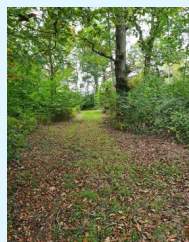


FRIENDS OF STANSTED PARK



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



A Stroll Through
the Woods

With the vaccination roll out well underway and looking very successful, we can allow ourselves a measure of optimism. In this spirit the committee has planned an events programme which is outlined on page 6. Whether these events can actually take place is, of course, dependent on matters beyond our control.

Whilst it is unfortunate that we have been unable to enjoy the pleasures of membership, it is worth reminding ourselves just how important Stansted has become in the life of the community. During these challenging times many have found comfort and recreation amongst its trees, avenues and footpaths. I'm proud to be associated with a membership who appreciate and value the beauty of Stansted's situation and its romantic and ancient history. Thank you for your continued loyalty and support.

Michael Olding

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



At this stage in the seemingly never ending cycle of restrictions caused by Covid-19, it is important to appreciate what a tremendous privilege it is to be associated with Stansted Park. That the Estate has such an enthusiastic and committed group of Friends provides reassurance that, once life does return to normal, there is a huge swell of support poised and ready to be galvanised into action. FOSP will, I'm sure, most definitely wish to make up for lost time in the year ahead!

We were very disappointed that we couldn't fully test our new Christmas programme but it was a real tonic to have Peter Auty singing in the Chapel in mid-December; a truly magical evening for those who attended. The performance was followed by drinks and canapés in the Mansion, where guests were able to sit down and enjoy the surroundings. The Director did receive stern glances from the Events staff as he, far too liberally, dispensed Christmas cheer in excess of the allocated champagne budget; but it did make it more fun!

We had very much hoped to launch into the New Year with a spring in our steps as we shrugged off the coronavirus but, sadly, the arrival of new, more transmittable variants, put paid to initial optimism as the Third Lockdown took hold. As I write, this has just been extended by another couple of weeks, so the release from this never ending cycle is still tantalisingly just out of our reach. However, the incredible vaccine roll out programme provides a glimpse of salvation.

The ability to plan ahead without any certainty remains extremely frustrating. We still have to decide when to open the House to the public; we had been anticipating an Easter opening, as normal, but it may make sense to delay this. We will make a firm decision later in February when the restrictions that are likely to be in place are better known. As you are all too aware, it is very difficult to second guess things these days.

However, when we do open, we intend to do so with a bang and not a whimper and ensure that Stansted Park gets firmly back on the map! To that end we are making good use of the time that we are afforded to improve many aspects of the Estate. We have re-laid some of the pathways into the Walled Gardens, making for easier access and are improving the main Visitors' Car Park. We are also refurbishing The Stable Block (formerly The Old Farm Shop) in readiness for the arrival of a Physiotherapy Clinic in April.

There are also many changes in the Mansion with regards to the Boudoir and the creation of the Waterloo & Victoria Room, as Celia Hodges reports elsewhere on page 3. We intend to have as full an Events Programme as circumstances allow and Lucy Wood is busy planning a wide range of exciting activities.

In the meantime, the many footpaths and beautiful scenery continue to provide a lifeline for many families to venture out and enjoy the great outdoors during the Covid crisis; this has probably preserved the physical and mental health of many.

It is very much hoped that Stansted Park can play its full part in restoring the morale of the nation by having a positive and optimistic outlook as we build back better, to coin a phrase, and use this opportunity to enhance what we do here at Stansted Park and encourage more people to become actively involved. *David Bennett*

STANSTED PARK FOUNDATION TRUSTEES



Rick

This is to announce the retirement of Mr James Kenroy, DL, and the appointment of Mrs Caroline Villiers and Mr Rick Wates, OBE, to the Board of Trustees.

I am sorry to tell you of Jimmy Kenroy's retirement, as he has been an exemplary trustee for 20 years, always willing to help with day-to-day business and provide wise advice. Many of you will have got to know Jimmy and Deirdre, as they have been regular attendees at Friends' meetings and functions.

Caroline and her husband, Chris, are tenants in a property belonging to the Foundation where they have settled in and quickly become actively involved in the Stansted community. Caroline, under her professional name, Caroline Daniel, is a partner of Brunswick, a global strategic communications company, and spent seventeen years at the Financial Times in senior roles, including Editor of *FT Weekend*.

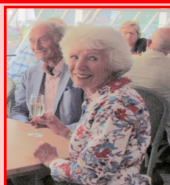
Rick and his wife, Minnie, and their three children live in West Marden and are, therefore, close neighbours. Rick's business interests include leisure, property and private investments. Rick also runs two large charities, one of which raises a lot of money to help severely disadvantaged children realise their potential.

The Earl of Bessborough



Caroline

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021



James & Deidre

JAMES KENROY

Following on from Lord Bessborough's announcement, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Jimmy and Deidre for the tremendous support and encouragement they have given the Friends over the past twenty years. I am delighted to say that Jimmy and Deidre have accepted Honorary Membership of the Friends and we can look forward to seeing them both at our forthcoming social occasions.

Michael Olding - (Photograph - Editor)

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - SPRING 2021

As the Covid 19 situation continues to have a huge effect on all our lives, I am eternally grateful that I have been able to keep working, so far, throughout it and Sam and our two stalwart regular contractors, Colin and Terry, have been able to continue our programme of work. The forest and park have certainly played their part in providing exercise and visual stimulation for a huge number of visitors, proving its worth as a multi-purpose landscape. People I talk to (at a distance) during the day often comment on how they are grateful to have such an amenity on their doorstep and many have sponsored trees in the areas being replanted after ash has been removed, as a gesture of thanks for the enjoyment of the fresh air and exercise they have had.



Sunset Over The Escarpment

We will continue felling ash, as the disease dictates, hoping that some of the ones we are leaving due to their present good health will continue to be resistant to some degree. Replanting is going well and all that is planned for this season will be in the ground by the end of March, if the weather co-operates. I was planting on the Escarpment just before Christmas and on several afternoons was treated to spectacular sunsets before the light faded and the twinkling spectacle that was the Christmas lights of Finchdean Road took over, a moment to forget the troubles of the world, if only briefly. A number of visitors have stopped and in conversation asked me if I ever get tired of planting trees. My answer is always that it is my favourite part of the job and there is a real connection with nature in putting a tree in the ground.

Although the loss of the majority of the trees on the Escarpment is to be regretted, a new mix of broadleaves will now, hopefully, take root on the areas of better soil, with predominantly beech lower down the slope where the soil is very thin over the chalk. The new track we have created through the middle of these plantings is proving very popular and provides some good views that were not available before. One problem we have encountered with the replanting in the Sling and nearby is the amount of concrete and brick infrastructure surviving from the military presence in these areas installed during World War 2. In creating one planting hole, I turned up a small glass bottle that, from the markings on the base, turned out to be a Swan Ink container from the 1940's, possibly a relic from the Officers' Mess which we know was nearby, or from a soldier writing home to his family in Canada.

Coppicing of chestnut by outside contractors is going well, so far, with three blocks completed and I therefore hope that, due to this, there will be plenty of violet plants in the spring for the emerging pearl-bordered fritillary to lay their eggs on, as it is still early days in the re-establishment of this rare butterfly.

With the uncertainty regarding lifting of regulations, I cannot at present give a date for resumption of our forest walks programme but as soon as I can, we will put details on the website and I hope the jungle drums will do the rest. We also do a Woodland Wednesday and Forestry Friday post (Lucy does the technical stuff) on the website and Facebook of recent topical events or things of interest in the woods and park, which has proved quite popular in keeping people connected with the forest and the countryside in general, particularly for those not able to visit it.

Michael Prior



Swan Ink Bottle

CARE ABOUT TREES? THEN EAT LOTS OF VENISON



Venison was once considered an exclusive meat to be eaten on special occasions. But now countryside campaigners have urged the public to eat as much of the meat as possible to save British woodlands. A drop in demand has caused the number of deer in the country's forests to reach an unsustainable level, threatening British woodland. Deer are known to eat newly planted trees as well as grass and berries. Demand for venison had been dwindling before the pandemic, with the import of cheaper substitutes from New Zealand, Spain and Portugal but the recent closure of restaurants has led to a dramatic fall in UK venison sales.

Writing in the Yorkshire Post, Sam Carlisle of the Countryside Alliance, said *'Given the historically low price of venison, now is the time to head to your local butcher and ask for venison steak, or indeed venison sausages or burgers. They are leaner than most meat, utterly delicious and you can be sure that your Sunday lunch will be helping maintain Britain's precious biodiversity.'*

The UK deer population is estimated at two million, the highest level for 1,000 years. Each year around 600,000 deer need to be killed to control the population. As they have no natural predators in the UK, numbers would double every year if left unchecked.

Experts fear that would result in trees and native plants being destroyed, especially in areas such as Norfolk's Thetford Forest and Hampshire's New Forest. Without the ability to put carcasses into the food chain, deer managers will be loath to continue the very necessary deer cull. **Elliot Mulligan – Daily Mail November 2020**

Editor's Note: Venison can be purchased at Stansted Farm Shop and at local Farmers' Markets

SUPPORT STANSTED WOODLAND - SPONSOR A TREE

The cost of replanting to replace the lost ash trees in large areas is a huge but vital part of Stansted Park's charitable mission. A mix of native hardwoods will optimise biodiversity and the introduction of new species, able to thrive in our changing climate, will add seasonal colour. New access paths will be created to enhance visitors' experience. For those who would like to contribute to this very important project, the suggested cost of sponsorship is £10 per tree and, if you are a tax payer, by completing a Gift Aid form the Foundation will be able to claim back tax. - **Lucy Wood**

Please visit the Stansted Park website for a sponsorship form to complete and return to:- Stansted Park Foundation, Stansted Park, Rowlands Castle, Hampshire, PO9 6DX. <https://www.stanstedpark.co.uk/treefundproject>

INSTALLATION OF NEW KISSING GATES



As part of the Stansted Foundation's programme to improve rights of way and access wherever practical, we have a rolling programme of replacing stiles with kissing gates. Although stiles are the traditional method of accessing the boundaries of land, they can be difficult for some people to navigate and, at certain times of the year, become very slippery.

Stansted Foundation are, therefore, in a collaborative plan with West Sussex County Council's Rights of Way Team to improve this situation. In this plan, the WSCC pay for and provide the kissing gate, and the Stansted Park Foundation provide the staff, labour, machinery and additional materials for the removal of the old stile and the installation of the new gate.

Michael Prior - (Photograph - Robert Godwin)

NEWS FROM THE MANSION



The Private Dining Room complete with reinstated doorway

While all is quiet in the House, in terms of events and public interaction, we have been busy planning changes to the visitor experience, ready for when we open again (hopefully) later this year. One of our Trustees, Yanni Petropoulos, has been working with us to rehang some of the paintings to help tell the story of Stansted House and the Ponsonby family more clearly. The main changes are in the Boudoir, where we will be exploring the architectural alterations made to Stansted by the different owners of the Estate over the years. Here the space will become more of an exhibition rather than a furnished room. This also enables us to use the space flexibly for events and, in particular, those all important pre-wedding bridal preparations!

In addition to this we have been converting the old Private Dining Room, which used to house the Model Railway, into an exhibition space. We have reinstated the old doorway so you can access it from the Grand Staircase and have a dramatic display case being refurbished to display the amazing objects from the Sir John Ponsonby Collection.

These include some beautiful miniatures, paintings and photographs as well as a variety of interesting military medals, letters and swords with stories to tell. These include the ones used at the Battle of Waterloo by Major General Sir William Ponsonby (who was killed there) and Major General Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby who was wounded.



Mission control in the Blue Drawing Room

Then, of course, there has been the important work of maintaining the fabric of the Mansion; the cupola has been repaired, making it weatherproof again, after water damage was discovered. Floors have received specialist treatments and essential electrical work completed.

We trialled our first on-line course before Christmas, a Zoom Wreath Making workshop, which proved to be successful, turning the Blue Drawing Room into what felt like mission control, with wires and screens and routers facilitating the event! If we are unable to reopen at Easter, we will look at offering some other on-line visitor experiences, so that you can enjoy Stansted and its cultural offerings from the comfort of your own home.

Despite the cold draught that sweeps through the office, it has been great to be back here after furlough. With a hot-water bottle to hand and fingerless gloves, the House is a perfect place to work in *ice-solation*!

Celia Hodges



Laying out paintings ready for redisplay in the Boudoir.

BOOKSHOP REFURBISHMENT



New Look Bookshop

During a quiet period late last year, we took the opportunity to work with the Friends of Stansted Park volunteers and the Garden Centre to give the bookshop a fresh new look. The old floral watercolours were replaced by clean crisp photographs of the House and grounds, to give the visitor a sense of place and a link to the House whilst browsing and dining at the Garden Centre. I hope you'll agree that the large print in the middle of the shop really brings the space to life; the photograph of the bluebells amongst the trees is a classic Stansted shot and is rightly celebrated here.

At present, the Bookshop is closed but will re-open when the circumstances over Covid-19 Lockdown changes for the better.

Lucy Wood

BOOKSHOP NEWS



I am delighted to report that, in 2020, the bookshop raised a total of £8,344.61, despite the fact that we were closed for five months. We are very grateful for the enormous number of books of very good quality which people have kindly donated.

Until lockdown was re-imposed after Christmas, we were going into the bookshop very early in the morning and leaving again before the Garden Centre filled with customers, to protect our slightly older volunteers. I look forward to re-opening as soon as we are able.

I will be happy to receive good quality books, preferably fiction (but no magazines, DVDs or CDs) once the Government restrictions on non-essential shops are eased again. Please remember us if you have been pruning your bookcase during lockdown. In the meantime, we regret we are not able to receive donations of any kind.

Thank you to all our customers for your support, and we look forward to seeing you again in the spring. Don't forget - this is where you can buy your beach reading for that long-awaited holiday!

Janet Mynors

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES



Recently, we had an inquiry from County Carlow, Ireland, asking about the involvement of Lady Blanche Bessborough with the production of Irish lace. I have to confess, I had absolutely no knowledge of this at all. Tessa Culley told me that we had some lace in the linen cupboards, but she did not know whether it was relevant. So, one rather dull afternoon during the quieter period of the virus, we made a successful search for it and the two photographs show a very small part of this collection of the Grayhill Cottage Industry, set up by Lady Blanche in the 1800's. She was one of the many Estate owners who were concerned that, during the winter months, there was little employment for the women who worked in the fields and, therefore, no money coming into the households in the villages around. She decided to attempt to find some form of income that could fill the gap.

Lady Blanche had a real interest, and talent, in lace-making so she began to offer lessons to local women and, after a rather shaky start, the numbers grew from just three to thirty in a couple of years. All the equipment such as linen, threads and designs were bought or developed by her and her friends. She would then take them to London to sell to her friends and then to Debenhams, who had a special department for such work and, eventually to a shop in Brook Street. This shop became an outlet for much craft work and, eventually, included basketry, leather goods and wooden chairs made mainly by the men.

The photographs show two examples of the lace work. Each was marked by a label and priced by Lady Bessborough and, miraculously, some items still have these attached!

Queen Victoria is said to have asked for a box of samples from which she selected several pieces as Christmas presents for her ladies. Prices were very sensibly set at a realistic level and the items were not just sold off cheaply.

Although this industry started in a very small way, the standard of the work was paramount and it became, for many years, a viable and successful business with many contributions from different towns and villages, bringing in much needed income to the workers. The onslaught of the terrible years of the Famine, the Irish Troubles and, finally, World War One, brought to an end this particular home industry. However, recent years have seen a surge of interest in craft work once more and many groups have formed to recreate and develop this work again, both as a hobby and as a business.

The best feature of the archivist work is that you never know where it will take you! This study has been a real pleasure and I look forward to a time when some of this work can be displayed and appreciated once more.

Diana Roberts



THE PROMS & TRIBUTE CONCERTS - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Set to return again on the 20th and 21st August, 2021, BEL Events will be putting on another musical weekend to remember. On Friday **The Bootleg Beatles** tribute band will be performing their flawless recreation of the greatest songbook of all time and **The Proms** will bring their usual classical grace to the stage on Saturday.

This year, **The Proms** will be accompanied by an aerial display by the **Kent Tigers Army Parachute Display Team**, followed by majestic Spitfire acrobatics while the sun sets. The finish will be a spectacular firework display, fully synchronised to the orchestration, to complete a memorable evening in the heart of our wonderful West Sussex countryside.



The organisers are, once again, kindly offering our members a **33% discount** on full price tickets. To claim your discount, you can enter one of the two codes below when purchasing your tickets online. There are only 200 concessions available and this will be on a first come, first served basis. These codes are to be redeemed by FOSP members only and must not be shared with friends and family.

Bootleg Beatles Concert Discount Code: FSPTBB

Proms Concert Discount Code: FSPTPS - Tickets via this link: <https://belevents.ticketsrv.co.uk/content/78>

PLAQUE AT MIDDLE LODGE



Last year marked the bicentenary of the death of King George III. To commemorate the event, Lewis Way, the then owner of the Stansted Estate, planted a new avenue of trees. A plaque, which can be seen on the west wall of Middle Lodge, carries the following inscription:

*The New Plantation of The Avenue was commenced
on the last day of the reign of his late Majesty
GEORGE III of blessed memory Saturday, January
twenty ninth MDCCCXX*



George III was acquainted with the Ways, having visited their family home, Denham Place, in Buckinghamshire. Following the royal death, Lewis Way was to seek the intervention of the King's son to realise his ambition to establish a Protestant church in Paris. George IV's letter to the French king made this possible. Today, the present St George's Anglican Church, Rue Auguste Vacquerie, Paris, stands as a legacy to Stansted's former owner. **Michael Olding** *NOTE: The plaque was the work of Emsworth sculptor J Holden.*

A FORETASTE OF SPRING



Tree Roots - Michael Parry

February is a sort of changeling among the months of the year. It belongs neither to winter nor to spring but possesses characteristics of both, particularly in its weather, which may be mild and wet or dry and frosty, while the month rarely passes without a spell of snowy weather, which comes as a great shock to precocious flowers and birds already busy with their first nests.

The mild spring-like days with which February never fails to delight us are in the intervals of her harsher moods and are among the most beautiful of the year. The countryside is full of colour at these times. The fields are fresh green-grey and have a clean windswept look. The sombre hues of the woods are turned by the sunshine into warm browns, greys and purples; the tracery of the elm tops thickens towards the end of the month as their twigs burst into reddish-purple blossom, beautiful to see against a background of blue-black storm clouds.

The waters of pond, river and ditch, proverbially full at this time, reflect delightfully the clear fresh blue of the sky and its feathery white clouds. The willows growing by the waterside, with their rich orange brown colouring, form one of the most beautiful sights of February, until their withies are cut for the basket-makers: for the evening always comes when only brown stumps are left of that mass of warm colour and then, a little later, I see a pile of freshly-woven hampers on the station platform ready for despatch and I know that, whatever may become of them then, they will never again bend and sway under the butterfly-weight of the little brown willow-wren, or see themselves reflected in the clear, deep water below.

Article by Ruth Tomalin - from The Hampshire Post - February 26th 1937 - Jill Waring

SPRINGTIME REVIVAL

Spring is here, new life new birth
Spreading wide across the earth.
Fields and lanes are green and white,
Hills and valleys fresh and bright.
Birdsong swells and cowslips peek,
Primroses the sunshine seek,
Bringing joy into our lives.
Nature evermore survives.

Valerie Godwin

IN PRAISE OF STANSTED

Oh, what would we do without Stansted,
Its forest and walks and its views?
A place to be peaceful and happy,
When all is so glum on the news.

Let's hope, in the summer at Stansted,
We can meet once again and be free
To go on a trip, or visit the House,
See Friends or enjoy a cream tea.

A Stansted Fan

HOPE

I volunteered some years ago when Stansted Park was iced with snow,
The brooding trees staring down like skeletons against the sky where red kites swoop and wheel and cry.
The winter days are short and long, saved by thoughts of Christmas and carol song.
As spring arrives the daffodils congregate and chase crocus and tulips across the Estate.
Alliums parade on purple spikes and salute the trees as buds explode and camouflage with leafy load.
Let's not forget our English rose that rambles and flowers all summer long, attracting bees and an admiring throng (of other insects!).
The Centre Border puffs out its cheeks and vibrant colour sunshine seeks.
Plants big and small fight for space and add much needed sparkle to our human race.
And then autumn arrives and plucks off the leaves but the fruits of our labour are hidden in seeds.
It's winter again, a colour of grey and that is the reason we made all the hay,
A warm, friendly blanket to ward off the chill and give us the hope that this vaccine will.....prevail. **PJ**

This poem was written by a garden volunteer and it gives us thoughts of better times ahead! - Editor

A MESSAGE FROM JILL & TONY WARING

From our home on Tenerife, we wish all our good Friends, Staff and Families of Stansted a safe and improving 2021.
Jill and Tony

FRIENDS OF STANSTED



IMPORTANT - DATE CHANGES FOR YOUR DIARY DUE TO GOVERNMENT COVID REGULATIONS

2021 HOUSE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The House is hoping to open the weekend of 10th/11th July

MARCH

Sunday 21st - Wedding Showcase
Possibly moved to the autumn - TBC

APRIL

Friday 24th - Murder Mystery Evening - **CANCELLED**

MAY

Sunday 30th - MG Car Rally - **DATE CHANGE**

JUNE

Friday 11th to Sunday 13th - The Garden Show
This date may be moved or there will be a
restriction on tickets - TBC

NO CHANGE TO THE FOLLOWING

Friday 25th to Sunday 27th - The Nostalgia Show

JULY

Saturday 10th to Sunday 11th - Cricketing Weekend

Saturday 17th—The Mikado by Opera Anywhere
Come along and enjoy a fantastic summer's evening at
Stansted Park with a performance of Gilbert & Sullivan's
magical masterpiece.

Saturday 24th to Sunday 25th
RNTA Outdoor Theatre in The Walled Gardens

AUGUST

Friday 13th to Saturday 14th - Mr Stink
David Walliams Outdoor Theatre on South Lawn

Friday 20th - The Bootleg Beatles Tribute Band

Saturday 21st - The Proms

SEPTEMBER

Friday 3rd - The Great Gatsby Outdoor Theatre in
The Walled Gardens.

Friday 10th - Murder Mystery Evening

OCTOBER

Friday 29th to Sunday 31st - Halloween Events (TBC)

NOVEMBER

Friday 26th to Saturday 27th - The Christmas Carol
Immersive Theatre in Stansted House

DECEMBER

Thursday 2nd to Sunday 19th
Christmas at Stansted Park (TBC)

For more information please contact the office on
023 9241 2265 or enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

Please Support Stansted House

FOSP MEMBER EVENTS - 2021

If you have queries for any of the Events, please contact
the providers directly via their websites or call the Estate
Office on 023 9241 2265.

20th MAY - FOSP TALK

Postponed until the autumn - TBC

TUESDAY 29th JUNE - **DATE CHANGE** SUMMER PARTY AT THE PAVILION

Booking forms being sent out with the May Newsletter

THURSDAY 22nd JULY - **DATE CHANGE** AGM AND COFFEE MORNING

THURSDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER - **DATE CHANGE** SPECIAL CREAM TEA

(Probably with 'Operatottie' - TBC)

WEDNESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER - **DATE CHANGE** EXTERNAL VISIT TO POLESDEN LACEY

Booking forms being sent out with the May Newsletter

Will FOSP members please be tolerant as Stansted House
staff and your Committee are trying to keep a programme of
events continuing under the present circumstance.

NOTE: FOSP Members who have not renewed
their membership will not be unable to attend
functions or receive a discount on House
productions.

COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACT POINTS

Chairman:- Michael Olding - michael.olding@btinternet.com

Secretary:- Anne Burton - anneburton99@gmail.com

Treasurer:- Sarah Hutchinson - hutchsj@yahoo.co.uk

Membership:- Paul Bennett - friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com

Newsletter:- Robert Godwin—crana.crana@ntlworld.com

CONTACTING STANSTED HOUSE **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE HOUSE IS CLOSED FOR VISITS AT THIS PRESENT TIME**

For a general enquiry, or for information about, visits and
social events, please telephone, email or write to:-
The Estate Office

Stansted Park Foundation

Stansted Park

Rowlands Castle

Hampshire

PO9 6DX Telephone No: 023 9241 2265

Email: enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

NOTE: For FOSP Membership Enquiries contact
Paul Bennett at friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com