

BARKWAY BULLETIN



A Quarterly Newsletter from the Parish Council of Barkway

Issue No. 7

June 2011

Chairman's Column

The time has come around again for me, as the Chairman of the Parish Council, to take out the quill pen and ink and write my column. We are now well into the new financial year with a newly elected Parish Council. However, such are the best laid plans of mice and men, things have not quite worked out as anticipated. We returned as 6 Parish Councillors, following the failure of one Councillor to enter his election papers in due time, and were about to commence the legal processes necessary to fill the seat when, just before the Annual Parish Meeting in the last week of May, Cllr Gordon Baker announced his immediate resignation due to health concerns. Therefore, at the time of writing this, I have had to call an emergency meeting of the reduced Parish Council to attend to the matter of redistributing portfolio duties, whilst we go through the necessary processes to fill the vacant seats. To our departing Councillors, we thank you for your hard work and commitment in the past year and, in particular to Cllr Baker - one of the true driving forces behind the Parish Council - we wish you the very best of health and thank you for your continued support, albeit taking a back seat from now on.

Thankfully, the preceding year has been one devoid of major incidents or problems in the Parish, as we worked behind the scenes to keep things flowing in the village, quietly and as trouble free as possible - just as we would hope and expect life to be in a rural village.

The Parish Council remains committed to continue with its voluntary work on behalf of the Parish but, as we see the Localism Bill roll out through Parliament in the coming year and the Prime Minister presses more and more for his Big Society, it is inevitable in the coming months and years to expect that more residents will be needed to get involved in the running of the community in some form or another. An example of this being the Speedwatch Group, all volunteers who started their work in March this year to record and report speeding traffic in the village, with incredulous results - over 200 speeding cars reported to the Police, an average speed of 46mph and a highest recorded speed in the High Street of 65mph.

In June last year we published our Parish Plan, which was highly complimented by District and County Councillors and officers and has already been put to good use. Several of the suggestions in the plan have been adopted, with many of you taking part in the Barkway Forum, which offers a valuable opportunity for the groups to share experiences and resources. We must now update the plan in the coming months to ensure that we adapt it to current circumstances and new suggestions and ideas

Spending cuts, the increase in VAT, increased insurance and energy prices have meant we have all had to tighten our belts in one way or another and that applies to the Parish Council too. Our revised financial working practice will ensure that the precept is managed in the best possible manner and that we will deliver best value practice at all times with the finances that the community has entrusted us to manage. Your Council has received many compliments at District and County level about how proactive your Council is. We are now in a very strong position to work towards applying for Quality Parish Status either later this year or early 2012.

Going forward there is still much to do. We must continually seek to find the best economical value for the services and governance items on which we are required to spend money but, as a Parish Council, must also strive to improve ourselves and so it is intended that all Councillors will be encouraged to attend training courses.

The coming year will be challenging. Spending cuts, the Localism Bill and the proposed Big Society are already filtering down to us. These are dynamic times but I am certain that, with the good shape the Parish of Barkway and your Council is in, we will be equally dynamic and able to adapt and change to meet whatever challenges that present themselves.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors present and past and, of course, our Clerk for their incredible commitment for the past year and for the hours of free time they have given up on your behalf. They have made a difference to the Parish by their contribution and commitment.

I now must ask you, the community, taking into account our elected Government's proposals of the Big Society and, bearing in mind that we have two vacant Councillor seats, what part will you feel empowered to play in the future?

Dr Robert Davidson, Chairman, Barkway Parish Council

Welcome.....to the Summer edition of *Barkway Bulletin*. As usual, it is full of information about what is happening in the Parish. The "Bulletin" is now over a year old and has become an established means of communication within the village

Wheatsheaf Meadow House - update.....

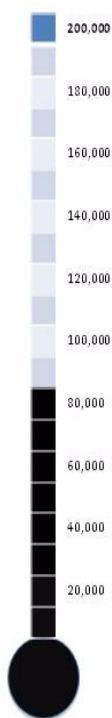
In the coming months, after over a year's delay due to the Government's Spending Review and cuts, we finally expect to see work start to redevelop Wheatsheaf Meadow House. The original plan to produce eight affordable homes on the site along with two full market properties was no longer financially viable due to cuts in housing grants and the number of market homes has had to increase to six leaving us with just four affordable homes. This is very disappointing but, for economic reasons, understandable. We are very much aware of the shortage of affordable homes in Barkway. We are continuing our discussions on how, beyond Wheatsheaf Meadow House, we can fill this shortfall to enable people growing up or with increasing families who are unable to purchase properties in Barkway to have the ability to stay in the village through affordable home schemes. Of course, at the same time, ensuring that we do not spoil our lovely village with large developments. We are pleased to say now that North Herts Homes (NHH) anticipates being able to commence work in August. As this is finalised, we will arrange with NHH and the contractors to meet with the residents who live around the site to explain how the work will commence and to answer any questions or concerns.

It was with great regret that I had to stand down as a Barkway Parish Councillor towards the end of May due to health concerns. I have enjoyed the last two years serving the community and hope that my contribution has been worthwhile. I will not be disappearing altogether as I will continue to maintain the village website and edit the "Bulletin" as well as serving on several committees. My best wishes go to Cllr Bob Davidson, his fellow Councillors and the Parish Clerk and I hope that the two vacant seats will be filled shortly.

Gordon Baker

Parish Matters.....

The Pavilion Project - update



Now that the euphoria of being awarded £50,000 under the NHDC's PACIF grant scheme has settled down, the Pavilion Project Committee must work hard to move on to the next stage of agreeing design and layout and obtaining building regulations approval.

The committee must also research other funding sources as a further £80,000 is estimated to be still needed. Grant applications are being considered and fund raising activities have occurred and/or are being organised.

A stall at the recent Barkway Market produced a small, but invaluable, sum by selling "virtual" bricks and the Casino Night held on 14th May produced a healthy profit of nearly £1300.

These funds will be set aside to pay architect's fees and building regulation charges. But there is still a long way to go and we are always looking for help in the form of donations, pledges and advice. Anyone wishing to contribute in any way should contact us by the usual methods.

Message from our new District Councillor



I am delighted to have been elected as the District Councillor for Ermine Ward. This includes the villages of Barkway, Barley, Nuthampstead, Reed, Therfield and Kelshall.

I am grateful for the help from so many friends and the electoral support from so many residents in our ward. I am especially grateful to Howard Marshall who has served us all for 12 years and who has done a great job. Howard has mentored me on Council matters and with my campaign. I should also like to thank Peter McMeekin as Howard's and now my agent. My wife Sally has, as always, been so considerate and supportive during the last month, whilst I have been away at meetings and canvassing. We have lived in Barkway for seven years. Having moved here almost by accident, it being midway between my four brothers in North London and my daughter and Sally's family in Norfolk and Suffolk. My son and his wife now live in Wales. The move here has been one of the best decisions I have ever taken. This is a truly wonderful area in which to live. I shall work hard to justify the faith that so many have placed in me and I hope be able to make a difference in Ermine Ward.

Gerald Morris

Barkway Parish Council would like to thank Howard Marshall for his many years of dedicated service as District Councillor and wish him well for the future.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

The Government has announced plans for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, which will include an official Jubilee weekend during the dates 2nd to 5th June 2012. At the Parish Council's meeting on 9th May it was agreed that, during this period, events would be staged by the Parish Council to commemorate this very significant occasion. It is too early at this moment to announce how the events will materialise but Cllr Steve Alsop has agreed to head a sub committee, which will start to make plans for the occasion. It is still a long way off but you can never start the planning process too early. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the organisation or who has some ideas as to how we could celebrate this event should contact Cllr Alsop by email.

Dates for your Diary...

Parish Council meetings: Mondays 13th June, 11th July, (no meeting August) in the Reading Room at 7.30pm. Members of the public welcome

Parish Council surgeries: Held bi-monthly in the Reading Room. Next date: 16th July (jointly with Police) - between 10 and 11 am

Barkway Forum: Meeting Wednesday 29th June in Barkway Village Hall at 8.00pm

Land Registration

The Parish own three pieces of land - these being the Recreation Ground, the Reading Room and the War Memorial. Though the Parish Council has the original title deeds to all three, none have ever been registered with the Government Land Registry office. We have gone through the process of formally registering these properties. Registration establishes proof of ownership, gives greater security of title and provides better protection in law. We will still keep the original title deeds but, now registered, the details of the properties will be able to be viewed by the Council in a more easy to read format quickly and securely online. The work leading up to the registration was carried out by Councillors Baker and Alsop and the Parish Council is grateful to Nicholas Tufton for his professional help and advice.

What has happened in the last quarter...

- £50,000 NHDC PACIF grant approved for the Pavilion Project
- First joint surgery carried out with the Police on 21st May
- Barkway Market took place on 7th May
- Casino Night held on 14th May in aid of the Pavilion Project
- Reading Room, War Memorial and Recreation Ground became registered land
- Barley FC became Barkway and Barley FC
- The Annual Parish Meeting was held on 25th May

Your elected Parish Councillors with their responsibilities and contact details

Dr Robert Davidson: Chairman, Planning, Highways and Corporate Governance

Ken McCormick: Community Liaison including Police

Jo Cockerton: Young People

Tony Terry: Property and Leisure

Steve Alsop: Environment

Catharine Toms: Parish Clerk

Two vacant positions - co-option process to take place

Please contact the Parish Council through the Parish Clerk

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If you have any comments on the content of this edition of Barkway Bulletin, please contact the editor at gordon.baker@barkway-village.co.uk We are always interested in hearing your views

**A Classical Music Evening
with a difference
Saturday 17th September
Barkway Village Hall
8.00pm
Details will be published
shortly**