

March
2010



Victory for Village

The power of a community working together.

Four Acres Trust had applied to build 150 additional dwellings on Stifford Green. Thurrock Council rejected the application and Four Acres Trust took the matter to appeal.

A Public Inquiry was held over three days 6th – 8th January 2010.



The village was represented by Dennis Brockhurst, North Stifford Village Community Group Chairman, who spent 3 days at the Planning Appeal.

Dennis presented the concerns of the villagers over this development. He was supported by Gordon Roberts, Vice Chairman of the Community Group and Councillor Neil Rockliffe.

After consideration of all the facts the appeal was dismissed.

Last year committee members of the Stifford Village Community Group visited every property in the village to collect signatures for a petition against the scheme.

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Victory for Village contd. from front page



Dennis Brockhurst
Represented Village

Out of 280 properties, 277 opposed the development.

The independent representations made on behalf of the village must have helped influence the decision of the inspector.

This demonstrates that when a community works together and supports each other, decisions can be influenced.

The complete planning appeal decision can be viewed on the village website www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk

It is still possible that Mr. Bottomley could make an appeal to the secretary of state.

Fracas Outside Village Hall

There was a serious disturbance outside the village hall on Friday evening 8th January. It was caused by two gangs of youths from outside the village. A nearby resident confirmed that at one point there were 9 police cars, 2 paramedic vehicles and an ambulance in attendance. It was a very frightening experience for residents living near by. Suki, the shop owner said that they attended to an injured young man who was covered in blood and also two young girls came into the shop shaking and crying. Suki said that the shop had to close early because of concerns about safety and possible shop lifting by the large number of teenagers involved.

Some residents also expressed concern that there are no contact details available for the people running the village hall. Subsequently they have the inconvenience of people knocking at their doors asking for information.

A spokesman for the village hall committee said: "We apologise to the residents affected by this disturbance. The police said that there was nothing we could have done to avoid it. The hall had been booked for an eleven year old boy's birthday party. We do not knowingly hire the hall out for teenage parties. However, in light of this event new rules will now be implemented to restrict children's parties to a cut off time of 8 p.m.

A village hall committee member can always be personally contacted on a Monday evening between 8 and 9 p.m. at the village hall, and the police have key holder details in case of an emergency."

Please may we have our Pilgrims Badge back?



A Pilgrim's Badge (or seal) lay buried at Stifford for 600 years before it was discovered near the Mardyke in 1980 and put on display at Grays Museum.

Shortly afterwards the cabinet at the museum was broken into and the Pilgrims Badge was stolen.

30 years have now passed and the badge may have changed hands or turned up at a boot fair without anyone realising its significance.

It has very little monetary value but its history is very valuable to North Stifford Village. It is thought that St. Mary's Church was a stopping point along one of the routes Pilgrims travelled on their way to visit the holy shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

Please help us to get the badge returned to the Museum.

Maybe it is lying forgotten at the bottom of a drawer in somebody's home. If anyone has any idea where it is please contact us editor@northstiffordvillage.co.uk

If you have the badge, but would prefer to return it anonymously; Please put it in an envelope to the Curator of the Grays Museum or put it through the letterbox of the Rectory, High Road, North Stifford or telephone me (Cliff) on 01375 396900 and I will be very happy to collect it.

Pilgrims collected these badges to show where they had been on their travels. This one showed that the pilgrim had been in Rome in the 14th century. It is the only complete example of this type of badge which has been found in England. Others have been found in Scandinavia and Ireland.

It is easy to imagine pilgrims exchanging stories of visits to holy shrines and comparing their collection of badges, much as present day tourists display car stickers.

The badge depicts Saint Peter holding the Keys of the Kingdom and Saint Paul holding a sword. The badge is made of lead and approximately 35 mm x 30 mm (The picture shows the badge about twice it's actual size)

PUBLIC MEETING 20th January, 2010. North Stifford Village Community Group

Herewith, a brief summary of topics covered at the above meeting for those who were unable to attend.

First speaker

Oliver Pendered (National Grid) explained that they were refurbishing the overhead lines from Tilbury to Lakeside to ensure sufficient electricity supplies for the planned regeneration of housing and jobs. Scaffolds and netting have been erected to protect roads and footpaths etc. Certain roads need to be closed overnight with signs to inform motorists of the next closure affecting the High Road leading onto the A13 roundabout/flyover (end of February). [\(story p. 6\)](#)

The Constitution

Andy explained the proposed changes. Members in attendance voted unanimously for the new constitution.

Treasurers Report

In the absence of Graham, who was representing North Stifford at the Chafford Hundred Forum meeting, Dennis advised that the Nth Stifford account stood at £1351.83. Thanks were expressed for another £30 recently donated by The North Stifford Allotment Society. Further monies to cover administration had been requested from the council.

Stifford Green Housing Development

Dennis reported on the hearing regarding Mr Bottomley's second appeal, for another 80-150 dwellings. Dennis represented the village to put our objections forward. The decision of this inquiry is awaited. If refused, Mr. Bottomley could then take an appeal to the secretary of state. [\(story p. 1\)](#)

Second Speaker

Wendy from NGAGE advised of various free training courses available through A.C.E. If there is no suitable course you could approach them to see if they are able to accommodate your needs. [For more details telephone: 0800 783 7733.](#) Leaflets were left for the members of the meeting. Dennis announced that Wendy and her colleague had worked with the village residents to form the present committee and helped to get them established. As Wendy was at the end of her employment with NGAGE sincere thanks were expressed for her involvement.

Social events

Gordon informed the meeting of a **Race Night** planned for March 5th and as the Thurrock Lyons will be running the event for us, some of the proceeds will go to their charity. The evening will be limited to 100 persons. Entrance £3.00 per person. As usual, participants should bring their own refreshments.

Another event for the end of March is to be a family **'Walk on the Wild Side'** at Davy Down. The warden Steve will be your guide and refreshments will be available. The walk is to be advertised on the notice boards and website.

PUBLIC MEETING continued

Another **summer barbecue** is to be arranged for a Friday evening, earlier in the year to have more evening light. Ideas for a live band and entertainment would be welcome.

PCSO's

Dennis welcomed two representatives from the community police, who advised that there will soon be free property marking as a means of identification in case of theft available in the area.

Concerns were raised by member of the meeting about car racing in the early hours of the morning at Lakeside. The noise can be heard in Clockhouse Lane and Stifford Green, causing a disturbance and waking people up. Advice given was to phone the Essex police on 033 3334444. After two warnings vehicles can be taken away.

Gordon enquired who he should approach for residents to be trained on speed cameras. He had been waiting for previous PCSO's to arrange this.

Neighbourhood Watch

Martin will now be taking over this project and will be contacting the people who have already offered to be designated soldiers.

300 calendars plus N.W. stickers etc. will be delivered to villagers.

Village in Bloom

Lee updated on the planting that she and Maureen had completed so far. With the help of volunteers from the village, bulbs had been planted from the pub all the way down Stifford Hill to Pilgrims Lane. They had also removed quite a bit of rubbish from Stifford Hill. As well as further summer planting of flowers, a village sign and stocks for the village green are still projects on the agenda. [\(p. 10\)](#)

Litter clean up day

To improve our environment a litter clean up of the village was arranged. The date of Saturday, February 13th was agreed. Volunteers meet at 10 a.m. outside the village hall. Committee members would contact the council and community police for loan of equipment and support for safety on the highway. [\(Back page\)](#)

A.O.B.

As the Thurrock Gazette is not delivered to Stifford Green or Stifford Hill it was suggested that the committee could write to the Gazette to inquire if these areas could be included.

Lee congratulated Cliff for his DVD photo slide show of the village in the snow which he gave to committee members as an alternative Christmas Card. Further copies were made to sell to villagers to raise money for the village gardening funds. Lee said there had been a good response from residents. [There are still a few DVD's left for just £2 each. If you would like a copy telephone Lee on 398928.](#)

**We look forward to seeing you at the Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 21st April 2010, Village Hall 7.30 for 8 p.m.**

National Grid Disruption

Oliver Pendered from the National Grid said that they were refurbishing the overhead lines in the area from Tilbury to Lakeside. This is to ensure there will be sufficient electricity supplies for the future.



Villagers will have noticed that scaffolds and netting have been erected to protect roads, footpaths etc. You may experience some disruption as certain roads need to be closed overnight whilst this work is in progress.

We have been assured that signs will be put up to inform motorists of when the next closure will be, especially when it will effect the high road leading onto the A13 roundabout/flyover (probably at the end of February).

Rather you than me



Mobile Library

The mobile library parks in Clockhouse Lane on a Monday
12.25 p.m.—12.55 p.m.

Save this newsletter for your Easter waste collections for North Stifford

Monday	29th March	Normal
Wednesday	7th April	Changed
Tuesday	13th April	Changed
Monday	19th April	Normal



Takeaway Food Shop in Village?

A planning application was submitted to Thurrock Council on 18th January 2010 by Mr Balwinder Singh of the Village Shop as follows:-

First floor extension over existing side extension, internal alterations and change of use into takeaway (class A5 use) together with installation of new shop front and extraction duct to rear. New access to residential property.

As we go to press the decision is still pending. It will be considered by the planning committee on Thursday 11th March.

THE VILLAGERS' LAMENT

The Local Yokel © 2009

*Up North Stifford they do say, "That blasted traffic spoils our day.
Cars and lorries trundle through, Belching fumes at me and you.
Hear the birds cough in the trees, We'll all go down with lung disease."*

*Down North Stifford they do say, "That b****y litter spoils our day.
Paper, cans, and fast food packing – Tidy streets are what we're lacking.
Slovenly and thoughtless bods, Just drop their muck – those dirty s**s!"*

*'Round North Stifford they do say, "Proposed new houses spoil our day,
Crowding out our little village, Developers the land do pillage.
Bursting at the seams we'll be, We'll all be doomed – just wait and see!"*

*The villagers are merry folk, Who smile and chat and crack a joke,
But woe betide you if you may Upset they folk – and spoil their day.*

(These sentiments probably reverberate through many small towns and villages up and down the country – and who can blame 'em?)



Village Newsletter

If you have any comments or articles to contribute.

Please contact the editor Cliff Cowin:-

Email: editor@northstiffordvillage.co.uk or Telephone: 01375 396900

You can always find the latest information on the Village notice boards (one outside the village hall and the other on the green at Stifford Green)

Or the village website www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk

Easter Traditions

By Maureen Nicholas

Easter bonnets, decorated with little chicks and bunnies, the indulgence of eating chocolate eggs, hot cross buns and meals of roast lamb and fish, are all part of present day Easter traditions. Although Easter is an important Christian celebration, many of our festive customs derive from Pagan traditions.

The word Easter:

Eostre was the Anglo Saxon goddess of fertility and birth who symbolised the rebirth of life in the spring. She was worshiped by Pagans who believed she would bless their families and crops. The goddess *Eostre* was sometimes depicted as having the head of a hare or having a hare familiar with her. The hare was an ancient symbol of fertility associated with spring, but over the centuries the hare has been replaced by a fluffy bunny.



The giving of Easter eggs came from a mixture of folk law and Christian belief.

Centuries ago when the period of lent had ended on Easter Sunday, it was traditional for people to exchange decorated eggs.

Can anyone remember having a painted shell on his or her boiled egg for Easter Sunday breakfast? I can! The eggs were a symbol of new life and also came to represent the stone that was rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

The chocolate Easter egg first appeared in the early 1800's in Germany. John Cadbury launched them in Britain in 1875. Some believe the first ones were made for a rich business man craving chocolate after giving it up for lent. I'm sure many of us chocolate lovers can relate to that.

The Easter bonnets made today by young and old, could have derived from the legend that says if you didn't wear some new clothing on Easter Sunday you would have bad luck for the rest of the year. Easter bonnets are made in schools and play groups for the enjoyment of the young and bonnets adorn the Easter parade in many towns and villages still.

Easter Traditions (continued)

Hot cross buns are traditionally eaten at Easter but seem to be in our shops most of the year. There was a pagan custom of baking cakes in honour of the gods and there was a belief that spiced buns were eaten to celebrate the Roman moon goddess, Diana. These were decorated with four lines, representing the moon divided into its quarters. However, this may also relate to the sacrificial Ox killed at the Saxon feast of *Eostre*.



Lines were carved into ritual bread to represent the animal's horns. Since the 12th century the cross has represented the crucifix.

Roast lamb has been the pope's Easter dinner from as far back as the 9th century and has become associated with Easter partly because Christ is known as the 'lamb of God' atoning for man's sins by his sacrifice on the cross. According to the book of Exodus, there was a Jewish Passover custom that the Israelites marked their doors with the blood of a lamb to prevent the Angel of Death killing their first-born.

Some may still remember when Friday was the traditional day to have fish and chips for supper. Good Friday (good derived from God) commemorates the day when Christ was crucified, and for early Christians Fridays were days of fasting on which no meat should be eaten. This could be the reason for the custom of fish being eaten.

Whatever your beliefs, customs or traditions, may your Easter be a happy one, and may you have many good things to eat - specially the Chocolate!

Editors footnote



This Chocolate Easter Egg according to the Guinness Book of Records is the largest Easter egg ever; the Easter Egg was made by the Belgian chocolate producer Guylian who prepared the chocolate egg with at least 50,000 bars on behalf of the city of St. Niklaas, Belgium. The egg measured 8.32 metres high. Twenty-six craftsmen worked altogether 525 hours to build the egg. They used 1950 kg of chocolates to create the confectionary giant.

Even Maureen couldn't eat this one! Could she?

Planting Bulbs a few days before the snow

Picture : Lee, Mo and Pat with her Grandson



2000 bulbs were planted in the village a few days before the snow set in.

They were planted on the grass area outside the Park Inn and at various places along the High Road and down Stifford Hill to the junction with Pilgrims Lane.

The green shoots are already starting to show through and we should have a nice display in the next few weeks

Race Night

Another successful Race Night was held at the Village Hall on Friday 5th March. 80 people attended and a great time was had by all.

The night was organised by Gordon Roberts with assistance of the Thurrock Lions Club. Approximately £470 profits made on the night will go into the fund to make improvements in our village.

Walk on the Wild Side

A family walk in Davy Down with guide Steve Mitchell (DD warden) has been planned for Sunday 28th March. Meet at Pumping Station 12 midday

After the long winter you can see everything coming back to life - including the blue bells and other spring flowers.

Spot the Kingfishers or you may see a marsh frog or the rare water vole just to name a few. A separate flyer will be sent out with full details.

Coffee Morning - Village Hall

The Village Hall is now open for tea or coffee every Thursday morning from 10am till 2 p.m. for anyone in the village who wants to come and talk, chill out or just enjoy the taste.

An ideal opportunity to meet your neighbours and get to know each other. Everyone is welcome.



Easter Services St Mary's and St Cedd's

Good Friday 2nd April

Reflection at the Cross 2 - 3 p.m. at St Mary's, High Road.

Easter Day 4th April

10.30am Family Communion at St Cedd's, Crammavill Street.

4 p.m. Holy Communion at St Mary's, High Road.



Police Newsletter for Chafford Hundred and North Stifford

Officers dedicated to your area to reduce crime.

Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (NSO) James Preston

Police Community Support Officers

PCSO Stacie Williams - PCSO Jackie Ball

PCSO Samantha-Joanne Harrington

Crime Prevention

If you would like to meet your Neighbourhood policing team to get some crime prevention advice then please get in touch with us. Details below.

If you are having problems or you are a victim of crime please DO report it. If we do not hear from you then we cannot help.

If you need any help do not hesitate to contact us on:-
0300 3334444 ext 70164 NPT Mobile 07779319907
or by e-mail. james.preston@essex.pnn.police.uk

The latest crime reports can always be found on the
North Stifford Village website: www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk



Have you seen this man?

If not you should see him soon.

He is Martin Thurgood your new Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. Martin will be visiting all residents in the village with details of the Neighbourhood Watch.





Village Clean Up Day A Big Success



17¼ people turned up for the village litter picking day on Saturday 13th February. They included our local Councillors Garry Haigue and Neil Rockcliffe who brought along his baby son (the ¼).

Three hours later the volunteers had cleaned up the whole village including the High Road, Stifford Hill, Clockhouse Lane, Stifford Green etc. During the clean up on Stifford Hill it was noticed how bad the litter problem had become behind the fence on the Mardyke side. Possibly this can be tackled on our next litter picking day. (20th March)

The North Stifford Village Community Group has signed up to 'The Big Tidy Up' a Keep Britain Tidy campaign www.thebigtidyup.org

We would like to thank all those who volunteered plus PCSO's Stacie Williams and James Gray who kept us all safe from the traffic in Stifford Hill.



Love where you Live

Why not join us on our next litter picking day and make the next one even more successful

Saturday 20th March

Meet at 10 a.m. outside the Village Hall and collect your 'Big Tidy Up' tabard to wear

