

Join the North Stifford Village Community Group

Working together to improve our village

Full membership is open to all residents who live within North Stifford.

As a member you will be eligible to vote at the General/Public meetings and will be entitled to nominate/elect members onto the Committee at the AGM/EGM.

Members will be kept informed about issues affecting the village.

It is now easier to join by completing the form on the North Stifford Village website. Go to www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk and follow the 'Community Group' link, then click on 'Membership Application'

Membership forms will also be available at the NSVCG stand at the village fete and at all public meetings.

Diary of events

5th June 10.30 a.m.	Village Litter Picking and Weeding
12th June 12 noon	Village Fete on the village green
25th June 6 p.m. till late	Barbecue evening with Elvis and Disco
14th July 8 p.m.	Public Meeting with guest speaker Jonathan Catton, Curator Thurrock Museum and Historian

Coffee Morning - Village Hall

The Village Hall is now open for tea or coffee every Thursday morning from 10 a.m. till 12 noon 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.



Takeaway Food Shop Rejected

Plans to extend the village shop to include a take away food shop were turned down by the Thurrock Council planning committee on 11th March.

Derelict Workshops Stifford Green



Thurrock Council have contacted Mr Bottomley of the Four Acres Trust and informed him that he has to either clean up or demolish the derelict buildings at Stifford Green. If neither is done by the time given, then the council would do the work and then reclaim the costs.

It appears that Mr Bottomley has still not conceded defeat regarding additional building on the Stifford Green site.

The following letter was recently sent to some Stifford Green residents.

Dear Sir or Madam

Of course you'll be aware we lost our appeal against the refusal of our planning application recently. We continue to talk to the UDC and to Thurrock Council as we're keen to at least demolish the flat roofed buildings and replace them with something more attractive. You may be aware that this is a long and complicated process.

In the meantime we are happy to let you use our land for recreational purposes entirely at your own risk. However we regret that we will no longer be maintaining the grass on the crescent area. We would be happy if a group of you decide to join together to cut any areas of grass as is already happening to the west of the site.

In conclusion we would ask you to consider in full any new application as there were many misunderstandings about our previous ones. In particular we had intended to hand all of the land over in perpetuity to the people of Thurrock. However, you can rest assured we are doing all we can.

Yours faithfully

John Bottomley, Trustee Four Acre Trust

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 21st April, 2010.
North Stifford Village Community Group**

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

The meeting was opened by Chairman Dennis Brockhurst who welcomed everyone and explained that according to the constitution all officers who had held their position for three years would not be able to re-stand for their respective posts for another year. Therefore the chairperson, vice chair and treasurer would not be putting themselves forward for re-election.

Treasurers Report: This was read by Dennis Brockhurst in the absence of Graham Butterfield (treasurer) and copies were available for inspection.

Secretary Report: This was read by Maureen Nicholas (secretary).

An independent chair, Celia Brockhurst took nominations for the officer's posts and the following were elected: Chairperson: Gordon Roberts, Vice chair: Ron Covill, Secretary: Maureen Nicholas, Treasurer: Pat Dance. Nominations were then taken for vacancies for the other eight committee members: Catherine Hooten, Martin Thurgood, Alicia Fullbrook, Dennis Brockhurst, Cliff Cowin, Andy Higgs, Kevin Hooper, Darren Jones.

As new chair Gordon then announced forthcoming events for the village: The Village Fete Saturday 12th June. A spokesperson from the fete committee requested items for the stalls and said any help on the day would be welcomed.

The Village Family Barbeque would take place on Friday the 25th June. Flyers for all events would be circulated and info on the village website.

Councillor Neil Rockcliffe advised the meeting in relation to the Stifford Green derelict workshops that himself and Councillor Gary Hague were in the proceeds of contacting Mr Bottomley of the Four Acres Trust. He has to either clean up or demolish the buildings. If neither is done by the time given, then the council would do this and then reclaim the costs.

Neil also advised that there were some funds available under section 106, to be spent on community resources. He had negotiated a sum of £500, which was now ring fenced for North Stifford Village Community Group, under the suggestion that we needed another planter for the village.

**We look forward to seeing you at the next Public Meeting
Wednesday 14th July 2010, Village Hall 7.30 for 8 p.m.**

Pilgrims Badge Good News and Bad News

The bad news is that no one has come forward yet with the missing Pilgrims Badge that we reported in the last issue.

The good news is that someone has sent another different badge anonymously to the Rectory. The person said that the badge was found during building works in North Stifford.

Initial investigations indicate that it is probably not a Pilgrims badge as it appears to depict a Buddha type image. It probably originated in India or South East Asia. We are still trying to find out more and assess age. We would love to know where in the village it was found and how it got here.

If anyone can help please contact editor@northstiffordvillage.co.uk

We will have the badge at the Village Fete for anyone who is interested to see it. Ask at the North Stifford Village Community Group stand.



Above is the badge we are still trying to locate which dates back to the 15th century.
Size 35 mm x 30 mm.



New badge awaiting Authentication
Size 44 mm x 40 mm
made of Lead/Pewter

Mobile Library
The mobile library parks in Clockhouse Lane on Mondays
12.25 p.m.—12.55 p.m.

North Stifford Village 'THE IDYLL IN THE MIDDYL'- of Thurrock

by the Local Yokel © 2009



*Now Thurrock aint a beauty spot,
It's so built up in places now
With houses, shops, and concrete streets,
There's scarcely room to graze a cow.*

*But there's this little place I knows,
That nestles where the Mardyke flows.*

*Down the end of Stifford Hill, the ancient bridge do span the stream,
Flowing lazily along, where swans and herons drift and dream,
Where marsh frogs croak and foxes play,
And Harry's horses pass the day.*

*The kingfisher, the water vole,
The field mouse dozes in her hole,
The rabbits frolic in the field,
And all sustained by nature's yield.*

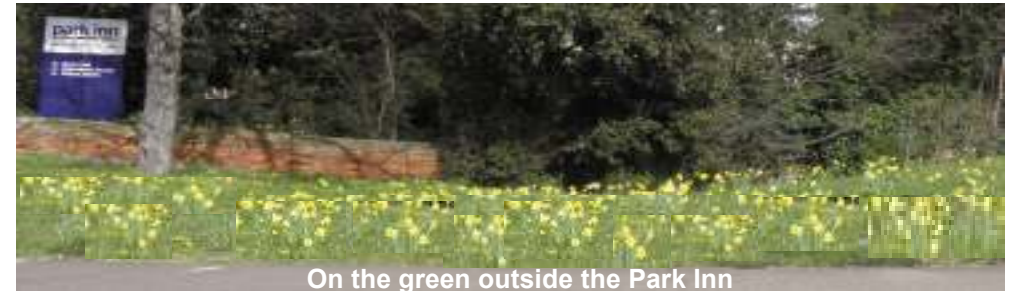
*And then we journey up the hill - abundant charms there to be seen,
Thatched cottages, and flowers sweet,
The pub, the shop, the village green - where cricket's played on summer days,
And peaceful fields where horses graze.*

*St. Mary's Church atop the hill, has witnessed centuries drift by,
As generations come and go - watched over as they live and die.
The ancient stones could tell the tale, of war and famine, plague, and tears,
When folk prayed for deliverance, so many times throughout the years.*

*And on the way to Canterbury, for to seek salvation there,
Going to the great cathedral, hoping for their soul's repair,
Pilgrims trudged down ancient byways, all along the 'Pilgrim's Way,'
And rested in this little village at the ending of the day.*

*Rich men built impressive houses, Stifford Lodge, and Coppid Hall,
Peasants worked with wood and thatching - toiled to build a cottage small.
Today we reap the legacy, for history such wealth do give,
So let us cherish and preserve, this little 'gem' in which we live.*

Village (almost) in bloom



On the green outside the Park Inn

The bulbs and flowers that were planted by volunteers last autumn have really brightened the village these past spring months and hopefully will multiply in the coming year.

It would be great if we could enter the national 'Village in Bloom' contest next year and Lee and Mo have plans for more planting this summer as a practice run. But there is much to do, so if anyone is interested in joining them to form a committee to develop this venture, please contact either Mo on 384315 or Lee on 398928.

Even if you could just spare a couple of hours to help with the weeding, preparing the plots for bedding etc they would be very grateful.



WANTED FLOWER POTS

Don't throw those unwanted flower pots away. Just drop them off at Lilac Cottage, High Road, or call either Lee on 398928 or Mo on 384315 and they will collect. Thank you.



Outside the Rectory

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

Davy Down Walk - Sunday 28th March



The Davy Down walk organised by the NSVCG was well attended considering the unpredictable weather. 20 people plus 10 dogs took part.

Our thanks to Stephen Mitchell the Davy Down warden who kindly agreed to be our guide. Steve is very knowledgeable and pointed out the best places to see the various species of wildlife.

Kingfishers - They are very shy and the best way to spot them is to settle by the river bank or stand on a bridge crossing the river and wait for one to zoom past as they travel up and down the river.

Water Voles - are best seen by sitting quietly and observing the banks and open water. Patients will usually be rewarded with a sighting of this increasingly threatened mammal going about its business.

Marsh Frogs are not native to the UK. They were illegally introduced to the river and ponds by a local resident. They are the largest European frog and can reach nearly 13cm (5 inches). They live in the water all year round and hibernate at the bottom of ponds in the winter.



Davy Down continued

During our walk through the park and woods we came across two unwelcome species of wildlife; two young men on motorbikes which are strictly prohibited from Davy Down.

Steve said that they damage the pathways and can be a danger to people or their dogs using the park.

Because they wear crash helmets it is difficult to identify the culprits.

But this time we did get a photograph. If anyone can identify the young men in the picture please contact Steve 01375 383744 or email stephenmitchell@davydown.org.uk and he will pass the information on to the police.

After a second warning the police can confiscate motorcycles and have them crushed.



Steve confronts the motorcyclists

We then returned for tea and coffee at the Davy Down visitors centre.

We were also able to visit the historic Pumping Station where Steve has a collection of fish, frogs, grass snakes etc. from the Mardyke which are used for educational purposes.



For those interested Steve also has a collection of snakes which I am glad to say are not native to this country. They include a Black Indigo and a dwarf Boa Constrictor and for those brave enough, you could touch and hold them.

This is the first time I have held a snake. If you get closer you can probably smell the fear.

FREE walks take place every Friday at 1.30 p.m. Meet at Pumping Station.

Night Walks (sounds like fun) start at 9 p.m. returning about 11 p.m. Included in the walk is bat hunting and on the way back when its darker you can see glow worms. Steve also sets a moth trap before setting off so we can view the contents when we get back to the Pumping Station. Date to be confirmed. For up to date information visit www.davydown.org.uk

Davy Down continued

A few weeks after the walk I had 10 minutes to spare so I thought I would drop in some photographs of the walk to Steve at Davy Down. When I arrived I was commandeered into going on a rescue mission to save two fox cubs which had been abandoned by their mother.

They were very dehydrated and were in danger of being attacked by other animals.

Steve took them to the South Essex Wildlife Hospital, Orsett, and the latest news is that they are doing well.

Ed



Village Joke

Contributions welcome - editor@northstiffordvillage.co.uk

Our Rector Andy was walking down Well Lane last week when he saw the village idiot struggling to load an enormous heap of hay back onto a cart after it had fallen off.

"You look hot, my son," said Andy. "Why don't you rest a moment?"

"No thanks," said the village idiot.
My father wouldn't like it."

"Don't be silly," Andy said.

"Everyone is entitled to a break.

Come back to the rectory and have a drink of water."

Again the village idiot protested that his father would be furious.

Losing his patience, Andy said, "Mr. Idiot senior must be a real slave driver. Tell me where I can find him and I'll give him a piece of my mind!"

"Well," replied the village idiot, "he's under this load of hay."



Councillor Surgeries - First Saturday each month

North Stifford Village Hall - 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Councillor Garry Hague and Councillor Neil Rockliffe



Parish of Stifford, Church Open Days

Sat 19th June, lunch time to afternoon (Cream Teas)
at St Mary's, High Road, North Stifford.

Sat 26th June, morning coffee to lunch (BBQ)
at St Cedd's, Crammavill Street, Stifford Clays.

Sat 17th July Parish Fete at St Cedd's, Crammavill Street, Stifford Clays.

THE ALPHA COURSE
explore the meaning of life

alpha.org



Stifford Parish is joining together with the other parishes of Grays to run an Alpha Course.

Alpha provides an opportunity for anyone to come along and explore and discuss what is at the heart of the Christian faith (whether you've never thought about faith before, or you're a longstanding church member). Each evening begins with a time of welcome, chat and food (usually deserts and cakes!), followed by a talk and time for discussion - it's a safe place to make comments, listen to others, agree or disagree and ask long held questions.

The next course will run on Tuesday evenings, beginning at the end of May at St. Clement's Church, West Thurrock, from 8 - 9.30 p.m. (lifts can be provided).

To find out more or book a place please contact
Andy Higgs (Rector of Stifford) on 01375 372733.

Find out more on <http://uk.alpha.org>



Crime Prevention

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

Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (NSO) James Preston
Police Community Support Officers

PCSO's Stacie Williams - Jackie Ball - Samantha-Joanne Harrington



The 'Big Tidy Up' continues (Photos by Mo)



Another successful litter picking day was held on 20th March. This included the Mardyke area. Even more rubbish was collected than last time; 64 bags were filled by more than 20 volunteers.

In addition the group discovered some sheets of corrugated asbestos which had been dumped near the Mardyke next to 'The Gardens'. The Council has been informed so that the asbestos can be disposed of safely. Garden waste and building rubble had also been dumped next to Bridge Meadow Farm, Stifford Hill. Hopefully the council will remove this too.

If you know who is responsible for this fly-tipping please call the Thurrock Council Hotline FREE on 0800 581 281. Offenders can and will be prosecuted with a fine of up to £50,000 or 12 months in prison.

We would like to thank Travis Perkins for kindly donating gloves for the litter picking and Thurrock Council for bags and the loan of litter picking tools.



It's not all hard work
- it can be fun.

Gordon chatting up
the girls
Sharon and Pat



Our poor Rector Andy
could do with a new
pair of trousers

