



# Barnt Green Parish Council

www.barntgreen.org.uk



## ANNUAL REPORT 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005

### Chairman's Overview

This Annual Report sets out what the Council has achieved during the past year. The award of Quality Status should assure you that we operate to the highest standards. We have made great efforts, as urged by you, to tidy up the village and hope that you are pleased with the progress.

We have signed a charter with both the District Council and the County Council, in the anticipation of closer partnership from both.

We are disappointed in the lack of installation of pedestrian safety measures along Hewell Road and the lack of maintenance of the roads and pavements around the village. We know that these are of great concern to the majority of you and will continue to urge for improvements. The Parish Plan, the blueprint for the next ten years or so, will be completed this year.

*Elaine Buckett, Chairman of the Parish Council*

### PERFORMING ITS STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

#### Street Lighting

The Parish Council is a street lighting authority and is responsible for maintaining most of the street lights in the parish. Many of the lighting columns inherited by the Parish Council are concrete which is prone to crumbling, and these need to be replaced due to health and safety considerations. Therefore, this year the Parish Council has embarked on a programme of upgrading lighting columns from concrete to galvanised steel. This year 3 columns were replaced and it is proposed to continue at a rate of approximately 4 columns per year, beginning with those in the poorest condition. The galvanised steel columns will be painted green.

#### Christmas Lighting

The strings of lights traditionally festooned above the shops no longer meet health and safety standards so alternative solutions are under consideration. However, provision has been made for the installation of 2 Christmas trees each year, at the entrance to the Millennium Park on Hewell Road and at the junction of Orchard Croft and Hewell Road. The Parish Council is liaising with traders in the village to see if a solution can be reached by working together.

#### Millennium Park, Hewell Road and "Parker's Piece" Playing Field, Bittell Road

These open spaces are managed by the Parish Council. They are well-used and are of great benefit to the community. Both are inspected annually by RoSPA and the Parish Council places great emphasis on its duty to ensure that they are safe.

A programme for upgrading the newly-named Millennium Park has begun this year involving the replacing of the slide, installation of fencing around the children's play area and replacing some of the railings. This programme will continue to ensure that all fencing, pathways, equipment, furniture and planting complies with the increasingly more stringent requirements of RoSPA and the Disability Discrimination Act.

The goal posts will be replaced in the newly-named "Parker's Piece" playing field on Bittell Road in 2005-6.

### Open Spaces

The Parish Council currently maintains the railway embankment on Hewell Road with the assistance of volunteers, the embankment on Hewell Lane adjoining the Longlands, the area around the substation in Orchard Croft and some of the verges on Hewell Road. It also carries out bulb planting.

The area at the junction of Station Approach and Hewell Road has been improved by the Parish Council, and the community notice board formerly affixed to the Post Office wall has been re-sited here.

A new community notice board has been installed in the bus shelter on Hewell Road, and both are well-used facilities.

The Parish Council has worked with the District Council to arrange for the litter bins around the village centre to be replaced at no additional cost to the residents.

## **PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND CONSERVATION AREAS**

### Development Control

The Parish Council, as a statutory consultee, comments on each application for planning permission relating to properties in the parish. The District Council's moratorium on granting planning permission for new houses introduced in August 2003 looks set to remain for the foreseeable future.

### Conservation Areas

A Conservation Area currently exists in the Fiery Hill Road/ Cherry Hill Road/Twatling Road area. The Parish Council aims to press the District Council into considering an additional Conservation Area for the village, probably in the Sandhills Lane/Sandhills Road/Hewell Road triangle.

## **FINANCE**

<b>Previous year</b>		<b>Current year</b>
<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>
	<b>Receipts</b>	
22,300.00	Precept	27,000.00
4567.00	Concurrent functions grant	3200.00
830.00	Lighting grant	0.00
971.51	Interest received	541.66
57.5	Rent	115.00
215	Christmas lights contribution from traders	0.00
4382.61	VAT refund	2436.58
0.00	Reimbursement of Lengthsman's fees	1218.48
0.00	Contribution from WCC to newsletter	25.00
2000.00	Parish Plan grant	0.00
0.00	Quality Parish Investment Fund grant	8500.00
54.00	Refund of training course fee	0.00
<b>35841.75</b>	464.13 Refund – feeder pillar	0.00
		<b>43036.72</b>
	<b>Payments</b>	
	<b>Administration</b>	
4768.24	Staff costs inc. NIC	6155.30
216.08	Members' allowances	222.00
336.50	Training and publications	331.85
1324.95	General administration costs	1946.19
419.81	Subscriptions	400.08
375.00	Auditor's fees	350.00
702.93	Insurance premium	1225.38
0.00	Contribution to HARM campaign	500.00
86.00	Election fees	0.00
4369.38	VAT	2658.41
<b>13070.63</b>	471.74 Loan repayments	471.74
		<b>14260.95</b>
	<b>Communications</b>	
64.99	Newsletters	20.00
600.00	Website	670.00
0.00	Notice boards	194.00
<b>500.00</b>		
	<b>Village Design Statement</b>	<b>0.00</b>

		<b>Millennium Park</b>		
	1075.00	Litter picking	510.00	
	401.62	Emptying bins	465.16	
		Maintenance & repairs of equipment, fencing,		
	579.77	Arch etc	1274.13	
	0.00	New equipment and railings	5720.00	
<b>2809.39</b>	753.00	Mowing, gardening	704.00	<b>8673.29</b>
		<b>"Parker's Piece" Playing Field</b>		
	109.53	Emptying bins	720.85	
<b>1519.26</b>	1390.98	Mowing	1333.36	
	18.75	Maintenance	385.00	<b>2439.21</b>
		<b>Environment and Open Spaces</b>		
	180.00	Mowing verges	180.00	
	506.97	Maintenance	505.00	
	437.50	Hanging baskets	480.00	
<b>1124.47</b>	0.00	Painting street furniture & sign posts	1313.00	<b>2478.00</b>
		<b>Street Lighting</b>		
	17095.75	New lighting columns	2931.00	
	3181.54	Maintenance	2695.95	
	173.36	Energy	0.00	
<b>22234.85</b>	1784.20	Total cost of Christmas lighting	2287.15	<b>7914.10</b>
<b>0.00</b>		<b>Lengthsman</b>		<b>1715.98</b>
<b>0.00</b>		<b>Parish Plan</b>		<b>1304.05</b>
<b>41923.59</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39669.58</b>

A summary of the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is set out above and these will be audited in accordance with the Local Government Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, first by an independent auditor and then by an external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission. A full copy of the accounts is available from the Executive Officer.

### **Members Allowances**

New legislation permits parish councillors to claim an allowance in addition to travelling expenses to ensure they are not out of pocket in representing the community. However, during this year the Council decided that a Basic Allowance should not be paid. The Council is required to publish details of amounts paid to councillors for the parish basic allowance and for the parish travelling and subsistence allowance. In the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, £22.00 was paid by way of travelling allowances.

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES**

### **Highways**

The Parish Council began participating in the Worcestershire County Council Parish Lengthsman Scheme in October 2004 under which the Parish Council retains a self-employed contractor to carry out, under the direction of the Parish Council, minor highway repairs which the County Council is unable to deal with. Payments made to the Lengthsman are reimbursed in full by the County Council. This has proved to be a success and the Parish Council will continue to participate in the scheme.

### **Pedestrian Safety, Hewell Road**

The Parish Council has been working with the County Council for several years to install pedestrian safety measures on the south side of Hewell Road. This has proved to be a most frustrating exercise. An consultation exercise in September 2004 proved of limited value when it transpired the plans prepared for the process required further revision. However, assurances have been given that the first phase of installation of bollards will start this summer.

### **Speed Reduction Measures**

The community has highlighted the speed of traffic on Bittell Road as a particular issues and the County Council has promised to install temporary pinch points to see if these will achieve the desired effect on traffic speed and flow. If so, the Parish Council will press hard for these to be installed permanently.

## PARISH PLAN

A Steering Committee comprising both parish councillors, residents and members of the local business community has been formed and is now working towards the preparation of a Parish Plan. This document will be a blue-print for the future of the village for the next 10-15 years and so it is important that community participation is as high as possible. The information-gathering stage has begun. The Village Design Statement, which will set out guidelines for the style of development in the village, will be incorporated into the Parish Plan.

## YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

### Quality Parish Status

In October 2004 the Parish Council became one of the first two parish councils in the county to be awarded Quality Parish Status. This is a national standard which demonstrates that the Parish Council's systems, procedures, links with the community and financial management comply with standards set by the government. An unexpected but most welcome benefit was the receipt of a grant of £8,500 for improving communications with the community, for identifying the parish boundaries and for improving the Council's office equipment.

### Communications

The Parish Council now produces three or four newsletters per year which are guaranteed to be delivered to each household in the parish by a group of volunteers. If anyone would like a large print, Braille or Audio copy please inform us directly or via a friend. The website at [www.barntgreen.org.uk](http://www.barntgreen.org.uk) is now an integral part of our communication network, and is being updated. The Parish Council now has its own notice board in front of the Millennium Park on Hewell Road.

### A Parish Council Office

It has become impractical for the Parish Council to continue to operate from the home of its Executive Officer and a search has begun for premises.

### Volunteers

The Parish Council is again very grateful to the many volunteers who are always so willing to deliver information to your doors to get important information to you, sometimes at very short notice. Thank you to the volunteers who pick up litter and those who join working parties to tackle various needs around the parish.

### Complaints

No complaints against any Parish Councillor have been referred to the Standards Board for England.

### Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council usually meets at 7.00pm on the last Monday in the month in the Lounge at the Parish Centre, Sandhills Road. Dates and details are displayed on the Parish Council notice board. Members of the public are welcome to attend and there is a slot on the agenda when members of the public can suggest items for the Parish Council to consider. Please come along!

## HOW TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL

Please feel free to contact any of your parish councillors or the Executive Officer, but please do try to do so at a reasonable time of day. Alternatively you may wish to use the "Contact the Council" facility at [www.barntgreen.org.uk](http://www.barntgreen.org.uk)

<b>Elaine Buckett (Chairman)</b>	<b>0121 445 1254</b>	<a href="mailto:chair@barntgreen.org.uk">chair@barntgreen.org.uk</a>
<b>Judith Jagger (Vice-Chairman)</b>	<b>0121 445 2437</b>	
<b>Diane Carr</b>	<b>0121 445 1220</b>	
<b>Peter Cliff</b>	<b>0121 445 6383</b>	
<b>Tom Gray</b>	<b>0121 445 4424</b>	
<b>Betty Lucas</b>	<b>0121 445 1370</b>	
<b>Sheila Parker</b>	<b>0121 445 1408</b>	
<b>Susan Whitehand</b>	<b>0121 445 3530</b>	

### *Executive Officer:*

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