

# Barkway Bulletin

A Newsletter from the Parish Council of Barkway

Issue 22

February 2015



## Welcome to another edition of the Barkway Bulletin.

This bulletin is mainly about the Parish Precept for 2015/6. This precept translates into a part of the council tax you pay each year and is the part which goes to your parish council with the amount determined by your 'Property Band'. We are advising you that regrettably the increase this year is significant, 50%. The increase amounts to £33 a year on a band D property, so 9p a day. Please let me try to explain why we believe this is the right thing to do.

### Costs

Firstly your council is not a profligate spender. On a like for like basis we hold, and often even reduce, many of our costs every year but some inevitably rise. However, and only as a small example, we now have more dog bins and so the cost of emptying goes up.

Our resourceful Parish Clerk does a great, complex and important job and, amongst many other things, gets us reduced insurance and energy costs almost as a matter of course. After a substantial rise in 2014, her salary in 2015 will rise by the national pay awarded to local council workers of 2.2%, but even then it will be below some published guidelines.

### Issues this year

The issues this coming year are however much more significant.

This year MAY be the last one where the precept is not capped. It is the only part of the Council Tax bill that is unregulated by Whitehall and the fear is that, once capped, our already ultra-careful controls on expenditure will come under impossible pressures. Not least among these potential pressures is that the County Council is looking at ways in which some of its duties (grass cutting, sign washing etc.) may be delegated to us and the appropriate funding cannot be guaranteed.

### Income

Please understand that our ONLY guaranteed income is the precept, and that any extra income, in the form of grants and S106 (the levy taken on new house construction) always comes with strings on exactly how it is spent and/or whether we have to match the grant with our own funds. In 2014/5 we used some of our S106 fund to cover the gap between the estimated pavilion construction costs and the actual. This did not come out of Parish Council funds but it did reduce the S106 pot available for future projects in the village.

### Solar Farm

We have also had to take into account the fact that the money promised from the Solar Farm has yet to materialise even though it was invoiced, as requested by them, in the spring of 2014. This was to be the first tranche of £11,000, which would be followed by 4 more annual payments of the same amount. As I write this, I have been unable to get from the landowner Tom Duke even a commitment that it WILL eventually be paid. It was not a legally binding offer.

## **Grant for the playground**

In this coming year we are anticipating a grant towards some refurbishment of playground equipment and a new see-saw. If we fail to get the grant, we will not spend the money, but we do expect the grant so there is £1674 in the budget to pay our bit.

## **War Memorial maintenance**

We also feel that the War Memorials need refurbishment, but before that can be done (and grants are available), they have to be properly (professionally) cleaned which is a Parish Council duty and therefore carries no grant funding. We estimate an eye-watering £1725, based on just one quote so far. We have spent almost nothing for many years.

## **Neighbourhood Plan**

In 2014/5 we were the first in the whole of NHDC in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and frankly at a very small financial cost. See elsewhere in the bulletin for progress but I feel that the existence of this well-developed draft plan had its effect on the draft NHDC Local Plan, and thereby helped us keep our village development in line with all our wishes. In 2015/6 we anticipate a final cost of £3000 to finish the job and have a legally significant document.

## **New Pavilion**

Finally the pavilion operation is a totally new scenario for the council. As I said above the ONLY guaranteed income is the precept. The pavilion is more like a business but in a small way. We have always budgeted a spend on the recreation ground and an income from football fees but now the numbers are much bigger. The consequences of failing to achieve the budgeted spend or income may have a significant effect, and equally bettering them will have a significant beneficial effect.

## **Summary**

After the Parish Clerk and associated administration costs, the pavilion turnover is by far the biggest in financial terms and so it is intended that there be put in place a clear and separate reporting system not only on achievement of financial budgets, but also achievement of performance targets as required by the Football Federation. The risks are low in the very short term but the cost of failure could be high in the medium term. With this in mind, we have planned a small increase in reserves to cover the costs of coping with that risk.

We have all in the council worked very hard to keep costs to a minimum, while still maintaining and trying to improve our village environment which the Neighbourhood Plan shows is so important to us all. The budget is realistic to the best of our knowledge however I should mention that in 2015 there has to be an election for the Parish Council, which could cost around £3000. This has not been budgeted for. As we are generally short of councillors we believe an election is unlikely. If there are no more candidates than places, then there is no election cost.

I and the Finance Committee are always available to discuss and explain these matters to you at any time. We do not take this matter other than very seriously. Your positive involvement is always welcome, as is your attendance at Parish Council meetings. Even better, please consider joining us as a councillor.

**Jim Dalton, Chairman, Barkway Parish Council**

# Parish Matters.....

## Highways

The refurbishment of Royston Road pavements between High Street and Periwinkle Close is due to start on 23 February, weather permitting. The consultation on the extension of Royston Road pavements is underway, and a second meeting with Hertfordshire County Council Highways will take place in February. Watch this space.

## Barkway Parish Council Email Database

Are you receiving email messages from Barkway Parish Council? If not and you would like to be kept informed about matters relating to the Parish (and we will not bombard you with endless emails, or pass your details on to any third party), please forward your details to: [parishclerk@barkway-village.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@barkway-village.co.uk)

## Barkway & Newsells Village Website

We have added a few new pages recently, we now have archived the news for 2012 and 2013 onto specific pages under News. In addition there is also a new page that contains the Enews of the Public Health team at Hertfordshire CC.

Also included on the site are the monthly police reports. In addition other items of news from the police are also included.

Thank you to the organisations that have sent items to be included on the site. If your organisation has some news to share or an event to publicise, then please forward the details by email to: [webmaster@barkway-village.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@barkway-village.co.uk)

## Barkway & Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

After a wonderful response from the Parishes to our proposal document, the final draft of our Neighbour Plan has been prepared.

We are now at the stage where we have to submit the draft to a number of consultees for their comments. Thereafter, following any necessary revision, we will be able to submit the document to NHDC for procedural checks and their consultation comments.

As you can expect these consultation steps take time, so we do not expect any leaps forward towards a referendum on the Plan until the late summer or autumn. However, Barkway and Nuthampstead appear to be the forefront of the process, pioneers amongst our neighbours, and we are encouraged that the comments we have had on the Plan so far have been positive. We seem to have influenced NHDC, as their subsequent recommendations for proposed housing development tie in with the desires expressed in our Plan. We shall keep you informed of any progress.

## Broadband

You may have seen the OpenReach vans in the village. They are installing the tubes that will carry the optical fibre cables. These will bring us high speed broadband this year. Dates vary but my best guess is October. There is capacity in the tubes for four times as much fibre as is deemed to be needed at present so we are future proof. The new green cabinet on the High Street near Burrs Lane is one hub. If you find another, then that will be another hub. Old green cabinets will not be used. It seems the fibre is coming directly and not through the exchange, so we are told.

## The Barkway Pavilion Opens in Style

11 January 2015 proved to be a memorable and historic day in the annals of the village of Barkway. The new "state of the art" Pavilion and Community Room was officially opened by Sir Oliver Heald QC MP.

Over 60 invited guests including Tricia Cowley, Chair of North Herts DC, Lynda Needham, Leader of North Herts DC, County Councillor Tony Hunter and several officials of Herts FA attended the ceremony and heard how four years of hard work and dedicated service by the Project Committee (Steve Alsop, Gordon Baker and Tony Terry) was brought to fruition with the construction of a very welcome amenity for the village.

The dual purpose building provides football changing rooms to be used mainly by Royston Town FC under a special arrangement with the Parish Council and a spectacular community room available for use by village groups. In addition, the community room will be available for hiring to stage events, such as children's parties.

The enormous potential provided by this facility is there to be seen by all and complements nicely the existing amenities in the village. It will enable Barkway to follow a path of sustained development and growth.

The long term benefits are tremendous. Royston Town FC has agreed under the terms of the arrangements to offer football coaching to the people of Barkway of both genders and abilities, particularly the younger element. Anyone interested in playing football will now have the opportunity on their doorstep to take advantage of skilled and professional coaching.

## Fundraising Events For The Barkway Pavilion

On **Sunday 8 March**, Barkway's very own Chris Cooper, will be running the **Cambridge Half Marathon** to help raise money for the new **Barkway Pavilion**. A tremendous amount of hard work has been undertaken (by Steve Alsop, Gordon Baker, Tony Terry & the team) designing, financing and delivering this project for the village. It is a fantastic achievement and Chris would like to do his bit by raising a few pennies towards the Pavilion's running & upkeep. **Any sponsorship would be kindly received** and can be donated via the following methods:

[Sponsorship Form](#) - There is a sponsorship form hanging on Chris' front door, Flint House, Barkway.

[Email](mailto:chris.cooper@hybridoperations.co.uk) - drop Chris an email with your donation and he will be in touch to pop-over & collect it, [chris.cooper@hybridoperations.co.uk](mailto:chris.cooper@hybridoperations.co.uk).

On **Saturday 4 April**, The Barkway Pavilion Project Committee will be organising an **'Easter Egg Hunt'** & **'Barkway Vs Barley Football Match'**.

Expect the fun & games to start about 10am and run for a couple of hours. There will also be a **'Beat the Keeper Competition**, a Raffle, Face-Painting, as well as Bacon Sandwiches, Cups of Tea/Coffee and other refreshments.

Anyone interested in representing either village in the football match should call Chris Cooper on 01763 849721 / 07796 693757 or email [chris.cooper@hybridoperations.co.uk](mailto:chris.cooper@hybridoperations.co.uk). The emphasis will be on 'Fun', so all ages and abilities are welcome.

## Council Changes

Steve Foster who was responsible for Community Property has resigned due to other commitments. BPC would like to thank Steve for all his hard work.

### New Councillors



Dr Bob Davidson

I'm delighted to have been co-opted and to return to the Parish Council after a three and a half years sabbatical.

I look forward to serving the community of Barkway, and to looking after the interests of the the village and environs to the best of my ability as a serving member of a strong, proactive Parish Council.

For those who may not remember me, or may be new to the village, I live in Periwinkle Close, with my wife Jenny, with the permission of our owner Willow the cat. I'm on a career break, acting as a consultant in change management, having recently left an US company, specialising in antimicrobial protection, to allow me to spend more time in the village and less time travelling to the corners of the world. So you will see me out and about.

I love all things DIY, gardening, music and playing bass guitar, and look forward to running the Parish Property folder where I can utilise my practical skills from time to time.



Rob Squire

I was co-opted to the Parish Council in November last year and am responsible for Media and Communications. I am enjoying serving the community of Barkway and if you have any events or news then please let me know as I am the person who keeps the village website updated. I moved to Barkway in 2012 with my wife Sue. We share our house with three cats, two hens and Dave the guinea pig. Recently moving from a job in Kingston upon Thames, I now work in Melbourn as a Software Release Manager. I am working on a project to develop a software driven modem to support the next generation of mobile platforms and the 'Internet of Things'. During my working life I have had a variety of jobs including serving in the Royal Navy. You may have seen me as a member of the Barkway Players: cast in a variety of memorable (!) panto roles ranging from a farmer called Randy to this year's offering as Sherlock Holmes sidekick, Dr Watson. I also enjoy walking, photography and wildlife.

### Dates for your Diary

Parish Council meetings are held in the Reading Room on the second Monday of every month, starting at 7.30pm. Scheduled meetings for the next quarter are 09 March, 13 April and 11 May.

Members of the public are welcome.

#### Your Parish Councillors with their responsibilities and contact details

Jim Dalton: (Chair) Highways

Sonia Falaschi-Ray (Vice-Chair): Neighbourhood Plan

Steve Alsop: Pavilion Project

Bob Davidson: Community Property

Giuseppe Frapporti: Environment

Jenny Warren: Planning

Rob Squire: Media and Communications

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, Rob Squire - [rob.squire@barkway-village.co.uk](mailto:rob.squire@barkway-village.co.uk) - we are always interested in hearing your views.

Published by Barkway Parish Council, The Reading Room, 12 High Street, Barkway, SG8 8EE [parishclerk@barkway-village.co.uk](mailto:parishclerk@barkway-village.co.uk) 01763 848716. February 2015