

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 24th April 2014 on work undertaken by Barking Parish Council 2013 - 2014

The Parish Council currently has its full complement of members, with **Craig Eagles** being co-opted in May to replace **Denys Hoyland** from Darmsden. **Cllr Michael Smith** continues to represent Barking on the Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities, and the Theobalds Foundation, **Cllr Craig Eagles** is the new Wattisham Liaison Group representative, **Cllr Michael Bailey** represents the Council on the Barking Village Hall Management Committee, and **Cllr Alex Smith** is the liaison for the Barking Footpath Group.

There were **9 meetings** during the past year, 2 of which were extraordinary meetings.

The Parish Council was consulted on **6 planning applications**.

Since the **improved signage** was provided early last year at the bend near Barking Nursing Home, the railings have remained intact. The Parish Council is still waiting for temporary portable speed cameras to be installed by Suffolk County Council. The posts have at long last been erected, now we are waiting for the signs. It is hoped we won't have to wait much longer and that motorists will be encouraged to keep to the 30mph limit through the village.

The Tye continues to be cut by the Eastern Facilities Management Solutions Ltd, as we have been very pleased with the level of service provided during the past three seasons. Income from the **hay crop** was very welcome and it is hoped this will continue to be received. Moles have been a major problem this year, but hiring professional mole catchers is very costly. Now the grass is being cut again, the council will review the number of new mole hills and decide what to do to keep the numbers down.

2 litter pickers continue to be employed by the Parish Council - Cameron Bate, and Dick Nash. They both do 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, 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 once again keeping the footpaths clear across the Tye. He also picks up litter and empties the dog bins on the Tye.

The **play equipment** is still in good condition. Minor repairs have been authorised to ensure it is kept up to the required standard. We have also purchased a new goal net to replace one that is badly torn.

The **grit bins** were topped up in October, but were not needed due to the very mild winter. Craig Eagles and John Boyle have joined Mike Bailey as our nominated ‘grit spreaders’. All were kitted out with hi-viz jackets and gloves, but their services were not needed this winter.

One of the dog bins was re-sited to the Fox Meadow end of the Tye, as a direct result of the Parish Plan responses.

The Council has continued its’ policy to support local organisations and **donations** were given during the year to the Four Parishes Magazine, to the Royal British Legion and Headway Ipswich & East Suffolk. The recipient of the profits from the 2013 Barking Calendar were the Needham Market Community First Responders. 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.

Last 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. Significant savings were made. The Council has budgeted to replace all the bulbs with new LED lanterns, as and when they fail. Two of those lanterns have now been changed, although one was as the result of a road traffic accident so the Parish Council’s insurers will pay the cost of that new lantern.

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 2014 - 2015** has been set at £28,553. This includes provision to replace the remaining street light bulbs (the whole mechanism has to be replaced, not just the bulb) and a budget heading for a possible footway. For the first time in 6 years, the Precept increased to £8,488 (an increase of £126), though the Parish Council element of the Council Tax Bill actually reduced. 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 also follow the Parish Council on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.

Deeds of Grant of Easement for vehicular access across the Tye were granted to another 2 properties.

And finally The Council **adopted policies** for Communication, Equal Opportunities and Social Media, and a Social Networking and Blogging Protocol was adopted.

The Future

To continue to maintain the Tye and village amenities, to support village groups and organisations and to oversee the management and improvement of the Village Hall as Custodian Trustee.

Stephen Butler
Chairman
Barking Parish Council
24th April 2014