

BARKWAY BULLETIN



A Quarterly Newsletter from the Parish Council of Barkway

Issue No 14.

December 2012



Welcome to this bumper Christmas edition of the Barkway Bulletin. Barkway Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and enjoyable 2013. This year has been an eventful one, not only nationally but locally. With the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the euphoria created by the London Olympics, there has been a tremendous feel good factor running through the village. The Parish Council plans to continue this feeling by planning and implementing a number of events and activities for 2013. Already, this year has seen the development of the area by the village pond into a much more scenic attraction and various improvements to the playground area on the recreation ground. The Parish Council is committed to continuing the improvement of the facilities and amenities within the village and has budgeted for 2013 accordingly. We now have a full complement of Councillors, each with an area of dedicated responsibility, and we are looking forward to the coming year with confidence and anticipation.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Steve Alsop, Chairman, Barkway Parish Council

Proposed Solar Farm on land at Wisbridge Farm Planning Application - Case Ref: 12/02365/1

The Parish Council would like to thank all those who either attended the open meeting on Saturday 24th November or submitted their opinions to us by email regarding this planning application. In total we received 56 responses of which 45% raised no objection and 55% objected to the above planning application.

At the Parish Council meeting on 10th December it was agreed that an objection to the planning application would be lodged with NHDC on behalf of Barkway Parish Council.

In our submission to NHDC we raised nine points. The main three of which were concerning the impact on the area, the change of use and especially the inadequacy in the landscaping proposals to mitigate the impairment of the visual landscape, both in scale and time to maturity.

Anyone who wishes to see the full text of our submission should contact the Parish Clerk.

Our understanding is that the application will be placed before the NHDC Planning Committee in January 2013. As soon as we have any further information we will advise parishioners by email and the village website.

Barkway Recreation Ground

Some good news - the aerial slide has now been repaired and, following our yearly safety check, should be up and running for your enjoyment, both children and adults. A very big thank you to the Reverend Sonia Falaschi-Ray for paying for these repairs and for opening the slide on Saturday 15th December. **But some bad news** - people are still letting their dogs foul the recreation ground. Pick it up please. It will make the recreation ground a far nicer place. It is also a possible health hazard for both children and the footballers.

Reading Room

Anyone who has visited the Reading Room during the last month will notice that we have now sanded down the floor and it has been revarnished. We have also bought and installed two new floor lamps. The overall effect from both of these has been to lighten the whole room. It has been quite effective. We have also installed an exit light and purchased a fire proof safe to keep all the important Council documents. All that is left to complete the renovations of the Reading Room is to repair the external brick wall which faces the door. The Reading Room is a significant asset and, with the upgraded heating and lighting, provides an excellent venue for meetings or small gatherings for the use of all the village organisations. Room bookings can be made through contacting the Parish Clerk in the usual way.

Dates for your Diary.....

Next Parish Council meetings: Mondays 14th January and 11th February in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Members of the public welcome.

Parish Council/Police Surgeries: Held bi-monthly in the Reading Room. Next date: 19th January - between 10 and 11 am.

Parish Matters.....

Meet your new Councillor - Fiona Tomkins



I have lived in Barkway since October 1999. My husband, David and I, moved here from Buntingford in a bid to sample village life and live in an older property and we are still very happy to be here. Our girls were at primary school then, but are now both pretty much grown up, Olivia away at Uni in Bristol studying Chemistry and Francesca half way through A Levels at Long Road in Cambridge. Now that they are independent, I feel that I have the time to take on a new challenge, looking after the village's interests through the Parish Council with the portfolio of Community Liaison and Communication. I have a background in marketing, having worked for Whitbread and then as a freelance marketer helping small businesses to grow. I am currently involved in launching a new wine range into the UK, which is all very exciting. I have spent many years on the Village Hall Committee as Bookings Secretary and helping with the annual panto, in charge of ticket sales. I am looking forward to helping Barkway continue to be a great place to live.

Your Village Website

As mentioned in the last edition of the Bulletin, the village website in its current shape has been in existence for almost 5 years and during that time, it has become an important means of communicating news and matters relating to the village. With over 30 hits a day - many of whom are first time visitors - it is important that a village website it kept up to date. The Parish Council is planning to revamp and reorganise the site and is at the moment considering the options available for a new design and format. Several suggestions are being looked at, but at this stage it seems timely to stress to the many village organisations that a website is the best means of communicating news and events which relate to their organisations. Important messages can be posted instantly; the publishing of fundraising activities can help to strengthen the message and, moreover, it can provide a wider audience with information about life in Barkway. The Parish Council is intent on maintaining a website for these and many more reasons, as well as the need to publish its rules, procedures and documents relating to corporate governance.

Pavilion Project Update

In the October edition of the "Bulletin" we announced that we had made a grant application for £50k to Sport England and were expecting to hear the result of our application early in December. We have now heard and, unfortunately, we were not successful at this time. However, despite this setback the project committee met on 12th December and organised the implementation of a "Plan B". This had already been part planned in anticipation of the unsuccessful grant application. We have almost £82k secured at the moment to fund this project and Plan B entails going to immediate tender for a more basic but functional and operational construction. The intention is for this to happen early in January 2013 and we are confident that we shall be able to construct a building that will await some fixtures and fittings, but will meet the requirements of the building regulations. All this will need to happen before the spring of 2013 in order to fulfil the conditions of NHDC's £50k PACIF grant.

Once the basic structure is in place, the intention is to continue to raise funds in order to complete and upgrade the building to the state as originally planned. We can assure people that the new pavilion and community building at the outset will be fully operational and fit for purpose. Of course, we plan to be very active in fundraising. In addition to the "Buy a Brick" option (which is available through the village website) and straightforward donations, we are looking at the possibility of raising money, perhaps through loan or bond schemes. These are being investigated and any progress made will be reported in the usual places. In the meantime, the project committee remains positive and confident that this project will come to fruition. Anyone wishing to discuss helping us to achieve our goal can do so by contacting the Parish Clerk.

Firework Night

A clear evening helped make November the 5th a great success. For 45 minutes, there was a spectacular display of fireworks and a great roaring bonfire. The crowd this year was bigger than ever so we must be getting good at this. A big thank you to all those who donated to our bucket shakers. A record amount of £352.50 was raised. Thanks to Firework Crazy of Chelmsford for giving us such a great deal and thanks also to our two brave pyrotechnics, Vince and Tom styles.

Street Sweeping

Because of the holidays, the schedule restarts on January 3, a Thursday for one time only. Please try not to park outside the even numbered houses, i.e. Church Lane side, between 8.30 and 12.00 to allow them a chance to sweep well. We know it is difficult but please try. After this sweep they revert to Tuesdays, same times

On Jan 29 please try not to park outside odd number houses On Feb 26 outside even numbers and that rota and swap over continues every 4 weeks until Easter We have requested a sweep in Newsells but they cannot advise us of a date except a 'promise' to do it between now and the end of January.

Litter Picking Day

On Sunday 14th October, 15 willing volunteers set about picking up litter on the outskirts of Barkway. Collections were made on the Cambridge Road leading to Barley, London Road and Royston Road, as well as around the Recreation Ground and the surrounding footpaths. It was a great success with 25 plastic bags of rubbish plus an assortment of larger items being collected. However, sadly, this success can also be seen as a poor reflection on modern society that so much litter is dropped by pedestrians or thrown out of the windows of passing cars. The event was rounded off with hot drinks, a glass of wine and nibbles in the Village Hall, which were enjoyed by all. Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the village environment more pleasing for all and to the Hertfordshire branch of CPRE for providing the litter picking equipment, free of charge.

Casino Night

Plans are under way to organise another Casino Night. The last event of this nature was held on 14th May 2011 and was very successful and enjoyed by all those who attended. The event raised nearly £1300 for the Pavilion Project and it is hoped that a much needed contribution to this important project can be raised again. The evening will comprise roulette and black jack tables and will be a chance for some of you to don the DJs and black tie. More details will be published in the usual places in the near future.

More Parish Matters.....

Speedwatch report from Tony Harris

The Speedwatch team continue their activities despite the cold weather. Without doubt their endeavours are having a positive effect on the volume of speeding vehicles travelling through our village, evidenced by the reducing numbers of vehicles recorded and, of those recorded, the reducing speeds at which these vehicles were travelling. Barley is also active and is seeing similar results for their efforts. There are also more teams being established, one at Ashwell and another at Stevenage. It was always intended that many more teams would be set up in Hertfordshire and this has not changed. As the village Speedwatch co-ordinator, I met the new Hertfordshire Police & Crimes Commissioner, David Lloyd. Along with Brian Haughey from Barley, we discussed our activities, our plans and explained how we go about things. The Commissioner was very supportive and expressed his wish to spread the Speedwatch initiative around Hertfordshire at every opportunity. We have recently been assisting the Commissioner's Chief Executive, to help formulate some improvements to our operations and working with Superintendent McCracken and Chief Inspector Pierce of Herts Police with the enforcement of speeding regulations for those drivers who fail to act on our warning letters. To this end, a number of "repeat speeders" have received a face-to-face visit from a uniformed officer. The police are also getting ready to work with the Speedwatch teams to target these "repeat speeders" and enforce the speed limit through our village. This will, of course, result in the usual penalties for those caught exceeding the limit. Apart from those drivers who have not heeded the warning letters, we are very hopeful that the enforcement activity will not catch any village residents or regular travellers through the village, who will by now be very aware and supportive of the speed control activities. In further support of our road safety remit, we have been asked to record those vehicles where the driver is seen using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving. Similarly, the registered keepers of those vehicles recorded will receive a warning letter from the police and the same follow up action for "repeat offenders." We hope village residents will welcome this additional activity to our village road safety. This way, drivers are reminded of their obligations without the need for the usual penalties of fines and points on driving licences.

Commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Residents of Barkway were asked to vote, from a list of four proposed ideas, how Barkway could provide a permanent fixture to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Of the votes cast, most opted for a picnic table to be positioned on the Recreation Ground. It is with great pleasure that we can now confirm that the table, including a small commemorative plaque, is now in position next to the playground area. We hope that this will be a significant feature of the village and would like to offer thanks to everyone who voted.

Barkway Welcome Pack

Following the production of the Barkway Welcome Pack, Shirley Streater and Val McGow, who played a major role in its development, have volunteered to meet and greet all new residents who move into the village of Barkway. Over the last few months they have visited everyone personally, often as soon as they arrive, introduced themselves and left copies of the Welcome Pack and other information regarding the village and its organisations. Well done to Shirley and Val for doing this excellent community work and making our new Barkway residents feel well and truly at home.

Parish Plan

Barkway Parish Council produced a Parish Plan in 2010. This was a comprehensive document and its proposals and recommendations were based on the results of a broad village questionnaire. Many proposals have been implemented eg. The Barkway Forum; actions to reduce speeding in the village; and several others. The Plan is a living document and, as such, needs to be reviewed and updated regularly. The Parish Council has charged each Councillor to look at the Plan in relation to their portfolios and come up with fresh ideas and suggestions based on current situations. Councillor Jenny Warren will be responsible for collating the results and for producing a structured addendum to the Plan.

Your Parish Councillors with their responsibilities and contact details

Steve Alsop: (Chairman) Environment
Jim Dalton: (Vice Chairman) Highways
Tony Terry: Property & Leisure
Andrew Murphy: Corporate Governance & Grants
Jenny Warren: Planning
Fiona Tomkins Community Liaison & Communication
Catharine Toms: Parish Clerk

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If you have any comments on the content of this edition of Barkway Bulletin, please contact the editor at gordon.baker@barkway-village.co.uk - we are always interested in hearing your views.

The Parish Council's Finance Committee will finalise the budget for the financial year commencing 1st April 2013 on 17th December and will recommend a precept request for the coming year for approval at the Council meeting on 14th January. A special edition of the Barkway Bulletin is planned to be published in January and will provide residents with details of the precept and of the Parish income and expenditure figures for the financial year to date.