

PARISH MEETING OF BARLESTONE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH May 2021 at Barlestone Community Centre

PRESENT – 7 Residents (Councillors Mr. P. Enston, Mr. D. Crane, Mr. P. Burchell, Mrs. L. Tegg, Mr. J. Kendall, Mrs. J. Roberts, Mrs. M. Symonds)

Apologies: Mr. Bill Crooks (Borough Councillor)

1 OPENING REMARKS

MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD IN APRIL 2019

The minutes of the meeting held in April 2019 having been circulated were confirmed at the Parish Council meeting in June 2019.

Due to Covid 19 pandemic no Parish Meeting was held in 2020

2 CHAIRMANS REPORT 2021

The Parish Council started last year with Chairman David Burchell, sadly David became ill and subsequently passed away, we were all deeply saddened by his death and realised the large amount of Parish Council work he undertook.

As a tribute to David, the Council have purchased an Elm Tree, at a short ceremony attended by Councillors and Staff, this was planted in Meadow Road by Mrs. Christine Burchell.

The restrictions due to Covid 19 has meant that the council have not been able to meet face to face for 12 months apart from a couple of meetings when restrictions were lifted, and this has made the ongoing day to day work difficult to say the least, but hopefully in the next few weeks we can return to some sort of normality.

BOSWORTH ROAD PARK & THE GLEBE PLAYGROUND

The upkeep of the park and Glebe playground is in the hands of our contractors, Cookes of Kirby who have worked hard to keep the areas belonging to the Parish in good condition. It is a shame we cannot say the same for the grassed areas around the village owned by Leicestershire County Council, the overgrown verges really spoil the look of the village.

THE BOWLS CLUB

After all the negotiations last year and holdups caused by Covid etc, the lease has now been signed between the Bowls Club and the Parish Council. It is hoped this can be settled as soon as possible.

THE ROUNDHOUSE SPINNEY

The purchase of the Spinney behind the wheel in the center of the village has now been completed and the Parish Council are looking at ways to make this an attractive area. Some of the fencing posts and gates need to be repaired and this takes time and money, and will be on the Agenda for the coming year.

MAY MEADOW

It is unfortunate that the members of the Parish Council have found it necessary to close the Boardwalk as it is unsafe and dangerous. It has been noted that some people are breaking down fences and still finding their way into the area and causing damage and also dumping rubbish. The residents, in their Council Tax, are having to pay for the damage and the removal of this rubbish

Quotations have been received with a view to repairing or replacing this boardwalk but as one quotation was for £96k it is something that will have to be done over a period of time.

ST GILES CHURCHYARD

The upkeep of the churchyard is the responsibility of the Parish Council and David Burchell had many conversations with Cookes of Kirby about how he wanted to see it looking, and his wishes are being carried out.

The white picket fence from Washpit Lane into the churchyard was very kindly repaired by a local gentleman to whom we are very grateful.

FLOWER PLANTERS

An enormous thank you goes to the local residents who volunteered to weed and water the flower boxes around the village last year, and they have also agreed to doing the same this year. A number of residents have also taken on the

responsibility for the planting up of some of the boxes and Barlestone Primary school are again taking on the planting and upkeep of the boxes outside the school for which the members are very grateful.

THE CEMETERY

A comment was passed by a resident that the cemetery was one of the best ones she had visited in recent months, it is always nice to get lovely comments.

A new area for cremated remains has been designated and has already been used with granite slabs as markers. This was needed as the previous Sanctum II's were all either purchased or used.

OSBASTON PARISH COUNCIL

We understand that Osbaston PC are not willing to make a donation towards the upkeep of the Barton Road Cemetery and therefore the double fees charged to non residents will also apply to anyone from Osbaston who wishes to be buried within the cemetery. It is unfortunate that this situation has arisen but the cost of the upkeep of the cemetery is not a small amount.

I am sorry that we had to accept the resignation of Richard Liddington from the Parish Council as his input was invaluable. We have been lucky to co-opt Mrs. Elizabeth Tegg onto the council and to date is proving a great asset.

Earlier in the year Cllr Peacock along with some Barlestonians were busy planting more spring bulbs around the village, which gave a good show. It is hoped this exercise can be repeated in time for next spring.

The weather over the past few months has been quite changeable and there have been instances of trees being blown down both in the cemetery & May Meadow which has needed the help of a tree surgeon, this work is a large part of running the village.

Last year a number of trees were planted in May Meadow with the help of a number of parish councilors and residents and hopefully getting established.

I am most grateful to our Responsible Finance Officer, Mrs. Jackie Roberts, who keeps everything in good order and to our Clerk, Mrs. Marilyn Symonds, her input to the work of the Council, answering queries from residents, keeping councilors informed and putting our plans and debates into operation.

Finally, to all my fellow councilors, thank you, it has been a very difficult year, I did not anticipate taking on this roll again, I wish nothing but the best to all who now step up to these positions, and mostly that you support whole heartily those who you elect.

3 ACCOUNTS

The Precept received for the year was £82,700.

The Parish Council employed four members of staff with salaries totaling £16,526

The Parish Council has this year continued to improve the buildings and areas under its control, which now includes the Spinney. There are areas that still need improving.

There has been issues with Fly Tipping and Vandalism, which causes unnecessary expense.

Expenses

We continue to pay the Public Loan Board for the original Pavilion £3,599.10 in two half yearly payments until 2027. That outstanding loan stands at £20,007.40

The loan for the existing Community Centre for which we pay £3,903.18 again in two half yearly payments until 2032, with the outstanding loan standing at £39,693.73

Grounds Maintenance – various village areas, including tree work £37,068

Scaffold tower £1,567

CCTV and Electrical work at the Community Centre £12,462

Income.

Parish Council Initiative Fund towards the newly installed CCTV £4,423

HBBC grant for small business rate relief £10,000

VAT refund of £14,029

Donations made

Air Ambulance £125

Barlestone Love Your Neighbour Scheme £250

Unfortunately, this year the Council lost a valuable proactive Chairman Mr David Burchell, who due to illness passed away. He in particular spent time applying for grants to help provide facilities vital to the residents of Barlestone. We reap the benefits of his efforts which will not be forgotten.

Jackie Roberts : Responsible Financial Officer 19th May 2021

4 ALLOTMENT REPORT

At the time of writing this report we have just about got our waiting list down to 2 as there had been some changes at the end of last year. The members of the Parish Council felt that some of the plots should be divided into smaller areas, this then gave more residents the opportunity to take on a plot, and they were snapped up.

The area at the bottom of the allotments has had to be cleared of all the rubbish that had been dumped and this area should now be kept free of rubbish. It had been intended as a Community Garden run by the Barlestonians but unfortunately this has not moved forward.

There were a number of complaints from residents with regard to fires being lit at the allotments but fires are allowed at certain times of the year as outlined in the Tenancy Agreement signed by the tenant.

Some major tree work will need to be undertaken as soon as the weather allows as otherwise some damage may occur at the bottom of the allotment garden.

The weather has not been kind this year which had resulted in very wet and flooded areas and we look forward to better weather for the rest of the year.

Philip Enston : Allotment Chairman

4 COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORTS

ANNUAL COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT From County Councillor Bill Crooks

Dear Chairman, Members and Residents

As your current representative on the County Council, for the past 4 years I have been the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on the Development Control Committee. I am also a member of the Adults and Community Scrutiny Committee. Councillors are given regular briefings by the Police, Fire Brigade and other issues such as Mental Health, Leicestershire PCT Board, Community Workshops, Highways and Education.

The past year has been particularly difficult because of Covid-19, and councillors have had weekly briefings by senior officers including the Director of Public Health every Tuesday at 4 pm.

All meetings have been held via Skype (or Zoom), which I think does not help the flow of discussions or questions from members. The most difficult part has been not being able to visit residents or deliver our newsletters/leaflets. This has been a hindrance to local people being not able to air their views or for me to visit problem areas.

The County Council already had carried forward a deficit of £30m that officers had not been able to balance, but I am advised that the Covid-19 outbreak has added another £19m. The grant from central Government has been cut back and the future for Government support does not look promising! Leicestershire is one of the poorest supported authorities in the country, and despite the County Council lobbying all 7 local MP's and visits to the Minister this has got them nowhere! The surprise is that all 7 MPs are of the same party as the Government.

Mr Chairman, Members, Clerk and Residents, I would like to thank you all for your support and advice during this year.

Bill

CC Bill Crooks : Member for Mallory Division

Annual Borough Council Report 2021 from Councillor Bill Crooks

Most of the focus this year at the Borough Council has been the Covid-19 pandemic. The council and voluntary bodies have delivered food parcels, given out grants, contacted everyone on the 'At Risk' list (including me)!

The Leisure Centre has been turned into a vaccination center. Lifts for residents unable to access due to mobility issues have been able to have a complimentary lift to a vaccination center nearest to their home when they have notified the council of their issues.

The other major issues have been the financial difficulties balancing the books this year due to the government reducing all the grants. This was always going to be a problem, but Covid-19 costs running at some £600k has caused more issues!

There have been successes: -

1. The New Crematorium building is now currently underway which will be a great asset to the whole of the Borough (currently Cremations must take place at either Gilroes or Nuneaton Crematorium.)
2. The Borough council have won 2 Green Flags again. One for Argents Mead and the other for Hollycroft Park. Hollycroft Park came third best park in England voted for by the Public.

The Liberal Democrat Group have put forward various motions to Full Council i.e. More money and support for carers, pay rises for Nurses, objecting to the Governments proposed White Paper on Planning Changes, objecting to the County Council's proposal to become a Unitary Authority which would have meant scrapping all the District and Borough Councils, but putting more responsibility on Parish Councils.

A cross party working group discussed changes to the Constitution on Planning and changed the rules for Planning Committees which now allow more than double the time for public speaking. It also now allows a representative from Parish Councils a chance to speak on applications affecting their area.

Major safety improvements have been implemented at the Councils depot. Recycling has bounced back up, the majority being both green waste and dry recycling.

Whilst Council Tax has risen the Borough are still the 14th lowest in the country.

Staffing: - Whilst some positions have not been filled no staff have been laid off.

Council House rents have been kept at 1.1/2 % rise in line with Government recommendations.

Once again, I thank residents of Barlestone, The Parish Council and the Clerk for their support during the past year. I wish good health to you all and look forward to representing you all in the new civic year.

Sincerely

Bill Crooks

Councillor W J Crooks : Ward Member for Barlestone, Nailstone & Osbaston.

5 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Annual Parish Meeting 2021 – Neighbourhood Development Plan Report

Despite the lack of meetings and other visible activities there has been a tremendous amount of work done on getting the NDP to the stage it is at.

The pre-submission draft went into consultation from 17th October 2020 for the regulation 6 weeks to the end of November 2020; we produced and distributed a summary to every household/business in the Parish along with details

of how to comment. The full pre-submission draft plan was available on our web site and two hard copies were also made available for those without internet access.

Unfortunately, the electronic communications to the statutory bodies didn't work with many statutory bodies not receiving the email notification including H&BBC and LCC. This prompted an extension of the original 6 week consultation period to 27th February 2021 with all statutory bodies being given a second notification on 23rd December 2020 to ensure that they had received the relevant documentation and had time to respond should they choose to do so.

All comments received needed to be documented and a response prepared (either noted, do nothing or change the plan accordingly), these amounted to 103 pages of comments in total. The plan was then duly amended where necessary with a few sections/appendices being completely revised.

Within the same timeframe, the issue of the target number of new development for the Parish raised its head and much work was done to understand the implications of this as H&BBC insisted that we must use the new number or they would recommend rejection of the plan by the Independent Examiner. Some previously "approved for development" sites needed to be included within the revised Settlement Boundary (the area where development can take place unless there are extenuating circumstances) including Garden Farm and the development off Brookside/Rushey Close/Ferrers Croft and Spinney Drive) – this does not mean any proposed development is approved, merely that H&BBC have already agreed that those sites are "developable" as they had previously given planning permissions on them.

The revised plan and its many appendices are almost complete ready for submission to H&BBC for their consultation but no documentation can be submitted or allowed on web sites unless it passes strict accessibility criteria i.e. the documents can be accessed by people with such disabilities to make reading difficult such as blind people who use screen reading technology. This applies to all documentation produced since 2018 on every public website including the councils.

The task of making the documentation "accessible" is huge with every photograph and diagram (*there are hundreds*) having alternative text added to describe what the image is, all text (*nearing a thousand pages in total*) being formatted so that a screen reader can easily pick up the context and all tables (*there are dozens*) being made readable by reformatting the structure where possible. This is the stage we are at right now...

The re-formatting suffered a setback whilst I was poorly and unable to do anything at the plan but it has now recommenced although only so much can be done each day due to the repetitive nature of the task. It is hoped that the re-formatting can be achieved ready for submission to H&BBC in mid-June although prior to this the Parish Council need to provide their formal approval for it to be submitted. This approval needs to be done outside of normal standing orders to avoid a month's delay prior to the next Parish Council meeting for it to be available for publication.

Cathie Watkins
13th May 2021

6 **B.O.C.A.** **Annual Parish Meeting 2021 – BOCA Report**

BOCA haven't been able to be very active during the past year and a half with all our usual events being impossible to organise given the restrictions we have all been under.

We held a quiz and fish & chip supper night just before the first lockdown which was very well attended (we had to squeeze in an additional table at the last minute!) and enjoyed by those who came along. This was the only event we were able to hold...

Sales of the "Know Your Barlestone" book still trickle in and every so often we do an advertisement, usually after someone has displayed an interest in old photos on Facebook, which prompts a few sales.

Hopefully we can now look forward to the coming year and we will be starting with the much awaited Garage Sales on 3rd July which will allow people to have a good clear out after being locked in... hopefully the villagers will take the opportunity to get "out and about" and meet people they haven't had chance to for such a long while – all within the prevailing COVID-19 restrictions of course.

Cathie Watkins (on behalf of BOCA)
13th May 2021

7 OLD SCHOOL HALL

The past year has been very limiting to progress usage at the Hall, as no doubt your own experiences have been. The only user of the Hall has been First Steps Playgroup, who initially, were only allowed children of key workers to attend.

Fortunately, they were allowed to increase eventually up to normal, i.e. up maximum of 35 per session.

Cleaning the Hall after usage is currently being carried out by volunteers due to a lack in our income.

No other regular users have been allowed at present, but hopefully, perhaps some may be allowed to be invited by end of June.

Whether they can continue with their groups, we need to contact them when time eventually comes.

Our aim last year, was to refresh the front yard to all, (users & visitors) which included :-

a) Carry out complete re-rendering of current walls - Costs £1600-£1800 tenders submitted early last year

b) Repairs & Repointing of the low level brickwork together with yard wall adjacent to cemetery (both sides) estimated say £2,500

I understand you will also have spending problems, but if at all possible, we would welcome some financial assistance.

I can also inform you that the Old School Hall will be holding it's AGM at 5.30pm on Tuesday 25th May.

Initially to be held externally in the front yard. (tables & chairs) otherwise we will arrange much space for each internally. Your representatives are very welcome to attend.

Thanks,

Glyn Bowen : Chair of Trustees

8 BARLESTONE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Unfortunately, the Community Centre has been impacted by the lockdowns due to Covid guidance and regulations. We have only just been able to start to re-open with dance classes for children. The adult classes started from the 17th May all with and following the Government guidelines.

We are very grateful to Alison, our Premises Officer, who has kept the building clean on a weekly basis whilst we have been closed and is committed to keeping the Centre clean and safe for hirers.

The hot water boilers that used to heat the water for the showers in the centre have reached the end of their lives and alternative ideas are being sort to provide the amount of water needed for them to function.

The building was used on the 6th May for the recent political elections and many compliments were received on the building, some with envy that they had not been able to achieve such a building due to the large amount of involvement that was needed by the Parish Council.

Income £1,942 Expenses £227

Jackie Roberts Financial Officer. 19th May 2021

Signed Date.....