

Dear Resident

Without exception, there has been dissatisfaction from those who have commented on the deferral of the installation of station lifts by Network Rail.

Our understanding of the Equality Act 2010 is that lifts should have been installed in 2015 when the new footbridge was built. This is because the replacement footbridge is a new structure which has more steps and is a greater barrier for the disabled.

Network Rail confirmed the budget was in place and installation would be completed by the end of each of the following years – 2015, 2016 and 2017. Now Network Rail say the delay is because the budget has risen from £900K to £3m and that such money is not currently available. This appears to be because infrastructure improvements need to be made to the station when lifts are installed in order to comply with legislation. Network Rail has been asked to provide details of that legislation so it can be verified.

Although Network Rail still confirms that lifts will be installed, no date can now be given – probably sometime between 2019 and 2024. Furthermore, Network Rail cannot even give a date when a date can be given!

Written or email responses from Network Rail on this issue are scarce. If you feel strongly about the situation, I encourage you to write to our MP by letter to the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or by email to sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk

Robert Cholmondeley, Chair, Barnt Green Parish Council
(more on station lifts on p2)

MP and Councillors' contacts:

MP	Sajid Javid – sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk	
County Councillor	Peter McDonald – pmcdonald2@worcestershire.gov.uk	
District Councillor	Charles Hotham – c.hotham@bromsgrove.gov.uk	
Parish Councillors:	Rosemary Briggs, Robert Cholmondeley, Charles Hotham, Judith Jagger, Jenny Jellie, Philip Perry, Susan Whitehand Councillor contact details via www.barntgreen.org.uk	
Chairman:	Cllr Robert Cholmondeley	robert.cholmondeley@btinternet.com
Executive Officer:	Gill Lungley, FSLCC 80 Hewell Road B45 8NF	exec@barntgreen.org.uk tel: 0121 447 9893 / 07410 906282

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Station Lifts

At the end of October 2017, Network Rail informed the Parish Council that the commitment to install lifts at the station by the end of the year would not be honoured. The reason appears to be a failure to budget properly.

Since then, the Parish Council has engaged with our MP and with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) but both approaches failed to secure anything other than a vague date between 2019 and 2024 for installation.

Parish Councillors met with Network Rail at the station to get to the bottom of some core questions to be answered. A further meeting is being sought with Network Rail:

- to understand why lifts no longer had to be installed when the new footbridge was built in 2015, as required by the Equality Act 2010, when this requirement was accepted by Network Rail in 2014;
- to understand the legal requirements that now require Network Rail to rebuild all the platforms on installation of lifts against the backdrop of platforms 1 and 4 already being accessible to the disabled; and
- to obtain confirmation of the final costings so a firm date can be set for installation, preferably in 2018.

Parish Council blog: from the last few meetings...

In October the parish council agreed to the installation of a water tap in Millennium Park to help with watering the planters and when events are held in the Park.

We also heard from PCSO Chelsea Lloyd, in her capacity as police community support officer from the Hagley and Rubery Safer Neighbourhood Team. Chelsea read out the crime figures for this area, which are thankfully relatively low.

Members agreed at the meeting held in November to seek tenders for the new position of 'Outdoor Parish Caretaker'. Due to start in April 2018 this will be a contractor responsible for maintaining parish council property and complementing the work of the parish Lengthsman and various contractors.

November's meeting also included a brief presentation from Simon Richards the Parish Footpath Warden on his role that supports our access to the surrounding countryside.

**All parish council meetings are now held
on the 3rd Monday of each month at St Andrews First School, B45 8NG**

Meetings start at 7pm and are open to the public to attend, with an opportunity to speak during the 'Open Forum' section.

All agendas are published at least 3 clear days before the meeting and can be found on the notice board next to the bus shelter and on our website.

Flood water



Picture taken 24th January 2018, Hewell Rd / Blackwell Rd

The county council's Highways department has been made aware of the floods that are occurring under the Hewell Road railway bridge. The driver in this picture was being very considerate but others have been less caring, leading to pedestrians being soaked by the resultant spray. If you're driving, please be patient and give pedestrians enough time to get clear!

Christmas Lights

WE hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas lights in the village again. We arranged for only one new themed light in 2017, to add to the five that were created in 2016.

This new light in the form of a Christmas tree was designed by St Andrews First School pupil India from Class 3 who helped to switch on the lights at the festive event held on Saturday 2nd December.



Picture was taken before the discovery of 500 eels, since rehomed in local waterways.

Upper Bittell Reservoir

This winter the Canal & River Trust is investing over £1million to repair sections of Upper Bittell Reservoir, including valves and piping which feed the local canal network. It is part of the charity's programme of works across the country to restore and improve the nation's historic 200-year old network of canals and rivers. The expected completion date is May 2018, until then all walkers must expect some disruption to the footpath network across the dam.

contact details: Office at 80 Hewell Road, Barnt Green, B45 8NF

Open: Mon – Thurs 10am – 1pm & Thurs 2pm – 4pm

Land: 0121 447 9893 / Mob: 07410 906282 / email: exec@barntgreen.org.uk

YOUR MEETING 2018

Thursday 26th April, 7pm Barnt Green Quaker's Meeting House

We referred in the last Bulletin to the Annual Parish Meeting and how the name might put people off attending, hence this new heading '**Your Meeting 2018**'.

The exact legal wording that obliges the parish council to make the arrangements is that "there shall be a parish meeting for the purpose of discussing parish affairs..." Despite the wording, it has nothing to do with the church and nothing to do with inappropriate liaisons but has everything to do with everyone who lives here to get together to talk about local issues.

You set the agenda – any topic as long as it's relevant.

The Parish Council already has a few items for the agenda:

- **Footpath lighting.** The footpath lighting across most of the parish to the east of the railway line is currently orange but manufacture of these lights has reduced, meaning they will cost more to buy in the future. Would residents support a change to LED lighting, and if so, what colour?
- **Outdoor Gym Equipment.** Plans for this have stalled because of fears it would become a 'white elephant'. If we put some outdoor gym equipment onto the Barnt Green Playing Field (behind the Baptist Church) would you use it?
- **Community Bus.** Another idea that has stalled because of lack of input is the suggestion to provide a bus service that operates between local villages during one or two days each week. Would it be used?

Come along and tell us on 26th April – warm welcome and refreshments await.
Quaker Meeting House, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green B45 8NR

LITTER

Some recent statistics published by "How Clean is England" and "Keep Britain Tidy" have highlighted how important it is for all of us to be more aware of how we personally deal with our litter. The top 5 litter items in England currently are:

- Smokers' materials
- Confectionery wrappers
- Non-alcoholic drink related litter
- Fast food
- Packaging



Over 2 million items are discarded in England every single day. This costs the UK tax payer over £1 billion every year, yet 60% of litter dropped on our streets is recyclable. In Barnt Green and surrounding villages there is some evidence of an increase of litter being thoughtlessly dropped. We should all take responsibility for our litter and dispose of it appropriately so that our village continues to be a place where people want to live, work and visit.

If you have any community news to share, please let us know.

This newsletter is issued each year in February and August and a feature page is included in The Village magazine in May and November.

BARNT GREEN FUN RUN

Save the Date for Village Fun Run on Sunday 18th March



Following the success of past events, the Barnt Green Chuggers are once again teaming up with the Parish Council to host the Barnt Green Chuggers Sport Relief Fun Run on Sunday 18th March. Sport Relief this year is asking people to register and together complete 1 billion steps each day over the course of a week, so this Fun Run event should help people to kick start their step count.

It's not a timed race, more of a fun event and a chance to have a go at completing a 5K 'loop' of three laps around the village (walk, jog or run), starting from Millennium Park, B45 8NW.

There will be phased starts from 12.30pm to be followed by bar, refreshments and music in the park when you've finished. You will need to register to take part and details are available from the Post Office and from St Andrews First School.



This year Provest Wealth Management from Hewell Road will also be providing sponsorship. Look out for posters and banners around the village for more details.

And from Sport Relief:

Sport Relief is excited to announce the Nation's Billion Steps Challenge. This year, Sport Relief is setting the nation a unique and epic challenge to beat one billion steps a day, every day, from Saturday 17th until Friday 23rd March. It doesn't matter if you're a walk to work-er, an aerobics addict, or a just-for-fun runner, every step counts for Sport Relief.

To get involved all you need is the brand new Sport Relief App which is available on the App Store and Google Play. There are plenty of ways for you to get active in the app, so find the one that works best for you and get moving – but don't forget to get sponsored for all of your hard graft! All the money raised will help vulnerable people across the UK and the world, to live happier, healthier and safer lives.



COUNCIL TAX AND PRECEPT

Having been established in statute as a Local Authority, the Parish Council is entitled to levy a precept upon all residents that is collected for us by the District Council as part of the Council Tax. For the 2018/19 financial year the Parish Council has decided to leave the amount each council tax payer contributes to the precept the same as for last year.

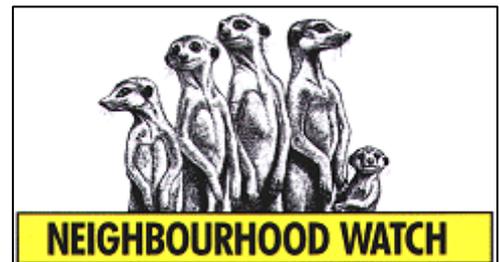
The average amount, paid by the Band D household, is £62.58 for the year. Due to fluctuations in the way the funding is calculated, whilst council tax payers will see no increase in their contribution to the precept the amount actually received by the parish council will be slightly less than last year. However, by prudent budgeting and streamlining of workload there should be no deterioration in the quality of service we provide.

The annual opportunity to inspect the council's accounts will be advertised on the notice board and website later in the year and the inspection period will include the first 10 working days of July. A summary of the year's receipts and accounts will also be presented to Your Meeting 2018 (see p4), on 26th April.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Have you considered joining or setting up your own Neighbourhood Watch? Neighbourhood Watch works on a basic idea; neighbours join together to keep watch on each other's homes and their immediate surroundings in a bid to make the neighbourhood a safe and better place to live.

Barnt Green is generally a safe place to live and has a low crime rate however an active Neighbourhood Watch scheme can help build relationships and a better community environment as well as preventing crime and anti-social behaviour.



A scheme can focus on a street/cul-de-sac or on longer roads a section of houses, each with a dedicated volunteer co-ordinator to communicate alerts from residents and the police to each member. Co-ordinators have vital role in Neighbourhood Watch and have the opportunity to make a real difference in their community. It's a great way to meet your neighbours and there are great resources online to help you set up a scheme.

More information can be found at www.ourwatch.org.uk or by contacting the Hagley and Rubery Safer Neighbourhood team by calling 101 or emailing us at hr.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR 2018

Open to everyone to enjoy...

- Chuggers Sport Relief Fun Run, Sunday March 18th
- Summer Music Day late June/ early July, date yet to be agreed
- Community Walk, Saturday 22nd September
- Christmas Lights switch-on, Saturday 1st December
- Wassail Walk, Thursday 27th December

Macular Society Barnt Green Support Group

The group usually meets on the last Friday of the month 2pm to 4pm at the Parish Centre (behind St Andrew's Church), Sandhills Road, B45 8NR

Members come from a wide area and new members and visitors are always welcome. Cost: £2 per person.

The programme for the next 3 months is:

23 Mar	Musical Entertainment	David Fuller
27 Apr	The Macular Society	Richard Elliott
25 May	Haunted Pubs in Worcestershire	Ann Radford

For more information call: Wendy 0121 445 1585 or Alan 01527 877864

Barnt Green WI start the year with a gift

When the last Barnt Green WI folded 18 years ago, Enid Fowles was the youngest member of the group and was entrusted with a hanging to keep, should another WI ever start up again in Barnt Green. That time has come and Enid (who is now 82 and one of our oldest members) was able to present it to Julia Waters, President of the new generation BGWI at our recent January meeting.

The hanging had been given to the village WI by a women's group in Nilma North, a town in Victoria County, Australia, a very long time ago. A collect/prayer is embroidered on the hanging and is signed by Marie Stuart.



A monogram in the top corner has the letters ACW in it, plus VICTORIA. Might these letters stand for Association of Christian Women or something similar? We would love to know more about the link between our village and Nilma North. Our research has shown 2 origins of the prayer – Mary Stuart of the US and also Mary Queen of Scots; perhaps if any readers know anything, they could get in touch.

Unfortunately, there's no space here to show the words which are beautiful and challenging but ends with 'O Lord God, let us not forget to be kind'. It was apparently read out at the start of each meeting, just as Jerusalem is sung at the beginning of many WI meetings in this country.

FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENTS

After a long period of negotiation the County Council, the North Worcestershire Water Management team and the Parish Council have managed to work together to improve the condition of the footpath that runs alongside the driveway to the Scout Hut, between Blackwell Road and the footbridge over the M42. The work was undertaken by local contractors who transformed the path from this:-



to this:-



HOUSEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Hopefully we've seen the last of snow and ice for this winter, but guidance from Worcestershire County Council states it is keen for residents to help keep highways clear for all users by clearing snow and ice from public footways or pavements fronting their properties.

The Council recognises that popular concern over a 'compensation culture' and possible legal liability has discouraged a lot of householders from clearing snow and ice from footways in the past.

In fact, we believe that case-law does not justify significant cause for concern and shouldn't put people off, provided they take *reasonable care*.

Any householder who takes reasonable care when clearing a footway and ensures that its condition does not create a greater hazard than before is highly unlikely therefore to be faced with a successful claim from pedestrians who may suffer injury or loss as a result of that clearance.

Reasonable care would include following the government advice on how to clear footways safely and the County Council is happy for salt in grit bins to be used to clear pavements forming part of the highway.

Government advice from <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>