Let me tell you about the SLHC and the role of Local Recorder.

The Suffolk Local History Council is an umbrella group for all things historical in the county - our members are individuals, local history & family history societies, museums etc.  We have been in existence since 1953 and the Local Recorders Scheme began shortly afterwards.

Each parish in the county is meant to have a Recorder and although there are still quite a lot of vacancies, there's a lot less than 3 years ago.  Stanstead is currently without a Local Recorder and it may be something you would be interested or you know someone suitable.

Basically we ask the Recorder to collect any parish magazine, leaflets of what's on, list the organisations in the village, cut out relevant newspaper cuttings and note any changes such as closure/opening of shops, new buildings etc.  In 2012, for instance, the Jubilee celebrations featured heavily - but what happened in your parish - was it recorded for the future?  Will the Queen's 90th birthday be celebrated in your parish and will it be recorded?

We ask that the Recorders are on-line to aid communication, and that they submit a short report each year.  This can just be two sides of A4 summarising the activities and changes in the village, and can be sent to us electronically (recorders@slhc.org.uk) or via snail mail.  The reports are then deposited in the Suffolk Record Office.  Over a period of time the reports make extremely interesting reading enabling a researcher to see the changes to a village.  Anything collected such as parish magazines, leaflets, scrap books should also be deposited in the SRO but we ask the Recorder to do that.  An e-mail is sent out at the end of each year to remind everyone about the Annual Report - we receive most of them in January/February and they will cover the past calendar year i.e. 2015.

 We also ask new Recorders to write an Initial Report to describe their parish and so set the scene.  Are you based around a village green or a ribbon development, a rural, coastal or industrial parish? What is the population? (Actually according to the 2011 census it was 319 in your parish).  What facilities are there: church, school, shops, business, village hall? What activities take place: brownies, zumba, bowls, British Legion?  What type of housing is there: thatched, brick built, estate?  These are just a few suggestions.

I should emphasise that being a Local Recorder *does not* involve research in the history of the parish or doing other people's family history, it is merely to collect and record the history of the parish today, *for tomorrow*.  Having said that many of our Recorders are actively involved in the local history of their parish and it does help to have a background but it is not a requirement to take on the role.  We do ask that you keep your eyes & ears open to anything historical that could be pointed in the direction of the Suffolk Record Office, for instance c17th documents of Leiston Abbey were recently deposited in the SRO due to a Local Recorder.

No two parishes are the same and therefore the amount of work varies and should easily fit in with life's commitments.

 As a thank you the Recorder will receive the SLHC Newsletter free of charge.  We also organise an annual conference specifically for the  Recorders that gives the opportunity to meet other recorders and hear relevant lectures - this is free to attend.  It is always a good day and Recorders go home buzzing with ideas.  The next one will be on 23rd April 2016.