

EAST STOUR VILLAGE ACTION PLAN

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REVIEW OF VILLAGE ACTION PLAN: 2013 - 2014

Well, this is it - the opportunity for someone to step up and take over from me as Coordinator! I'll relinquish the role at the end of the year, after two years (plus eighteen months before that on the Village Plan Committee). If no-one comes forward, I'll continue to coordinate what is worthwhile with ongoing projects and pass the balance of funds to the Village Hall Committee to spend on the refurbishment (one of the VAP projects).

STATISTICS

The Village Plan Committee of eight was formed in early 2010 and published the Village Plan Questionnaire in July 2011:

- 276 Questionnaires delivered by hand, 202 completed (plus 20 blanks returned)
- 107 questions with 454 answer options
- The survey printout was 298 pages including 90 pages of narrative answers.

The Plan booklet of 32 pages was published in November 2012. At the back we listed the Village Action Plan - the Top 40 subjects that villagers raised in their answers in the Questionnaire.

The Action Plan kicked off with the initial project meeting in January 2013, and the first project - to replace the dilapidated Village Hall hedge - started in February.

The 40 projects can be simply divided into Those Achieved (and ongoing) and The Rest (no active support forthcoming/no action possible or required/non starter).

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

- 18 projects achieved and 2 ongoing
- 20 projects where action is not possible (a mains gas supply) or seems unlikely (more pavements, bus services, youth club).

The most successful projects:

- **First Class Coffee** - arising from discussions at the first VPlan Open Meeting in 2011, this weekly coffee session is now run by David Morphew and helpers, and makes donations to village projects. It is at the Village Hall on Wednesdays 10am to noon, to coincide with the Post Office hours. Come for a coffee, have a chat and use the Post Office!
- **Village Hall Hedge** - do you remember the overgrown mess that was a blot on the landscape of the Village Hall? On 27 February 2013 we learned that cutting hedges was illegal after the 28th due to bird nesting! With a rush, we had the hedge inspected and this allowed us to gain permission to do the main cut on 1 March. Over the next few months, thanks to a dozen sterling volunteers led by John Gould, the new fence and beech hedge were planted, kerbing realigned and grass seeded. What a transformation!
- **Bulb Planting** - thanks to Penny Brentnall who organised fund raising (Souper Saturday), bulb purchasing and working parties (eighteen volunteers), we planted 4,000 daffodil bulbs along the front of the playing field and village hall and at village entry signs. What a super display in the spring! Penny has organised another Souper Saturday and ordered another 4,000 bulbs - planters needed urgently, please ring her on 838028
- **Website and Facebook Page** - do look at www.east-stour.org.uk and www.facebook.com/pages/East-Stour-Village-Dorset. Many thanks to Natalie and Guy Gilding for producing these and managing them
- **Playing Field** - we hope you've noticed the improvements. John Gould organised thirteen trees to be planted, including one to acknowledge Oliver Salisbury's marathon on the Village Hall Committee (from 1970 and as Chairman for many years). The grass is cut more frequently and carefully around the children's equipment, thanks to the diligence of Phil

Buttress. Cutting back the overgrown vegetation on the corner of Witch Lane (blocking the drivers' sightlines when emerging onto Back Street) was also managed by John. Some wildlife features are incorporated, including six bird boxes. The Witch Lane entrance has been opened up and the railings repainted. We hope to add a firm footpath around the perimeter to encourage exercise and help children play

- **Fuel Buying** - Sandy Mould arranged for us to join an oil buying consortium (www.FindMyHeatingOil.com) and he saved £60 on his first purchase. Over 20 villagers have joined - both to save money and avoid the hassle of getting prices from different suppliers. Anyone can join - ring Sandy or his wife Claire, tel 838767
- **Yoga** - Natalie Gilding is a qualified yoga teacher and holds classes at the Village Hall (Mondays 7.30 to 8.45pm) and also offers to do private classes in your home (tel her on 838271)
- **Benches** - we laid concrete plinths along the bottom of the playing field for three new benches, and another plinth for the strong new picnic bench funded by the Parish Council
- **Stour Villages Market** - this was instigated by Julia Gould after she did a survey and found that opening a village shop would not be viable. Hope to see you at the next market at the Village Hall on Sunday 7 December!
- **Speeding traffic** - I am supporting the Parish Council's trial of Community Speed Watch in West Stour, with a view to bringing it to East Stour. Anyone interested in supporting this??
- **Village History** - Guy Gilding is persevering, with too little help, with research into the lives of the 19 village men who went to fight in the First World War. Can you help him (tel 838271)? He has given a presentation to the children at Stower Provost Junior School, and plans to a new stone memorial (probably on the Village Hall/playing field site) if funding can be found. He also hopes to generate "living history" of life in the village by getting memories from long term residents - but he needs volunteers to chat to them
- **Village Hall Refurbishment** - redecoration and simple improvements are due to start in January. The speed and extent of works will depend on getting able-bodied help please ring Lewis Fanner (tel 839791 evenings or 07771 562242)

FINANCES

I'll publish the audited accounts later in January 2015 (in a report to the following Parish Council meeting, on the village website, and in the next Village Newsletter). In round figures so far, our income is £3,400 (including £228 from Waitrose's Community Fund) and we have spent £2,600. We will have income from the November Souper Saturday, another 4,000 bulbs to buy and some smaller transactions to complete.

David Little
Village Action Plan Coordinator
November 2014