

BARKWAY BULLETIN



A Quarterly Newsletter from the Parish Council of Barkway

Issue No. 6

March 2011

Chairman's Column

We are now well into 2011 and braced for the full effect of the Government's spending rationalisation. Our roads are suffering, the number of affordable homes we hoped to provide has been dramatically cut and the programme delayed, all as a direct consequence of the spending cuts. I must now report that Herts. Highways have informed me that, despite our excellent Parish Plan, they will not be assigning any of their traffic compliance funds to Barkway and, furthermore, that the rural traffic funds will be dramatically reduced. The outcome is that we are unlikely to see any traffic calming in our Parish in the foreseeable future. So I would make two appeals to our community.

First, please report any road faults to Herts. Highways, as per Councillor Hunter's request - we need to put our village on the faults highway map.

Secondly, please slow down and adhere to the speed limit. It is regrettable that, on a daily basis, we see local people speeding through the village without regard for their safety, or that of their community.

We await with some degree of nervousness the implications of Mr Cameron's Big Society policy and how it will affect rural life. Mr Cameron recently asserted "as the state spends less and does less.....there would be a positive benefit if some parts of society were to step forward and do more". That will apply even here in Barkway where, in addition to the Parish Council, other members of the community will be needed to accept responsibility and to be expected to take a greater role in certain aspects of daily life. How this will work, and how it will be managed, is yet to be revealed by the Government but they intend to make it happen. An example, however, might be the Barkway Speedwatch Group whom, I am pleased to announce, will shortly begin monitoring speeds around the village, with the aim of positively reducing traffic speed. We will all have our views on the "Big Society" but I would hope that, if this policy were enacted, we would see our community benefit from the additional input of those individuals who do feel empowered to come forward and contribute positively to life in Barkway. 2011 will be, one way or another, a dynamic year for us all. I believe that the preparation your Parish Council has put in place together with the good relationship we have built with District and County Council and with the support of the community, we are in a good position to fare whatever the year throws at us.

**Dr Robert Davidson. Chairman
Barkway Parish Council**

The "Bulletin" has been in existence now for a year and has become an excellent source of information about Parish Council matters. One resident was heard to say "I look forward to reading the Bulletin as it keeps me up to date with what is going on in the Parish".

Message from our County Councillor



2010 was a year that had challenges for Hertfordshire, although our overall performance, when judged against other County Councils, proved to be nationally one of the best. Our services for older people and those with physical and learning disabilities when inspected by the Care Quality Commission were given a "performing excellently" grade, one of the few to achieve this standard. Hertfordshire County Council now faces in 2011 even tougher financial pressures as a consequence of the recession and the need for Government to deal with the borrowing and debt, which has accumulated over the years.

My main aim this year is to maintain our high level of service and, wherever possible, ensure this service is retained for those who are in need.

Many will already be aware that I receive a Locality Budget, which can be used to support local communities, and last year I was able to assist the Reading Room, so if in need of assistance for a community project please do make contact.

We are in what is called the pothole season after the severe weather and, as always, the greatest concern is for safety. When a road or footway has logged a great number of faults it enables me to apply pressure as to why the road should receive urgent attention and be added to the Integrated Highways programme. **So, it is vitally important that you report any pothole or fault by calling 0300 1234047.**

My thanks to all those involved in the production of the Bulletin and please feel free to contact me as required and I will do my best to help.

Tony Hunter, County Councillor
01763 245237 tony.hunter@hertscc.gov.uk

What has happened in the last quarter...

- The Reading Room was officially re-opened on 29th January
- Parish Council surgery took place on 15th January
- Barkway Book Club commenced using the Reading Room for their monthly meetings
- £21,000 Section 106 monies allocated to the Pavilion Project

Barkway School has a new website...

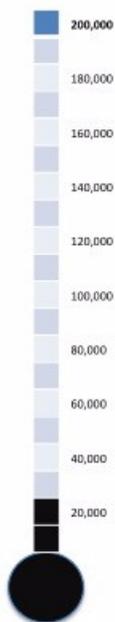
The staff at Barkway School felt that it was time to revamp their website and asked Councillor Gordon Baker to volunteer his services. A new, bright site now exists and contains some very surprising pictures of the staff and assistants, as well as interesting information about the activities and the work of the children. Why not have a look? www.barkway.herts.sch.uk

Dates for your Diary...

Parish Council meetings: Mondays 14th March, 11th April, 9th May - in the Reading Room at 7.30pm. Members of the public welcome
Parish Council surgeries: Held bi-monthly in the Reading Room. Next dates: 19th March, 21st May (jointly with Police) - between 10 and 11 am
Barkway Forum: Wed 30th March - Barkway Village Hall at 8pm Annual Parish Meeting: Wednesday 25th May - Barkway Village Hall at 8pm

Parish Matters.....

The Pavilion Project - update



In the last two editions of the Bulletin, details of the project to develop the existing pavilion into a new sports centre and youth club were unveiled. Events have moved on - approximately £21,000 has been allocated to the project from Section 106 monies in respect of the Wheatsheaf Meadow House development. The Recreation and Pavilion Project Management Committee has met and has plans for further grant applications in addition to the £50,000 pending request to NHDC and has been active in organising fundraising events. A casino night is planned for 14th May in the village hall and a cultural evening of classical music with a difference will take place some time in the Autumn. It is hoped that these, and further events, will be well attended and will contribute much needed funds to the project. However, there is still along way to go in order to find the total cost of the project and the Management Committee will welcome ideas and contributions from anyone who feels able to help.

The Barkway thermometer shows the target for the project and the figure in black tells you how much we have reached to date.

Barkway Forum

The Barkway Forum has been up and running for nearly a year and, in that time, three meetings have been held. The next meeting is planned for 30th March in the village hall. This is probably an opportune time to remind everyone of the aims of the Forum:

- To encourage communication between village organisations
- To provide a platform for the village organisations to share ideas and plans
- To suggest policies and strategies for the betterment of the village
- To support each other as and when required
- To consider fundraising for the village in general

The Parish Council is very keen for the Forum to become, and then remain, an established organisation within the village and will do all that it can to make the Forum a success. Please contact Councillor Ken McCormick for more information.

Wheatsheaf Meadow House

As a result of Government cutbacks and reduced funding to Natural England, it is now not possible for North Herts. Homes (NHH) to obtain the necessary work licences in time, before the bats return to Wheatsheaf Meadow House, nor to begin redevelopment in Springtime as originally intended. NHH are pushing on with all preparatory work possible, with the intention to begin dismantling the building in late August/September, as soon as the bats have left the roost once again. Very soon, security hoardings will be erected around the perimeter, whilst the already bare building is stripped out ready for dismantling. This is another unfortunate and unforeseen setback for the development and an indication of just how extensive the current Government cut backs are and how far they are likely to reach. We will keep the Parish informed of progress via our website.

www.barkway-village.co.uk

The Village Pond

During this year, we plan to complete some necessary remedial work around the village pond. The width of the reeds in front of, and within, the pond will be cut back. We will also manage the other vegetation around the perimeter to improve the appearance and views of the area.

The height of the side rails on the jetty will be increased and we will improve the safety mesh on the decking floor, both of these items were highlighted in our recent risk assessment for the area.

Whilst this work is in progress, we plan to take the opportunity to enhance the grassed area in front of the pond, where the village sign and map are already positioned, in order to create a 'Village Green.'

We have applied to NHDC for Section 106 funding to be made available for the purchase of a picnic table and bench seat for the area.

This will allow both the village community and visitors alike to rest awhile and enjoy this picturesque part of the village. If you have any comments on the above, please contact Councillor Steve Alsop.

Plans for the Reading Room

You are warmly invited to come in and see our restored Reading Room. It now has an efficient heating system to keep everyone warm during the cold weather, new furniture for meetings, clubs etc. and, true to its original purpose, it has a well stocked general library for village use. Please drop in for a warm welcome, arrange to meet your friends there for a cup of tea or coffee, borrow or swap books, or book the room for your club or group meetings.

Would you like to be a part of our new Reading Room? Do you have a few hours a week you could give to helping out? You will meet really nice people who may live just around the corner. We are working on our schedule of opening times now so don't delay. For more information call Councillor Ken McCormick today on 849151 or e-mail Catharine Toms at parishclerk@barkway-village.co.uk Thank you in anticipation of your help and support.

Your Parish Councillors with their responsibilities and contact details

Dr Robert Davidson: Chairman, Planning and Traffic

Gordon Baker: Vice Chairman, Grants and Communication

Ken McCormick: Special Projects

Jo Cockerton: Young People

Tony Terry: Recreation and Leisure

Vince Styles: Police and Village Emergency Plan

Steve Alsop: Environment

Catharine Toms: 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.

Grand Casino Night

Barkway Village Hall

14 May 2011 - 19.30 -23.00

An evening of Blackjack and Roulette

Licensed Bar - Buffet - Raffle - Auction

Prize for the Most Successful Player

Tickets £12.00 from Catharine Toms

848716 or Jo Cockerton 849201

Proceeds in aid of the

Recreation and Pavilion Project