



Village Wayfinder Trail

In early 2025 the parish council was awarded funding for a wayfinder trail. The aim of the trail is to bring the history of our village to life by placing large stones from one of our local quarries in nineteen strategic locations around the village. Each stone will have an inlaid mosaic and a QR code. The mosaic will represent an aspect of the history of village life over hundreds of years, and the QR code will offer a link to the parish council website with a more detailed explanation of the siting of each stone, alongside some historical content relating to the surrounding area.

We are now pleased to announce that the wayfinder trail is now scheduled to "go-live" on 11th July 2026, to coincide with the village fete.

It has been a long process to obtain the required planning permission and to coordinate the various organisations, but we are almost there. The stones, from Hatford Quarry, are scheduled to be delivered and positioned in key locations around the village on Tuesday 26th May. This may take two or three days, but we hope to have the stones positioned, ready for our artist, Rob Turner, to begin installing the heraldic mosaics and QR codes early in June.

As a footnote, we have been in contact with writer, broadcaster, entertainer and former parishioner, Pam Ayres, and, diary permitting, she will open both the wayfinder trail and the village fete at 1.30pm on 11th July 2026.

The parish council will have a gazebo at the village fete, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible over the weekend.

Community First Responders

Do you have some time to spare, and would you like to make a difference in your local community, while perhaps picking up some new skills along the way?

As reported in the last newsletter, our community first responders, Jeanette Gill and Les Harding, have stepped down after many years providing a vital and, at times, quite literally live-saving service to our community. On behalf of the many people helped throughout the years, we would like to express our sincere thanks to both of them.

This does now leave us without any CFRs within the village and while ambulance services are not

impacted (CFRs augment rather than replace the ambulance service), evidence has shown that having local CFRs can significantly improve outcomes when urgent treatment is needed, particularly in rural areas such as ours.

If this is a gap you think you might be able to fill, or you would just like to know more about the role, our local scheme is run by South Central Ambulance Service, and details can be found here: <https://www.scas.nhs.uk/what-we-do/community-first-responders/>.

Community first responders (CFRs) are trained volunteers who respond to 999 medical emergencies in their local area. Dispatched by regional ambulance trusts, they often arrive on scene before an ambulance, providing crucial life-saving interventions in the vital first minutes of a medical emergency.

New parish council website and email addresses

In line with new recommendations and guidance, the parish council has recently moved over to a gov.uk domain for its website. At the same time, we have taken the opportunity to standardise the format of parish council email addresses.

The new website can be found at: <https://stanfordinthevale-pc.gov.uk>.

Contact details for the parish clerk and all councillors can be found on the website and in the section at the end of this newsletter.

Stanford in the Vale Skatepark

Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out our survey included with the last parish council letter on a new skatepark. We want to make sure that the new park caters for as many sections of our community as possible and we will be using your responses to help us plan what the park should look like.

We are now collating and analysing the responses and will be publishing the results in the next issue of our newsletter alongside an update on our planned next steps.

Community Woodland Vandalism

Many of you may have enjoyed a walk in our community woodland, which lies between the QEII Field (accessed via Cottage Road) and the household waste recycling centre.

The community woodland land is owned by Oxfordshire County Council but managed by the parish council and a small team of dedicated local volunteers – the Stanford Woodlanders – who look after the woodland.

For the last few years we have been working to an agreed habitat management and monitoring plan drawn up by county council ecologists, designed to progressively improve the woodland's biodiversity.

One of the things that the ecologists asked us to do was to enhance the existing hedgerow and create a broader wildlife corridor to the northeast of the woodland by closing off a path and diverting walkers along a nearby parallel path. It should be noted that the closed path is not a public footpath and was in an area where public access is 'permissive' only.

In January and February this year the Stanford Woodlanders planted over 250 trees (whips) with stakes to close off the path and create a wildlife corridor. The trees, stakes and tree guards were provided by a local charity. Signage explaining what was being done was erected. The signage etc was paid from parish council funds – your taxpayer money. As there is no vehicular access all the trees, tree guards, support canes, compost, tree feed, water and tools had to be laboriously transported by wheelbarrow from Cottage Road. Details of what was being done and why were included in the village newsletter sent to all households at the beginning of April. The trees were carefully watered by volunteers in the dry spells since planting.

Imagine our distress then when sometime around Sunday 10th May, vandals bashed down the signs, ripped up all the trees and threw all the trees, guards and stakes over fences and all over the woodland. The incident has been reported to the police (incident number: 43260233888) who are investigating. If anyone can help identify who has done this, please report it to the police or contact the parish clerk with details.

It is sad that when a charity and volunteers in the community come together to improve the environment for all, only to have their hard work destroyed in moments. We need to take care of our Community Woodland. We do not want it to be closed off to the public until trees are mature enough to be safe.

We will be looking in the coming months at what we can do to repair the damage done. If you would like to make a more positive contribution to our community and environment, perhaps by

volunteering to help us rebuild after the damage, the Stanford Woodlanders can be contacted via the parish clerk.

Bow Road drainage works

As many of you will know Bow Road was closed for several days last month in the vicinity of the culvert under the road though which Frogmore Brook flows. The closure was so that Thames Water could carry out a survey into the causes of flooding to nearby properties, one of the causes of which is suspected to be a blockage in the culvert.

Unfortunately, the road closure was only to investigate the cause of the blockage and not to solve the problem. We now must await the report and the subsequent action plan before any remedial works to address the flooding problems. The parish council are deeply frustrated by the time it is taking to sort out this important artery into and out of our village. We are urging the county council and Thames Water, who are the responsible bodies, to get this sorted out once and for all and as soon as possible.

Millennium Green

The Millennium Green is run by a trust of which the parish council is the sole corporate trustee. We were recently made aware by the school of evidence of drug consumption and dealing taking place on the green.

This is a difficult issue for us to address, given the green is a public open space, but we are in conversation with the school and our community policing team about prevention and deterrence, and the parish council are deploying some additional security cameras in the vicinity. Any footage of suspicious activities will be passed to Thames Valley Police for investigation.

One thing we would do is encourage anyone witnessing or knowing of suspicious behaviour to report it to Thames Valley Police. Reports can be made via their website at <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> or by phoning 101 or 999 if a crime is in progress or someone is in immediate danger. One way of addressing the problem is by requesting greater police presence, but we can only make this case if there is evidence of a problem in form of previous reports made to the police.

Use of weedkiller in public spaces

We have had reports of someone using weedkiller on public footpaths and roadside verges. We would like to remind parishioners that using herbicides in public open spaces is illegal without a licence. This is for

good reason as it can be dangerous to both people and animals, and in fact several pets were taken ill after ingesting some of the residues

Although maintenance of pavements and roadside verges is the responsibility of the county council, the parish council has a weedburner that can be used to remove excess vegetation from smaller areas in a more ecologically sensitive way. If there are particular locations you are concerned are becoming overgrown you can report them to the county council using Fix My Street (<https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>) or by contacting the parish clerk.

Cycleways and pedestrians

Could we please ask anyone using the shared cycleway/footpath along the A417 to be considerate, particularly if you are a cyclist passing pedestrians.

We have had some complaints from parishioners with mobility issues using the footpath that they have felt at risk from passing cyclists. Please take into account the hierarchy of road users as set out in the Highway Code when using shared pedestrian/cycle route spaces. This gives pedestrians, especially children, older adults, and disabled people, priority over other users, including cyclists.

Additional Information

Your member of parliament is Olly Glover (Lib Dem): olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk

Your county councillor is Lee Evans (Con): lee.evans@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Your county council is responsible for schools, roads and footpaths, transport and travel, recycling facilities, children's services and adult social care; see: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Your district councillor is Lee Evans (Con) lee.evans@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Your district council is responsible for collection of council tax, planning, rubbish & waste services, leisure facilities, housing, benefit management and elections; see: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

The parish council lobbies district & county councils over issues in the parish and scrutinises and comments on planning applications and local plans. The district council decides most planning applications.

Your parish council by convention does not operate along party political lines. All councillors are unpaid volunteers. Our parish clerk is employed for 20 hours per week (normally Monday, Wednesday & Friday).

Contact Details are: clerk@stanfordinthevale-pc.gov.uk

The Parish Council is responsible for:

- Church Green, Upper Green & Jubilee Green
- The play areas next to the village hall, on Nursery End and the aerial ropeway
- The QEII field
- The Skate Park and MUGA
- The Millennium Green
- The Community Woodland, Community Orchard & on Nursery End, both the willow tree park & strip woodland.
- Mowing some areas of the village on behalf of the County Council
- Litter picking – we employ a litter picker for several hours per week
- Setting the Village Precept (which is part of the Council Tax).
- Managing the budget for expenditure by the Parish Council in the village. The Parish Council spends substantially more than the Precept but raises all the rest of the money that it spends, on specific projects, through (non-domestic) rent, grants and similar applications. It has no debt.

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