

September
2010



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Issue No. 10

North Stifford Village NEWS

North Stifford Village Community Group
Working together to improve our village

*Oh what a night it was -
it really was such a night*



The North Stifford Village Community Group held their second Summer Barbecue evening on 25th June and what a fantastic night it was. Elvis impersonator Pete Storm mingled with the audience and everyone got involved.

The evening entertainment was free. It was financed out of the Community Group funds as a thank you for the support people in the village have given during the year by attending fund raising evenings such as the Quiz Night and Race Night, plus all the litter picking volunteers.

Elvis will take some beating but we are already searching for an act for next year - please let us know if you have any suggestions.

More pictures can be seen on pages 6 and 7.

Diary of events

4th September 10.30 a.m.	Village Litter Picking and Tidy up
20th October 8 p.m.	Public Meeting, Village Hall
29th October 8 p.m.	Quiz Night, Village Hall
7th November 10.45 a.m.	Remembrance Service, Stifford Green War Memorial
11th December 3 till 6 p.m.	Children's Christmas Party, Village Hall

Grass Cutting Stifford Green

Following Mr Bottomley's letter to residents of Stifford Green about not maintaining the grassed areas, Stifford Green residents have now taken this work upon themselves using a tractor owned by one of the residents, and giving up their time to cut the grass. A request was made to the North Stifford Village Community Group for £250, to cover the cost of diesel and maintenance for the tractor for the next year. In the meantime the residents were looking into buying a tractor. The NSVCG committee agreed to fund the cost for the next year.

Path in Stifford Hill Resurfaced

The North Stifford Village Community Group reported the bad condition of the path on Stifford Hill to Thurrock Council some time ago. We also lobbied our councillors Neil and Garry who took the matter up for us.

I am glad to report that the council have now resurfaced the path.

London to Southend Charity Cycle Ride

Three young men from the village, Steve Pearce, Garry Shulver and Jamie Hollis completed the London to Southend Charity Cycle Ride in aid of the British Heart Foundation on Sunday 18th July. 5000 keen cyclists took part to raise £175,000 for the heart charity. The annual bike ride, now in its eleventh year started from London's Victoria Park, then followed a 58 mile route through the villages of South Essex finishing at Southend's Priory Park. Riders finished in record time due to a tail wind pushing the riders on. Well done Steve, Garry and Jamie.

Remembrance Day

This year the Remembrance Day service will take place at the War Memorial, Stifford Green, on Sunday 7th November. The service starts at 10.45 a.m.



Attempted Robbery at BBQ Evening

Four female thieves turned up and mingled with the revellers at the BBQ evening and then made off with some of the children's raffle prizes. Fortunately they were spotted and confronted by some angry villagers who retrieved the stolen toys.

Photographs were taken of the thieves including the registration number of their car. The information was sent to our Neighbourhood Specialist Officer, James Preston, on 28th June. The thieves had Irish accents and had been previously seen using the village shop.

Fly Tipping at Mardyke

In the last issue we reported on the fly tipping of asbestos and other building and garden rubbish at the Mardyke Valley Field of Peace. This was reported to Thurrock Council by our councillor Garry Hague after he helped us at the litter pick on 20th March. Nothing was done so another report was made on 27th April.

As still no action had been taken it was reported again to our local councillors at their surgery on 3rd July. They have assured us that they will take the matter up.

On a brighter note; we send a big thank you to Thurrock Council for the vast improvement in the collection of litter in the village. What a big difference it makes. Unfortunately within a day or so the litter starts to accumulate again.

However if, in addition, everyone in the village also regularly picked rubbish up from outside their own property, it would keep our village much more clean and tidy. If you have an elderly neighbour perhaps you could collect from outside their house too. Let's all make it our 'good deed for the day' shall we?

Takeaway Food Shop Appeal

The owners of the village shop have appealed to the Minister for Communities and Local Government following the refusal by Thurrock Council to grant planning permission.

The appeal will now be decided by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

Village Website

The village website www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk is growing ever more popular, now exceeding 2000 hits per month. The website has visitors from all around the world.

By popular request back issues of the Village News can now be viewed on the village website; just follow the 'Community Group' link.

Councillor Surgeries - First Saturday each month

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

Councillor Garry Hague and Councillor Neil Rockliffe

The Allotment

by Maureen Nicholas

I have very cherished memories of my childhood spending long summer days during the school holidays with my father on his allotment. There was a sense of escapism from the norm even at that early age. It must have been the hours spent in the open air providing a peaceful respite from, what seemed then as the chore of school work. The amount of knowledge I gained about the environment would never have been gained at school. I remember vividly the amazement of my fellow pupils and the pride I felt when I answered a question in a school lesson, that the frost broke up newly dug soil. It was probably the only time I put my hand up with such confidence - so thank you dad. However, I didn't divulge my knowledge of the qualities of animal manure, as that may have somewhat diminished my newly found street cred! I found many aspects fascinating such as the destructive insects like black fly, slugs and the caterpillars as they munched their way through the cabbage leaves and learning about the good insects that would munch on the bad ones. I even enjoyed the labour of digging the earth and watching the Blackbirds and Robins at my feet pouncing on the worms that I had exposed with each spade full of earth. Individually dug wells provided the water for the allotments and I always wondered when lowering the bucket if the rope would be long enough to reach the water, fearful that if I fell in, I would be lost forever in the darkness.

Magic moments were shared, like being wheeled around in the wheelbarrow and joining in my father's laughter as I tried desperately to push it and tip the contents onto the compost heap. It would end up all over my feet. I would listen intently to his instructions when given a job to sow seeds, or plant onions and potatoes and feel immensely important being there when the first harvest was gathered. Just a smile between us was all that was needed to reveal the knowledge that I had some involvement in the production.

This childhood experience obviously was the start of my interest when I had my own garden and then an allotment in later years, where I found not only was it a relatively grubby hobby, looking as though I had taken up mud wrestling at times, but a very social one too. New friends emerged, all with a common focus. Help was always at hand; the loan of a tool, advice or intriguing solutions to perennial problems, the sharing of plants and crops or just a cuppa and a chat. The pleasures are endless. Even when nature is somewhat stuck in the groove of winter, thoughts go to what could be accomplished next year and planning begins. Before you know it the ground is buzzing with new life as the dark red nubs of rhubarb start nudging their way through the soil with the crocus and daffodil bulbs, reminding us that spring is coming and a new year is beginning.

18th Century Georgian Secret Garden

The Park Inn has made available a plot of land, complete with a 32 foot greenhouse and shed, to be used for community allotments. I visited the Park Inn with our chairman Gordon Roberts and his wife Janet a few weeks ago. We were shown the garden by Richard Groome the Park Inn manager. It is an impressive 18th century hexagon shaped walled vegetable garden. I estimate the size to be about a quarter of an acre and it would accommodate about twelve allotments. I also spotted some grape vines growing over the wall.

Mr Groome said that it would be nice to restore the gardens to their former glory. The intention would be that hotel residents could walk through and view the vegetable gardens when completed, and also local school children could visit from time to time to help and learn from the plot holders. If you are interested please contact Philomena on 01375 481308 for further details.

The Park Inn was formerly Stifford Lodge. The last occupant was Colonel Sherwood who was very generous to the villagers. He would grow fruits and vegetables in the walled garden and have them distributed around the village. Ed.



Village in Bloom - Can you help?



Lee and Mo would like to enter the national 'Village in Bloom' contest next year. Unfortunately their request to villagers for help has fallen on deaf ears. 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.

Without more help it will not be possible to expand the project or enter any competition. 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.

£500 grant for planters

Our councillors Garry Hague and Neil Rockcliffe secured a grant of £500 to buy additional planters for the village. Thank you Garry and Neil.

The money will be used to buy a number of half barrels to be located around the village. Mo and Lee are searching for suitable sites where someone living nearby will hopefully volunteer to water the plants regularly.

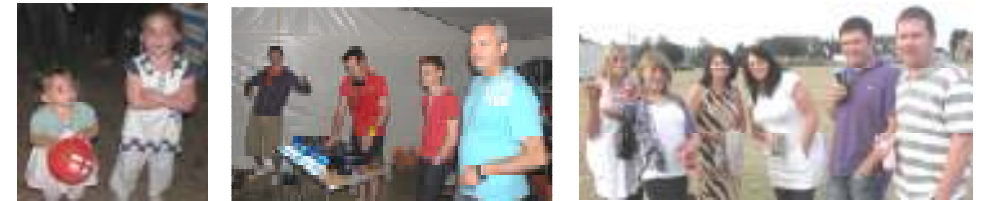
Message from our Chairman

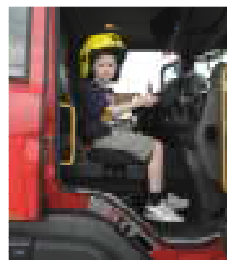
You will have recently received a leaflet regarding fundraising for various projects for the village. I am glad to report that a number of residents have pledged their support and we will keep you informed of progress made. Further pledges would be most welcome. If you would like to help in any way please contact me on 01375 374208. Thank you. *Gordon Roberts*, Chairman NSVCG

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



Barbecue Evening with Elvis
 More pictures on www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk





Village Fete 12th June

This year's Village Fete was the most successful ever, raising a whopping £3400 for charities.

An enormous amount of work was put in to organise the event by the Village Fete Committee, comprising Lee Pearce, Jacqui Luff, Sue Higgs, Karen Collier, Carol Monk and Maureen Quinn. A big thank you goes to them and all other helpers on the day.

If anyone would like to join the Fete Committee, they would be very welcome.

Please contact Maureen on 372757



The Presentation of cheques took place on Wednesday 28th July in the Village Hall



St. Luke's Hospice

The two main charities who accepted cheques on the evening were

St Luke's £1500 and Help for Heroes £1500

The balance was split between others including Spectrum Brass and St Marys Church Band



Help for Heroes

More Fete pictures on www.northstiffordvillage.co.uk

PUBLIC MEETING 14th July, 2010 North Stifford Village Community Group

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

Chairman Gordon Roberts welcomed everyone and gave a brief account of expenditure for the summer barbecue.

Speed Guns: Jackie Ball, our PCSO was welcomed back to our patch from her secondment. Jackie spoke of the re-introduction of joint training for speed guns for North Stifford and Chafford Hundred residents. The training would be carried out by Jackie and her colleagues.

Village in Bloom: Lee reported that Maureen had put summer bedding plants in the planter at the entrance to the village and more permanent plants outside the Rectory. Lee had contacted the council regarding the overgrown area in Marian Close, and was advised that this would be attended to in the autumn.

Chafford Forum: Philomena, chairperson of the Forum, advised that the manager of the Park Inn had approached her regarding the availability of allotments in the grounds of the Park Inn. See article on page 5

Social Events: Gordon advised that the committee had plans for a Quiz Night on the 29th October, a Children's Christmas Party for children up to 11 years, on December 11th and a Race Night on February 11th 2011. Dates would be confirmed for booking the Village Hall. All events would be advertised by leafleting, newsletter and on the village website.

Neighbourhood Watch: Martin reminded people not to leave their windows or doors open or unlocked when going out into the garden, or further afield. Martin explained how Neighbourhood Watch worked. One delegated 'soldier' for an area would receive crime information and then inform their neighbours. Jackie advised that there was to be a new sign indicating that North Stifford was a Neighbourhood Watch area. Please call the police if there are any problems.

Delivery of the Gazette: Dennis Brockhurst, member of N.S.V.C.G. reported back from a previous issue that not all residents received a free copy of the local Gazette. Having contacted the Gazette office the response was that it was not financially viable to increase the quota for any area.

Reception of the internet: Andy Higgs reported that as he had experienced a slow internet speed where he lives in the High Road, he had contacted Virgin to see if there was any prospect of them installing their cable system in the village. The response was that they would not be doing so at this time.

Speaker: Jonathan Catton, curator and historian from Grays Museum gave a very informative and enjoyable talk. He included a slide show of the history of North Stifford and links to the surrounding areas. Jonathan explained his role working for Thurrock Council in promoting Thurrock through its history.

The library has many books on local history including the Stifford Saga, written by two North Stifford residents. More information can be found in the Grays Museum.

Jonathan said that the literal interpretation of the word Thurrock from medieval times (Turroc) has two possible meanings. One is 'the bottom of a boat where the bilge water collects' and the other is 'dung heap.'

I am not sure that we wanted to know that JC!

We are hoping to persuade Jonathan Catton to return sometime in the future.



Jonathan Catton

**We look forward to seeing you at the next Public Meeting
Wednesday 20th October 2010, Village Hall 7.30 for 8 p.m.**

Proposed Village Sign

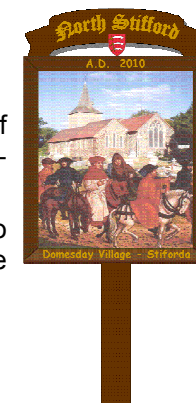
We are now in the process of deciding on a sign for our village.

A possible location could be the Village Green as both ends of the village are isolated and thought to be more prone to vandalism. What a shame we have to take these things into account.

We are still in the early stages and are considering a sign to represent the history of North Stifford. Materials are still to be decided on; probably wood or wrought iron.

The picture shown is just one of the many proposed ideas.

All suggestions will be considered.



Crime Prevention

Meet your Neighbourhood policing team to get some crime prevention advice. 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 following events will be at the North Stifford Village Hall:

27th September Mobile Police Station (Car Park) 8.30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

20th October 7.30 p.m. Beat Surgery (one to one with a member of the team to discuss issues) followed by Neighbourhood Action Panel till 10 p.m.

This is an open forum - members of the community meet with community leaders, and police to decide local priorities and discuss how best to deal with them.

Bungee Jump at Dog and Partridge

Bungee Extreme, the world's highest mobile bungee were at the Dog and Partridge Pub on Tuesday 29th June.

Jamie Strickson was one of the jumpers who took part.

Bungee Extreme says it always operates jumps from a set height of 200ft, with a braided rope system, to avoid any error in weight calculation. Bungee Extreme was established in 1993 and has a 100% safety record.



There was also some entertainment for the children



Contributions to the Village News are very welcome

**Just Married? New Baby?
Special Birthday? Lost Pet? etc.**

Why not send us a picture and a few words and we will include it in the next issue of the Village News.

Also welcome; any other stories about the village past or present.

The Village News is published for the first day of March, June, September and December, with a copy deadline of two weeks before.

Contact Cliff Cowin: editor@northstiffordvillage.co.uk