

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BARLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT BARLESTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 13TH APRIL 2022

PRESENT 10 Residents

1 Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Chairman's Report

I have been Chairman of Barlestone Parish Council for the last 11 months and at first it felt a daunting process but I have been ably supported by my Vice Chair, Mrs. Elizabeth Tegg and the previous Chairman Mr. Derek Crane, along with the other members of the Parish Council.

It has been an interesting year finding out the way things work behind the scenes from the Clerk (Marilyn) and the Responsible Finance Officer (Jackie).

The ground maintenance around the village on the areas owned by the Parish including the Cemetery and St. Giles churchyard, have been kept to a high standard by our contractor, Cookes of Kirby who are always willing to help and discuss matters relating to problems with trees, May Meadow etc and we look forward to working with them again in the coming year.

Trouble with the water tap in the cemetery was a problem as it was leaking and the water had to be turned off. We are very grateful to K S Plumbing for their quick response in fixing a new tap.

We have managed this year to get a number of jobs done that had needed doing for quite a while. The cemetery gates have been repainted and are quite impressive again. These gates date from when the cemetery opened in 1921.

We have acquired the telephone box at the corner of Church Road and Bagworth Road and a new defibrillator has been installed along with a new cabinet. The defibrillator situated near the wheel has had to be replaced also with a new cabinet so we now have three in the village, the other one is on the wall at the Community Centre in Bosworth Road.

New seats have been installed on the playing field and also at the Bull Piece, and more bulbs have been planted around the village by Cllr Peacock with help from a member of the Barlestonians.

This year for Christmas more lights were purchased to light up the Spinney and to give more of a backdrop to the wheel in the centre of the village, and many compliments were received.

Negotiations have been ongoing for a few months with relation to the proposed Solar Farm on land between Barlestone and Nailstone and I along with Cllr Tegg have negotiated a sum of money to be received once work commences on the site. This money is to be used towards replacing the boardwalk in May Meadow and possibly solar panels on the Community centre to help with running costs.

Last year the flower boxes around the village were watered and weeded by volunteers and in some cases, flowers were also supplied by residents. The Council are extremely grateful for the work done on these boxes which bring a cheery feel and colour to our village.

I must thank the members of the Parish Council for their help and support throughout the last year and also the Clerk and Finance Officer, along with Mrs. Hodgson, the Premises Officer and Mr. Franklin the Village Warden.

3 Accounts

The Precept received for the year was £85,000

The Parish Council employed four members of staff with salaries totalling £19,174

The Parish Council has this year continued to improve the buildings and areas under its control.

We are in the process of trying to improve May Meadow in particular with accessibility. We are waiting for approval of a grant application from HBBC Community Initiative Fund to help with this project.

Expenses

We continue to pay the Public Loan Board for the original Pavillion £3,559.10 in two half yearly payments until 2027. That outstanding loan stands at £17,302.73.

The loan for the existing Community Centre for which we pay £3,903.18 again in two half yearly payments until 2031, with the outstanding loan standing at £36,608.00.

The Council continue to pay for Safety inspections on the Community Centre building, surrounding area and equipment including all the Play Equipment in all the areas. Extra Christmas lights were purchased this year to improve the display.

Grounds Maintenance – various village areas, including tree work, play equipment repairs, fence repairs £30,188.41

Defibs – two new have been installed, at the Roundhouse and the Telephone Box on Church Road £2,940

Repainting and cleaning of the Telephone box £950

Cemetery Gates – Repainting £580

Playing Field – two new benches £840

Income

Apart from the Precept – VAT refund of £14,386

Donations made to

Barlestone St. Giles AFC £250

1st Barlestone Brownies £300

Finally, I would like to thank, on behalf of myself and the Clerk for the continued support of Philip Enston (Chairperson) and Liz Tegg (Vice Chairperson)

Jackie Roberts Financial Officer. 13th April 2022.

4 Allotments

All the allotment plots are taken and a new waiting list has been started.

During the past year we have levelled off the path to the bottom of the allotment garden to make it easier for cars to drive down but we are conscious of the fact that the car park is quite small and will look into the cost of making this area larger but it will be down to the finances as to whether we can afford to do much work on this. Unfortunately, the rental we receive from the tenants does not cover the cost of the work needed to keep everything up to scratch.

Large trees at the bottom of the allotments on the road side have been removed as they were in danger of falling and causing damage or injury.

At the end of last year due to the extreme amount of rain we problems with flooding on some of the plots near to the road and although discussions were held a satisfactory solution has yet to be found.

Philip Enston

5 County Councillor's Report Barlestone Parish Council – County Councillor Annual Report April 2022

It is with great joy I write this annual report, my first one since being elected as your County Councillor. This is a role that, as expected, required an element of 'learning on the job' and I appreciate the Parish and its Councillors for their generous support and help in allowing me to get up to speed with the roles and responsibilities associated with being the County representative.

I also want to recognise the tight knit feeling residents have within Barlestone. Being the councillor for seven villages I get to interact with a diverse range of communities and few are as community minded as this one. Whether its Cathie organising wombles or Faye spearheading food kits for hungry children over the holidays there is no lack of volunteers within the village working to improve it for those around. This is also shown through the villages active social calendar. My only critique is that Galahad (my golden Cocker Spaniel) and I were robbed in the dog show last summer! I will continue to reach out to these groups to highlight grants available from LCC to help them flourish as I have done over the last 12 months

Much work I have done in Barlestone this year was to improve the highways. For the first time LCC allocated each councillor £25k to spend on non-vital highways improvements in their area. In conversation with residents and the Parish Council it has been agreed that residents will see a mobile vehicle activated sign with up to 5 posts around the village, a new planter and bike racks. I will confess that this project has not moved at the pace I would've liked due to lack of available resources at LCC however rest assured the funding has been allocated and the requests confirmed. This fund is being continued to the 22-23 financial year and I would welcome more ideas on how this could be spent. I also would like to highlight Cllr. Julia Trinder's suggestion that when LCC comments on new proposed developments from a Highway's point of view that they request money be included as part of the proposal. Some developments will naturally already involve changes to the road network, but several small projects soon add up and it is these where relatively modest sum would be appreciated. The planning policy framework is quite tight and descriptive however talks are ongoing to see if this idea can be implemented.

The new developments within the village have certainly had an impact on local residents. I have been in close regular contact with a number of groups helping to accommodate requests such as diverting HGV's, reducing road closures and even getting LCC to do an in-depth search of settlement boundaries.

Throughout the last year I have also picked up casework from residents directly. These include items such as repairing broken panels, parking issues, overgrown verges, grant applications, tree blockages, planning problems, traffic issues.

Finally, maybe the thing I am most proud to have introduced since I started in this position is my 'Adopt your road' litter picking campaign. I have donated *picking packs* which include a litter picker, gloves and bin bags to any resident that comes forward. The hope is that eventually every main road in Barlestone will have a volunteer that regular ensures just their road is free from litter.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months as the village expands, the road network will naturally become more congested. Rest assured, I will be pulling all the levers I can at County Hall to ensure that everything is being done to improve safety for those within Barlestone. Fixing the issue of congestion within Barlestone is not an easy one given it is a historic village with few easy areas of expansion in the centre, nevertheless it is a long-term ambition to find a solution. One benefit of having more residents within Barlestone may be a greater use of the bus network and I am currently fighting proposed Arriva changes that may come into force this month.

Once again, I want to thank the residents of Barlestone and the members of its Parish Council for their help and support over the last year. As always, my door (email/mobile) is always open and so please do get in touch if you are in need of any assistance.

Ross Hills : Member for Mallory, Leicestershire County Council

6 Annual Report from Borough Councillor Bill Crooks

This year all councillors have been working to keep the essential council services running due to the staff shortages because of Covid. The Council have experienced major staff shortages in every department, i.e., Planning, Waste Management, and green spaces in particular.

Unfortunately, The Private sector are able to pay much larger wages than the Borough Council can, in the budget allowed. For example, the drivers we employ are on £25K per year and companies such as DPD pay their drivers £45k plus £7k bonus if they cover the entire year.

Planning is always a problem, and with the Government hell bent on building everywhere the council are fighting a rear-guard action. Figures of 9500 plus is the current Government requirement for Hinckley & Bosworth to build in the next 20 years, and as I have stated before Leicester City have been allocated a large amount that they cannot meet, and the Government are stating that the Boroughs & District Councils will have to take up this unmet requirement. This means that the yearly figure HBBC are expected to build will go up from 450 to 600.

The planning department has been hit by 8 of the officers leaving for the Private sector (as their remuneration is higher) and going to developers who use their expertise to be able to move forward some applications. Enforcement have also lost their staff and recruiting has been difficult. Fortunately, we now have a senior Enforcement Officer and also a trainee.

The enormous success for this year as far as I was concerned, was winning the public appeal against the Gladman application off Cunnery Close.

On the good side we have managed to keep the Council Tax down to the minimum and still be in the lowest rated authority in the country 15th out of some 300 councils.

The Borough Council signed up to a Carbon Reduction Charter. We have planted and are planting many more trees including 6 tiny forests. We are looking for areas in the Borough to plant more of these in the next civic year.

I would like to thank all residents, Parish Councillors for their support especially the Clerk, and I am always happy to take up any issues that may affect the Ward or indeed its residents. I am aware that the coming year is going to be exceedingly difficult and If I can help in any way I will.

Yours sincerely

Bill : Councillor Bill Crooks

7 Neighbourhood Development Plan

It has been a very busy year with many reiterations of various aspects of the documentation following the Regulation 14 consultation around Christmas/New Year 2021, answering each comment and in some cases amending the plan accordingly. The Regulation 16 consultation - where H&BBC contact largely the same people, land owners, statutory bodies and businesses as we did for our Regulation 14 consultation plus a few others – started on 15th September and closed on 27th October. Following this consultation, the NDP went to Independent Examination. I worked with H&BBC to choose an Independent Examiner (an additional job which I hadn't anticipated having to do) and Andrew Ashcroft was chosen and started his examination in November. He produced a report at the end of January with a number of suggested amendments which I have accepted and made the necessary changes, yet again, to the documentation.

With one last final diagram to amend, my computer died... by the time I had got a computer back the gentleman I had been working with had left H&BBC at short notice! This created another short delay but we are now back on track. The Planning Dept at H&BBC recommended to their seniors that it should proceed to

referendum; this has been approved and has been passed to the Referendum Team at H&BBC to make the necessary arrangements.

It will be put to the Parish electorate in the form of a Referendum and this will take the same form as a local election; parishioners will receive 56 days' notice of the Referendum organised by H&BBC. If more than 50% of those who vote say "yes" then the NDP and its policies will become part of planning law. Given the examination will start in November and his statement that he intends to do it mostly electronically, best latest guess would now be end of May for the Referendum to take place.

The Parish Council or individual Councillors must not attempt to influence the voters in any way.

The Parish Council will then have a duty to monitor and review the NDP to ensure that it keeps up to date, including updating it in line with the emerging Local Plan, and also to pursue the Community Actions contained within it (which cannot be part of planning law but nevertheless were things identified by the parishioners as what they wished to be delivered). There is no reason to delay thinking about these Community Actions until the NDP completes any of the above stages or even in the case for it not to be accepted by the majority of voters.

Cathie Watkins

30th March 2022

8 BOCA Report

We have been unable to organise as many events during the past two years as would normally take place due to the various restrictions/cautiousness around the pandemic.

We did however have the annual Garage Sales in July 2021 (these will go ahead again this year but back to their normal slot in May) and the Indoor Car Boot Sale in October 2021. The Fireworks Evening on 5th November was fine weather and was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old alike with the barbecue selling out...

We were also asked to have a free of charge bric-a-brac stall at the St Giles Church Fayre & Dog Show in September 2021 and raised funds for BOCA with our proceeds.

Our Quiz & Fish + Chip Supper had to be postponed from February 2022 due to the quizmaster having Covid but will be taking place during April.

Our AGM is on 12th April 2022 where we will elect officers for the coming year and decide on distribution of our profits to local groups as usual.

Cathie Watkins on behalf of BOCA members

30th March 2022

9 Old School Hall Report

The last two years have been extremely challenging for the Old School Hall; playgroup was closed for a lot of the time, only opening for a very limited number of key worker's children. This was slowly opened up over time but many parents were unwilling to return to normal until they felt that their children were safe. This meant that the playgroup struggled for income and their rent was reduced accordingly to just cover the ongoing costs of running the hall. The playgroup wouldn't exist without the hall and the hall wouldn't exist without the playgroup.

Expenditure was reduced to a minimum with the cleaner, our only paid employee, had to be let go in favour of volunteers doing the role.

Bookings did do really well for a brief period when the school didn't want to host Brownies, Rainbows or Guides but they have now returned to the school as the premises is much bigger with ample parking for delivery/collection of children who arrive by car. We do still have the regular dance class and also ad hoc bookings for parties, craft fairs, etc.

We have some very large repair jobs needing to be done at the moment with the woodworm in the kitchen floor getting worse; this will involve a complete replacement of the floorboards although this will be done in stages. The drains also continue to be an issue in heavy weather although we have had major work done to stop the water ingress through the corridor walls and some minor works were also done in one of the porches. The toilets are in dire need of refurbishment... We will be seeking grant funding and donations where we can to cover at least part of these costs.

Our long-standing trustee and treasurer Ian Mills left during 2020/2021, his replacement Jacquie Thornber has also notified us that she will be standing down as both trustee and treasurer at our meeting on 31st March 2022. Our long-standing trustee and chairman Glyn Bowen also stood down in early 2022 and I have now taken on this role as well as continuing to be secretary until a replacement can be found. The loss of these knowledgeable people about the history of running the hall is going to be very sadly missed and we need to take stock of what we have and where we need to be going. We hope to work closely with the Charity Commission on this.

With the reducing number of people on the committee we are advertising for additional members (including a secretary) in The Graphic. Shortly we will also be looking for a treasurer...

Cathie Watkins; Old School Hall Chairperson

30th March 2022

10 Barlestone Community Development Trust

Covid 19 brought many challenges with lockdowns upsetting our normal operations at the Community Centre. The Premises Officer Mrs. Hodgson worked diligently to keep the Centre covid free, following recommended procedures and cleaning all the facilities after every group. Regular health and safety checks are made so the Centre is safe for all users

The disabled / baby changing facility required anew hand basin tap which was replaced by a local plumber. Quotations are now being requested for a replacement shutter for one of the windows and we are also hoping to remove the old boiler system that serves the showers.

The Centre is now operating normally and is being used by many groups both during the day and in the evenings. There has also been a lot of interest in hiring the Centre for birthday parties and Christening receptions in the hall since we re-opened and the users have all been very complimentary about the facilities on offer.

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Chairman