

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 23rd May 2017 on work undertaken by Barking Parish Council 2016 - 2017

The Parish Council strives to ensure that fully democratic decisions are taken that are truly representative of the whole Parish. Craig Eagles left the parish in July and the resulting vacancy has not yet been filled, so we only have 6 out of our full complement of 7.

The Council is represented on the **Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities**, the **Theobalds Foundation**, the **Barking Village Hall Management Committee**, and the **Barking Footpath Group**. **The Wattisham Liaison Group** has not met for several years now.

There were **9 meetings** during the past year, **3** of which were extraordinary meetings convened to consider planning applications.

The Parish Council was consulted on **14 planning applications**, (compared to 3 in the previous year). A **Public Consultation** was held by Hopkins Homes which was well attended by residents. **3 new Affordable Homes** were built in Fox Meadow - one bungalow and two semi-detached houses.

Temporary portable speed cameras are routinely deployed to remind motorists to keep to the 30mph limit through the village. County Cllr Julia Truelove has pledged to fund a permanent VAS sign to be located adjacent to Barking Hall Nursing Home, for which we are very grateful. This means that there will be 3 VAS signs in operation every few weeks. There continues to be no **Community Speed Watch Team** in Barking at the moment. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the Parish Clerk.

Anglian Water completed the replacement of the old water pipes. Large holes were dug in the Tye to facilitate this, and the Tye appears to have recovered well.

The Tye continues to be cut by VERTAS, as we have been very pleased with the level of service provided during the past 6 seasons. There was no income from the **hay crop** again last year due to the quality of the hay. Natural England has granted a **Haymaking Subsidy** which will bring in very welcome income until July 2018. **Moles** have again been a problem and the Parish Council is doing its best to keep the numbers down.

An **archeological/geophysical survey of the Tye** was undertaken during the year as part of a resident's University dissertation. We look forward to seeing the results in the near future.

We have a new **Litter Picker**. William Dalby took over from Martin Pryke in September. He 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, has continued to cut the grass to the rear of the village hall and is once again keeping the footpaths clear across the Tye.

All the **dog bins and litter bins** on the Tye are being emptied weekly by MSDC, although the dog bin opposite Ladyfield was missed out a few times. Hopefully this has now been rectified. The cost of this is met by the Parish Council.

For the second year running the **grit bins** were not needed due to another very mild winter.

The **play equipment** on the Tye is still in good condition, with a swing seat being replaced in April last year, but the equipment behind the Village Hall is now showing its age, and as it is hardly used, it is likely to be removed.

The Council has continued its' policy to support local organisations and **donations** were given during the year to

- St Marys Church - for grass cutting
- Headway Suffolk
- Royal British Legion - in exchange for the poppy wreath
- Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk
- Needham Market Community First Responders
- Barking Village Hall - for the new Annexe
- Barking Village Hall - to enable the Rural Coffee Caravan to use the new Annexe for its visits

The beneficiary of the **2015 Calendar profits** was Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

A **defibrillator** was purchased and installed in the redundant telephone kiosk outside the Village Hall. The majority of the funding was provided by County Cllr Julia Truelove from her Locality Fund. The Parish Council acquired the kiosk and gave it a makeover once the telephone mechanism had been removed. New LED lights were also installed. Training was provided by the Community Heartbeat Trust and also by the Needham Market Community First Responder team. 24 residents attended the first session in January and another 22 in February. Let's hope the equipment is never needed.

The **new LED lanterns**, which have been in place for 2 years now, and are resulting in significant savings in our electricity bills.

£4,000 was donated to **Phase 2 of the Village Hall Extension Project for the new Annexe**. The Parish Clerk was tasked with the fundraising, with help from the Village Hall Management Committee. This took several months of hard work by all parties, but was well worth it as we now have a new Annexe for the Hall. Grateful thanks for all who contributed funds to enable this project to be delivered.

The **Budget for 2017 - 2018** has been set at £17, 355. The Precept was increased by £200 to £8,688. Funding will continue to be sought for special projects as and when needed.

Funds were secured from Central Government to cover additional costs incurred by the new **Transparency Code**, which adds at least 3 hours a month to the Clerks work.

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

To mark **Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday**, a Birthday Party was held after the Annual Parish Meeting last year, with a film show of old photos of Barking – people and places, a news reel covering Her Majesty's life, and to roll back the years to 1926, music from year was the soundtrack to the event. Our thanks to Cllr Julia Truelove for providing funds to cover some of the cost.

An additional **Birthday Tea** was hosted by the Parish Council in June for the parish's oldest residents. Much fun was had by everyone.

It is planned to hold a similar event on 21st June which has been officially named '**Suffolk Day**'.

And finally

The Parish Council would like to publicly express its' thanks to **County Cllr Julia Truelove** who has now retired. She has been extremely supportive of the Parish in so many ways and has, over the years, provided much needed funds for several village projects.

Alex Smith
Chairman, Barking Parish Council
23rd May 2017