

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 26th April 2013 on work undertaken by Barking Parish Council 2012 - 2013

The Parish Council currently has one vacancy, due to the resignation of **Denys Hoyland** from Darmsden. **Cllr Michael Smith** represents Barking on the Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities, the Theobalds Foundation and the Wattisham Liaison Group meetings, **Cllr Michael Bailey** is on the Barking Village Hall Management Committee, and **Cllr Alex Smith** is the liaison on 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 8 **planning applications**, 5 of which were in Barking, 1 in Needham Market and 2 in Darmsden.

Some highways improvements are being undertaken at the bend near Barking Nursing Home and we are grateful to County Councillor Julia Truelove for providing funds from her Locality Budget to pay for these works. The Parish Council is currently waiting for temporary portable speed cameras to be installed by Suffolk County Council. The good work of the **Community Speed Watch Scheme** has helped to influence the need for these speed reduction and highways safety measures and we are very grateful to the Team for its hard work. The Barking Team is not active at the moment as there is no co-ordinator.

The Tye continues to be cut by the EFMS Ltd, as we were very pleased with the level of service provided during the past two seasons. Income from the **hay crop** was very welcome and it is hoped this will continue to be received. Several large trees on the Tye have had their canopies raised, and others have had some branches removed. Permission has been granted for the Tye to be used this year for the Barking Fair.

2 litter pickers are employed by the Parish Council - Cameron Bate, and Dick Nash. They continue 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 for a short period, until that person moved away.

Our **Village Caretaker** - Dick Nash, has continued to maintain parish assets such as the wooden benches, he regularly cuts the grass to the rear of the

village hall and is now keeping the footpaths clear across the Tye. He also picks up litter and empties the bins on the Tye.

The **play equipment** is still in good condition. A smart new spring rocker was installed on the Tye in 2012, partly funded by the Parish Plan Project.

The **grit bins** have been kept topped up during the winter months. Our continued thanks to Dennis Eaton and to Mike Bailey from Barking, and to John Berry from Darmsden for volunteering to be the 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. The recipient of the profits from the 2013 Barking Calendar is yet to be determined. 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.

This year, the Parish Council decided to instal an **Intelligent Lighting System** on all 10 street lights in Barking, which enables the lights to be switched off during the night to save electricity.

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. During the year, the Council adopted the new **Suffolk Code of Conduct** and became eligible to use the new **General Power of Competence**.

The **Budget for 2013 - 2014** has been set at £29,107. This includes provision to replace the street light bulbs (a very costly exercise), and to further explore the possibility of a footway through the village. Due to prudent management of the Council's finances, the Precept remains at £8,362 for the fifth year running. Funding will continue to be sought for special projects as and when needed.

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. You can now follow the Parish Council on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.

The Parish Council hosted a **Coffee Morning** in September and raised £120 for MacMillan Cancer Care.

Deeds of Grant of Easement for vehicular access across the Tye were granted to another 3 properties.

The **Queens Diamond Jubilee** took place in June. The Council funded a wrought iron beacon for the event and this is now in place on the Tye in front of the Village Hall. The beacon will be re-used for future events/Coronations. The Council matched funds provided by Suffolk County Council via Councillor Julia Truelove for the village celebrations that took place for the Diamond Jubilee.

Finally Following the **Community Governance Review** that took place during 2012, an order was made by Mid Suffolk District Council to create a new parish of Darmsden, effective from 1st April 2013, and Barking Parish Council has been ordered to transfer set up costs of £750 to the new Darmsden Parish Meeting. The new boundary was agreed in consultation with Barking Parish Council and a large copy of the map is on display at this Parish Meeting.

The Future

The **proposed footway** through Barking is now being actively researched and funds set aside in this year's budget, as have funds for **Energy Saving Bulbs** for the street lights.

Village Hall Extension – Planning permission has now been granted for the planned improvements to the Village Hall, which are being implemented by the Village Hall Management Committee with the support of the Parish Council.

Stephen Butler
Chairman
Barking Parish Council
26th April 2013