

FRIENDS OF STANSTED PARK



THE ESTATE UNDER LOCKDOWN

These are indeed very worrying times for the Nation and Stansted Park due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Sadly, we have had to close the Mansion to the Public until at least the end of May and postpone some of our events. We wait to hear what scope and scale of events we will be allowed to host when the Government eases the lockdown.

Unfortunately, the much heralded Easter Opening had to be cancelled, which was a huge shame for our staff and volunteers as well as our potential visitors. Given the recent exceptional weather, we would have been justified in thinking that we were in for a bumper season. A few couples have had to postpone their weddings until later in the year and I'm sure that all the pent-up and suppressed energy from delayed nuptials will make for some amazing celebrations when they do take place!

The Estate's operations have been significantly reduced and, as a consequence, we have placed many of our staff on furlough for what may be a three month period. We have retained a light maintenance, caretaking, forestry and grounds team to keep on top of any safety issues and to be able to provide an emergency response to our many tenants.

The Stansted Park Foundation fully appreciates how troubling these times are for the health and well-being of the Nation, both physically and economically and there are many people who are deeply worried about their future and their livelihoods. We are all earnestly hoping, of course, that normal service can be resumed as soon as possible and that our exceptional signature outlets of the Farm Shop, Pavilion Tea Rooms and Garden Centre will be able to be back to full trading operations very soon.

However, I am certain that when the 'Great Unlock' comes, phased and staggered though it may be, Stansted Park and its excellent Mansion, grounds, woodland and parkland will spring back into life with renewed vigour and the Park will once again be at the heart of our enjoyment of this wonderful rural idyll and our morale will be lifted. As Alexander Pope wrote :

*'Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never Is, but always To be blest.
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.'*

We look forward with optimism to better days when we can bounce back from these strange times.

At the time of writing, the Opera in July, the Proms Concerts in August and The Garden Show at the beginning of September are still planned to go ahead (provisional dates are: 11th July, 21st-22nd August, and 4th-7th September). We will just have to make up for lost time by ensuring that these excellent events are well supported and that we make a real jamboree of them!

Thank you to all our FOSP members, volunteers and staff who are following Government advice and waiting patiently to leap into action and help Stansted Park make the most of the remainder of the year. I hope you all stay safe and healthy.

David Bennett

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - SUMMER 2020



Ash firewood stretching along the old drive in the Sling

I sincerely hope that by the time you read this the Coronavirus restrictions will be starting to lift and we might be able to get back to some kind of normality, whatever the new normal happens to be! David Bennett's thoughts on the impact on the wider estate are above but, as I write, we are able to carry on with some tasks in the yard and forest. I have suspended all of our major felling operations, especially roadside work for the present, as this not only brings more people into close contact (at least four required for roadside tree felling) but the potential double handling of ropes, ladders and equipment by more than one person. However, the primary reason is that, if there were to be an accident, it would be adding to the burden of our heroic NHS staff and would be a further drain on their resources. We are continuing with our fence material production and there is plenty of spraying and plantation maintenance work to do requiring minimal contact with anyone. Powell Forestry are continuing our

diseased ash felling programme at present whilst they can.

People are obviously missing the freedom to get out and enjoy our wonderful countryside. Therefore, I have been sending pictures of interesting and beautiful plants and parts of the forest as I come across them to Lucy Wood, our Media and Marketing Manager, who has been posting them on social media and on our website in an effort to lift people's spirits and remind them of the beauty of the natural world.

Unfortunately, the launch of our new 'Tree Sponsorship Programme', to replant the large areas of diseased ash we are removing, coincided with the start of the Covid-19 crisis. I can fully understand that, with worries over the health of family and friends, job security and finances, people will be reluctant to sign up to such a scheme, especially when so many other charities are struggling. I am hopeful though that, in time, people might want to support the restoration of the forest and be able to say in a few years', as the trees start to have a presence in the landscape, that they had a small part to play in it. As we finished off our major conifer replanting programme this season, only a small area of ash was replanted. This is adjacent to the Finchdean Road, between the park wall and the Prisoner of War Ditch in the Sling. The 300 tree scheme was designed and planted by Sam Lock and is an attractive mix of native broadleaves and a number of ornamentals; look out for the sweet gum in a couple of years time! **Michael Prior**



Sam Lock in the plantation he designed.

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends of Stansted,

Following the restrictions placed on us all, it was with great regret that the Friends Committee have had to cancel the trip, the Summer Party and the Cream Tea. I can only apologise without reservation to all members that we will not be able to enjoy your company at Stansted this summer.

We are living in an extraordinary time with restrictions unprecedented in peacetime. We can only be guided by official advice and do all that is necessary to safeguard our loved ones and ourselves. Once this crisis is over we will pick up the pieces, continue supporting the Foundation, and enjoy the benefits which come with membership.

It is our intention to keep you informed of any developments, and hope to be sending information to all Friends via email and you can keep up to date with the Estate by viewing the Foundation's website:-

www.stanstedpark.co.uk .

With best wishes,

Michael Olding

COVID-19 STATEMENT - UPDATED 17TH APRIL 2020

The Stansted Park Foundation is regularly monitoring the Government website:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

This is providing up to date public information and advice on COVID-19, which includes sections on the number of cases, risk levels and returning travellers from affected areas, as well as guidance on actions to take. The Foundation considers this to be the authoritative source of information from which we will take the appropriate measures. The Foundation requests that all members of the public comply with this advice whilst at Stansted Park. Should the situation develop which requires a more active response from the Foundation, then information will be disseminated via information signs, social media as well as on the Stansted Park website.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ARBORETUM AND WALLED GARDENS
ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

The Stansted Park Garden Centre and Stansted Farm Shop is open for shopping using a 'Click 'n' Collect' system. For more information regarding the services offered by these outlets can you please visit their websites on:-

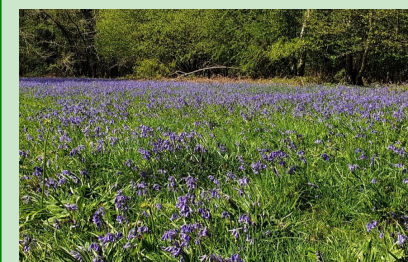
www.stanstedfarmshop.com and www.yourlocalgardencentre.co.uk/stansted-park

The Main Gate will be open Tuesday – Sunday from 8:00am – 4:00pm only. The Gate will be locked all day on Monday. The two car parks located on Broad Walk are now permanently closed until further notice. **Stansted Park Foundation**

LYELS WOOD

Under permitted Government rules regarding 'essential exercise' during the current Covid-19 epidemic, Robert and I were able to set out on our favourite bluebell walk through Lyels Wood.

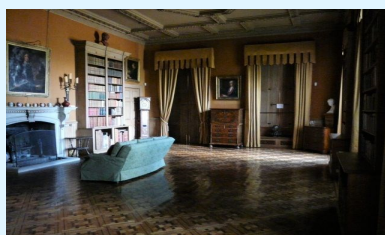
Carrying our SPF Conservation Area passes, we walk there every spring, to lose ourselves in the wonder of nature. This year was no different and yet it *was* different. With all the horror and fear in the world around us and with so many deaths and dying each day, here was a peace and tranquillity that was solace for the soul. We saw deer between the trees, butterflies flitting through glades and we stood still and listened to the silence, broken only by birdsong. Swathes of colour spread out before us, vibrant carpets of bluebells, interspersed with a myriad of other spring flowers, giving the overall impression of a glorious watercolour painting. Primroses, violets, wood anemones, stitchwort, yellow archangel, celandines, wild strawberry flowers and even a few red campions; all were there. All gave us an uplifting strength of purpose to come home and 'carry on'. For nature heals and nature continues throughout the seasons. Nature has a normality, even in the midst of extreme



crises and our lives will, one day, be normal again too. **Valerie Godwin**

THE LIBRARY

Part of the work undertaken in the House since Christmas has been a complete review of the Library furniture and its presentation to the public. It was eventually decided to clear many items to give a much better view of the room and its vast selection of books. So, a good clean was given and the floor polished. The result can be seen in this photograph.



The library after it had been emptied and the floor polished

Daniel Cook

SHEILA



I would like to take this opportunity of thanking both the Foundation and the FOSP members for the messages of sympathy and support that were sent to me following Sheila's death in January. Sheila simply loved Stansted; its beauty, the seasonal changes, the wildlife and its peace and tranquillity.

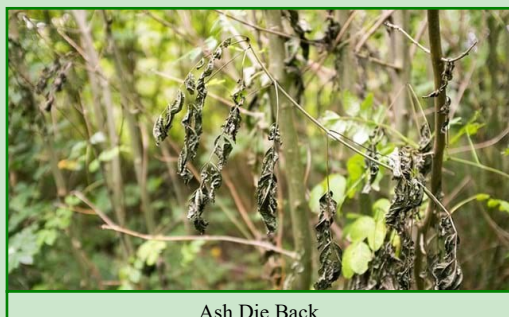
She gave great support to the Foundation and Friends over the years in the many spheres of Stansted life and I hope that she will be remembered for her flair and warm personality that made her such a lovely person to be associated with.

A tree, a giant redwood, will be planted in her memory on the South Lawn, one of her favourite locations.

Michael Olding



YOUR CHANCE TO HELP: STANSTED PARK FOUNDATION FIGHTS ASH DISEASE DEVASTATION



Ash Die Back

Watching the forests burn in Australia, covering an area roughly the size of England, tore at our hearts. We knitted wraps for bats, praised firefighters and donated money to rescue efforts.

But even as we count our blessings, our own forests are suffering a devastating threat.

Ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) moves frighteningly quickly – most of this species at Stansted Park has some degree of infection and young trees particularly are either dead or dying.

Now the Stansted Park Charitable Foundation is offering the chance to help forests closer to home, planting thousands of trees to recreate forest cover, offset emissions and create wildlife habitats.

This virulent disease weakens even larger trees, reducing their ability to fight secondary pathogens and making them unstable. This has serious safety implications in areas of public access and those adjacent to roads and buildings. Managing them is fraught with danger, meaning landowners are, with heavy hearts, having to fell large numbers of ash trees.

The Stansted Park Foundation has reluctantly begun its own felling programme, under licence from the Forestry Commission.

Head Forester, Michael Prior, said, *'This is a last resort, something we never wanted to do. Ash is one of our most common trees and its widespread loss will have a disastrous effect. The species is vital for biodiversity, with huge numbers of creatures reliant on it for food or habitat. Old trees, with numerous cavities, are homes for birds, insects, bats and a myriad of insects and fungi. Many superb young trees are having to be felled and sold at a fraction of their potential value rather than as fine timber in the future.'*

THE TREE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

The cost of replanting these large areas is huge but a 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 laid to enhance visitors' experience.

The Foundation is hoping individual sponsors will 'buy a tree', perhaps as a present for family members or in memory of a loved one.

Michael Prior stated, *'We are incredibly fortunate that Stansted Park is well loved – and are very grateful that so many people have already expressed support for this project. While it won't be possible to identify your individual tree, you will be able to specify which area and species you'd like and know that you have permanently committed to the restoration of the forest.'*

For those who would like to contribute to this wonderful project the suggested cost of sponsorship is £10 per tree. For details, please contact:- marketing@stanstedpark.co.uk

Stansted Park Foundation

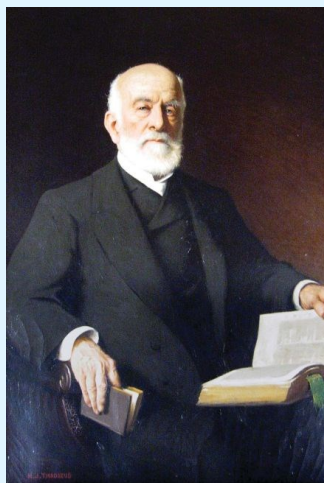


Sweet Gum Tree

CHANGE OF COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Will Friends please note that Helen Spilsted has decided to stand down from her post as Membership Secretary. Paul Bennett, a Committee Member, has agreed to take on the responsibility and he has met with Helen at the House to start the changeover. Helen, Benny and Anne, with the invaluable assistance and support of Kim, are currently ensuring that the handover is successfully managed. I am sure that we all wish Helen our best wishes for the future. *Michael Olding*

REVEREND WALTER PONSONBY, 7TH EARL OF BESSBOROUGH



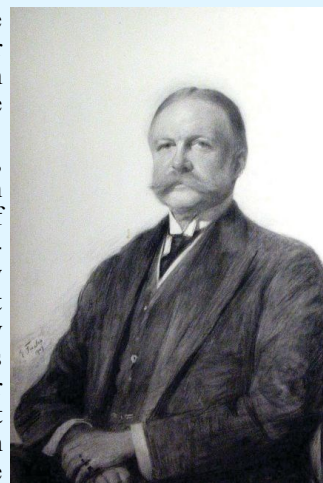
Reverend Walter Ponsonby

The Music Room at Stansted contains a number of fine paintings, none more so than that of the Reverend Walter Ponsonby, 7th Earl of Bessborough. Painted in 1901, superb in detail, the portrait is the work of H J Thaddeus and is one of the room's stewards' favourites.

The Reverend Walter William Brabazon Ponsonby, 1821-1906, brother of the 5th and 6th Earls, inherited the Earldom in 1895 when his elder brother, Frederick, 6th Earl of Bessborough, died unmarried and without a male heir. He was 74 years of age when he succeeded to the title. Walter Ponsonby was born in 1821 at Roehampton in Surrey and educated at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He took Holy Orders in 1846 and, between the years 1846 and 1894, he acted as Rector of Canford Magna in Wiltshire from 1846-1869, of Beer Ferris in Devon from 1869-1875, of Marston Bigot in Somerset from 1875-1880, and of Stutton in Suffolk from 1880-1894. An engraved silver plated soup tureen and cover, presented by the parishioners of Stutton to Walter on his retirement, can be seen in the Main Dining Room. On 15th January 1850, Walter Ponsonby

married Lady Louisa Susan Cornwallis Eliot and together they had eight children. The 7th Earl died in Pimlico, London in 1906, at the age of 84, and is buried at Piltown, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.

The portrait of the 7th Earl's eldest son, Edward (born March 1851) by Emil Fuchs, is by the Dining Room door.



Edward Ponsonby

HENRY JONES THADDEUS, 1859- 1929

Henry Jones Thaddeus received his artistic training in Cork (his home town), London and Paris before embarking on a remarkable career that took him all over the world. In 1907 he emigrated to California with his wife and family and, in 1912, published his autobiography* which contained a fascinating account of his time as a Parisian student, his later travel and contacts with some of the most significant figures of the age. Today, Thaddeus is regarded as one of the top Irish artists of the 19th Century. Although chiefly remembered as a portrait painter of subjects from the upper echelons of society, his range was wide, including plein-air landscape/subject painting, Oriental pictures as well as Biblical works. Two of his paintings, 'The Wounded Poacher', painted in 1881, when he was a student, now in The National Gallery of Ireland, and 'An Irish Eviction' (1889) are highly regarded as excellent examples of realism.

Born in 1859, Henry Thaddeus Jones entered the Cork School of Art at the age of ten. In 1879, aged twenty, he won the prestigious Royal Dublin Society Taylor prize and, two years later, whilst a student at the Academie Julian, he painted his acclaimed 'The Wounded Poacher'. By the time he had completed an eighteen month study of Renaissance Art in Florence, he had developed into an outstanding plein-air artist, whilst also excelling at studio portraiture, which brought him considerable commercial success. It was around this time that he altered his name to its present form. By 1887, Thaddeus was settled in his London studio, although spending significant periods throughout the late 1880s and 1890s in France, Italy, Germany, Morocco, Australia, the United States and Egypt, where he was Court Painter to the Khedive, Abbas II Hilmy. His painting of the Khedi (1893) was, at the Khedi's request, delivered as a gift to Queen Victoria by the artist himself. *"I was not altogether unknown to the Queen"* noted Thaddeus in his autobiography, *"and, as I bowed, she gave me a gracious and very pleasant smile."* Other notable sitters included Franz Liszt, William Gladstone and two papal commissions, Pope Leo XII in 1885 and then his successor, Pius X in 1903, when he persuaded the new Pope to agree to the presence of a photographer at their next sitting. The resultant photograph of sitter and painter (shown) was, Thaddeus believed, unique.



In 1917, ill health caused the artist to return to England, where he settled at Appley Court in Ryde on the Isle of Wight. On the 4th May 1929, the Isle of Wight County Press reported his death from a seizure. He is buried at St John's Cemetery on the outskirts of the town.

**Recollections of a Court Painter, published by John Lane 1922. There is a rare copy in the Hampshire Library Service.*

Michael Olding

BOOKSHOP

I am sure that most of the Friends are aware of Stansted Park Foundation's Bookshop in the Garden Centre, at the rear, opposite the Café. All the money raised goes towards projects around the Estate, for the enjoyment of visitors. We are obviously still closed at the moment, and will remain so until the Garden Centre opens fully but, while you are in isolation, you may be taking the opportunity to sort out your bookcases or read some of your books.

When the Garden Centre is fully functioning again, we would be pleased to receive any good clean hardbacks or paperbacks, fiction or non-fiction - books can be left at the Bookshop, in the dresser cupboard. We would be delighted to receive them and see our customers again, after this unforeseen closure. We will be able to arrange collection, if required - contact me, on :-

jemynors@btinternet.com

Thank you and best wishes, **Janet Mynors.**

THINGS IN BLOOM

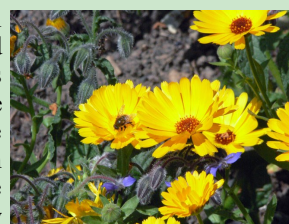
Ruth Tomalin - from the Hampshire Post 21st May 1937



Of all the months in the year, May is the time when spring and summer mingle their loveliness, when birdsong is at its height and the woods are clad in their first green freshness. We may deck out our streets and houses with red, white and blue in honour of our newly crowned King and Queen, but man will never outdo nature when every English meadow, wood and garden is blaring with the Royal colours of blue and silver, purple and gold in clearer and brighter tints than we can ever hope to achieve.

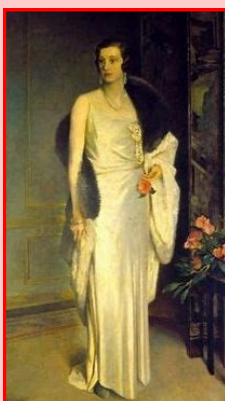
Now the meadows are carpeted with buttercups, daisies and sweet-scented freckled cowslips. In the gardens bloom their cousins, the hybrid cowslips, with thick clusters of flowers in rich polyanthus shades of yellow, orange and red, and the true cowslip fragrance. In the woods are drifts of bluebells, matching the wood-smoke from the foresters' fires. Every hedgerow is bright with purple vetches, yellow deadnettle – each of its little flowers as delicately marked as a rare and lovely orchid. A flower worth searching for this month is the wild meadow-orchid. The common sweet-scented purple one is easy to find, but the flower often has varieties of the loveliest mauve and shell-pink shades, their delicate veins exquisitely pencilled in pale green. Towards the end of the month, many rarer orchises may be found in the woods and on open downs such as the dainty dark purple fly-orchis. If you are lucky enough to find them, remember that the bulb of an orchid will not live if the flowers are pulled. Nature's regalia, like England's, may be admired by all but touched by none; and, in any case, the flowers look far more beautiful growing; picked, they lose the dainty freshness in which lies their charm.

Gold is the traditional colour of Royalty and it may be seen all over the countryside in May – blazing banks of broom and almond-scented gorse, in whose prickly strongholds long-tailed tits, goldfinches and vociferous yellow-hammers are rearing their young. In woods and gardens fruit trees are covered with snowy, pink-tinted blossoms. But if the May-time woods and fields are beautiful by day, they are even more so at night, when the soft, crinkly young foliage rustles in the dark and the nightingale sings in quiet lanes and lonely copses. Then, when the warmth rises in grateful waves from the earth where the spring sunshine has soaked in, and the air between the waves is deliciously sharp and cold, the warm scent of bluebells, the bitter, beautiful tang of curly young bracken, and the glimmer of orchards through the dusk have a magical quality. The cherry trees of early May are never so wildly beautiful as when they are seen by moonlight; and, in the still night woods like snowy crab trees, send out drifts of sweetness never caught by day. There is food for every sense as you stand in the scented dark, while the small people of the woods go about their own business, rustling along their private paths through the grass, and the apple-scented sweetbriar reaches out tiny clutching fingers from the edge of the ride.



In lockdown at our home in Tenerife, Tony and I wish all our FOSP friends and staff members, the very best of health in these difficult times and the hope that you will all remain safe. Our very best wishes, Jill and Tony Waring

‘THE KIDS WHO MADE THE 1920S ROAR - THE BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS’



Loelia Ponsonby

On leap year's night, 1928, Loelia Ponsonby, soon to be Duchess of Westminster, hosted the ‘Dream of Fair Women Ball’ in the heart of London's Mayfair, at Claridge's newly redecorated mirrored silver and green ballroom. The ball featured what Tatler magazine termed ‘the loveliest women in England’ in a tableau vivant of futuristic fashions. It was the very embodiment of the ‘Bright Young Things’ (a nickname given to them by the tabloid press), a hedonistic group of young artists and socialites who lit up interwar London with elaborate parties and pranks.

The photographer Cecil Beaton, who had just celebrated his 24th birthday, was tasked with designing the outfits for this most talked-about event, be it for the huntswoman of 1960, the bather of the future, the nun or the bridge-player of 1980 or Ascot 2000. Several bridal or going-away outfits were also included, with his wilful sister, Baba, exquisitely attired as ‘the bride of 2028’, in a white and silver embroidered satin confection along neoclassical lines, adorned with a vast Elizabethan lace collar. Beaton's portrait of the Hon Mrs Inigo Freeman-Thomas (or Blossom, as she was known) in her towering Ascot garb, has become something of a symbol for the excesses of this era, her angular gaze one of patrician disdain.

Tickets for the ball cost three guineas, including supper and champagne. the equivalent of nine days' wages for a skilled tradesman. Never before - and quite possibly never again - did so many glamorous society women parade in costumes as audacious as they were lovely.

The Mail on Sunday ‘You’ Magazine March 8th 2020

SUMMER

Summer, are you here at last?
Have you fled wild winter's blast?
Will you permit the rose to bloom,
The sun to shine each afternoon
And, underneath the apple tree,
Might I eat scones and jam for tea?

Valerie Godwin



SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2020

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR BOTH HOUSE AND FOSP MEMBERS

In light of the new Government guidelines for COVID-19 the directors of Stansted Park Foundation have taken the decision to cancel all gatherings and events at the house until at least 22 May 2020. This information will be updated in line with any changes in Government policy.

If you have booked tickets for any of the events that fall within this time-frame, and require a refund, please contact the office on:- **023 9241 2265** or enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

Lucy is frequently updating the Stansted website so will FOSP members please check it regularly.
<http://www.stanstedpark.co.uk/stansted-park>

STANSTED FARM SHOP - COVID-19 UPDATE SHOP OPENING AND LOCAL DELIVERIES

The farm shop is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am - 4pm, with numbers restricted to ensure social distancing, in accordance with Government guidelines. We are fully stocked with meat, fresh fruit and vegetables and most staple items and we have simplified our online orders to fulfil local deliveries during the current period of self-isolation.

PRODUCTS ONLINE: Restricted to weekly grocery, fruit and vegetables and meat boxes, along with weekly updates, details of which will be sent via the Farm Shop newsletter which you can join on line.

There is a minimum order of £30 with a delivery charge of £3.99. Orders over £60 will be delivered free of charge.

We will be delivering on Thursdays to the following areas:-

Forestside, West Marden, Compton & Walderton, Rowlands Castle, Horndean, Westbourne, Emsworth, Bosham, Aldsworth, Funtington, West Ashling, and Chichester. **Deliveries to Havant is Friday.**



Delivery Times: Please order by 12 noon on Wednesday for delivery the same week. We will plan 3-hour delivery slots during the afternoon/evening but, until we know what the take-up is for this service, we won't be able to specify slots at this stage. However, if you can work with close neighbours and friends and combine for a good-sized order, then we will be able to arrange a tighter delivery slot. You can leave a cool-box outside the door if you are not able to be home, or if you are self-isolating, in which case please let us know.

This service has been set up as many of our customers are understandably staying away from public spaces on account of Coronavirus. However, if we don't trade during this period, like many small businesses, we will struggle to keep going. **Please do use this service if you can, and encourage friends and neighbours to do the same.** We want to keep providing you with local, quality, seasonal ingredients and are excited about this new service. Not only will you be supporting the Farm Shop, but also many of the local producers who will struggle during this time.

Your delivery will be packed with care, with hygiene our first priority. All produce will be fresh (and can be frozen) and will be packed on ice during delivery. We can provide an insulated box for your produce if you don't have your own cool-box for 'click and collect' but please allow us 24 hours to assemble your boxes. You will be notified as to when to pick up your provisions. Call us from the car park **02392 413576** when you arrive for 'click and collect'.

Contact: info@stanstedfarmshop.com or **02392 413576** *The Farm Shop Team*

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

For a general enquiry, or for information about FOSP membership, 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**

Fax: **023 9241 3773**

Email: enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

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 Secretary:- Paul Bennett
friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com

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

NEXT FOSP NEWSLETTER COPY DATE

Friday 25th July 2020 - Autumn
Articles would be welcome