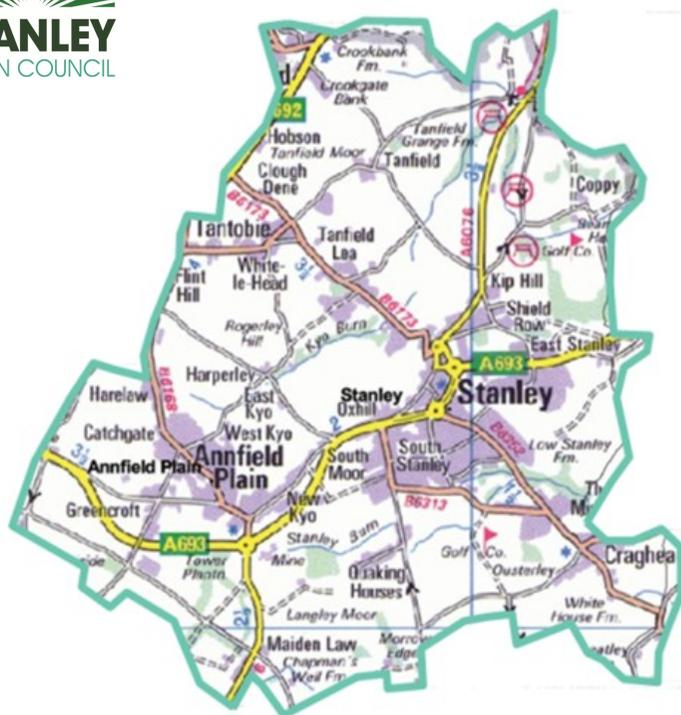


Contents

Introduction	2
Statement of Responsibility	5
Chair's Review	8
The Town Council	14
Corporate Aims and Objectives	17
Activities, Action and Performance	18
Statement of Accounts 2012-13	28
Appendix 1: Democratic Structure	34
Appendix 2: Organisational Structure	34
Appendix 3: Elected Representatives 2012-13	35
Appendix 4: Summary of Neighbourhood Warden and Environmental Caretaking Tasks	37



Introduction

Stanley Town Council was created by Statutory Instrument (No: 1185, Local Government, England) dated the 11th April 2007.

Parish and Town Councils are also known as Local Councils and are the first tier of local government in England. They are statutory bodies with 'Members' elected for a set term of office whose activities are principally funded by an annual precept on the council tax .

Local Councils have a wide range of powers and are involved in an extensive range of activities intended to benefit the community. During 2012-13 for example, this enabled the reintroduction of a music festival, support to the Stanley Horticultural Show, the Stanley Brass festival, the introduction of a Stanley Fireworks display and a series of Christmas festivals.

The area covered by the Town Council is divided into seven electoral 'wards' represented by a total of twenty elected members known as Town Councillors. These wards are: Annfield Plain; Catchgate; Craghead and South Stanley; Havannah; Stanley Hall; South Moor, and; Tanfield.

The population living within the Town Council's boundary is in excess of 31,000 making it one of the largest local councils in the region. As of October 2012 this figure included just less than 25,000 electors.

The original group of Town Councillors were elected during the 2008 local elections in County Durham. Between taking up office in April 2009 and the end of 2011-12, seven Town Councillors left office mid-term and, in accordance with 'due process', were replaced by seven co-opted Town Councillors. However, during 2012-13 no Town Councillors left office.

At the time of writing, the next local elections are scheduled for the 2nd May 2013 and therefore, the list of Town Councillors within Appendix 3 which refers to 2012-13, is likely to have changed.

Following public consultation, the Council's "Strategic Town Plan 2009-14" (the Strategy) was published in 2010. Whilst the current strategy is now being followed, (see figure 2), a further consultation exercise and follow-on Strategy will be undertaken during 2013-14. This will ensure that the Town Council's overall strategy remains up to date and reflective of local views.

The Town Council's Chief Officer, who performs the roles of 'Town Clerk', 'Responsible Finance Officer', 'Proper Officer' and 'Head of the Paid Service', took up office in March 2009 and the Council began to operate in April 2009.

In accordance with Section 112(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, this officer must remain at all times, independent, objective and professional in the manner in which he provides: administrative support, advice regarding lawful decisions; recommendations for implementing decisions; unbiased information to help inform choices and many other duties.

Whilst the Council is responsible for taking all decisions and the officer takes instructions from the Council as a body corporate, he is not answerable to any individual Councillor - not even the Chairman of the Council.

The Clerk's role is analogous to that of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a District or County Council and many similarly sized local councils have replaced the job title of Clerk/Town Clerk with CEO.

£820 to the Miners Gala 2012 (Craghead & South Stanley Ward)

Introduction

The new 'unitary' County Council also came into effect on the 1st April 2009 and is known as the 'Principal Authority'. The County Council "recognises local councils as the first tier and 'grass roots' of local democracy.... [and] is committed to full parishing of County Durham and to building the capacity of local councils who wish to play an even stronger role in their local communities..." As can be seen within the Strategy, the Town Council successfully completed an exhaustive process in order to be able to do just that. This mandate sets local councils aside from other local organisations, groups, partnerships and so forth who are not part of the local government structure.

Chapter 5 of the Strategy is titled the "Action Plan". This Plan is based on what the public told the Town Council during the consultation and what the Town Council said it intended to do in response.

£239 to Beamish Primary, No Place for Diamond Jubilee (Havannah Ward)

As can be seen by accessing www.stanley-tc.gov.uk the Action Plan uses the easy to follow format:
You Said.... We Will Do....

The use of **You Said; We Will Do** means that the public can track progress towards aims, objectives and targets, known as performance.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides that the Town Council is not subject to the duty of 'Best Value' placed on local authorities by the Local Government Act 1999. Nevertheless the Town Council opts to pursue best value principles by having due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness in all of its activities.

As part of this commitment to being accountable to the public, this document, which has been officially approved by Town Councillors, is the third consecutive Annual Report set out in a format that can be easily compared to previous years and the 2009-14 Action Plan.



Statement of Responsibility

To ensure compliance and regularity, the Town Council is subject to both internal and external audit on an annual basis. In this regard an 'Annual Statement' (the Statement) is read out verbatim before a meeting of the 'full' Town Council for consideration, scrutiny and approval. This practice is recorded in the related minutes of the meeting for transparency and future reference.

The Town Council has a designated 'Proper Officer' (PO) who acts in relation to all matters relating to law and governance in a similar manner as the Director of Law and Governance of a Principal Authority, (as set out within the Local Government Act 1972).

The Town Council also has a designated 'Responsible Finance Officer' (RFO) who is responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances. The RFO's role is analogous with that of the Director of Finance of a Principal Authority, (Local Government Act 1972).

The Town Council also has a designated Head of the Paid Service who is responsible for the management of all employees.

All of the above roles are performed by the Town Clerk (Russell Morgan). The role of Town Clerk in a larger local council such as Stanley Town Council is analogous to that of the Chief Executive Officer of a Principal Authority and the National

Association of Local Council's 'Model Standing Orders', as adopted by the Town Council, provide for the use of the title of Chief Executive regarding the most senior employee.

The Town Council is responsible for the preparation of this document and for the information and assessments set out within it and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based. It is also responsible for ensuring that 'fit for purpose' internal policies, procedures, performance management mechanisms and internal controls are in place, and thereby, that in all material respects, the contents are accurate, complete, realistic and achievable at the time of writing.

In July 2010, Robin Tunstall took up the position of Deputy Town Clerk whose primary role was to manage all financial and related matters on a 'hands on' and day to day basis.

As befitting what are senior executive roles, the Clerk has a relevant honours degree and is a qualified member of the Crime and Community Safety, Housing, Health, Economic Development and Regeneration, Local Government, and; Leadership and Management professions. Likewise the Deputy Clerk has relevant accountancy and business management qualifications.

£308 to Beamish Under 8's FC
(Stanley Hall Ward)

Statement of Responsibility

As well as advising the Town Council as a 'body corporate' on the legal basis of any given matter, for example, the legal power under which a particular project may be supported, the RFO also oversees the Town Council's compliance with the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the related Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011. In so doing the RFO annually publishes 'Notice' that the accounts are available for inspection by local electors.

With effect from August 2012, Cameron McGhee joined the Council as Executive Officer. Cameron is a qualified accountant and experienced international, national and local government auditor whose expertise has been of great benefit regarding financial regularity, scrutiny and risk management.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new provisions to replace the standards framework previously established by the Local Government Act 2000. As a consequence the Town Council adopted a new Code of Conduct for Town Councillors during 2012-13. (Under Section 28) this is consistent with what are known as the 'Nolan Principles' of conduct in public life, i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Localism Act also introduced a range of new criminal offences concerning the registration and disclosure of Councillors' interests and their participation in discussions and voting at

meetings where they have an interest. (Under Section 34) failure to register a disclosable financial interest, or the provision of false information and participation in discussion of a related matter at a meeting, will be a criminal offence, which at the discretion of the Director of Public Prosecutions, may render the perpetrator liable to a fine of £5,000 and/or disqualification from office for up to five years.

As well as the factors above and compliance with the risk management, expenditure and financial management requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the related Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, compliance with the wider legal framework is also applied to the manner in which the Town Council considers all matters before arriving at a decision in order to ensure that the decision is lawful as well as desirable.

As a 'learning organisation' the Town Council is also a Member of the County Durham and National Associations of Local Councils which provides access to expert legal and other relevant technical expertise, as well as the recommended practices of: the Durham and Cleveland Training Partnership; the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants; the Society of Local Council Clerks; the Environment Agency; the Audit Commission; the Local Government Association, and; the Institute of Local Council Administration. In effect this nationwide reservoir of knowledge and experience is tapped for the benefit of informing decisions taken here in Stanley in the interest of local communities.

Statement of Responsibility

The Town Council also operates in accordance with the “Governance Toolkit for Parish & Town Councils, Version Three, April 2009” and the National Association of Local Council’s “Model Standing Orders, 2010”.

The Standing Orders are reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose.

A Constitution which is consistent with the Governance Toolkit and model Standing Orders has been prepared for adoption and implementation from 2013-14. Once adopted the Constitution shall be placed on the website with a view to making it much easier for the public and Town Councillors alike to understand how the Town Council operates, and why certain processes or procedures are followed.



£10,000

funding towards
Stanley Fireworks Festival



£10,000 to Beaconsfield Street Car Park
Improvement Works

Chair's Review of 2012-13 (Councillor Peter McLaughlin)

Having been co-opted as a Member of the Town Council during 2010, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the 8th May 2012, I was honoured to be elected as Chairman for civic year of 2012-13. Accordingly it falls to me to review the year just ended.

The Town Council came into being in 2009 at the same time, but not as a part of local government reorganisation of County Durham. This process replaced the previous form of Durham County Council and seven District or Borough Councils, including Derwentside District Council, with a single 'unitary' County Council.

One of the main reasons for forming the Town Council in the years leading up to 2009 was to give the Stanley area a stronger voice due to a perception that the decisions affecting the Town and surrounding villages and hamlets were being taken too far away (in Consett). As the Principal Authority is now based in Durham County Hall, having a strong local voice that is independent of bodies such as the County Council, Police or national

government etc, is just as important, and perhaps even more so following the credit crunch and economic downturn.

With regard to this report which covers financial year 2012-13, I would like to recognise the hard work of the Town Clerk whose challenging workload was exacerbated by the long term absence of the Deputy Clerk and then a series of further shorter absences.

Naturally, everyone connected with the Town Council wishes the Deputy Clerk a full recovery following his entirely blameless involvement in a serious road accident, and; as Chairman I am involved in the process of facilitating a supported return to work.

I also acknowledge the contribution of my fellow Town Councillors and the patience of my family in terms of time needed to fulfill my commitment to the role of Chairman.

From 'day one', whilst remaining independent of other organisations, the Town Council has sought to develop effective working relationships with outside bodies. A few examples included the bulb planting and roundabout improvements which started during last autumn time and which we all hope will soon signal the arrival of warmer weather, or, the joint Participatory Budgeting event in February 2013 which was helped by positive links between staff and Members of both the Town Council and the 'Stanley Area Action Partnership' (or AAP as it is usually known).

During 2012-13 Councillor Ron Harrison was the Town Council's designated representative on the AAP Management Board whilst Councillor Mark Boyd continued as Deputy. Due to workload the Town Clerk was unable to continue as a member of the AAP.

£500 to Quaking Houses Olympic Play Scheme (South Moor Ward)