



BARNT GREEN
PARISH COUNCIL
NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2004

ISSUE NO.1

www.barntgreen.org.uk

Chairman's introduction.

The planned improvements to the centre of the village are progressing well, albeit slower than anyone would have wished. A summary of the next stages appears elsewhere in this newsletter. The Parish Council now has its full complement of councillors, but extra help is always welcome; now is a good time to volunteer as you know you cannot be co-opted! Many of the working groups are overstretched and would welcome extra help. A list of the different groups is on the back of this newsletter. If you are interested, please contact us.

Volunteers for the 'hands on' working parties which tackle various untidy areas around the village are also needed. So if you like to get out and about with like-minded helpers and share a task, a pasty and a pint please get in touch. This is a good way to meet other residents especially if you are new to the village.

There are lots of opportunities for you to influence how the village 'shapes up' over the next few years, so get in on the act, get in touch and don't wait for others to shape it and then complain!

Elaine Buckett

Village Clean-up

On Saturday the 18th of October a hardy group braved the elements to give our village a good clean up. It is amazing how much litter can be picked up in just a couple of hours. As usual a skip was hired and parked in the Victoria Inn car park by kind permission of the manager. By Sunday night it was full!

The main street was actually not too bad, but the area around the station and on the main approaches to the village was again disappointing. It was wonderful to have so many children helping. They even brought some parents along too!

The children had produced some brilliant posters to advertise the event and all the traders supported the effort by displaying them in their windows.

Village Improvements

The Parish Council is still progressing with the improvements to the village. We have put in a bid for funding to Bromsgrove District Council to improve two more areas of the village. The first is the broad pavement outside the 'One-Stop' block of shops which it is hoped will be improved to include new surfacing, planters and possibly a bicycle rack. The second area will be the junction of Bittell Road and Bittell Farm Road to reduce the speed of traffic coming in and out of the village. If funding is granted, various options will be considered. Proposals for pedestrian safety measures in the village centre will be provided by the County Council very soon and we will keep you informed.

Logo-what logo?

Our new Parish Council logo! Sadly there were not many entries (or possibly not any entries!) for the logo competition. So this is your last chance for fame! Entries to the Parish Clerk must be in by 31/3/04. A prize of £25 is just waiting to be spent!

A Christmas Carol!

The Christmas Tree looked stunning in its new location. A short Carol Service led by Rev. Rob Fieldson was attended by over a 120 villagers of all ages and everyone sang heartily to keep warm. Refreshments were provided and afterwards the playground was full of families using the occasion to chat to their friends old and new.

The lights in the village looked wonderful too, but sadly they are reaching the end of their safe lifespan. It is hoped that funds can be raised to continue providing Christmas lighting that does so much to create a special village atmosphere.

Many thanks to all the traders who contributed towards the cost of the lights - they know who they are!

New Parking Arrangements

There are new waiting restrictions in force in Hewell Road, and it is no longer possible for commuters to park here so we would ask that commuters please use the station car parking facility.

Due to the doubling of patient numbers at the Barnt Green Surgery, in the future there will be parking at the Surgery for Doctors, Staff and Disabled patients only. In view of this we are very grateful to both the Victoria Inn and the Social Club who will allow casual parking during the day for patients, shoppers and shop workers. This facility is not open for all day parking and if it is abused, it will be withdrawn.

Council Tax

Part of your Council Tax funds some of the Parish Council's expenditure. In 2003-4 the Parish Council levied £22,300 which, on average, worked out at about £15.46 per elector or about £29.73 per household. However, for the year 2004 - 5, the Parish Council will levy £27,000 through the Council Tax bill. This works out at an increase of just over 21%, or £3.26 per elector or £6.26 per household. This equates to £18.72 per elector.

The Parish Council acknowledges that this is a significant increase but has endeavoured to keep the increase to the minimum possible whilst still delivering quality services. Next year, the Parish Council wishes to involve the community in setting its budget and so it is proposed that in October a draft budget for 2005-6 will be included in your newsletter to give you the chance to comment upon it before the Budget is set.

Basket Ball Facilities

The Parish Council is applying for a grant to install a basket ball post and net in the Playing Field on Bittell Road and will let you know if it was successful in the next newsletter.

Peter Cliff

Having moved from close to Birmingham city centre, to the village of Barnt Green 3 years ago, Peter Cliff is a very recent addition to the Parish Council.

Peter says:-

'In the few meetings I have attended the main feelings that I have picked up on is that everyone living in the area wants to keep Barnt Green as a village. If this is the case why do we abuse the village? It is obvious to me as a new resident that car parking was a problem for shoppers and this is not helped by commuters and others parking as close to the shops as possible all day.'

Speeding!

There is a 20mph speed limit in Hewell Road to protect children, the elderly and shoppers. If everyone observed it, there would have been no need for the speed cushions. There's a thought!

Please drop your speed through the village. It is impossible for the Parish Council to solve these problems without your help and assistance.

If we all play our part in village life, it will benefit all of us!

APM.

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be on Monday 26th April at 8pm in the Parish Centre behind St. Andrews Church. Please come along and meet your local councillors and take the opportunity to have your say about your village. Refreshments will be served and there will be plenty of opportunity for questions and maybe a few answers!

Environment

The Parish Council would like to keep Barnt Green as a village with a green boundary of fields. Your support undoubtedly helped prevent possible future development recently off Fiery Hill Road.

Traffic volumes continue to rise, but despite the unpopularity of the traffic calming measures, traffic has actually slowed down and that makes the village safer for all. Why not visit the shops by bike? - a rack will soon be installed. We intend to maintain the green areas including the park and the playing field. The embankments are being developed into natural habitats and we intend to improve the verges around the station car park and the railway bridges. We hope you like the bulbs which are now starting to show.

Police

Many thanks to those residents who have rung the police to report incidents, including driving and parking on pavements, since the last newsletter. Details of every phone call from the public are recorded for statistical purposes, and the greater the statistical evidence of a problem, the better chance there is of action being taken to resolve it. Details of incidents should be given by telephoning 08457 444888, and the police confirm that callers need not leave their name and address.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Instances of anti-social behaviour can be reported to the District Council's recently appointed Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Graham Hancox, who can be contacted on 01527 584400 or to the Community Safety Partnership on 01527 881423.

Have your say!

If you really feel strongly about something that affects the village, why not write or e-mail the councillor (s) responsible. Contact details are on the back of this sheet and the web-site.

Your Parish Councillors are:

Chairperson Elaine Bucket	Highways, Village Appraisal, Village design, WCALC.	Chair@barntgreen.org 445 1254
Council Clerk Debbie Warren	Council Clerk 57 Bittell Road, Barnt Green, B45 8LX.	Clerk@barntgreen.org 445 5433
Vice-Chairperson Judith Jagger	Planning, Village design, Village Appraisal, CPRE.	Vicechair@barntgreen.org 445 2437
Councillor Peter Cliff	Highways, Communications, IT, WCALC.	Peter.cliff@barntgreen.org.uk 445 6383
Councillor Tom Gray	Playing Field, Park..	Tom.gray@barntgreen.org.uk 445 4424
Councillor Betty Lucas	Planning, Special Events, Environment, Village Services.	Betty.lucas@barntgreen.org.uk 445 1370
Councillor Sheila Parker	Playing Field, Park, Lighting, Christmas lights.	Sheila.parker@barntgreen.org.uk 445 1408
Councillor Terry Peate	Environment, Village Services, Communications, IT.	Terry.peate@barntgreen.org.uk 445 3482
Councillor Susan Whitehand	Planning, School Governor, Conservation area.	Susan.whitehand@barntgreen.org.uk 445 3530

Bollards!

The bollards and dropped kerbs outside the school were installed just before Christmas, together with improvements to the pavement. The final scheme was the only solution which met current health and safety regulations

Village Groups Meeting

A meeting was held on 15th October in the Parish Centre to allow the organisations, groups and voluntary bodies in the village to let the Parish Council know what matters to them and what additional facilities they would like to see in the village. It was a very lively and informative meeting and the Parish Council would like to thank all those who attended.

Highways

The continuing report on the roads, potholes, hedges and fly posting is being updated and passed on for action.

To assist us with this, if you have any hedges or trees encroaching on or overhanging the pavement and roads please make a special effort to have these problems trimmed back. Contact the Parish Council if you need advice.

Bittell Road Traffic.

A meeting for all interested parties will be arranged in response to concerns raised by residents of Bittell Road regarding speeding traffic and road safety. A provisional date of 16th March will be confirmed in due course.

Pruning!

If you went down to the woods on the 15th of November (yes the woods in the playing field on Bittell Road), you would have had a big surprise!

Those trees that were planted around 8 or 9 years ago have now grown upwards and outwards. Following expert advice from Wade Muggleton from the Countryside service, a team of around a dozen volunteers spent an enjoyable morning pruning over 400 trees. The technique, known as 'crown raising', is to encourage upward growth, rather than wasteful outward growth. It also improves the shape of the tree. Eventually the trees will provide a canopy with varying degrees of shade and we will hopefully see the emergence of wild flowers and a wider variety of birdlife. If you haven't been down there yet you are missing out! There is plenty of space for football, rounders or even a picnic! The next project is to clean out the brook so watch out for notices – find those waders!

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The site is currently being updated.

Please log on and register your name via the site. Your details will be perfectly secure, and you can download your copy of future editions of this newsletter. The site contains details of all meetings + lots of information about your village. It also contains useful links to other relevant sites. Contact any of your council via the site and look out for competitions and the chance to take part in our on-line surveys.