

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 26th April 2012 on work undertaken by Barking Parish Council 2011 - 2012

There have been 7 **meetings** of the Parish Council during the past year; 1 of which was an extraordinary meeting.

The Parish Council was consulted on 6 **planning applications**, 5 of which were for Barking and 1 related to a property Needham Market.

The Parish Council currently still has its full complement of councillors.

Denys Hoyland was elected as the new councillor from Darmsden, replacing John Berry, who retired at the May election, and **Ann Ross** was co-opted to replace Sue Marsh who also retired in May.

Cllr Michael Smith represents Barking on the Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities, **Cllr Michael Bailey** on the Barking Village Hall Management Committee, and **Cllr Alex Smith** on the Barking Footpath Group. **Cllr Michael Smith** also represents Barking on the Theobalds Trust and at the Wattisham Liaison Group meetings.

1 Councillor attended **training** during the year, as did the Parish Clerk.

The **Community Speed Watch Scheme**, which was set up last April with 5 volunteers from Barking, has been very effective in identifying many vehicles exceeding the speed limit, and it is apparent that the presence of the teams is instrumental in encouraging motorists to observe the speed limit through the 3 Parishes – Barking, Great Bricett & Somersham. It is also hoped that the data produced will support the Parish Councils continued efforts to obtain further speed reduction measures. A request for solar powered speed indicator signs was made in March 2009, and it is understood the Speed watch data is being looked to support this request. The Council wishes to record its' thanks to those volunteers who have turned out in fine and foul weather throughout the year. It is understood the number of volunteers from Barking is now 7.

The grass continues to be cut by the County Grounds Service, as we were very pleased with the level of service provided last season. Income from the **hay crop** was very welcome and it is hoped this will continue to be received.

3 litter pickers continue to be employed by the Parish Council - Claire & Peter Bate, and Dick Nash. They continue to do an excellent job and the costs are still being reclaimed from Mid Suffolk District Council by way of a Cleansing Grant. A volunteer litter picker came forward from Darmsden.

Our **Village Caretaker**, Dick Nash, has continued to maintain parish assets such as the play equipment and wooden benches, he regularly cuts the grass to the rear of the village hall, picks up litter and empties the bins on the Tye.

The **play equipment** is in good condition, apart from the spring rocker on the Tye, which is in need of replacement.

Four Horse Chestnut trees on the Tye had to be removed, on the advice of our Tree Warden, as they were suffering from a combination of leaf miner, bleeding canker, drought and damage to the trunks by mowers and strimmers. It is intended to replace them.

Fritillary bulbs have been planted on the Tye along the edge of the wild flower meadow, near to the play equipment. These should now be visible.

A Grit Bin has been purchased for the Village Hall car park. Once again, this was funded from County Cllr Truelove's Locality Budget, for which we are very grateful. The proviso under which our grit bins are funded by Suffolk County Council, is that only nominated people can spread the grit on the road. This also ensures that their actions in doing so are insured under the Suffolk County Council Public Liability insurance. Our thanks to Dennis Eaton and Mike Bailey from Barking, and John Berry from Darmsden for volunteering to be our nominated 'grit spreaders'.

The Council has continued its policy to support local organisations and **donations** were given during the year to St Marys Church towards the upkeep of the church yard, to the Four Parishes Magazine, and to the Royal British Legion. Also benefiting was the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service, who received the profit from the sale of the 2012 Barking Calendar. The donation to the Royal British Legion is in exchange for a **poppy wreath**, which was laid at the site of the War Memorial on the Tye, as it is every year.

A full **Financial Risk Assessment** was conducted to ensure all risks to the Council and its finances have been identified, and measures taken to either reduce or eliminate the risks. Also a full review of the **Internal Audit Process** was carried out as required by the External Auditors.

The **Budget for 2012 - 2013** has been set at £19,828 to ensure that the Parish Council has sufficient funds to meet its' day to day expenses. Due to prudent management of the Councils finances, the Precept remains at £8,362 for the fourth year running. Funding will continue to be sought for special projects as and when needed.

9 Welcome Packs were given to new residents during the past 12 months, which is 5 more than last year.

The Barking Parish Web Site continues to be maintained by the Parish Clerk and is a good source of information about the Parish and the various community groups and organisations. The website has recently been updated and has many new features.

Your Council was consulted on several issues, including the **future of the mobile library service, and the drive for Better Broadband.**

Deeds of Grant of Easement for vehicular access across the Tye were received from 3 properties.

A **wreath laying ceremony** was held in September at the site of a crashed spitfire. The crash happened on the eve of the breakout of World War 2, at Lady's Lane, in Barking. The ceremony was attended by several Parish Councillors, and our MP – Dr Daniel Pouter.

Following the completion of the **Parish Plan**, the Parish Council has reviewed the Action Plan to identify the actions for which it is responsible. Speeding was identified as being the top priority. The Action Plan is a living document and will be reviewed at least annually.

Finally A **Community Governance Review** is currently underway following a request by residents in Darmsden for a review. This process, which is being conducted by Mid Suffolk District Council, could take up to a year to complete, so we should know by next April what the outcome will be.

The Future

The **proposed footway** through Barking is still on the Parish Council's radar and will be pursued.

The Council is considering **Energy Saving Bulbs** for the street lights. Costs are being obtained.

The **Queens Diamond Jubilee** takes place in June. The Council has allocated funding for various celebratory events that are planned to take place. This funding is matched by a grant from Suffolk County Council via

Cllr Truelove. Some events are planned to take place on the Tye, for which the Council has given permission.

Village Hall Extension – the Council has submitted a planning application for improvements to the Village Hall - a meeting room with additional toilets, and more storage space is planned.

Michael Smith
Chairman
Barking Parish Council
20th April 2012