

# FRIENDS OF STANSTED PARK



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I begin my report with the sad news that Robert & Valerie Godwin have decided to step down from the Committee, and the production of the quarterly Newsletter. They are very long serving FOSP members, having joined right at the beginning, 26 years ago. They have served as Committee Members, and Newsletter Editors, for the last 11 years, developing the Newsletter, and extending it to six pages. Robert, a keen photographer, has also attended most Foundation and FOSP events, taking photographs for the Newsletter. They they will both be missed for their dedication to FOSP, and the Committee and Membership thank them most sincerely.

This Newsletter is therefore in a different format this time, as it has been produced by the Committee.

Since the last Newsletter, we have had a talk by Jill Stanley on Fascinating Fungi on the Estate, see picture on page 4; the extremely popular annual Cream Tea, see picture on page 5; and a Coffee Morning, where members were given an update on the Foundation by Sasha Fardell, House and Events Manager, and where there was a also a Pop-Up Bookshop, from the Foundation's Bookshop in the Garden Centre – two much appreciated additions to the morning.

We are looking forward to the Yule Tide Tea in December, which has proved so popular that it sold out within days of being announced. Exciting plans are being made for next year's events and further details will be released soon.

Membership continues to grow and there are a number of events arranged by the Foundation that you can still attend in 2024, see page 6.

If you are looking for a Birthday or Christmas present why not consider buying an annual membership for friends or family so that they can enjoy the benefits throughout the year? You can delay the start of this to suit the occasion by contacting the Membership Secretary at: [friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com](mailto:friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com)

On behalf of the whole Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all FOSP Members and their families a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

Nigel Smith

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Summer Season at Stansted has been extremely full-on with all staff and volunteers dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to ensuring that our House Opening, Grounds & Gardens, and events operations, went smoothly. We are just about coming up for air now but are much looking forward to our Halloween and Christmas events which will set the seal on a highly frenetic but satisfying year.

Our visitor numbers at around 6,000 are now back to pre-Covid levels as people slowly emerge from the torpor that that cataclysmic event induced. The bespoke Tours and Heritage Talks have proved immensely popular and there is definitely a keen interest in a more focused analysis of various aspects of the history of Stansted House and the Ponsonby family.

The Summer Festival attracted around 4,000 folk which was a healthy uplift on last year with increasing amounts of eccentric and eclectic entertainment! My thanks, as always, to those FOSP members who volunteered throughout the weekend.



A new addition to our events programme this year was the South Downs Food Festival organised by the Farm Shop. This year's theme was the celebration of the impact of Elizabeth David on British cuisine. The Festival was opened by Dame Prue Leith and proved to be very popular. It is considered to be set fair for the future as it establishes itself firmly in the Stansted Park calendar.

We were sad to say farewell to Edward Mynors who retired as a Lay Reader of the Octagon Parish, although he remains as Reader Emeritus. We are very grateful for all the support that he has kindly provided over many years to St Paul's at our Monthly Prayers and Carol Services as well as our Armistice Day Service. Please note that, from 2025, the Monthly Prayers will be held on the first Thursday of every month.

I express my heartfelt appreciation to all those members of FOSP who willingly give up their time to support the Foundation throughout the year, and for the most generous donations which assist us in accomplishing some of our projects.

David Bennett

## HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES

I am presently busy with preparations for the winter work programme. This will need to take into account the loss of our Assistant Forester Sam, who will be going on a sabbatical for the months of January to April inclusive, we wish him all the very best of luck and safe return from his travels.

The wet summer has impacted many operations in the forest and now the autumn rains have come this is complicating the catching up of many tasks deferred earlier on due to ground conditions. We did manage to get the Highland cattle into the Pond Meadow for a good period this year which has done a great deal of good in grazing or trampling the pond sedge which is trying to take over the sward to the detriment of less robust flora. We have also been helped in the management of this area by the South Downs Rangers and their volunteers who have tackled beds of bramble and pollarded a number of willows to reduce shading of the meadow, for which we are very grateful.

The cutting of chestnut coppice has started with the first block completed. We will need to revisit it after the coppice products have been extracted, as there are a number of dying ash trees that will need to be removed as well. Fortuitously it is between two other recently cut blocks so that we can keep opening areas close to each other, which will provide new violet plants for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary caterpillars to feed on. We saw very few of them this season in the poor conditions during the flight period but I recorded them on two occasions so hope more appeared on suitable days when I was not near their sites to give us a reasonable population for next spring and hope we get the weather for them to thrive.



One of the species we have planted throughout our recent plantings is wild cherry. New improved seed sources are now available to nurserymen which are a huge improvement on saplings used in the past which were coarse and heavily branched. The one we are using is Wildstar and it certainly grows very vigorously with regular whorls of light branches, which make formative pruning very easy. I am hoping that in the years to come these will produce some fine stems suitable for cabinet making and in the meantime, they will give us spring flower and vibrant autumn colour.





Full marks to one of the sharp-eyed naturalists who regularly visit the estate who recently found a fungi that is a new record for us. In fact, it has only been recorded in this country since 2012 originating from Madagascar. It has colonised Australia and New Zealand and now Europe. It is called the Orange Pore Fungus and is very attractive. As it appears to live on small dead branches on the ground I hope that it will not be a problem and just carry on converting fallen wood back into the forest soil.



Photo credit Jill Stanley

Let's hope for a drier winter so we can get on with forest operations without significant ground damage which is expensive and time consuming to put right. In the meantime, we can enjoy the autumn colours which as I write are transforming the forest into a palette of many stunning hues.

Michael Prior

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR THOSE WHO RENEW IN JANUARY

For those of you who renew in January, and would like to set up a Standing Order, it is quite easy to do with your bank, making the payment for the 1st January each year. If you choose to set this up (you then don't have to worry about remembering to renew each year), please inform Paul Bennett, the Membership Secretary, by email below. FOSP Account details for your Bank are :

**Friends of Stansted Park**

Account Number: 61788627    Sort Code: 60 -10 – 20

**(Please use your Membership number as a reference)**

Alternatively, you can pay by **BACS to the FOSP account**, using the details above, or by **card via the Estate Office**, giving your **name and membership number**.

**Estate Office 023 9241 2265, option 5.**

If you have any queries, or changes to address, or email, please contact me, Paul Bennett, Membership Secretary, by email: -

[friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com](mailto:friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com)

**FOSP EVENTS**

**DECEMBER 2024**

**Yuletide Afternoon Tea (SO SORRY, SOLD OUT)**

**MARCH 2025**

**AGM followed by Coffee Morning**      March 2024  
Date and details in the Spring Newsletter

**MAY 2025**

**Talk on Southdowns National Park**      Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 2pm  
Booking information in the next Newsletter

**JUNE 2025**

**Coach trip to Athelhampton House**      Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
Details and booking information in the next Newsletter

Other Events are planned for later in the year, all details in subsequent Newsletters:  
**Summer Supper Party, other interesting talks, autumn Coffee Morning, Yuletide Tea**



**The ever popular Cream Tea in August, held in the beautiful setting of the Main Hall and Music Room, with delightful piano accompaniment by Vanessa Bowler.**

**FOSP Events should be booked via the Estate Office on 023 9241 2265 Option 5**  
**For access and parking at the House please use the North Entrance, go through the automatic black gates, and park in front of the House, unless otherwise directed**

**FOUNDATION EVENTS**

**NOVEMBER 2024**

**Wreath Making Workshop** Friday 29<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November & Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December

**DECEMBER 2024**

**Calligraphy Workshop** Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 10.00am

**A Christmas Carol** Immersive Theatre, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December & Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December

**Christmas Carols at St Pauls Chapel** Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 4.00pm For catering purposes, please contact the office if you would like to join us

**An Evening with Peter Auty** Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 6.30 – 8.30pm

**2025**

The monthly **Midday Prayers at St Pauls Chapel** has moved from Wednesday, and will be held on the **first Thursday** of each month, from February to October.

**For a full itinerary of events and House Tours, see the Stansted website**

**[www.stanstedpark.co.uk.whatson](http://www.stanstedpark.co.uk.whatson)**

**For more information, contact the Office 023 9241 2265, [enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk) or visit website [www.stanstedpark.co.uk.stansted-house](http://www.stanstedpark.co.uk.stansted-house)**

**A discount to FOSP Members is available on most Foundation Events. Contact the Office, quoting your Membership number for discount codes**

**COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS**

Contact your FOSP Committee via the Membership Secretary, Paul Bennett

[friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com](mailto:friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com)



The FOSP stand at the Food Festival, showing our new promotional banners