

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman's Annual Report

For Financial Year 2019 – 2020

I write this with the country in lockdown because of the Covid-19 virus. I, and my fellow councillors, wish everyone well during this difficult period.

In line with guidance to parish councils, the annual parish meeting has been cancelled. This report has been drafted as a record for the past year, the content of which will be included when the next annual parish meeting is held.

There is currently a vacancy for a parish councillor. During the year, Olivia Polton was co-opted and Harrison Rone-Clarke stepped down. The office at 80 Hewell Road is currently closed because of Covid-19, but the council's Executive Officer, Tracy Bodley, is continuing to serve the council by working from home.

During the year, the council organised some successful events: a Treasure Hunt, the Community Walk, the Christmas lights switch on and the Christmas Wassailing Walk. The Christmas events saw record numbers. The new lights on the big tree in Millennium Park were a notable success. The Community Walk in September took the opportunity to use the reopened footpath and go over the newly opened railway footbridge at Cofton.

Two large projects have been affected by Covid-19. The switch to LED street lights (south east of the railway line) has not been fully completed as the light bulbs for Hewell Road have been delayed in transit from China. The other affected project has been the take up of SmartWater, the anti-crime initiative, being undertaken in conjunction with West Mercia Police. The planned sessions in public places to encourage take up have been cancelled. West Mercia Police are considering other methods during the lockdown.

Progress with getting lifts installed at the station, which was a legal requirement in 2015, is slowly moving through the project process of Network Rail and the Department for Transport. Disappointingly, West Midlands Rail has not conveyed any indication of improvements to the station in relation to a train information screen on platform 1 and better configuration of the car park.

The Parish Council has taken over the ownership of the car park on the corner of Butterwick Close and Fiery Hill Road. Signage is being put in place to make it clear that it is a commuter car park.

Funds are available from the Butterwick Close housing development, normally referred to as S106 monies, which are to be utilised to extend and improve the footpath around Parker's Piece playing field.

Work has continued at the pollinator site on the corner of Green Bank and Hewell Road. New signage and fencing is to be installed.

It has been possible once again to maintain the precept (the portion of council tax paid by residents to the parish council) at the same level as previous years.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has worked and supported the parish council over the past year, both volunteers and those paid.

Robert Cholmondeley

18 April 2020

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS				
Financial Report of 2019/2020: Receipt and Payments				
Annual Parish Financial Report				
RECEIPTS	2018/19	summary totals	2019/20	summary totals
Precept received in current year	62,440.00		£ 63,480.00	
Interest	531.54		£ 550.94	
Lengthsman Refund	1,167.50		£ 1,888.10	
Miscellaneous	79.50		£ 29,877.20	
Hires	510.00		£ 680.00	
Total Receipts	64,728.54	64,728.54		96,476.24

PAYMENTS				
ADMINISTRATION : Staff Costs	15,538.96		20,765.14	
Chairman's Allowance	262.80		383.46	
Office Running costs	6,405.99		7,315.08	
Training and Publications	223.99		1,069.99	
Meeting Rooms and Refreshments	210.00		120.00	
Subscriptions	979.02		1,330.13	
Insurance	790.33		821.94	
Auditor Fees	542.40		542.40	
Legal Fees	600.00		-	
Election Costs	-		82.72	
Grants and Donations	200.00		200.00	
General Administration Costs	926.90	26,680.39	1,702.51	34,333.37
COMMUNICATION Newsletters	830.00		25.00	
COMMUNICATION Website	120.00	950.00	120.00	145.00
MILLENNIUM PARK Mowing	798.00		836.00	
MILLENNIUM PARK Maintenance	426.80		517.00	
Park Safety Inspections	66.50	1,291.30	68.50	1,421.50
PLAYING FIELD Mowing	2,788.92		2642.51	
PLAYING FIELD Maintenance	1,163.94		2259.16	
PLAYING FIELD Safety Inspections	66.50	4,019.36	68.50	4,970.17
ENVIRONMENT Hanging baskets	565.25		560.00	
ENVIRONMENT Planters	929.17		916.01	
ENVIRONMENT Maintenance	6,537.92	8,032.34	7190.90	8,666.91
FOOTPATH LIGHTS Maintenance	3,804.52		3338.25	
FOOTPATH LIGHTS Electricity	2,404.89		3038.43	
LIGHTING Christmas lights	6,940.64	13,150.05	9589.58	15,966.26
HIGHWAYS Lengthsman charges	-	-	-	
HIGHWAYS Miscellaneous	-	-	-	
MISCELLANEOUS Events	2,029.49	2,029.49	1504.50	2,518.71
N'hood Plan/ capital projects 2016/17	1,390.99	1,390.99		
FIXED ASSETS	4,306.42	4,306.42	15021.45	15,021.45
Net Total Payments		61,850.34		83,043.37
VAT Refund	2,964.66		£ 8,837.86	

BARNET GREEN PARISH COUNCIL RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY 2019/2020						
RECEIPTS	2018/19	2019/2020	PAYMENTS	2018/2019	2019/2020	Variance
Precept received in current year	62,440.00	63,480.00	Administration	26,680.39	34333.37	22.29
Interest	531.54	550.94	Communication	950.00	145.00	- 555.17
Lengthsman Refund	1,167.50	1,888.10	Millennium Park	1,291.30	1421.50	9.16
Miscellaneous	79.50	£ 29,877.20	Playing Field	4,019.36	4970.17	19.13
Hires (room / playing field)	510.00	680.00	Lighting	13,150.05	15,966.26	17.64
			Environment	8,032.34	8666.91	7.32
			Highways	-	0.00	
			Events	2,029.49	2518.71	19.42
			Capital projects	5,697.41	15021.45	62.07
Total Receipts	64,728.54	96,476.24	Total payments	61,850.34	83043.37	25.52

VAT Refund	2,964.66	8,837.86	VAT PAID		8708.47
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Annual Receipts	£ 105,314.10	Annual Payments	£ 91,751.84
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Notes to the report of 2019/20 Receipts and Payments account:

1. These draft accounts are presented on a Receipts and Payments basis and have yet to be externally audited.
2. The impact of the precept for 2019/20 upon the Parish Council Tax payer was £62.58 per Band D Annual Council Tax payment.
3. Other income variances:
 - a) In line with the national picture, interest rates have risen slightly, and the amount of interest raised via deposit and savings account has improved.
 - b) The Lengthsman scheme continues via Worcestershire County Council who will refund up to £1888 each year. The comparable receipts during 2018/19 did not account for the full year.
 - c) VAT refund demand for 2018/19 was received during 2019/20 inflating the figure. Two capital expenditure projects were both applicable to VAT reclaims which also inflates this figure i.e. the greater the vatable expenditure, the larger the VAT reclaim.
 - d) Miscellaneous income for during 2019/20, consisted of a wayleave from Cadent Gas and a commuted sum of £30,000 from CALA Homes to be used for the ongoing of the carpark only.
 - e) Hire income for use of the playing field is showing term 3 from 18/19 and all 3 terms invoiced and receipted for 19/20.
4. Expenditure variances:
 - a) Administration: the variance shows an increase of 22.29% between the two years for staffing costs, these rose due to additional hours paid for the Clerk's study time to gain the CiCLA qualification, office running costs have increased due to the council's move to a cloud based accounting system, with an increase in training costs due to the training course attended and for the Clerk's qualification.

- b) Communication: The Parish Council issues two Bulletins during the year, which are delivered free to residents of the parish – There is an anomaly in the figure shown in the accounts as this was recorded to an incorrect cost centre, however the complete accounting figures shown are a true representation of all expenditure.
 - c) Millennium Park and Playing Field: The increase in costs for 2019/20 relate to the number of grass cuts which increased due to the mixed weather and extended grass growing period. Remedial work was also undertaken on the large tree within the park.
 - d) Environment: This has increased slightly due to expenditure on the Pollinator Patch at the top end of Hewell Road. The defibrillator also required new pads and battery during this financial period. Going forward for 20/21 The Outdoor Parish Caretaker expenditure and the Pollinator site will be recorded using a separate cost code.
 - e) Footpath and Christmas lighting: Footpath lighting has remained static during the comparable years with the maintenance during the next financial year due to decrease following the installation of LED bulbs to all the parish council owned streetlamps. The Christmas Lighting budget was increased during summer 2019 to allow for the purchase of the wrap around tree lights to the large tree in Millennium park. This was well received by the community.
 - f) Highways: the Lengthsman scheme continues to be appreciated by the parish council and residents, and as this is a delegated service via Worcestershire County Council there is almost nil net cost to the parish council. However, invoicing as yet has not been actioned showing a nil balance.
 - g) Events: During 2019/20 the parish council hosted the summer Community Treasure Hunt, two community walks and a new-style Christmas Lights switch-on.
 - h) Capital projects / Exceptional items: items purchased include SmartWater Kits for Barnt Green Residents and Traders. The contract was awarded for the replacement LED Bulbs to the village wide streetlamps.
 - i) Fixed Assets: New IT equipment was purchased during this financial period.
 - j) VAT: the amount of VAT paid remains similar to previous years. There are special arrangements for parish councils to reclaim the VAT on all purchases that are described as for non-business purposes.
5. The full version of the parish council's accounts may be inspected at the parish council office during the audit period, as yet the date for this is unknown. To view the accounts in person please contact the office. A summary of the unaudited accounts will also be available on the parish council's website during that period: www.barntgreen.org.uk

~End of report~

Tracy Bodley
Responsible Financial Officer
15/04/2020