

BARKWAY BULLETIN



A Quarterly Newsletter from the Parish Council of Barkway

Issue No. 11

March 2012

Editorial

At the January meeting of the Parish Council, Steve Alsop was unanimously elected as Chairman and Jim Dalton agreed to be Vice Chairman. Steve has been a Parish Councillor for two years and Jim was co-opted last October. Both bring to the Council a wealth of business experience and their interest and involvement in village activities is well known. Technically, a chairman's role is to chair the council meetings and the vice chairman's duty is to deputise in the chairman's absence. But, like most organisations, leadership and drive are paramount. In Steve and Jim, the Parish can be confident that these qualities exist. You will see from this edition of Barkway Bulletin that, in the short time that they have been in tandem, a number of initiatives has been planned and implemented.

A parish council is a corporate body elected by the residents and it is important that the council is seen to act in a way that represents that standing. Barkway Parish Council is such a body - it operates a portfolio system whereby each councillor has a delegated area of responsibility and an allocated budget from within the precept. Activities and projects are devised to improve the quality of life in the village and, at each Council meeting, projects are discussed and ratified by the Council where needed.

Communication and consultation with the residents are important parts of the Council's duties. Barkway Parish Council endeavours to keep everyone informed of events and activities through this publication; the village website and notice boards. Regular surgeries are also held where residents can discuss issues with a councillor on a one to one basis. All councillors have now attended a 'New Councillor Training Course' run by the Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils. This course introduced the new councillors to the duties and responsibilities of a parish councillor and refreshed the others. It has been agreed that, in future, new councillors will attend this course on joining the Council. Residents can be assured that their Parish Council is in a fit and organised state and well equipped to manage the affairs of the village.

North Hertfordshire Local Development Framework -

Core Strategy. New Housing Growth Targets- Consultation

Under the Localism Act, local authorities will become responsible for planning for growth in their areas. The District Council is now consulting on its housing growth targets for the next 20 years. The consultation document outlines eight different options for housing growth in North Hertfordshire over the next 20 years, ranging from 15,800 new homes down to 2,500. The Council is seeking views on which level of growth is best for the District. The District Council's preferred option for growth is to plan for 7,000 new homes, which will enable them to meet their affordable housing needs. You can make comments by using the website at: www.north-herts.gov.uk/core-strategy. You can also email your comments to ldfconsultations@north-herts.gov.uk. We strongly advise that parishioners should let the District Council know their views on this very important issue, which will shape planning for the coming years. The consultation period ends on Friday 30th March.

Highways report

Apart from an almost endless series of pothole repairs the Parish Council is pursuing a number of other issues.

- The pavement from the Village Hall to the Penns has been cleared most of the way, done by parishioners and anonymous business support for which we are grateful. NHDC has no money for this. We are promised by parishioners that the last part will be tackled soon. Again many thanks for self help.
- In conjunction with the Chapel Close builders and Herts CC, we are organising a full set of dropped kerbs, so that all people who need these kerbs have access to the bus stops, Village Hall, Social Cub and Reading Room, as well as the remainder of the village. This should be completed in late Spring.
- Visibility at Royston Road junction has been improved by hedge trimming, thank you, and we are repainting and extending the white road markings as this is the worst junction in the village.
- We had a big effort to get the road swept (by asking drivers to magic their cars to somewhere else) as gutter debris blocks drains and then causes floods, if it ever rains again. Please watch the website for news as to sweeping dates.
- Improved access to the kerb near the school for buses and cars is also in hand.
- We have asked for consideration to officially adopt and surface the unofficial passing place on the second curve (right hander) on Buckland Lane. Funds are not generally available for such things but the Localism Act has put funds into the hands of our County (not NHDC) Councillor and we have asked him to consider this in next years spend.

If anyone sees a trip hazard or pothole, it can easily be reported on the NHDC website and they DO react (in the end). If the problem persists, then of course your Parish Council will try to help. On other highway matters, please tell us your thoughts and wishes and we will investigate and report.

Chapel Close: A meeting has been arranged for the evening of Thursday 22nd March to enable residents to talk to staff of North Herts Homes about the housing process relating to the new homes at Chapel Close. More details will be published later.

Dates for your Diary.....

Next Parish Council meetings: Mon 12th March and Tues 10th April in the Reading Room at 7.30pm. Members of the public welcome.

Parish Council/Police Surgeries: Held bi-monthly in the Reading Room. Next dates: 17th March and 19th May - between 10 and 11 am.

Barkway Forum: Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21st March in the Reading Room at 8pm.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee meeting in the Reading Room 19th March at 8pm.

Saturday 12th May 2012 - Barkway Village Market 10am - 4pm.

Parish Matters.....

Footpaths

We would request that horse and bicycle riders please do not use the public footpaths, but keep only to the bridleways. All are clearly marked and there is a map for information on the notice board, which is outside the Reading Room.

Dog fouling

The Parish Council has recently installed another dog bin, which has been positioned at the end of Church Lane, near the footpath. This brings to 8 the number of dog bins, all of which are strategically placed around the village. The Parish Council pays for these to be emptied on a regular basis. Unfortunately, we still have instances of dog fouling in the village and we would ask all dog owners to be respectful of other members of the public and deposit dog waste in these bins. If anyone considers that there is a need for a further dog bin in another location then please let the Parish Clerk know and we will consider the request.

Snow clearing

The Parish Council, in anticipation of bad weather, had organised a supply of salt and sand mix from Herts County Council. After the recent snowfall, Councillor Gerald Morris provided a tractor and spreader and, with the help of Nicholas Tufton, cleared most of the treacherous side roads in the village making them less hazardous. The Parish Council would like to express its gratitude to Gerald and Nicholas.

Pavilion Project

Tenders were received for the revised pavilion project just before Christmas. The tender process raised a number of questions about the most appropriate specification for the project.

A revised pavilion project management committee, under the Chairmanship of Councillor Simon Taylor, has now been established to deliver the project. The committee has recently met to agree the next step for the project and agreement has been made on some clarification to the original specification. The committee will therefore produce a more detailed specification to allow for firm prices to be established.

In the meantime, additional fundraising is being organised by Councillor Andrew Murphy in order to allow for us to meet the costs of the project in full before construction commences. You can still contribute to the project by "buying a brick" through the village website.

Work to the play area and football pitches

As you may have seen, we have had to close the aerial slide as some of the posts have rotted at the bottom. We will try to repair this as soon as possible - provided the costs are not too high.

The swings and climbing frame have been repainted and the chains and seats have been replaced to meet current safety standards. We have bought new matting to go under the roundabout and have replaced the seats on the children's picnic table. The multi function fort has had minor repairs carried out, also the balancing apparatus. All of these play area repairs were shown as low risk on our annual inspection.

The football pitches were rolled and spiked, for the first time ever, so hopefully we will get a better growth and playing surface this year.

Dogs are still fouling the area around the play area and on the football pitches. There is a dog bin and also dust bins on the recreational ground - please use them.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Plans are progressing well for the celebration event for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to be held on Sunday 3rd June on the "Rec" in Barkway. Everyone from Barkway, Newsells and Nuthampstead is invited to come along for the whole day and join in the fun. Hopefully, you are now planning how you are going to 'dress' your house in a Royal theme for the Jubilee weekend and you are making your fancy dress costume for the day. Information about the dog show is in the March edition of the Diary and on the website. This is a fun event so come on and enter that dog! We will soon let you know about the sports day and ask you to enter the events. Again this is all about having fun, so they will not be Olympic events to test you but ones in which everyone will want to take part.

This is a full day event so bring your gazebos and tents so that you can stay all day. Prepare your picnics to be part of the 'Big Lunch' on the Rec. In the evening we have the very popular band, "Déjà Vu", back to play for us and finish the day off with a party atmosphere.

Watch the Barkway village website and notice boards for further details. We still need some more volunteers to help on the day so come along to the next meeting of the organising committee, which is on Monday 19th March at 8pm in the Reading Room.

Hope to see you there on the 3rd June!

Village Green and Pond

Following a presentation to parishioners on Thursday 1st March a plan for landscaping around the Village Green and Pond will progress during the next month.

This will involve the removal of all the flag irises immediately in front of the pond and the old tree stump next to the jetty.

Once removed, top soil will be spread across this area and turf will be laid on top. This will open out the view of the pond, especially in the summer months and increase the total grassed area.

During the year we will cut out some of the dead wood and overgrown vegetation around the south side of the pond (school side). Fallen tree branches in the pond itself will also be removed.

Once the work is completed we plan to maintain the area on an annual basis.

Overall, the aim is to have a Green which is a focal centre of the village, where residents and visitors alike will be happy to stop awhile and enjoy this attractive open space.

Your Parish Councillors with their responsibilities and contact details

Steve Alsop: (Chairman) Environment

Jim Dalton: (Vice Chairman) Highways

Ken McCormick: Community Liaison

Tony Terry: Property & Leisure

Simon Taylor: Pavilion Project & Parish Plan update

Andrew Murphy: Corporate Governance & Grants

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.

Thanks to Jo Cockerton

It is with a great degree of sadness that we have to announce that Jo Cockerton has resigned her position as a Barkway Parish Councillor for personal reasons. Jo has been a Councillor since May 2007 and has carried out the role with enthusiasm and industry. She will be greatly missed. Jo says "I enjoyed my time as a Councillor and have seen the Council grow from strength to strength in the past few years. My best wishes go to Steve Alsop and the other Councillors for success in their current activities".