

Little Bardfield Parish Council - 2016 Annual Report

This is a report on the activities of the Parish Council during 2016.

Parish Council Membership (PC)

Cllr William Gardiner (Chairman) LB moorhallfarms@btinternet.com

Cllr Terry Cutmore (Vice Chairman) HG tcutmore@btinternet.com

Cllr Clare Beeston HG clare.beeston7qn@btinternet.com

Cllr Andrew Davies, The Hydes LB davies@farmline.com

Cllr Colin Simpson, OE gboog97@aol.com

Supported by:

Parish Clerk, Mrs Chelsea Feltham-Williams littlebardfieldparishclerk@gmail.com

Uttlesford District Council, (UDC) Cllr Simon Howell cldrhowell@uttlesford.gov.uk

Essex County Council, (ECC) Cllr Simon Walsh cldr.simon.walsh@essex.gov.uk

Listed below are most of the tasks undertaken during 2016

Borehole – Anglian Water (HG)

The Parish Council has maintained a good relationship with Anglian Water since 2008 when the borehole at Hawkspur Green was established. It is used infrequently by Anglian Water, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, to maintain water flow in the River Pant. Water is extracted from the river further downstream for eventual domestic distribution. About 2 years ago, iron and sulphide contamination was observed and smelt where the borehole water enters the river causing some pollution. Since then observation liaison has been maintained with Anglian Water whenever the borehole is brought into operation.

Bridleway (HG)

On 25 November, the bridleway was deliberately vandalised by the removal of trees and bushes to establish vehicular access to land situated near to the solar farm. The Parish Council obtained the attendance of ECC Public Rights of Way Enforcement and Liaison Officer the same day. He declared that:

“Anyone who takes a motorised vehicle - including quad-bike, motor bike or farm vehicle up the track is committing a criminal offence under Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, enforceable by the Police who should be informed immediately.”

Representation was made by a “Consultant” to ECC claiming that the bridleway had historically been a public road. On 23 December ECC confirmed the status as a bridleway and designated it “Little Bardfield bridleway 22”. The Parish Council have made application to the Land Registry to obtain title to the land under this bridleway on behalf of the local community.

Broadband (all areas)

Discussions have taken place with various private telecoms companies, BT, ECC and UDC throughout the year regarding both a faster and a more reliable service. Any improvement in service will be at an additional cost to all subscribers. BT’s earliest estimate for upgrading locally is 2020.

Defibrillator (all areas)

The provision of a defibrillator was considered. UDC Cllr Simon Howell offered to part fund this acquisition. However, with the Parish being widely spread, no suitable storage location being identified and no known First Responders who would be able to use it, the project was put on hold.

Emergency Response Plan (all areas)

The framework of the current Plan was established in 2010. It was revised in 2015 and updated in 2016. Copies are held by all Parish Councillors, Thaxted Fire Station and Uttlesford DC Emergency Response Officer. Another Parish requested a copy to consider as a model for their own plan.

Essex County Council (all areas)

We are strongly supported by ECC Cllr Simon Wash. Good relationships have been established with four other ECC Officers, mainly on Highways subjects.

Potholes and road defects: 23 reported, 20 repaired. Outstanding – pavement beside Little Bardfield Hall which was “orange marked” earlier in the year indicating it was under consideration; pavement outside the entrance to the Alms Houses; and a pothole on the bend approaching the Hall wall which has also been “orange marked”.

Road resurfacing: Notification has been given that several roads and lanes in the area are programmed for resurfacing. The single carriageway lane between Little Bardfield-Hawkspur Green-Little Sampford has initially been designated a diversionary route for two-way B Road traffic. The Parish Council, with ECC Cllr Simon Walsh’s support, have raised strong objections with ECC Highways regarding this proposed unsuitable diversionary route.

Culverts (HG): These are under road or path waterways. Four such culverts in Hawkspur Green are scheduled to be attended to by the UDC Highway Rangers and ECC jetting teams to ensure clearance from obstruction to avoid potential overflow or local flooding.

Hawkspur Green Bridleway – reported separately

Finance (PC)

In April, our bankers Santander, were requested to effect changes to the account signatories and the correspondence address. Due to Santander’s interdepartmental politics and organisational incompetence, by November these simple requested changes had still not been effected.

The PC now has a new account with Lloyds Bank and the Santander account has been closed.

Fly Tipping (all areas)

For reporting:

Major incident to the Environment Agency 0800 80 70 60.

Minor incident to Uttlesford DC 01799 510 510

Hawkspur Green Lane (HG)

The lane running from Little Bardfield, north through Hawkspur Green to Little Sampford is unsigned and confusingly referred to by different authorities by different names and not always consistent within that authority. It is of insufficient width to be classified as a “road”. The PC is pursuing the official naming of the lane between Little Bardfield and the Parish Boundary at Gambers Hall Farm as Hawkspur Green Lane.

Hundred Parishes (all areas)

The PC maintains membership of The Hundred Parishes which is part of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Noticeboards (all areas)

The PC are obtaining quotes to replace the three noticeboards all of which are in various states of decay.

Parish Council Meetings (all areas)

Meetings are held approximately quarterly to formally carry our Council business. The Annual General Meeting is held in May. In addition, meetings are called to review Planning Applications. Email correspondence between Parish, District and County Councillors is very frequent.

Parish Council Meetings were held on: 11 January, 15 February, 8 March, 31 May, AGM 31 May, 12 July, 25 August, 19 September and 5 December.

Minutes are published on the Noticeboards and can be seen on the website.

Planning Applications 2016 (all areas)

Uttlesford District Council invite the Parish Council to review all Planning Applications submitted in regards to any property within the Parish and make their opinions known. However, UDC are the final arbiters on Planning Application decisions and not the Parish Council.

UTT/15/3746/FUL Coopers Transport HG – retrospective for expansion.

This successful local family-run company has outgrown its rural location and most of its clients are outside of the immediate area. This results in continual vehicle movements throughout the local villages and narrow lanes. Further to numerous complaints received, the PC raised objections to the retrospective Planning Application for this Company to expand further at its current location. UDC permitted the Planning Application with conditions. The Vehicle Operators Licensing Authority was also contacted in regards to Coopers Transport's operating hours.

UTT/16/0513/FUL Chequers LB. No objections

UTT/16/0860/HFF The Lodge LB. No objections

UTT/16/0676/FUL Solar Farm HG. Many objections made by the PC and UDC. Granted on appeal.

UTT/16/1213/FUL Land east of Guivers LB. No objections

UTT/16/00055/NEWDEV Adjacent to Fridays LB. No objections

UTT/16/1806/FUL Land at 3 Gridiron Villas LB. Objections made

UTT/16/1959/FUL Land adjacent to Furthermoor House LB. No objections

UTT/16/2350/FUL Land adjacent to Fridays LB. Variation to UTT/15/2131/FUL. No objections

UTT/16/2811/FUL Chequers LB. No objections

UTT/16/3092/FUL Third property at Fridays LB. Objections made

UTT/16/3190/HFF The Lodge LB. No objections

UTT/16/2633/HFF Squirrels LB. No objections

UTT/16/3575/HFF 3 Gridiron Villas Pending

Hawkspur Green: An area of wooded land between Hillside Cottage and Rosedale has recently been cleared and surveyed. A Planning Application for a development can be anticipated.

Police Contact (all areas)

Previously the Parish had a named Police Contact. Upon making enquiries we were advised that this arrangement had been discontinued. Emergencies call 999, non-emergencies 101.

Precept (all areas)

This is the term used to describe the amount of money that the Parish Council needs to raise to carry out its business. There are 101 properties in the Parish with varying levels of occupation.

In 2011 the Precept was £2750. In 2013 this was adjusted to £2700 and has remained at that figure. This results in a Little Bardfield Precept bill for a Band F property of around £31 per year per property or 8.5p per day per property. In view of the significantly increased activities and expenses, the Budget and Precept are being reviewed before submission to UDC for the 2017/18 Council Tax calculations.

Queen Elizabeth 90th Birthday medals (all areas)

A quantity of medals was purchased for free distribution to children in the Parish under the age of 18 years. There has been a low take up on this offer and some are still available.

Quiet Lanes (HG & OE)

There has been an ECC "Quiet Lane" initiative. Initially it would appear that Hawkspur Green Lane and Oxen End Lane could be considered.

Despite the rural environment and single carriageway, considering Cooper's Transport movements, Solar Farm traffic and the ECC initial suggestion as a diversionary route, Hawkspur Green Lane hardly qualifies as a quiet lane! However, Oxen End lane will be considered.

St Katherines Church Roof (all areas)

This is the only remaining public meeting place in the Parish. In response to the recent appeal in regards to the repairs to the Church roof, the PC voted unanimously to donate £1000 from reserves.

Solar Farm (HG)

Despite objections from the PC and refusal by UDC, this development was permitted on appeal. There has been continual and ongoing dialogue throughout the year with the main contractors Lightsource Energy. They advised the PC on 21 December that the Solar Farm generated electricity was connected to the National Grid on the 8 December. Despite the PC being strongly against this development at all stages, Lightsource Energy is in contact with the PC offering a Community Benefit compensation.

Website (all areas)

The Parish Clerk set up a Parish Council website. www.essexinfo.net/littlebardfieldpc
Although it is still undergoing development, it currently provides reference information such as Parish Council Members, Meetings & Minutes, Finance and an on-line Noticeboard.

Quite a busy year for a bunch of Volunteers!!

Report compiled by Cllr Terry Cutmore and authorised by Little Bardfield Parish Council Chairman, Cllr William Gardiner, December 2016