

Appendices to MPAG Written Representation

Appendix 13.....Local History of Stamford

(Source: Stamford Town Council website)

**Application by Mallard Pass Solar Farm Limited for an Order Granting
Development Consent for the Mallard Pass Solar Project – project ref. EN010127**

Submission by Mallard Pass Action Group (MPAG) – unique ID ref. 20036230

Extracts from the Stamford Town Council website

The History of Stamford



About Stamford

“Stamford is located on the River Welland in the county of Lincolnshire, just off the A1 and approximately 90 miles north of London and 14 miles north-west of Peterborough. In addition to the A1, the A14 East/West link crosses the A1 only a few miles south of Stamford, as does the A47 with connections to Leicester and beyond.

The town lies on the Birmingham to Cambridge/Stansted Airport railway line, and Peterborough, with its East Coast line connections to the South and North, is only 15 minutes away.

The town has a population of around 18,350 people and is within the South Kesteven District which covers an area of approximately 364 square miles and has a total population of around 120,000.

Situated in the far south of the county, it is a [beautiful market town of predominantly stone buildings](#) which retains its medieval street pattern. Amongst its many notable historic buildings is the [15th-century Browne's Hospital](#), founded by one of the town's rich wool merchants, and more famously the grand Elizabethan stately home, Burghley House. It is a popular visitor destination and a good base from which to explore the surrounding area.

Historically the town's economy was based upon the [wool industry](#) but today has a diverse range of industries with tourism, retail and service sectors being major employers. New high-tech industries have also been attracted into the area.

The name Stamford derives from the Old English and means 'stone ford' and refers to its crossing point of the River Welland. The name appeared in the [Domesday Book \(1086\)](#) as Stanford.

Stamford Buildings

In 1967, Stamford was the first designated conservation area in England, and the whole of the old town and St Martins has thus become an area of outstanding architectural and historic interest of national importance. Within this area there are over 400 buildings classed as Grade II (of special architectural or historic interest), or Grade II* (of particular importance). There are also eight ancient monuments in and around the town on either side of the Welland.

The existing street pattern has essentially stayed the same since Saxon times, with Medieval and Georgian buildings now predominating. Stamford is a town best explored on foot, – many narrow pedestrian ways have survived – and unexpected open spaces have been retained. Many of the historic buildings have been restored and repaired.

Of the 14 original churches, five Medieval ones still survive, close together in the centre of town.

All Saints' Church, on the north side of Red Lion Square, is principally Early English, with 15th century restoration by John and William Browne, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. Of interest are the vaulted porch and a series of brasses to the aforementioned Browne family.

St George's Church in St George's Square is possibly of very early origin (11th century) but was rebuilt in 1449 by William de Bruges, first Garter King of Arms, as the chapel of the Knights of the Garter. It has several monuments of interest as well as a collection of Garter panes in the 15th century north chancel window.

At the south east corner of Red Lion Square is the Church of St John the Baptist, a complete, mid-15th century perpendicular building with splendid carved angels in the roof of the same period. Ancient glass is seen in several windows as well as brasses and carved screens on north and south sides of the chancel.

St Mary's Church, at the top of St Mary's Hill above the Town Hall, is the town's 'mother' church with a very fine broach spire of the 14th century.

St Michael's Church in the High Street, a disused church of 1836 on the site of a 12th century predecessor, has now been converted into three shops. St Martin's Church across the river in High Street St Martin's, is a stately late 15th century perpendicular building with fine glass, some of it unique, built on an older site. Monuments to the Cecil family include the fine Renaissance monument to the first Lord Burghley, William Cecil, who died in 1598.



The George Hotel, Stamford



Brownes Hospital, Stamford



Stamford Museum

On the north side of Broad Street is [Browne's Hospital](#), an extremely interesting [15th century building built by William Browne](#), a wealthy Stamford wool merchant, who was six times an Alderman and who died in 1489. The hospital was built for "ten poor men and two women" with a Warden and Chaplain. It then consisted of a common room divided into cubicles. Altered and enlarged in 1870 and later modernised in 1963-64, the hospital now has six double and five single rooms. The chapel retains a fine screen, original pews and a pre-Reformation altar slab and there is rather fine 15th century glass both here and in the Audit Room. The whole building, set so charmingly around its quiet courtyards, is full of human and architectural interest.

There are [eight ancient monuments](#) in and around Stamford. Amongst these are an arch, part of a 12th century town house on St Mary's Hill, whilst another is a 13th century bastion that is the only surviving relic of the old town wall. Outside the wall to the east is the fine Greyfriars' gateway that was erected in 1350; also of interest is St Leonard's Priory which was the earliest of the town's monastic buildings. It was erected for Benedictine monks and the imposing west front still remains.

[Stamford School dates from 1532](#) and is now part of Stamford Endowed Schools. The surviving part of the Norman and Early English St Paul's Church remains on the site. Also worth seeing is

the Brasenose Knocker, a copy of that brought by Oxford students from their Oxford College in 1333 and now returned there.

Close to the bridge on the south side of the River Welland is the [George Hotel whose famous "gallows" inn sign](#) spans the former Great North Road. This site has been catering for travellers since the days when the resident Knights of St John of Jerusalem cared for pilgrims passing through the town.

[Stamford Library](#), on the High Street, is housed within the portico of the original market and shambles which stood beyond; it was opened as a library in 1906 by the then Stamford Borough Council. This building also offers a Heritage Centre which displays the Stamford Tapestry. This took 17 years to complete and was finished in 2000. It depicts the Town's history, including many of the churches, buildings, industries and people. It was worked in 6 panels by over 25 embroiders and measures 20 feet long with a 20 foot drop.

Like many other country towns, Stamford once had several breweries and reminders of this trade are found in All Saints Brewery which is located in All Saints' Street.

A History of Stamford

Stamford grew up at a strategic point on the River Welland – where this river could be easily crossed at most times of the year. On either side of the river were lowlands which could be, and often were, extensively flooded.

Early British traders, raiders, hunters and migrants crossed at this point and traces of these early inhabitants is evidenced by Neolithic finds in local quarries. In these early days the river was forded which gave the growing settlement its name – 'Stony Ford'. This first ford was just east of the present town bridge, but the Romans preferred a crossing point farther west on direct alignment with Ermine Street, which crossed the Welland between the two Roman settlements and military cantonments of Castor to the south and Great Casterton to the north; the word castra being Latin for a camp.

Under the Saxons the community grew in size and it is to them that we owe the present name Stamford (a corruption of Stony Ford). Although the town suffered heavily during the Danish invasion of the 9th century, it prospered under Saxon rule and it was sufficiently important to be granted its own mint by King Edgar in 972, which remained in use for two centuries. The location of the mint is believed to have been across the river to the south of St Martins; but the exact site has yet to be identified. Examples of money coined at the mint are displayed at the Town Hall.

In the 11th century the invading Normans, to ensure military control of the area, built a strong castle on the site of the Saxon fort. It was erected alongside the river to protect the ford crossing, the main road to and from Scotland, and the growing town itself which was, in the Domesday Survey, described as the King's Borough of Stamford. Trades and crafts developed and, by the 12th century, the local cloth was known for its quality throughout Europe. Pottery too was made in the town between the 9th and the 13th centuries – the first glazed ware to be made in England since Roman times was produced in Stamford.

In 1076 Stamford was appointed as a centre for the hearing of law cases by the King's Justices and the town was frequently visited by monarchs on affairs of State. Parliaments and other councils convened in the town and it was a meeting point for the barons on their way south to Runnymede to ensure the signing of the Magna Carta by King John.

At the end of the 13th century, the funeral procession of Queen Eleanor, wife of King Edward I, stopped at Stamford on its progress to London, to commemorate which an Eleanor Cross was subsequently erected at the King's command. At this time the town was of great importance having been granted a charter by King Henry III in 1256. It then possessed six monasteries and priories, six religious colleges and no fewer than 14 churches. This unusually high density of religious establishments was renowned throughout Europe. Unfortunately, few of these buildings have survived into the 21st century and most are represented now only by fragments.

St Leonard's Priory, founded in the early 12th century, was the first of these buildings, and was followed by St Michael's Nunnery in the mid 12th century. The Greyfriars (Franciscan Order) was founded by 1230 on a site to the east of the town, with the Blackfriars (Dominican Order) founded by 1241 close by. Shortly afterwards, the Carmelite Order was given a small site between the two and the Whitefriars was founded. To the west of the town, Austin Friars was founded in 1341. In 1333 a number of Oxford students, displeased with conditions at their university, transferred to Stamford and tried to set up a rival university at the two colleges of the Black and Grey Friars. They were, however, ordered to return to Oxford and their rebellion was firmly put down by dint of various threats.

As well as religious establishments and colleges, Stamford was also well endowed with guest houses and hospices for travellers on the road. These included St Giles' Leper Hospital, the House of the Holy Sepulchre and the Hospital of St John. These establishments employed many local people and exerted a great influence on the life of the town, which came to an abrupt end in 1539 with King Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. The effect and decline in the prosperity of Stamford was immediate.

During the Wars of the Roses the town suffered greatly because of its allegiance to the Dukes of York. The town was taken by the Lancastrians in 1460 and damage was extensive. All Saints' Church was partly destroyed and the town archives were burned – and with them the Town's charters. However in 1462 the charter was renewed by Edward IV and forms part of the collections of charters held at the Town Hall.

Stamford had a connection at this time with Henry VII: his mother, who lived at nearby Collyweston, founded the Guild of St Catherine which met at St Paul's Chapel (the surviving part of which is now the chapel of Stamford School). Henry VIII was entertained in the town several times but, nevertheless, the town's many religious establishments were not spared the ravages of the Dissolution. Their passing greatly upset the economic balance of Stamford and its environs. Henry's daughter, Elizabeth I, also visited the town and the Lordship of Stamford was granted to her Lord Treasurer, Lord Burghley, one of the outstanding figures of that period. His father and grandfather lived in Stamford and he himself held offices of state under Edward VI and Queen Mary, and helped place Elizabeth on the throne. He remained a trusted and powerful minister until his death in 1598. His wonderful Renaissance tomb can be seen in St Martin's Church.

During the Civil War the town was held for Parliament and Oliver Cromwell was in local command here when Burghley House was besieged. King Charles I came to Stamford in 1646 and, disguised as a servant, was admitted secretly into a house in the town and left the next night en route to join up with the Scottish army, only to be betrayed by them. The king thus spent his last night as a free man in Stamford.

New charters were granted to the town in 1663 by Charles II and the title of Chief Magistrate was upgraded from Alderman to Mayor. At this time, Stamford was represented in Parliament by two Members and this state of affairs continued right through until 1867 when the number was reduced to one.



During the 18th century, Stamford was a major coaching stop on the Great North Road and to enable easier access the gates in the town walls were pulled down. The great fairs and markets, which had been such a part of local life in the Middle Ages, had declined although a number of customs and entertainments still continued, including horse racing at the Stamford Races which survived until the 1870s and the annual and barbarous Bull Running (chasing a tormented bull through the streets of the town and driving it to its death off the bridge) continued until 1839. It had in fact, been a popular annual event since the early 13th century, when it was introduced by William de Warrenne, Earle of Stamford.

The population of the town was 4,022 at the first census in 1801 and had risen to 5,837 by 1831 at which time a national gazetteer presented this 'portrait' of the place:

"A borough and market town in the wapentake of Ness in the county of Lincoln. The town is pleasantly situated on rising hill on the north bank of the Welland. The houses are well built of free stone obtained from the neighbouring quarries of Ketton and Barnack. The streets are indifferently paved and lighted by gas, water is brought from Wothorpe by pipes, the distance being about a mile. In the principal street is the town hall erected in 1776 on the site of an old structure that had fallen into ruins. The town has also assembly rooms and a theatre which is neat and commodious. Races are run in March and July and on the banks of the river are excellent hot and cold baths. The Welland is navigable up to the town for boats and small barges

but the trade, inconsiderable, is principally in malt, coal, timber and free stone. The market days are Monday and Friday, the latter principally for corn.”

In later years the decline of the Great North Road as a coaching route was, to a great extent, caused by the coming of the railways. At the height of the railway era, early in the 20th century, Stamford had two stations: the Midland Station serving Peterborough, Oakham and Leicester and Stamford East Station (designed to echo Burghley House and built of local stone) to Essendine for London. Today only the Peterborough – Stamford – Leicester route survives, although this has been improved to form part of the through route between Norwich and Birmingham, thus giving Stamford good links with many neighbouring population centres.

The Great North Road (A1) by-pass, built in 1960, brought a new peace to the town though local trade was inevitably affected. In 1961, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh came to Stamford to celebrate the Quincentenary of the Town’s Charter. Her Majesty returned in 2012, as part of the celebrations of her Diamond Jubilee.

The creation of Stamford as a conservation area in 1967, the very first conservation town, celebrated the beginning of a new era in its history.

Despite its long history, and the fact that it is now a very important conservation area, Stamford has by no means stagnated over recent years. It comfortably blends the old and the new.

In recent years, too, Stamford has extended well beyond the boundaries of the older town beside the Welland and now has extensive areas of new housing.

Stamford is renowned for its wide range of small independent shops together with a surprisingly extensive range of retail outlets along the pedestrianized High Street and Ironmonger Street. Of historical importance, the extensive Friday Market sees stalls along Broad and Ironmonger Streets and the colourful and lively activity draws shoppers and day trippers from a wide area in search of fresh produce and bargains from the wide range of general stalls together with the fortnightly farmer’s market. Many small, individual shops and familiar high street names, including Marks and Spencer and W. H. Smith add to the shopping options, whilst supermarkets such as Waitrose, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer, Sainsburys, Tesco and Lidl, together with specialist food shops, complete the choices available.

As benefits a town with a long history of scholarship, Stamford has an excellent range of both state-run and independent schools, including half a dozen primary schools, one secondary school, a College for Further Education and a co-educational public school. The boys’ public school, Stamford School, was founded in 1532 and now has about 850 boys; Stamford High School, founded in 1876, on the south side of the river is the girls’ public school, and has about 775 pupils.”

There are further interesting facts about the heritage, history and collections on Stamford Town Council’s website.