

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2020

Never in my worst nightmare did I envisage writing this report in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. However, as the saying goes "every cloud has a silver lining" and I must say that I am very proud of the way in which the residents of Barnwell have responded to the Covid-19 crisis. Neighbours have been helping neighbours and the wonderful Care and Share Scheme is much appreciated by those of us who are required to completely isolate. I would like to extend a big thank you to all the volunteers who are offering their services, they are much appreciated. I would also like to thank everyone who has respected the call to stay at home as much as possible and, in so doing, has ensured that the village has remained virus free.

Now to Parish Council business.

There were no major issues picked up at our annual audit. Thank you to Nicki for ensuring that all is in order.

In January Councillor Holden informed us that, owing to pressures of work, he needed to resign from BWPC. With regret we accepted his resignation and thanked him for his valuable contribution over the past years. Mrs Jeanne de Bock has been co-opted to fill the vacancy and we look forward to welcoming her at our May AGM.

Councillors have adopted certain areas of responsibility in the day to day running of BWPC in part to ease the burden on our Clerk, and also to keep down the cost of her hours of working.

Councillor Brown: Flood Warden and tree rep.

Councillor Wise: Highways Warden

Councillor Bould: Country Park and new speed calming measures

Councillor Soans: Rights of Way

Councillor Hanlon: Trustee Parson Lathams

Councillor Shacklock/ JAG and Oundle Area Parish meetings
and Hanlon

Throughout the year BWPC has considered and commented on various Planning Applications, bearing in mind any concerns which have been put forward by residents.

When the Corona virus restrictions were imposed in March we decided to suspend the grass mowing in the village in order to ensure the safety of our residents. Having checked the risk assessment that Turneys, the grass cutting contractor, has in place, we have now decided that mowing can safely resume towards the end of May.

Throughout the year there has been work done on the trees in the village and there is more surgery due to be carried out towards the end of May on trees on the Green.

Until it had to be closed due to the virus, the children's playground was being very well used. The official annual safety inspection was carried out in January at which a couple of small problems were detected. These were very quickly rectified and we will continue with our weekly inspections once the playground reopens.

The Neighbourhood Plan is progressing well now. We are being aided by a Technical Support team which is producing, free of charge, a design statement to be incorporated into the plan. We hope that this will soon be completed and we can then prepare the final draft plan for submission to the Parish for approval.

We are trying to find ways of making more use of the Recreation Field and to this end we plan to install football posts and create a mown playing area. This would have already been completed but for the lockdown. It is not intended to be a full-sized pitch but rather somewhere where children can go and have a kick about and practice their football skills. We would ask that once this is installed people walking their dogs on the field will take care not to allow their pets to foul any part of the field.

We have received two generous donations towards the installation of traffic calming measures in the village. The Rifle Club gave us £500 and the Community Group £1000. Both donations are very much appreciated and we hope to install speed warning signs as soon as the lockdown is eased.

Unfortunately there has been no progress with the sale of the Village Shop and it has been closed during the lockdown.

We were able to install mains powered lights on the tree on the Green last Christmas and our thanks go to Councillor Brown and John Foster for installing them. We are also indebted to Bob and Margaret Whitehurst for allowing us to use their electrical supply to power the lights. Everyone seemed to enjoy them and we hope to see them again this year. Also on the subject of the Green, our thanks must go to Ted Croft who keeps it in immaculate order throughout the year, and indeed has kept up the mowing throughout the crisis.

A big thank you to all the Councillors for their help throughout the year and especially to our Clerk, Nicki, who does such a good job keeping us on the straight and narrow.

Heather Hanlon (Chair)