



BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER WINTER 2007



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www.barntgreen.org.uk



Barnt Green Councillors Elaine Buckett, Susan Whitehand and David Gilburn present the village's Parish Plan to Julie Kirkbride MP.

Chairman's Introduction

2007 promises to be a good year for the Parish Council and for the community of Barnt Green. The community, through the Parish Plan, has set out its vision for the village and identified the priorities to be tackled by the Parish Council. Last year saw a 65 per cent increase in the parish precept, the vast majority of you backing the council's action in setting this precept with only three residents complaining to the members and the council. I may be naïve in hoping that this support was because residents understood the council's reasons for asking for this increase and trusted the council to get on with the job; but that is the feedback we received so naïve I remain.

The Parish Council is now in the position we asked you to put us in financially – we have a blueprint for the village. This is due to all residents and the council thanks you for your support. It is for this reason that we have been able to set a **zero per cent increase in the precept for 2007-2008**. The Parish Council believes that with continued good housekeeping it can manage with no increase for the coming year. With the cessation of concurrent functions grants from Bromsgrove District Council and the taking of the first actions to implement the recommendations from the Parish Plan it is difficult to anticipate expenditure, so what transpires in 2007-08 will give a clearer indication of trends in spending for the following years.

Thank you all.

Elaine Buckett, chairman.

Parish Council Elections

Thursday May 3 2007 is the date for parish council elections and provides an opportunity for all residents to consider standing for the Parish Council. If you are interested but are not too sure what is entailed in becoming a councillor, we have arranged for an **Election Roadshow to be held on Wednesday February 28th at 7.00pm at the Parish Centre in Sandhills Road**. There will be presentations from existing councillors and from the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils and an opportunity to quiz parish and district councillors on their role. Do come along and listen to what is involved and learn how you can help shape the future of your village. Further information is available from the executive officer.

The Parish Plan

The Barnt Green Parish Plan has now been presented to Julie Kirkbride MP, to Bromsgrove District Council and to the Barnt Green Chamber of Trade and it is hoped to present it to West Mercia Police and Worcestershire County Council early in 2007. We will be asking for written comments from these bodies by the end of February 2007 and will include them in the next newsletter. On May 2nd at the Annual Parish Meeting we will expect a detailed report to be presented from BDC, WCC and the police covering those recommendations that fall within their jurisdiction. This will provide an audit of the progress of the Parish Plan. If the WCC, BDC or the police do not intend to refer to the plan when formulating plans or services for Barnt Green it will be for them to defend their actions or lack of actions.

Christmas 2006

The Parish Council hopes that all residents enjoyed the festive spirit that ran throughout the village in the pre-Christmas period. Special thanks are due to Robert Oulsnam & Co and Judith Hitchin for their generosity in helping to fund the provision of the two large Christmas trees that gave such a special atmosphere. The local traders should also be congratulated on the mini Christmas Festival which they organised on Sunday December 10th. Despite the

weather, this was a very well attended event and it is hoped that it will become an annual fixture. The traders should also be thanked for installing Christmas lights along Hewell Road during December.

Parking

An interim report on the effectiveness of the planters on increasing the safety of pedestrians along the stretch of pavement from Victoria Mews to Sandhills Road clearly demonstrates that there is not the degree of increased safety for pedestrians that was hoped.

This is possibly due to the parking of vehicles on the "shop side" of the planters which visually and physically blocks the "pedestrian side".

The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation and welcomes brief, objective and constructive comments from residents and traders. You may find it useful to refer back to all the information about this stretch of pavement as many of you have suggested actions in the past that have been considered but for some reason or other cannot be implemented. Please let us have your comments either by email or in writing (use of the drop box at St Andrew's church hall is free).

PACT

Following the initial PACT meeting held last May, there has been no follow up from the police who have advised us that "PACT meetings are not working for Barnt Green." The police are currently seeking an alternative solution for Barnt Green, but the Parish Council wishes to stress that this was very much a police decision which was taken without any reference to the elected members.

Footpaths

The Parish Council will shortly begin work on the upgrading of stiles on the parish footpaths. The first footpath to be upgraded is the one that starts at the bottom of the Bittell Road playing field. This should overcome the problem of sheep finding their way onto the playing field and has the full support of the local farmer.

We are also looking to upgrade the stiles on the footpath that runs from Bittell Road to Aqueduct Lane, but are having problems identifying the owner of the land at the rear of The Paddocks in Aqueduct Lane. If anyone knows who owns this land, please contact the executive officer.

Simon Richards, our footpaths officer, has planned a **spring walk**. The walk is organised for **Saturday 12th May and will start from Barnt Green at 10 am**. The route goes to Blackwell, Burcot then at the side of the Lickey Incline to the Cider farm at Tutnal. Here we stop for a bite to eat and a glass of Cider. We then continue over the paths on Blackwell Golf Course and back to Barnt Green. The total walk is about 8 miles long. We can accommodate a maximum of 20 people and the cost will be £3 each

Bittell Road Playing Field

The Parish Council is planning a working party in February to thin out the trees at the lower end of the field. This is a lovely wooded area, but needs attention from time to time to keep the trees and undergrowth under control. We have been talking to Worcestershire County Council's countryside officer about this and will be fixing a date shortly. If you are interested in joining such a group, please contact the executive officer.

County Comput@bus

We have had a good response to our proposal for Worcestershire County Council to bring its purpose built, fully equipped mobile computer classroom to Barnt Green to run free introductory computer classes to anyone over 19 years of age. The course will cover basic internet and e-mail and last for 2 hours per week for a six week period. We shall be fixing a date soon for this. Residents who have already expressed interest need not apply again, but if there

are other people interested in pursuing this opportunity, please contact the executive officer.

Lengthsman Scheme

We are pleased to confirm that Worcestershire County Council has agreed to fund the Lengthsman Scheme for a further year and that you will continue to see Ron Rand's smiling face around the village. Meanwhile we have received an anonymous thank you from a resident to the lengthsman "for clearing the stretch of pavement along Bittell Road which extends from the canal to the junction with Bittell Farm Road - a vast improvement"

Archive Material

Rick Main, our newest councillor who also doubles as the Parish Archivist, is always on the lookout for articles and photographs of "old Barnt Green". If you have any suitable material which Rick can keep or copy, then please get in touch with him on 445 3349.

982 Flexilink

Flexilink is a bus service that responds to your needs within the local area. The service is provided by comfortable, easy to use buses with friendly, fully trained drivers and is inexpensive (free for over 60s). The 982 service runs from Redditch-Alvechurch-Barnt Green-Bromsgrove Monday to Friday. All you need to do is ring 08456 077 077 to register your details. You will be issued with a unique ID number and you can then ring whenever you need the service and book your journey. A minimum of 30 minutes notice is required and journeys can be booked up to two weeks in advance. Call the Booking Centre on 08456 077 077 for more details.

Parish Council Budget for 2007-2008

The Parish Council is funded through the local tax system. Each year the Parish Council tells the District Council how much it needs for the following year to run its services, and that amount is added to the Council tax bill for each household in the parish and is known as the precept. For this current year, the estimated revenue expenditure was approximately £44,000; a grant of £4600 was received from the District Council to defray "concurrent functions" and the remaining £6000 of the grant towards new playground equipment was also received. After making allowances for the estimated costs of acquiring and running a

Parish Office and setting aside an amount of reserves to cover unexpected costs, the precept was set at £56,000.

This year a similar level of budget has been set and was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting held on November 27th, 2006. This means that there will be **no increase in the Parish precept for 2007-2008**. The whole of the budget will be displayed on the website, and hard copies can be requested from the Executive Officer.

The budget includes the cost of more or less everything the Parish Council would like to do next year and includes the following items of expenditure:

- Continuing the programme of replacing the concrete street lighting columns
- Replacing the tarmac path and re-landscaping the Park on the Sandhills Road side
- Installing planters on the pavement in front of the Tesco block of shops
- Replacing benches
- Covering the cost of Parish Council elections in May 2007
- Finding premises in the village which could serve as an office for the executive officer and as a community centre with IT facilities.

Dates for your diary....

Monday January 29 th	Parish Council Meeting
Monday February 26 th .	Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday February 28 th	Election Roadshow
Monday March 26 th	Parish Council Meeting
Monday April 30 th	Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday May 2 nd	Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday May 3 rd	Parish Council Elections
Saturday May 12 th	Spring Parish Walk

How to Contact the Parish Council

If you would like to get in touch with the Parish Council about anything at all, please contact either one of your Parish Councillors or the Parish Executive Officer. Your Parish Councillors are:

Elaine Buckett (Chairman)	0121 445 1254	chair@barntgreen.org.uk
Judith Jagger (Vice-Chairman)	0121 445 2437	
Diane Carr	0121 445 1220	
Peter Cliff	0121 445 6383	
Tom Gray	0121 445 4424	
David Gilburn	0121 445 1456	
Rick Main	0121 445 3349	
Susan Whitehand	0121 445 3530	
Executive Officer: Roger Westbury	0121 447 7455	clerk@barntgreen.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings

These are usually held on the last Monday in each month at the Parish Centre in Sandhills Road at 7.00pm. You are welcome to attend and observe, and an opportunity is given at each meeting for members of the public to speak.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

District Councillors:		County Councillor	
Mrs Ann Doyle	0121 445 4184	Peter McDonald	0121 453 9267
Brian Fuller	0121 445 4950	:	

Anti-Social Behaviour Officer: 01527 881423

Police: 08457 444888. Local police contact PC 2138 Jayne Willetts Rubery Police station.

Hall Bookings: Parish Centre Edna Whitehouse 445 4696
Baptist Church Hall Beverley Bennett 445 1551
Friends Meeting House Peter Wastenev 447 7355