

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 21st April 2016 on work undertaken by Barking Parish Council 2015 - 2016

The Parish Council still has its full complement of 7 members. Cllr Pearl Hollocks stood down at the Election in May 2015, and the resulting casual vacancy was filled by Rosamund Fellowes.

The Council continues to be represented on the Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities, the Theobalds Foundation, the Wattisham Liaison, the Barking Village Hall Management Committee, and the Barking Footpath Group.

There were 7 **meetings** during the past year, 1 of which was an extraordinary meeting.

The Parish Council was consulted on 3 **planning applications**.

Three new Affordable Homes are being built at the entrance to Fox Meadow, one bungalow and two semi-detached houses – completion expected in June.

Highways – The temporary portable speed cameras appeared again for a couple of weeks just before Christmas to encourage motorists to keep within the 30mph limit through the village, despite the Parish Council lobbying Suffolk County Council for regular repeat visits – they haven't been seen again. There are improved road markings, between Parsons Lane and Barking Forge at the request of the Parish Council. It is understood a new rota is being signed off.

Anglian Water - Following on from last years' road closures for railings and bridge repairs, and communications works for Wattisham, the numerous water mains issues have finally led to **Anglian Water resolving to replace the old pipes and a long overdue upgrade to the system**. This resulted in several weeks of road closure from September to December and even more misery for motorists. The works are now taking place on the Tye. Had the Parish Council not given consent to these works there would have been many more weeks of road closures. Works are planned to be completed by June 2016.

The Tye continues to be cut by the Eastern Facilities Management Solutions Ltd. There was no income from the **hay crop** last year due to the poor quality and the presence of ragwort. We are hoping for permission from

DEFRA to spray this year. The Parish Council is continuing its attempt to keep the number of moles down. The brambles around one of the pill boxes were removed as they had not been tackled for many years and were completely out of control. **One tree was felled** due its dangerous condition.

The Aviva Men's Cycle Tour of Britain passed through the village in the September, and the Parish Council granted permission for visitor's vehicles and the PR stands of the race organisers to park on the Tye. This was a wonderful free event for people to attend and enjoy.

Litter Pickers continue to be employed by the Parish Council. Martin Pryke is doing an excellent job and the costs are still being reclaimed from Mid Suffolk District Council by way of a Cleansing Grant.

Our **Village Caretaker** - Dick Nash regularly cuts the grass to the rear of the village hall and is once again keeping the footpaths clear across the Tye. He also picks up litter.

All the **dog bins and litter bins** on the Tye are now emptied by MSDC at a cost of £300 a year.

The **play equipment** is still in good condition, apart from a rotten post which is being replaced under warranty. Other minor repairs have been authorised to ensure it is kept up to the required standard

The **grit bins** did not need topping up this year, or using at all due to yet another very mild winter. Craig Eagles and Mike Bailey are our nominated 'grit spreaders', but their services were not needed this winter.

The Council has continued its' policy to support local organisations and **donations** were given during the year to the Four Parishes Magazine, St Marys Church for grass cutting, and to the Royal British Legion .The donation to the Royal British Legion is in exchange for the **poppy wreath**, which was laid at the site of the War Memorial on the Tye, as it is every year. The beneficiary of the **2015 Calendar profits** will be the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

The installation of the Intelligent Lighting System on all 10 street lights in Barking, and the **new LED lanterns**, which have been in place for several months now, are resulting in significant savings in our electricity bills. We have also received positive comments about the improvement in the lighting the new lanterns provide.

Two new **Neighbourhood Watch Signs** were placed at agreed points on the Battsford Road, and adjacent to Moat Farm. There are now signs at all 4 entrances to the village.

The **Budget for 2016 - 2017** has been set at £19,973 - this includes £4,000 towards the Village Hall Extension Project. Due to the prudent management of the council's finances, the Precept has remained unchanged @ £8,488. In addition to the Precept, the final payment of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant of £64.75 will be made by MSDC. Funding will continue to be sought for special projects as and when needed.

The Parish Council managed the finances for **Phase 1 of the Village Hall Extension Project** – the store room and new oil tank, which was successfully delivered slightly under budget, and now the Parish Council doing the same for **Phase 2 – the new Community Room.**

A new **Training Policy** was adopted, as was an **Action Plan.**

Deeds of Grant of Easement for vehicular access across the Tye were approved for granted to another two properties.

The Barking Parish Web Site continues to be maintained by the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council can also be followed on **Twitter** and **Facebook.**

The Clerk attended **two training seminars** on behalf of the Council, and one member attended **New Councillor Training.**

Most recently, at the March meeting, it was resolved to purchase a **defibrillator** with funds granted by County Councillor Truelove. It is intended to fix the unit in the telephone box outside the Village Hall. *Provided* this can be done, the purchase and installation will take place as soon as possible, but the Council first has to adopt the telephone kiosk from BT which could take up to 3 months to achieve. A full briefing will occur for residents when the defibrillator installed.

And finally

To mark **Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday**, which happens to be today, the Council resolved to hold a Birthday Party after this meeting, and to roll back the years to 1926. Our thanks to Cllr Julia Truelove for providing funds to cover some of the cost.

Stephen Butler
Chairman, Barking Parish Council
21st April 2016