

VILLAGE ACTION PLAN 2013-2023 – FINAL REVIEW

The East Stour Village Plan Committee was set up by the Parish Council in 2010. A two-part Open Day on the proposed Plan was held in the Village Hall on 11 May 2011. During the afternoon suggested topics for the Plan were displayed, alongside stands by the village businesses, trades, and clubs. Comments and ideas about the village were invited, focussing on its current facilities and what residents would like to see in the future. The evening discussion group led to the very first village event arising from the Village Plan as Dorothy Dodd and David Morpew each separately suggested that a weekly coffee morning might be held. As a result, the First Class Coffee sessions began on Wednesday 22 June 2011, to coincide with the existing outreach Post Office times.

Following the Open Day, a questionnaire was compiled and delivered to every one of the 276 households, with 202 completed forms returned. The Village Plan was developed and submitted to the Parish Council for approval. The 32-page Village Plan booklet was produced in November 2012 and distributed by volunteers to every household in East Stour.

The Village Action Plan (VAP) got underway in January 2013 and 25 Actions were achieved, starting with the replacement of the overgrown and dilapidated hedges in front of the village hall. The most noticeable projects have been

- the planting of over 11,000 daffodils throughout the village
- the refurbishment of the Village Hall - a massive task for the volunteer team. Amazingly the Village Hall Management Committee raised and spent £25,000, including a National Lottery grant for heating of £10,000 towards the cost of £13,000
- improvements were made to the playing field – bushes cut back, trees planted, picnic tables and seats replaced, and more playground items added
- purchasing the out-of-commission telephone box from BT for £1 which was renovated to create the Telephone Box Library
- joined a community oil buying consortium to simplify oil buying and get the best prices for villagers
- purchased the defibrillator at the village hall, with the help of a generous donation of £1,000 from one East Stour resident (whose life had been saved five times in hospital by defibrillators!)
- installed the footpath on the playing field
- the creation of a sundial war memorial at the playing field (mostly funded by direct donations generated by Guy Gilding)
- funded the flag and flagpole.

The Stour Villages Market (SVM) was set up alongside the VAP by a group of ladies and raised an amazing £8,000 (including a wonderful £1,100 from the initial fundraising walk) directly contributing to several VAP projects, especially

- opening Moviola
- creating the wild flower meadow near the crossroads, replacing the ugly HCC road waste site
- landscaping the eyesore at Pleck, including planting many trees, wild flowers

and daffodils to greatly improve this entrance to our village.

The working parties and fund raising activities were very sociable and well supported – the Souper Saturday fundraising lunches were very tasty!

VAP accounts

Personal donations of £3,400 were gratefully received along with £1,900 from organisations and £2,100 from fundraising making a total of £7,400 (apart from SVM's funding and the Lottery grant), with the final credit balance of £570 recently transferred to TESS. The VAP accounts have been audited by Sarah Miller and a summary will be posted on the ES Village website - east-stour.org.uk.

My grateful thanks must go to Penny Brentnall and John Gould, without whom we would not have got the VAP started, and to many other villagers especially Julia Gould, Guy Gilding and Bob Partridge. Despite the effort, we all enjoyed "getting things done"!!

David Little
VAP Coordinator
27 Nov 23