The Pang Valley Countryside Project was set up to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the Pang Valley and to help people appreciate and care for the countryside.

81% of respondents showed a considerable strength of opinion that the ancient water meadows, a special feature of the village, should be safeguarded. 60% felt that more trees should be planted and more bird/bat boxes erected.

Rushall Farm is a mixed organic farm situated just outside the parish. It is home to the John Simonds Trust, an educational charity that works primarily with schools, promoting an understanding of farming and the countryside.



Many parishioners raised the importance of Rushall Organic Farm and Rushall Manor Farm (the Black Barn site). 83% felt these farms contributed hugely to the area and were particularly supportive of lambing days, facilities for schools, social activities, facilities for walking/riding and support for the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, guided walks, facilities for scouts and overnight camping.

The questionnaire also showed that there was interest in generating electricity locally using environmentally friendly methods. 59% were in favour of this and the preferred choice of power generation for 80% of them was by small domestic solutions including solar panels and/or small scale wind turbines.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ELECTRICITY LOCALLY GENERATED USING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY METHODS? No answer No Yes



KEY ISSUE

There is a clear desire to maintain the natural environment of Stanford Dingley

ACTION PLAN

Ensure local landowners are aware of their responsibilities and are reminded regularly Supply instructions on how to make bird and bat boxes - initiate a local competition? Liaise with Pang Valley Countryside Project

> Set up our own conservation group with volunteers managing rights of way and wildlife areas

> > Organise working party days focusing on practical conservation

Encourage tree planting

Work with Environment Agency, WBC and landowners to ensure regular clearing of river to alleviate flooding (with additional information in the event of a flood contained in Appendix 4).



APPENDICES

- 1. Those who have made this Parish Plan possible
- 2. Recommended Bridlegate design
- 3. 2008 bird and mammal survey
- 4. Disaster recovery information sheet

APPENDIX 1 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Parish Plan Working Party, Andrew Gilroy-Smith, Brian White, Jilly Hawkesworth, Katrina Rostrup, Michael Vaughan-Fowler and Peter Hall, would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their assistance and support in the production of this Parish Plan:

Stanford Dingley Parish Council

Bradfield Parish Council and their Parish Plan working party, particularly David Crawford, Dave Swan and David Noakes, for their invaluable help with producing the questionnaire Bradfield College - for their help in printing the questionnaires

Archives - Mary Platt and Maureen Park (and their wonderful Millennium history of Stanford Dingley)

Community Action West Berkshire (CAWB)

Community Council for Berkshire (CCB)

DEFRA - for initial funding

North Wessex Downs AONB - grant for printing and artwork

Teresa Newson, Greenham Common Trust - graphic design

West Berkshire Council

The many local residents who delivered and collected questionnaires and helped us to achieve such an excellent response rate and those who contributed thoughts and ideas throughout the various consultations

The following members of additional Action Groups: Mark Hawkesworth (Village Design Statement), Bob Chessum (VDS), Fergus Madden (VDS), Peter McCurdy (VDS), Peter Trentham (VDS) and Peter Harvey (Neighbourhood Action Group)

The following people and organisations for the wonderful photographs, images and input used in this plan: Candida Kennedy (village map), Tony House (kingfisher and long-tailed tit photos from www.seeing.org.uk), Mike Taylor (roe deer and brown hare photos from www.seeing.org.uk), Sherie New (water vole photo from www.seeing.org.uk), Andy Fairbairn of BBOWT (red kite photo), Stuart Logan (heron photo), Andrew Gilroy-Smith, Ann Featherstone, Pea Brodhurst and Peter Trentham (VDS) and Catherine Hartz (Children's Bird and Mammal Survey)

APPENDIX 2 - BRIDLEGATES

WOOD BRIDLEGATE

All bridleway gates should be at least 1.525m (5ft) wide. Ideally they should be openable on horseback. Wherever possible the bridlegate should have at least 1m clearance from adjacent hedging or fence.

Latches recommended for closing bridlegates:

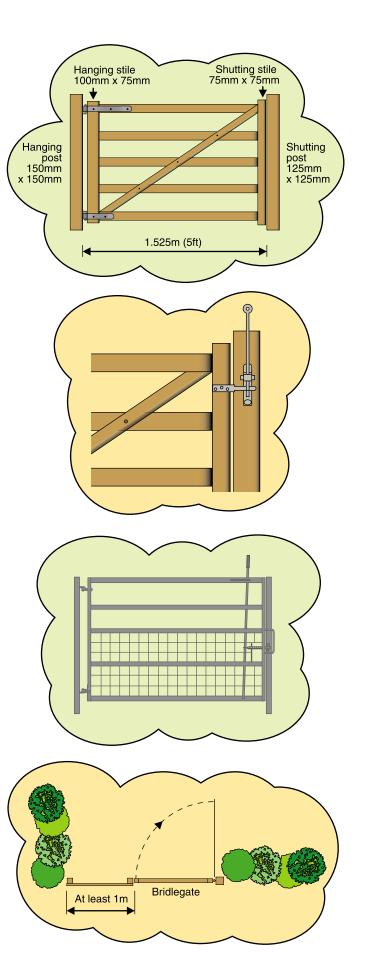


The standard latch has a extended handle for ease of opening on horseback and will re-fasten when the gate is closed.



These can be fitted to any wooden gate and come fitted as standard to most metal bridlegates.

Where bridlegates are situated near field corners it is recommended that there is at least 1m clearance from the adjacent hedge/fence line.



APPENDIX 3 - 2008 BIRD AND MAMMAL SURVEY UNDERTAKEN BY CHILDREN OF STANFORD DINGLEY

Stanford Dingley has a wealth of wildlife. The development of the Parish Plan has provided an ideal opportunity to encourage and engage the children of the village to take part in a survey of just two groups of wildlife - birds and mammals.

All children 13 and under were invited to take part in a bird and mammal survey. This took place from mid April to the end of the summer holidays. Literature on birds was kindly provided by the RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology. Each child taking part was given a number of leaflets and posters with information on recognising birds and their habitats. The aim of the survey was to encourage the children to recognise birds and mammals and appreciate their contribution to our village wildlife. This in turn will encourage children to understand how important it is to take responsibility for the local countryside, preserve the local habitat and value our village and surrounding countryside. The birds and mammals on this list may not contain all the regular birds, visiting birds and mammals in Stanford Dingley but contains the list of those identified by the children during the months of April through to the end of August.



BIRDS

Barn owl

Blackbird

Blue Tit

Bullfinch

Canada Goose

Carrion Crow

Chaffinch

Chiffchaff

Coal Tit

Collared dove

Coot

Crow

Cuckoo (heard)

Gold finch

Great Spotted woodpecker

Green Finch

Great tit

Green woodpecker

Heron

House Sparrow

Jackdaw

Jay

Kingfisher

Long tailed tit

Magpie

Mallard

House Martin

Moorhen

Partridge

Pheasant

Pied Wagtail

Pied fly catcher

Red Kite

Robin

Rook

Song thrush

Sparrow hawk

Starling

Swallow

Swan

Tree creeper

Turtle Dove

Wood pigeon

Wren



RED KITE



KINGFISHER



LONG TAILED TIT



HERON

APPENDIX 4 - SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE

SUBJECT	SOURCE	CONTACT
Preparing for an Emergency	HM Government	www.pfe.gov.uk
Flooding	Environment Agency	0845 988 1188 www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood
Emergency Planning	West Berkshire Council	01635 519105 emergencyplanning@westberks.gov,.uk
Gas	Transco	0800 111999
Electricity	EDF Energy	08007 838838
	Scottish & Southern Energy	08457 708090
Water/Sewerage	Thames Water	08459 200800
Crime	Thames Valley Police (non emergency)	0845 8505 505
	Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Local Authority	West Berkshire Council	01635 42400
Roads, litter, fly- tipping, refuse, recycling etc.	Streetcare	01635 519080 www@westberks.local.gov
Local G.P. Surgeries	Chapel Row Surgery The Avenue Bucklebury	0118 971 3252
	Borthwick and Partners The Surgery Cock Lane Southend Bradfield	0118 974 4147
Veterinary Surgeons	O'Gorman, Slater & Main 10 London Road Thatcham	01635 868382
	The Valley Veterinary Centre Tutts Clump	0118 974 4352 / 5040

STANFORD DINGLEY PARISH PLAN

SUPPORTED BY



















VIEW DOWN JENNETS HILL



THE RIVER PANG

