



Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

April 2022



Annual Parish Report 2022

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Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney

Front cover: Great Bardfield Primary School's tribute to Ukraine

Back cover: Early spring view from churchyard

With grateful thanks to all who contributed photographs to these pages.



Chairman's introduction

It is now three years since we could present our report to you face-to-face, having been unable to hold a full Parish Assembly in 2020 and 2021. In these years, however, we still managed to produce our printed annual report, for which we have won awards and acclamation. This is down to the commitment of many village clubs and societies which have provided their own reports for publication and to Kate Fox and Jenny Rooney, in particular, who have pulled the whole report together each year and continue to do so. Thanks to them both for maintaining this vital means of communication for our village. These reports are made available to newcomers to the village via the CIP and give an excellent view of the wide range of activities, even in years when these were severely curtailed. We have received many positive comments and awards for our Annual Reports and are proud of how they represent our Parish. So my thanks once again to all those that have contributed to this year's report and particularly to those that present them live at the Parish Assembly. This is not just the Parish Council's opportunity to summarise what we have been doing over the last 12 months but also for other groups, the School, Bardfield Charities, clubs and societies to present their own annual reports to the community.

Simon Walsh, Vice-Chair of the Parish Council gives a fuller summary of the Parish Council activities. Suffice it for me to say a big thank you to the Parish Clerk, and Responsible Financial Officer,



*Cllr
Carolynne
Ruffle,
Chair
of Great
Bardfield
Parish
Council*

Kate Fox for her commitment, expertise and support given to this Parish and the Council for many years. We were very pleased that Kate was recently presented with an award by Peter Davey, Chair of the Local Council Award's Panel for the Essex Association of Local Councils, for 'foundation' level re-accreditation, under the Local Council Awards' scheme. Great Bardfield Parish Council, and specifically our Clerk, is one of a minority of local councils that have been given this benchmark award, which recognises good practice in governance, communication and achieving the standards of performance expected of a good council.

I would also like to thank all of my fellow Parish Councillors for their contribution and support in all the activities that we, as a Parish Council, undertake. This includes, but is not limited to, the progression of our pavilion project; improvement of the



footpath network; keeping our streets clean, our street lights working, and of course commenting on planning applications within the Parish. We also maintain pressure on Essex Highways for action on potholes and the state of our pavements, and on the police and parking partnership for attention to issues we face particularly with speeding (cars and motorbikes) and with inconsiderate parking. Of course, these may seem like minor issues when we see the dreadful situation in Ukraine, but it remains important to protect the benefits of living in this caring, vibrant community, its history and environment as well as working to make improvements to it for our residents. I remind you that Parish Councillors are volunteers and give much of their time to this community. Our current term expires next year and Parish Council elections will be held in May 2023. We invite anyone who may be interested in standing for the Parish Council to attend some of our monthly PC meetings to get a feel for what we do and/or to have an informal chat with one of us.

I would also like to thank our District and County Councillors, Cllrs Peter Tattersley and Graham Butland, for their attention and support over the last year, attending most of our Parish Council meetings, providing updates and advice, and taking up some concerns on our behalf. They have also contributed their reports to this Parish Assembly and Annual Parish Report.

In the last year we have welcomed the new vicar at St Mary's, Rev Alex Shannon, who has the unenviable task of leading the ministry of the Pant Valley Churches. I would also like to thank Alison Kerrell, Head of Great Bardfield School for her dedication and hard work over the last eight years, and facing the challenges of running a village school, particularly during an unprecedented pandemic. Alison is moving on to another school and will be leaving Great Bardfield in July. We offer our thanks and best wishes for her future.

Sincere thanks go to many other members of this community in providing assistance and care for the village and people. From the school governors who support and manage our village school, to our village volunteer group that continues to deliver medication to those unable to collect it themselves; those who

provide support and help to their neighbours, and all those who get involved in village activities and societies which help provide support for others. Thanks to all those who have instigated aid and support for the Ukraine crisis more recently, acting as collection points for necessary items and aid; giving their time to making brooches, pendants and greetings cards to help raise money and organising a jumble sale that will take place in May, also in aid of the Ukraine disaster.

I am also pleased that the Essex Air Ambulance are here to provide an insight into their work. They were booked for our 2020 Parish Assembly, two years ago, and have been rolled forward each year so we are pleased to now welcome them, in person. As many of you know, the Air Ambulance have provided much-needed help to residents of this village in the past and we as a Parish Council also support them financially.

Finally, as this is the Platinum Jubilee year, and on behalf of the Parish Council and community of Great Bardfield, I would like to congratulate Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth for her long reign and commitment. A number of activities are planned in the village to mark this occasion. You may also be interested to hear that the footbridge adjacent to the main bridge over the River Pant, which has recently been repaired, in the 70th year of the Queen's reign, was initially installed in her Silver Jubilee Year, in 1977. We will be installing plaques on the bridge to mark these events.

**Carolynne Ruffle, Chairman
Great Bardfield Parish Council**



Parish Council review 2021-2022

After two years of Covid regulations, the Parish Council is gradually returning to 'Business as Usual' and will be resuming formal meetings back at the Town Hall from April. Prior to that and as restrictions eased and Zoom meetings ceased, we became somewhat peripatetic in where we met; firstly, in the Town Hall where we abandoned the small meeting room for the main hall area, and latterly the Church, as both spaces allowed for safe social-distancing for Council members and others who attended our meetings. Throughout this disruptive period, we continued to meet as scheduled every month, except for August when a brief finance meeting was held. Additionally, many other meetings occurred, notably for the Pavilion Project, the proposed Wethersfield Prisons development, and the planning sub-committee.

The Covid period demonstrated how strong our local community is in supporting others, with a robust volunteer network continuing to collect and deliver prescriptions and do the occasional shopping trip. I know too that many in our community quietly look out for the well-being of a neighbour ensuring everything is alright and they are not feeling lonely.

More recently, the war in Ukraine has again galvanized this community spirit, with collection points quickly set up for donations to be sent abroad, along with a local resident's container business sending a truck with much needed supplies. The Parish Council wishes to record its thanks to all of those who have been involved.

A key role for the Parish Council is to comment on local planning applications and the past year has seen an increase in the number of cases passing before us. Our role is to review the applications and make comments based on our local knowledge and backed up by the design statement and various known planning designations such as the extent of the Conservation Area, which for example will require tree works to be submitted for review. It is important to note that the Parish Council cannot grant planning permission but can only submit an opinion to the planning authority, in most cases Braintree District Council. During the past year we dealt with 45 planning applications which varied from small extensions to a large-scale addition to the new housing estate at Deer Park View. Twenty tree-works applications were also appraised, mostly for tree management where oversized trees needed some pruning back.

We are also involved in wider ranging issues and have been an active participant in the Local Plan process, which is now concluding. Recently, proposals for a double prison at the old Wethersfield Air Base have been circulated, although at the time of writing no formal plans have been submitted. In order to be ready for this, a consortium of local parish councils has been set up with a standing committee comprising two members from each parish, and we are represented there. Many of our residents have already expressed their concerns to us, and these will be reflected in any representations we may make should the application occur.

Another area where significant progress has been made is the Pavilion Project. After several false starts we have now obtained a revised design, a programme of works and various contractors ready to start work. We have been expertly guided by Andrew Taylor who has applied his extensive project management skills to this project, and to John Maidman who brings similar expertise to the table. A small sub-committee has taken control of this project in order to speed



Presentation of re-accreditation award to Kate Fox (l) by Peter Davey, Chairman of Essex Association of Local Councils, withCarolynne Ruffle

the process along and get matters settled without the usual delays brought about by having monthly meetings. We wish to express our gratitude to all of those involved including local landowners who have granted easements to allow a drainage system to be put in.

As with every year, I comment about highways. We hope the post-Covid era will bring a certain amount of relief around the school, in particular congestion caused by parking in the centre of the village. Parking across the village is always a challenge, and we have asked the North Essex Parking Partnership for advice to help improve matters. Speeding is another area of concern, and the police have at our request set up speed checks resulting in some motorists being caught.

The public footpath network has been discovered by many to be a fantastic asset, and that is a great thing to see. During the past year we were lucky to have a group of volunteers from the Friends of Flitch Way clear a significant part of the historic track, Black Lane, which sits on our borders with Little Bardfield. Their efforts have made a big difference and following their example the Parish Council has now joined the County Council's P3 partnership which will give us support in establishing our own

volunteer group, building on a core group that has over many months checked the path conditions, mapped routes and regularly reported to the Parish Council, for which we are very grateful.

Our open spaces, including Pipers Meadow, the Quiet Space and the village greens continue to be well used. Our thanks go to Dr Doug Joyce for his continued advice on the management of these areas and to Ian Ruffle the village handyman for keeping trees watered and the village environs clean, to Mick Gell who regularly tends to the Memorial Green ensuring it is kept in good order, and finally the churchyard volunteers who keep the church surroundings in good shape.

The Community Information Point remains a key point of contact for residents, for information, to report matters of concern, to collect recycling or dog-poo bags, or just to drop in for a chat! Our thanks go to the team who ensure it is kept open and staffed.

Thanks needs to go to the Parish Councillors who give of their time generously, and to our Clerk, Kate Fox who keeps us on the straight and narrow, but also ensures the Parish Council remains accredited at Foundation Level, no mean achievement as only 40 other councils in the county have achieved this: well done Kate!

**Simon Walsh, Vice Chair
Great Bardfield Parish Council**



Parish Council financial review

For the year ended 31st March 2022

This brief report is to highlight key items of income and expenditure for the year further details of which are contained in the Minutes available to view on the Parish Council website www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk

Parish Income: The annual Precept is still the most significant part of our income which in the 21/22 financial year was £42,415. Unfortunately, in the current climate, grant opportunities are few, however we have received £1,568 towards street cleaning and maintenance and £836 from ECC for verge cutting (which are duties undertaken on their behalf) totalling £2,404.

The Pavilion Project: Things have really moved on apace since the 2021 Annual Report in which the proposal was outlined. The planning application together with building regulations have been approved and the build is on target for the current year. This does of course impact on expenditure but, as you will know, the Parish Council have been earmarking funds over the course of some years for this project and we have the benefit of 106 funding which comes from developers' premium as a result of any new housing in the village. The 106 fund is held on our behalf by Braintree District Council and released when a project is approved and follows strict criteria. Expenditure in this financial year has been £21,200 (net of VAT) with little opportunity for fundraising due to the many Covid restrictions over the last two years. It

is hoped to address this in the coming year with the support of the community.

Parish Expenditure: The Parish Council is responsible for key services and costs always increase year-on-year. Some of the major expenditure this year, apart from the pavilion project, was:

- Street Lighting: £4,200 – which is set to increase by 30%
- Grass Cutting and Open Spaces: £3,219
- Town Hall Grant, CIP Rent and British Telecom: £3,584.

Precept: For the 2022/23 year the Parish Council has reluctantly increased its Precept in order to keep pace with costs by precepting an extra £4,000. The resulting increase is 3.5% which in monetary terms is just £2.58 per annum per eligible Band D property.

Overview: Annual Accounts – the external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's financial reporting and the reserves held for special projects. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor. These were published on the Parish Council website at www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

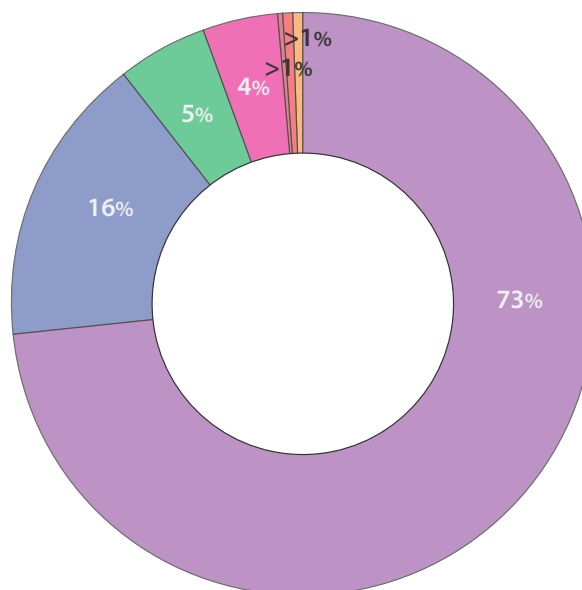
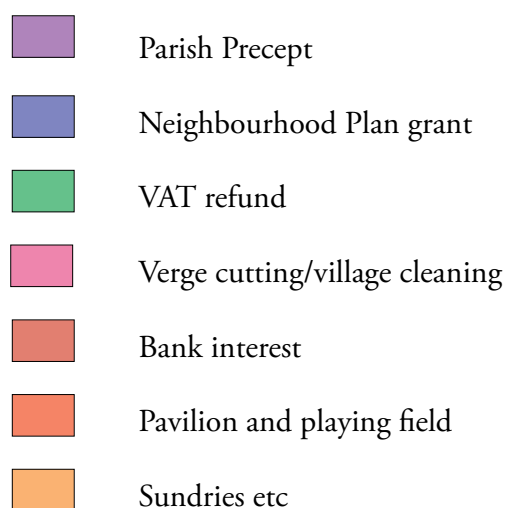
Parish Council meetings were no longer held by Zoom, following the ending of the Covid 2020 Act, and have met in larger venues including most recently St Mary's church. However, from April 2022 meetings will return to the Town Hall Committee Room unless restrictions are re-introduced or where we expect a large attendance by the public.

Kate Fox
Parish Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Parish income

For the financial year ended 31.3.22

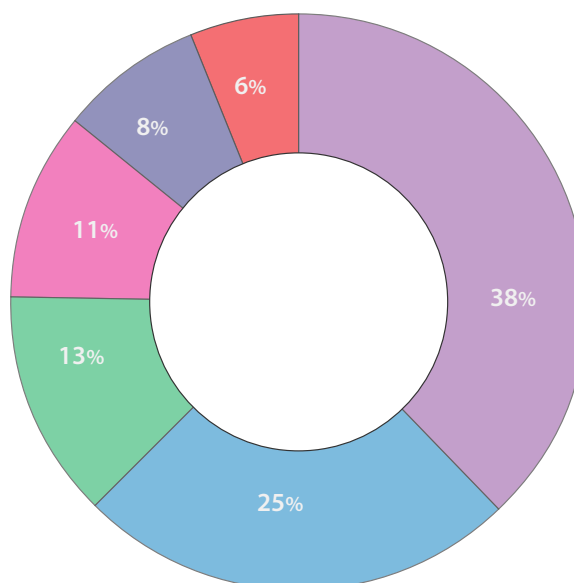
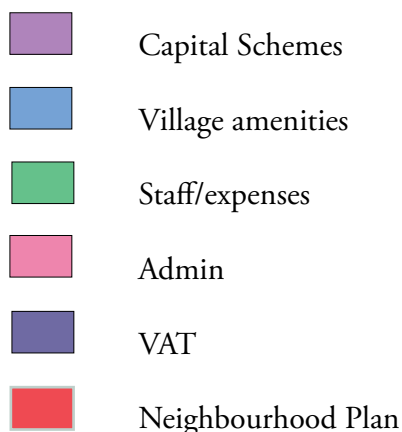


Parish Precept	£42,415.00
Neighbourhood Plan grant	£9,238.00
VAT refund	£2,986.00
Verge cutting/village cleaning	£2,404.00
Pavilion and playing field	£275.00
Sundries/training bursary/substation rental	£212.00
Bank interest	£191.00
Total	£57,721.00
Pavilion project fund as at 31.3.22:	£67,972.00
Business reserves account as at 31.3.22:	£63,126.00
Special projects account as at 31.3.22:	£12,963.73
Current account as at 31.3.22	£1,352.00



Parish expenditure

For the financial year ended 31.3.22



Capital schemes	
Pavilion Project: Architect's fees, BDC application, Land Easement fees, deposit for main build	£20,142.00
Village amenities	
Public lighting – supply and maintenance	£4,200.00
Grass cutting/Memorial/open spaces	£3,219.00
Town Hall: grant and substation rental	£2,107.00
Verge cutting/street cleaning (agency arrangements)	£1,542.00
CIP: Town Hall rent/IT and British Telecom	£1,477.00
Pavilion maintenance/playing field	£536.00
Total	£13,081.00
Staff/Sundry expenses	
Salary/website/sundries/training/defibrillator	£6,777.00
Admin	
General admin/telephone/audit fees/tax/insurance/stationery/Annual Parish Report/subscriptions/donations	£5,617.00
VAT	£4,234.00
Neighbourhood Plan	
Underspend refund	£3,148.00
Total	£52,999.00



Braintree District Council

Last year I wrote about 2020 being a year like no other in recent times, and how local councils were having to find new ways of holding meetings and decision-making as a result of Covid 19. We are now returning to face-to-face meetings providing more opportunities for residents who are not councillors to attend the meetings and raise issues at public question time.

Whilst the pandemic is still a very real threat, most of us are learning to live with it and are returning to something resembling normality. However, at the same time we recognise and respect those families who lost loved ones or suffered serious illness. Personally, I quite enjoyed remotely-held meetings which avoided travelling and allowed more use of casual clothing.

I know the District Council was impressed by the way local communities pulled together to support the more vulnerable and isolated in our parishes and it is obvious that this relationship is being maintained and continuing. The District Council for its part has distributed huge sums of money to support those businesses severely impacted by the enforced closure and restrictions. Unfortunately, whilst there was an initial rapid rebound in global growth, inflationary pressures, supply chain issues and the Russian invasion of Ukraine now provide new challenges.

On a more local level I continue to be bemused by the inconsistencies and illogical discussions made by individual planning inspectors from the government-appointed Planning Inspectorate which seem to ignore the views of local residents and the democratically-elected Parish Council and the District Council Planning Committee.

I note and understand the concerns of many residents about the prospect of two new prisons on the Wethersfield airbase, although at the time of writing no planning proposal has been submitted by the Ministry of Justice for the Council to consider and we have to await their proposal before deciding on the appropriate response. I am sure traffic congestion will be a major factor on our rural road network.

Part I of the Braintree District Local Plan has been found sound by a Planning Inspector but we still wait for confirmation of Part II. If found sound, this will provide the basis for controlling new housing and other developments across the district. I welcome the initiative taken by many parishes to introduce their own Neighbourhood Plan which will give residents in those parishes a significant role in shaping the area in which they live, and allow local planning for the types of development that could meet the community's needs. This is a significant piece of work for the Parish Council alone to undertake and will require the active involvement of a number of volunteers.

In a further attempt to regain control of our local planning system, the Council has allocated significant new resources in the 2022/23 budget for the planning department to dramatically improve its planning enforcement functions, including the monitoring of planning conditions.

Other initiatives included in the Council's 2022/23 plans include:

- Supporting affordable housing schemes and further regeneration of our town centres.
- Raising income to reduce the financial burden of the Council Tax by investing in offices for hire, health facilities, business grown-on units and superfast broadband.
- Contributing towards highway improvements which might otherwise not happen.



- Investing in key Council priorities such as new cycling infrastructures and initiatives to combat climate change, including additional air quality monitoring.

We recognise the financial pressures on households and our Council Tax proposals include holding the increase of the district council share of the tax to £4.95 – less than 10p a week – for a band D property, meaning a band D rate for the BDC share of the overall council tax bill at £189.63, a below inflation rise of 2.68%. Unfortunately, this excludes any increases imposed by the County Council, Fire and Police Commissioner and the Parish Council. We hope these increases, whilst not welcome, will continue to receive the support of our residents.

A measure of the Council's overall effectiveness, headlines from the 2021 customer satisfaction survey showed

- 89% of residents were satisfied with the Braintree District as a place to live
- 80% were satisfied with the way BDC run things
- 60% feel that the Council offers value for money.



Cllr Vanessa Santomauro



Cllr Peter Tattersley

It will be interesting to see the impact that these new proposals have on future surveys. I am also pleased that the Council will continue to provide funding for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme. This has provided over £322,000 of financial support to 248 community organisations since 2016.

I aim to continue keeping your Parish Council informed of ongoing issues from BDC as they arise through my attendance at parish meetings and email correspondence with your Clerk.

Cllr Peter Tattersley
Joint Representative for the Three Fields Ward
Braintree District Council





Essex County Council



County Councillor Graham Butland

Dear Residents,
Since the last Annual Report we have had, in May 2021, new elections to Essex County Council. I am honoured to have been re-elected to represent Three Fields with Great Notley Division which covers the parish of Great Bardfield.

For most of the last two years we have had to live with restrictions due to the COVID pandemic. This has caused significant hardship and distress to many families although there is beginning to be light at the end of what was a very dark tunnel.

What the pandemic did show however, was how extraordinarily generous many people were providing help and support to their fellow residents. I would also like to add my praise to the part played by your local Parish Council throughout the pandemic.

In Essex we are determined to harness that spirit of collective endeavour to build an even better future. The task is huge, but we shouldn't be daunted by its scale. We are Essex, and we will build back better. Working with partners the County Council will:

- renew our economy, because prosperity is the best pathway to a good life. And we will support our businesses as they seek to recover the ground lost by the hard stop placed on them by the pandemic and create the jobs that underpin our wellbeing.
- seek equality so that opportunity is more fairly distributed across Essex – we want all our residents to be able to maximise their potential.
- be as ambitious for the people of Essex as the people of Essex are for themselves and their families. Because there is no excellence without ambition. There is no landing on the moon, without first reaching for the stars.

Alongside the themes of **Renewal**, **Equality**, and **Ambition** which run through everything we do, we are focused on four areas where outcomes really matter for the quality of life of our residents. They are:

- the economy
- the environment
- children and families
- promoting health, care and wellbeing for all the parts of our population who need our support.



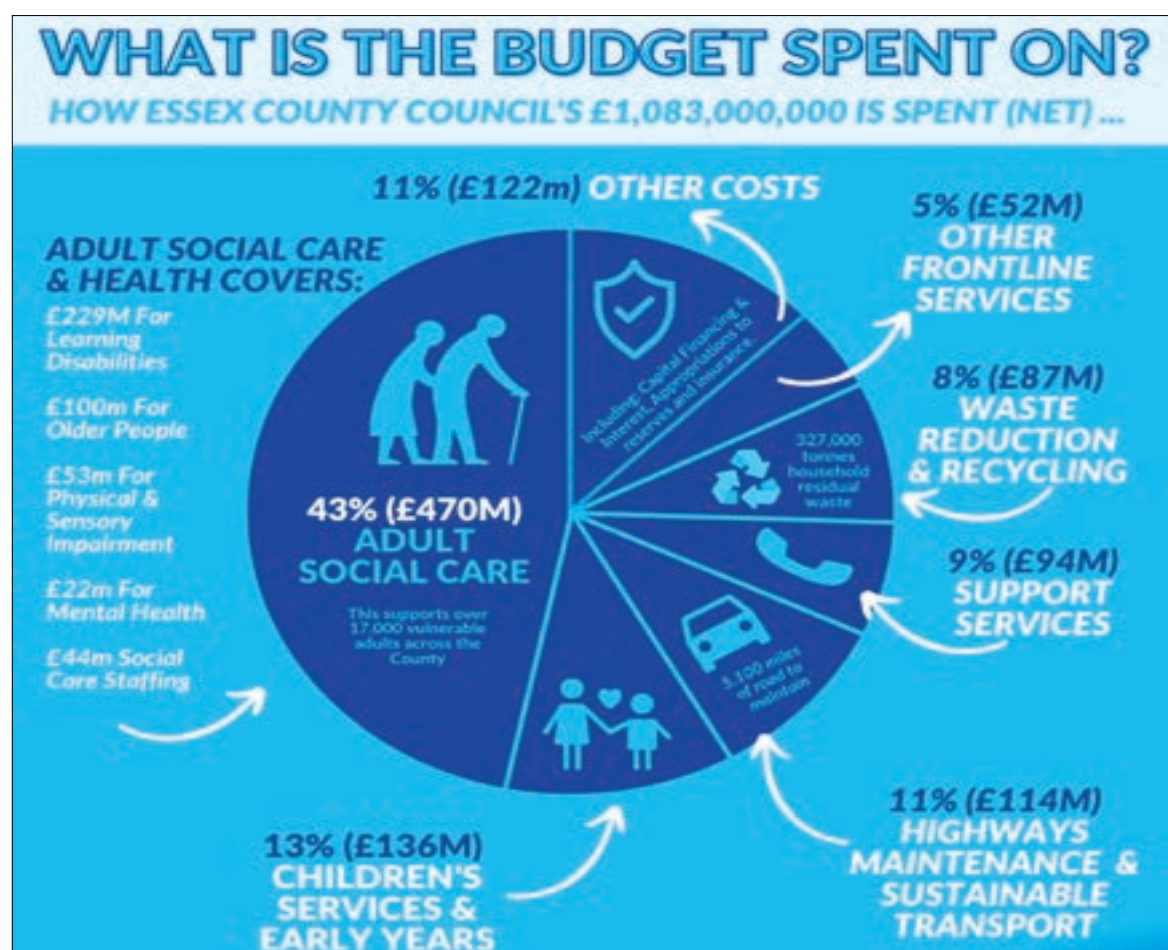
Essex has a proud track record of addressing inequality across the county, but we know that there is always more to be done.

For the coming year the County Council's net expenditure budget will be £1.083 billion. By far the largest area of expenditure, £470 million, is on Adult Social Care. The pie chart below shows how the tax that is collected from you by Essex County Council is spent.

I am delighted that there is a close working relationship between your Parish Council, Cllrs Tattersley and Santomauro your Braintree District Councillors, and myself which hopefully ensures that the needs of the parish are well attended to.

If you have any issues that you wish to raise with me I can be contacted at cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk.

**County Councillor
Graham Butland**





Great Bardfield allotments

Over the last year or so, the village allotments have witnessed one or two significant developments, but the good news is that we are now back to having ten allotment holders, the same number as when they first started twelve years ago.

The most dramatic moment for us, in 2021, happened one late summer afternoon – a powerful storm, with hailstones described as ‘large as golf balls’ caused significant damage to everything in its path. Fruit and vegetables were battered and beaten down, leaves and blooms stripped and shredded, the majority of crops seemingly destroyed. However, we should have trusted nature to come to our aid. Amazingly, the vast majority of plants duly recovered, flowers flourished, and fruit and vegetables still provided impressive produce although some four or more weeks later than had been originally expected.

In 2020 the allotment report talked of unwanted intruders, 4-legged or those with wings, causing much damage to carefully nurtured and tended plants. This was undoubtedly caused in part by the decline and general wear and tear of the original fencing, now more than ten years old. In places it had completely collapsed and elsewhere fence posts were broken and large holes had appeared in the wire netting. After some discussion it was agreed that what remained of the old fencing had to come down and be replaced with new, stronger posts, more robust and effective fencing and a new gate.

However, before anything could get underway, we first had to find the necessary funding. All the allotment holders contributed what they could,

some very generously. Beyond that, we successfully pursued charitable grants from the Parish Council and received really generous support from the Bardfield Charities, under the leadership of Pat Coles. Without this support the project really wouldn’t have got off the ground.

Eventually the pursuit of funding was complete and an allotment ‘task force’ cut back and cleared the surrounding ground in readiness for Dunmow Fencing to begin the work, which took some 4 – 5 days, including the installation of a new, sturdy gate.

The general consensus is that an excellent job has been done. With the arrival of spring, grass and small shrubs will return and all will blend in happily with the surrounding landscape.

With a full rota of allotment holders, a dramatic storm survived, new strong animal-resistant fencing in situ, all is ready for the seasons to take their place and we look forward to hard but enjoyable work pursuing the ‘fruits of our labours’ in the course of the summer and autumn of this year.

Jonathan Davies





Town Hall report

At our AGM last year, Carolynne Ruffle stood down as Chairman of the Town Hall Management Committee and John Maidman took over. Carolynne served on the committee for more years than even she can remember, and was Chairman for the last six years. We are grateful to Carolynne for her hard work and dedication. She will be a hard act to follow. Thanks also to Martyn Lennard who retired from the committee after many years.

At the beginning of our financial year, Covid restrictions were still in place regarding gatherings indoors, therefore our first letting of the Hall was not until June 2021. Fortunately, we received grants from Braintree District Council to compensate for loss of earnings and from Essex County Council and the Rural Community Council of Essex's Covid Safe Community Buildings Fund for repairs to the windows and doors.

Since June, village activities have gradually started up again. All restrictions were lifted on 19th July and we were delighted that the Horticultural Society were able to hold their Summer Show in August. Sadly, Great Bardfield's Mother and Toddler Group closed as Angela Boyle, who ran the group for many years, moved away and there was no-one to take it over. We would like to thank Angela for all she did for the Toddler Group over the years, and wish her and her husband every happiness in their new home.

Our first fundraising event was the Boules Barbecue at the final of

the Boules Competition on a lovely sunny day in early October. Later that month we held a band night featuring 'Strike School' to mark the official opening of the Town Hall following the pandemic. The evening was a great success and a fun time was had by all.

This year we had another wonderful Christmas Tree outside the Town Hall and were extremely grateful for donations from the Parish Council, the *Bardfield Times* and Bardfield Charities towards the cost. Bardfield Community Choir were unable to hold their usual Christmas Carol Concert inside the Hall due to the large numbers who usually attend. However, the Choir sang carols around the village, ending at the Town Hall in front of the beautifully lit Christmas tree. Mulled wine and mince pies were served to put everyone in the festive spirit.

This March the Town Hall Quiz took place after an absence of two years. Minds were as sharp as ever, and the somewhat challenging questions were ably put together by our renowned quiz-master Iain Graham, with Kate Fox doing the hard work of calculating the scores.

During the summer, Paul Brandl repaired the window frames and doors on the Hall, the CIP and the Cottage. This year the exterior of the CIP, Store Room and cottage will be painted. An electrical inspection was also undertaken and any issues requiring attention were rectified by Spencer Smith.

In December 2021, we opened a 'Community Fridge', giving out food donated by the Co-op which can no longer be sold. The Community Fridge is open on Monday and Friday from 10.00am–2.00pm and on Saturday mornings from 10.00am–12.00. Thanks go to Great Bardfield Co-op for this wonderful initiative, and to Sarah Hymas, the Hall's caretaker, for running it.

Patricia Walsh
Treasurer

John Maidman
Chairman



Great Bardfield Charities

I am pleased to present the report of the Great Bardfield Charities covering the last 12 months from May 2021 to April 2022.

During this period we have held quarterly meetings where we considered all applications for grants received from our community.

In February, we accepted the resignation of our Trustee, Brenda Poston, who held the position of Charity secretary over many years. We are very grateful to Brenda for her long-term commitment and thank her for her invaluable contribution and support to the Charity Trustees and our community. We are in the early process of appointing a new Trustee, and will announce in the *Bardfield Times* when the position is filled.

Although we try to ensure that there is an awareness of the Great Bardfield Charities throughout the community, displaying posters on the village notice boards and in the Community Information Point, and with details of the Charity included in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Parish Council website, and the Great Bardfield Charities Facebook page, we know that many of our residents do not know that the Charity exists and that financial help could be available for them in times of need. The Trustees therefore ask that villagers are mindful of family, neighbours and friends who may benefit, but not be aware of the Charity provision, or who are unable to make an independent application.

The Charity Trustees meet on a quarterly basis, with our meeting dates

appearing in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Bardfield Online Community Facebook page the month before the quarterly meeting takes place.

In extraordinary situations, urgent applications will be considered between meetings. The trustees will reply to all applicants.

The Great Bardfield Charities operates within a Scheme overseen by the Charities Commission which clearly defines the purpose and terms under which our funds can be allocated. We consider grant applications on their merits at the time of application. Decisions made are confidential and are made in accordance with the Scheme. We do our best to grant financial assistance to the residents and organisations in Great Bardfield but we do not have unlimited funds. Our ability to assist applicants is dependent on our financial position and other applications made at the time.

As Trustees we are continually mindful of the generosity of our benefactors and it is only through them, that we are able today to financially assist the residents and organisations of the parish of Great Bardfield.

The Charity Expenditures over the Year April 2021 – March 2022 are outlined as follows:

Income:	£21,793.06
(inc. bank interest)	
Total Expenditure:	£21,269.80

(NB These figures are unaudited at the time of writing this report).



Examples of grants made in the last year include:

- Contributions for fuel payments for pensioners and others in need.
- Social needs.
- Provision of disability equipment and hospital travel expenses.
- Personal para-medical services.
- Educational – supporting school curricular and extra-curricular activities, student projects and travel, school uniform and local school transport, equipment and books for school students, university students and apprentices.
- Village groups, club and societies.

The Charities Committee is accountable to the Great Bardfield Parish Council, and the administering Officers are listed below.

All applications to the Charity are considered carefully and without

prejudice by the Trustees. Organisations or individual villagers can approach any of the Trustees for information and assistance in making applications.

The Charity Accounts are audited yearly by Bill Mules, and we thank him for his on-going professional support.

This report, together with the audited accounts are deposited with the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Pat Coles
Chair of the Bardfield Charities

The Charities Committee is accountable to the Great Bardfield Parish Council, and the administering officers are as follows:

Pat Coles – Nominative Trustee and Chair

Linseys, Bridge Street, Gt Bardfield 01371 810995

Debbie Rogers – Minutes Secretary

01371 811083

Mick Gell – Nominative Trustee and Treasurer

3, Mill Close, Gt Bardfield 01371 810113

Annika Woodcock – Co-opted Trustee

Yew Tree Cottage, Dunmow Rd, Gt Bardfield 07900 491636



The Bardfield Times

In the last few months our magazine has begun to fill up with notices and reports of village events as the village has gradually come back to life after the restrictions of Covid. Hopefully this is a real sign that our vibrant village community is flourishing once more.

Thanks to everyone who makes the production of the *BT* possible: Ray Coles and Paul Eusden who organise the magazine distribution and the deliverers who ensure that, whatever the weather, a copy arrives on your doormat. Thanks to Jackie Newton our Treasurer, and Kate Fox who deals with the advertising, ensuring that we have a regular income and can make donations to a number of causes in the community. We are grateful to Alicia Holmes who types handwritten contributions and, again, special thanks to our Layout Designer Joe Jones whose professional skills ensure that everything magically fits together.

It is quite a commitment to write a regular feature and it is those articles that enabled the *BT* to keep going in the absence of village activities and reports. Thanks are due to those who produce interesting copy on time, come what may. Our regular contributors include Mac Beanland whose Nature Notes are always based on careful research and observation; skilled interviewer Anna Bass who manages to coax people to talk about their interesting lives in her Village People articles; and, of course, our veteran reporter on Bardfield in the 'Old Days', Michael Hitchcock. Michael has recently been unwell and his entertaining and informative

writings were much missed. We're pleased that he has made a welcome return to the pages of the *BT*. The mysterious 'Greenfingers' always has interesting creative ideas for gardeners, and book reviews by 'Bibliophile' also proved popular during Lockdown. New ideas, contributions and photographs are always welcome. We look forward to hearing from you.

Janet Dyson
Editor

The Bardfield Times		
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31 st March 2022		
	2021-2022	2020-2021
Opening balance	£1,767.37	£1,107.29
Income		
Advertising	6,866.50	8,107.00
Subs/Sales	57.52	6.20
Fundraising/Cinema	1,053.20	-
	£7,977.22	£8,113.20
Expenditure		
Printing	8,400.00	5,700.00
Stationery	22.85	19.65
Postage	169.08	173.84
Siteground Sub	14.34	14.34
Cinema	896.96	88.00
Donations*	1,320.00	350.00
	£10,823.23	£6,345.83
Closing Balance	£-2,846.01	£1,767.37

***Donations**

PCC, Town Hall Christmas Tree,
Allotments, Community Choir,
Primary School PTA

Current A/c: £5,024.26
Savings A/c: £3,043.23
Cash in hand: £ 50.00

Jackie Newton
Honorary Treasurer



Bardfield Community Choir

Music-making of all kinds has been badly affected by Covid, particularly for choirs where singers expel aerosols into the atmosphere and sit close together. We decided to restart rehearsals in the autumn, meeting in the church which provides a large, well-ventilated space. It was a delight to be singing together again after so long and our first performance was on the very joyful occasion of the institution of Rev Alex Shannon in St Mary's, Great Bardfield. It was a pleasure to hear John Rutter's lovely anthem 'For the Beauty of the Earth' echoing around the church. As it was not possible to put on the traditional Town Hall Carol Evening again this year we joined with Bardfield Brass to organise open-air carol-singing around the village. Jim Bray kindly lent a tractor and trailer to accommodate the band and Christmas music echoed around the village. We started at Deer Park View with a stop in

Bendlowes Road, ending by the Town Hall Christmas tree where Ian Ruffle's famous mulled wine was enjoyed! It was a very festive occasion and great to have so many children joining in.

We are very sad to report the death of Anne Arthur. Anne loved music and singing and was a founder member of the Choir. She sang soprano and rarely missed a rehearsal. We shall miss her.

The Choir is returning to the Town Hall for the summer term. New members are welcome. We sing a wide variety of music and rehearse on Tuesdays from 8–9.15pm.

Janet Dyson
Musical Director

Bardfield Cinema Club

Our 13th season started in October 2021 with a significant reduction in audience numbers, due largely to continued worries over Covid, which are still being felt (to a lesser extent) at this time.

Consequently, membership has reduced accordingly but we are confident that our missing members will return during this current season, which continues until July 2022. As usual details of all forthcoming films are listed in the *Bardfield Times*, the Bardfield Community website and posters around the village.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our team of helpers for their continued assistance in organising the evening's entertainment – from setting up the projector equipment and seating and preparing refreshments, but with a special mention to Jackie Newton for her continuing, loyal support, holding responsibilities for membership, licensing and financial matters.

All profits from the Cinema Club go directly to the *Bardfield Times* – the largest expense we incur is the licence to show films to a public paying audience. Costs of refreshments and room hire account for a smaller expense and the net profit received contributes to the general running costs of the village magazine, and helps to fund, where possible, various requests for donations from within the village societies.

We look forward to the rest of this season's films, with returning normality of Town Hall activities.

Ray Coles





Great Bardfield in Pictures

Top Row: Remembrance Sunday, Bardfield School's Easter Bunny, Fr Robert's leaving tea, our new butcher Stuart Ray with Ian Holmes. Next row: Bardfield school children plant trees in the churchyard, Town Hall Christmas tree, licensing of new vicar Rev Alex Shannon, Next row: Charity tractor run, Community Fridge at the Town Hall, Wethersfield Prisons protest rally. Bottom row: Horticultural Summer Show, Nativity play at Bardfield School, Town Hall Boules final, tree of remembrance at St Mary's Church.





Bardfield Horticultural Society

As I sit deciding what to write for this year's Parish Report I am seeing signs of spring. Bulbs pushing through, tete-a-tetes out, giving us all renewed hope and enthusiasm for the coming year.

In 2021, we managed two successful garden visits with one in April to Ulting Wick and although the tulips were late and not as plentiful as we hoped the rest of the garden was a delight! Twenty-six members enjoyed time together and even managed to sit outside in the sunshine and share tea and cake.

In July we visited two separate gardens near Chelmsford which were very different from each other, both well worth a visit. The weather wasn't quite so kind to us on this occasion but everyone enjoyed a pleasant afternoon out.

We were able to put on a Summer Show by cutting down on classes and were delighted with the support we

received from exhibitors and visitors alike. It was truly heart-warming to see the Town Hall filled with entries again.

Earlier in the year we gave out sunflower seeds/pots and compost to the children and we were rewarded with a wonderful display at the show, with each child receiving a prize.

We had an amazing turnout for our AGM in October which was followed by a talk from Riverside Bulbs titled *Bulbs Galore* a very apt title. I had no idea how many varieties of different bulbs there are on offer! It made us all very aware of the need to buy British and local, if possible, too.

How encouraging that we also got three new members on our committee, several people renewed their memberships or joined us for the first time.

November saw us making floral arrangements in the Friends Meeting House again with some splendid results.

Children's sunflower competition for the Summer Show and (r) floral arrangements class in November





Summer visits to Ulting Wick (l) and one of the Chelmsford gardens (r)



BHS Summer Show 2021

Alan Gray from East Ruston Gardens gave an interesting talk on the history of these gardens and over 60 people joined us for this in February 2022.

We have sadly lost Michelle our treasurer who moved away from the area and we thank her for her enthusiasm and hard work for our society. We all wish her good luck in her new home.

As the village comes alive again after the pandemic and into a new year, Bardfield Horticultural Society wishes you all a safe, enjoyable year ahead.

Linda Prior
Chairman



Chris Couldridge receiving the President's Award



Plantings at Long Green

Alongside the establishment of the Bardfield oxlip into Piper's Meadow, a second project to improve the natural environs along Long Green (Coney Green) was also begun more than a decade ago. Initially, a narrow tract of land approximating to one-third of an acre and much used as a casual dumping ground was identified for improvement. Despite the unforgiving soil and landscape, 100 largely native trees and shrubs were transplanted adjacent to the track and fenced off to discourage further dumping and damage. In the early years the site suffered a series of summer droughts which necessitated regular hand-watering, significantly reducing woody-plant losses.

Now, more than 95% of the trees and shrubs originally planted have developed into an attractive woodland coppice, under-sown with native herbs, most notably cowslips populated from seed collected from a nearby ditch. All the trees and shrubs are now well-established and best described as adolescent in maturity, flowering well and setting fruits and nuts for birds, bees, animals and people to enjoy. For now fencing around the site remains in place but this is becoming less essential as the seasons roll by. Site maintenance is now largely restricted to weed control, particularly the brambles, which can very quickly take over. A few extra sapling trees have been added recently, where space has permitted, but essentially planting of the coppice is complete and includes the following: alder, birch, hornbeam, white beam, sweet

chestnut, wild cherry, walnut, oak and field maple together with smaller woody species such as euonymus, viburnum (see photo below), hazel and hawthorn.

In addition to the woody plantings we have attempted to increase the bio-diversity of plants growing further along the margins of the lane leading towards Bardfield Saling. Sadly, these margins are rather too narrow and overshadowed by trees and roots to allow a greater range of wild flowers, but attempts to establish our native English bluebell from seed at suitable locations along the lane have been partially successful. Bluebells take several years to establish from seed but native bluebells can be found in flower in small pockets along the lane.

Not by mistake are bluebells regarded as indicators of centuries-old ancient woodland, but it will, however, take time before they become that iconic blue carpet that many so much admire.

DW Joyce





The Oxlip Recovery Project

It is perhaps appropriate when thinking in contemporary terms of nature today, with its emphasis on conservation, re-wilding, habitat restoration and sustainability, for us to consider the value of Piper's Meadow to the village community and beyond. It was more than a decade ago that a concerted effort was made to re-introduce the Bardfield oxlip back into the heart of the village after a century or more of decline. Initially the planting of many hundreds of oxlip seedlings was carried out by local schoolchildren who subsequently monitored their establishment and progress. Since then the site has been managed under the auspices of the parish council who have organised contract mowing and more latterly some much-needed tree-felling alongside replacement tree-planting. A seating and small recreation area has also been provided for visitors to use and to welcome everyone to explore the meadow.

It is pleasing to report that the Bardfield oxlip is once again firmly established into the heart of Great Bardfield alongside the river in Piper's Meadow, as anyone can testify if they visited or simply passed by the meadow during the month of April 2021. Perhaps the cooler and wetter spring favoured more and greater longevity of flowering than usual: some of the more robust plants reached a size up to 45cms across with 30 or more flower spikes in a dense groups, resulting in a "sea of oxlip-yellow". However, equally important has been the natural



arrival of some other typical meadow species such as meadow buttercup, ox-eye daisy and somewhat unexpectedly a large colony of ragged-robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) shown in the photo above. The latter is a species frequenting damp soils in meadows, pastures and along woodland rides.

Once widespread and common throughout the British Isles, but now listed as conservation status – declining, the ragged-robin is a welcome addition to improving the diversity of wildlife in our meadow.

The planting of trees closer to the river has suffered mixed fortunes since the project started. Many of the initial March 2019 plantings, particularly the bare-rooted alders, failed to survive the subsequent summer drought of the same year. A decision was therefore taken to replace these failures in November 2020 with pot-grown whips of native trees purchased from the Woodland Trust (with additional summer-watering now arranged as needed). With one exception all of the replacement whips have survived their first full season following transplanting, but at least one further year of summer watering and careful attention will be needed before they can be regarded as adequately established.

D W Joyce



Freshwell Health Centre

Your surgery cares for 7,578 people living in Great Bardfield and surrounding villages. We have 49 staff including 6 GPs and two advanced nurse practitioners. Our clinical team consists of practice nurses, health care assistants, a musculoskeletal specialist, a radiologist, a well-being coach, and a social prescriber.

Staff News

We have welcomed a new GP, Dr Laura Thorogood and Richard Clancy, an advanced nurse practitioner, to our team since our last update. We continue to train the next generation of doctors and nurses and would like to thank our patients for their engagement with trainee nurses, registrar GPs, and Cambridge University medical students.

Primary Care Network

Our involvement in the Colne Valley Primary Care Network saw us take part in the Covid Vaccination Campaign mostly centred at the Pump House Surgery in Earls Colne. We are working towards having future vaccinations for Covid carried out at Freshwell. Our patient population and their families, friends, volunteers, and neighbours showed huge community spirit in getting to Earls Colne where we administered over 41,000 vaccinations.

Well-being Coaches

As well as two pharmacists the PCN has two active well-being coaches, Sharon Withnell and Halima Khanom, who run our Low Carb patient activities. The group has a Facebook page and holds meetings and restaurant trips as well as sharing recipes and advice. Many of our patients play a big part in this. Our social prescriber, Terri Sparks, can help people with advice on benefits, access to services and activities to help reduce social isolation.

CREAMER Fund

The CREAMER fund continues to be a support to patient services in the villages. Thanks to your donations they have been able to pay for a whole range of services like X-ray, ultrasound and DEXA scans. Their money allows us to employ Eve and Dr

Pratt to keep diagnostic work within the villages.

After many years of dedicated service to the Charity (he has been involved since 1993!), Chris Blewett will be stepping down as Chair. He is going to be succeeded by former Bardfield GP Dr Andrew Hildrey who many of you will know from his time at Brook House. We are planning to resume the second-hand bookstall in the waiting room in the very near future.

Low Carb

Our patients have taken to the Low Carb diet with incredible results. Dr Andrews has just launched her second recipe book which is available from our reception. You can learn more about the health benefits here: www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk.

Happiness Group

We have a new happiness group which will be hosted over Zoom on the 4th Monday morning of each month by Sharon and Halima, our two well-being coaches. People can join in at any point or just attempt topics of interest. Each meeting will focus on a particular method of improving well-being and be delivered using materials from Action for Happiness <https://actionforhappiness.org>. Ask reception for more information or find us at: www.freshwell.co.uk; @Freshwell_HC on Twitter; or Freshwell Health Centre on Facebook.

David Shedden
Practice Manager



CREAMER Fund

Thanks are due to all the Trustees of the CREAMER Fund for the gift of their time and effort over yet another disrupted year.

Although we didn't hold an AGM last year, we did publish a report from the Chair, and are very pleased to be meeting in person again.

We have a strong team of elected officers in post, supported by David Shedden and the staff at the surgery. Debbie Rogers, our Treasurer, continues to bring her enthusiasm and new ideas to the CREAMER Fund. Sarah McCarthy is a hard-working and proactive Secretary. I would also like to thank Sarah's husband Rob, who has supported us with his professional design and printing skills.

During the year we have said 'goodbye' to Anita Clapson. In her role as Freshwell's Business Manager, Anita has been an effective and important link between the surgery and CREAMER Trustees. She was part of the CREAMER Fund's community initiative responsible for purchasing and over-seeing the setting up and maintenance of a network of twenty-one defibrillators in the surrounding villages.

We have had another challenging year which has had a huge impact on our fundraising. Our Facebook and website presence has raised our profile and offered a way for the community to make online donations, most recently via a JustGiving page. We thank all those who have supported the CREAMER Fund through this time. Your donations have been more important than ever.

This year our payments have totalled £33,607.73. This includes medical purchases; for example a refrigerator, which was required for Covid vaccines. We also support the operation and maintenance of surgery equipment, such as the ultrasound and X-ray machines. These machines help to speed up diagnosis and treatment, avoiding trips to hospitals. Raising funds to meet ongoing costs is a priority.

I am stepping down this year as Chair of the CREAMER Fund, but I will be continuing as a Trustee. I am very proud to have been involved since Dr Andrew Hildrey started the CREAMER Fund in 1993.

I would like to thank all the people who have served on the committee over the years, and all the donors, who have supported us, some of whom wish to remain anonymous. I feel sure that the money we have raised and been gifted, has been used wisely.

Chris Blewett
Chairman



Great Bardfield Historical Society



Drawing of Stebbing Church by Thomas Hennell

Despite restrictions the Society has run a programme of talks this year including one by writer Gillian Darley whose talk *Excellent Essex*, based on her recent book, highlighted some of the lesser-known delights of our often misunderstood county. A talk on the David Parr House in Cambridge also provided insights into a hidden gem, a time capsule preserved with its original early C20th décor.

Much of the Society's income comes from visitors to the village and the sale of our publications. This has, of course, been greatly reduced but the Cottage Museum will re-open from May–September on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 2.00–4.30 pm.

The Bawden Room is open to small groups by appointment. A recent addition to the collection is a pen and ink drawing of Stebbing Church by Thomas Hennell (1903–1945), a close friend of

Edward Bawden and a frequent visitor to Brick House. Much of his work features the countryside and rural life in North Essex and Suffolk. Interest in the Bardfield Artists continues and we have a number of visits booked for the summer. Braintree Museum currently has a delightful exhibition *The Art of Friendship* which explores the creativity of Bardfield Artists Denise Hoyle and Marianne Straub, in the 1950s–1970s, through collage and textile design. This exhibition has been curated by Claire Willetts, Collections and Exhibition Manager, a Bardfield resident and member of the Historical Society. Items from our Bawden Room collection have been loaned for this exhibition which is open Tuesdays to Saturdays 10.00am–4pm until July.

We are very pleased that members of the committee have worked with teachers at Bardfield Primary School to develop the local history aspects of the curriculum. Children have visited the Bawden Room and explored some of the historic buildings in the village.

Our 2022 AGM will be held on Thursday, May 12th in the Town Hall. This will include refreshments and a chance to see photographs from the Society's archive. New members are very welcome. For further information contact Secretary Marilyn Edwards mazjedwards@yahoo.co.uk. To book a village walk or a visit to the Bawden Room email jm.dyson@btinternet.com.

Janet Dyson
Chairman



Great Bardfield Carpet Bowls

When the Parish Clerk asked me for a report on the year, I thought oh no, what can I say that's interesting about a village activity where very little has happened. I then read my 2021 report and thought about cutting and pasting it for 2022 but some smart villagers out there would notice.

I reported that, with the outbreak of Covid, all games had been cancelled since early March 2020 and until very recently nothing much has changed. However, in the last few months activities have started to pick up both locally, county-wide and nationwide. There will be no leagues until the 22/23 season however local clubs are slowly looking at friendly matches, counties are also looking at some friendly competition and the English Association is hoping the Champion of Champions will be held in June and the National County Championship will be held in November.

Returning to our club here in Bardfield, we have never been a large club but this Covid outbreak has hit us hard. We have not had any die of the virus but those that had underlying health problems have deteriorated greatly over the last two years. We have lost five due to this. There were also those that enjoyed the sport but have realised that after two years of not going out they are happy to stay at home. We can understand this because none of us are getting any younger and we are creatures of habit. So far, only seven of our existing members have expressed an interest in continuing. However, on the positive side, in very

recent weeks we have had six new people come along to our club nights and seem very keen. Just a few more will enable us to be financially viable, covering our hall hire fees and possibly ensuring we can once again compete in local charity events and leagues.



Each year I tell you a little bit about the club for the benefit of those new to the village. Our Club has been going strong for over 30 years now, with club nights every Wednesday for all those years (until 2020). It is now even more important for clubs around the country to encourage new members to bolster numbers and bring in new blood and interest. Having been stuck inside for so long this is an ideal time to think about joining us.

So, for those new to the parish; not only is it is an ideal way of meeting new friends locally but also finding out about other villages in the area. Is there anyone new to the area that would like to try your hand? We would really welcome some more new faces into the club, so if you think it might be worth a look, please do not be shy in coming forward. The Club normally meets all year round on a Wednesday at the Town Hall from about 7.30 pm. When my wife and I first formed the club, our children were school age. We would take them along to the club nights and they would do their homework at a table on the stage and also join in. After a while our daughter got quite good at it and helped us out once or twice in matches! We made sure that we left early so they were ready for school the next day. As the Town Hall has wi-fi then laptops and tablets come into play now – less excuse for not bringing the youngsters along.

This is a sport for all. Despite the name 'carpet' it is not the toy game that you play in your lounge. The bowls are 10cm in diameter and the carpet is 10 metres by 2 metres. Carpet Bowls is a proper skilful sport open to all, the young and not so young, the



able and less able bodied, we even let male and female compete together. Finally; it is cheap as the club provides the bowls etc; it prides itself on its friendly nature and is as competitive as you wish to make it. For more information about carpet bowls call me, Cliff 07582 540524, or Lynda 07977 403122.

Unfortunately, Bardfield does not have an outdoor lawn bowls green now but there are many clubs around including Dunmow, Thaxted, and Stebbing – Lynda and I play at Castle Hedingham.

They would welcome any interest you may have in the full-size game and it looks like there will be a more or less full programme for 2022. If you are new to the area and would like contact details, we should be able to help you out here too.

Clifford Richardson

Neighbourhood Plan

Work on our Neighbourhood Plan has started again in earnest after Covid restrictions were lifted. We commissioned reports on Landscape Assessment and Design Codes which we have now received. Written by expert consultants they are vital in enabling us to understand our parish in terms of the historic and modern built areas, and the landscape in which the village sits. We have also appointed an experienced consultant to help us draft the documentation required and advise on community consultation.

We plan to hold a pop-in session in the next couple of months to display the work undertaken on Landscape and Design Codes and we will distribute a village-wide questionnaire to collect information about how you would like Great Bardfield to develop. We will advertise the event and questionnaire widely and hope that many residents will contribute.

As a reminder, here is a bit more information on what a Neighbourhood Plan actually is:

- an opportunity for a community to shape and influence planning policy for their village/town.
- a document written by and for the local community, rather than blanket policies set at national or regional level.
- a set of planning policies for the neighbourhood which, once accepted by the community and the District Council, has legal status to help decide whether to approve planning applications.



- funded by Government grants, which enables the development of a bespoke Plan with minimal cost to the community.

Our Neighbourhood Plan must correspond with national planning policy and with Braintree District's Local Plan which should be finally approved in the next couple of months, so our timing in writing our own plan should tie in nicely.

If you would like to get involved, or want to hear more about our Neighbourhood Plan please get in touch with Carolynne Ruffle (Chair of Gt Bardfield Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group) or Kate Fox (Clerk to the Parish Council).

**Carolynne Ruffle, Chair
Neighbourhood Plan
Steering Group**



Great Bardfield Primary School

AIM HIGH – TRY YOUR BEST – GO FAR

There have been many positive changes to life at Great Bardfield Primary school since the publication of the Annual Parish Report last year. Whilst we have faced many challenges, it is with a positive and optimistic mind-set that we are moving through this school year. The difficulties of the last twelve months are important for us to reflect on so that we can fully appreciate the wonderful things that we take for granted every day. Something as simple as parents coming on to the school playground is now back to normal since September; we are so pleased that we could leave the queuing outside the school boundary behind us as we started the new academic year. We really missed connecting face-to-face with our whole school community.

We are always very sad to say farewell to our Year 6 pupils when they leave us at the end of the school year. Last year's cohort missed out on so many of our end-of-year school traditions and we were unable to go on our annual residential visit. Instead we organised a special week of activities which included, a trip to Legoland, bowling, pizza and the cinema at Freeport (we had the whole cinema to ourselves!), a visit to Southend and a sleepover in the school hall to round it all off. The children loved it and thoroughly enjoyed all the experiences they had. Sadly, due to Covid they were unable to have their traditional Leavers Assembly in school. However, we had a massive

final assembly Zoom call with over 150 pupils, staff and governors joining to wish this fantastic group of pupils lots of luck. We have been thrilled to hear that the children are doing very well as Year 7 pupils but we miss them.

We were so pleased to be able to relax the Covid restrictions at the beginning of the new school year enough so that we could get rid of bubbles and have a normal school day, albeit a well-ventilated one! It was great to be able to return to having our Friday Celebration Assemblies as the children love sharing and celebrating their achievements with the whole school. As always in September we have a Macmillan Coffee Morning and this year we were delighted to ask parents to join us and we raised an incredible £174.

Fundraising for people beyond our school community is extremely important to us as we know that not everyone is walking the same life path



*Key Stage
Two girls
take part
in inter-
school
Football
Skills
Training*





*Year 6
2021
on their
visit to
Legoland*

*Children
learned
the
technique
of lino-
printing
with Flora
Olney*

that we are on and that when others are in need, it is important that we reach out and help. Our pupils also showed that they care for others when we collected our Smile Boxes to send to Ukraine in the autumn term. This year we collected 112 boxes! Our dear friend George Mills has been working with our school for 25 years collecting our smile boxes and we are incredibly grateful to him. Sadly, George shared the news with us that after 25 years this was to be his last year.

Being part of the wider community is very important to us as the village school and every November it is our



tradition to take the oldest children to the War Memorial, to lay a wreath on Remembrance weekend. Our School Ambassadors Eloise and Lucca laid our wreath for us this year.

Our children also love to get out and about in the village and in particular learning about its rich history.

The children have also loved finding out about the Bardfield Artists and have been learning how to create images using their techniques. We have been delighted that Flora Olney has been able to come and work with us this term, on developing the art skill of lino-printing. The children have used the technique to recreate, as prints, landmarks around the village.

Christmas at Great Bardfield Primary School is a very important time of year and we were sad that the children missed out on all of the traditions that we love so much, due to Covid in 2020. Christmas 2021 was wonderful! We enjoyed all of the things that we love so much including a fantastic Nativity performed by our Key Stage One and Reception children. Our Key Stage Two children presented a beautiful carol concert at St Mary the Virgin church in the village which is always a magical and special evening. Our Christmas fair (organised by our amazing FOBs team) and class parties were great fun and we were so pleased that Father Christmas had his Covid passport in order and could join us.

We are very pleased with the progress that the children have made since the beginning of the autumn term. They have missed so much school time due to the two lockdowns when we had to move pupils to remote learning. Being in bubbles has also had



a big impact on pupils' mental health. We are therefore delighted with the resilience and determination that the children have demonstrated this year both academically and emotionally. Inevitably, we have some large learning gaps to fill and the staff are working very hard with the children to narrow them. As always, our parents offer us support and we have enjoyed getting back to face-to-face parents' evening meetings.

We have not had any statutory assessments since 2019 and our Year 6 pupils over the last two years have told us that they felt that they had missed out on the experience of SATs. We will return to our normal test schedule this summer and our current cohort of Year 6 pupils are trying hard with their preparations.

We have had British Science Week this term and the theme was Growth. Each class had a different growing project to complete and the children enjoyed preparing beds to grow the seedlings that they planted in class. The children also made bug hotels and thought about the different things that plants need to grow. They learned about biomes and the variety of habitats and eco-systems around the world. We celebrated the children's success in their science learning, with certificates at our special celebration assembly.

At Great Bardfield Primary School we love non-uniform days! These can be for different reasons but it is a great opportunity for the children to be creative. A fun event that we have every year is World Book Day and this is when all of the children dress up as their favourite character from a



book and we have a day of stories and activities. Our other non-uniform day this spring term, was for Red Nose Day. The staff and children all dressed up as superheroes and raised £116 for this fantastic cause.

In the spring term, we were incredibly sad to learn that war had broken out in Ukraine and that our friends at the hospital in Chernihiv were suffering as their city came under attack. In the true Bardfield way we issued an appeal for aid that we could send to Ukraine. Once again we were so pleased to help George Mills with the wonderful work he does helping those in most need. We collected so

Phoenix Class enjoyed a visit to the Quaker Meeting House

Phoenix class planting the raised beds





*Super-heroes
Team GB*

*Mrs
Atkinson
with
Unicorn
class and
their smile
boxes*

many kind donations of baby milk, toiletries, blankets, washing powder and first aid supplies. George's car was overflowing when he collected everything! The children also had a Cake Sale and we raised £300 for Save the Children as part of their campaign to help the survivors of the war. To show their solidarity with the children of Ukraine every child decorated a sunflower blue and yellow in the colours of the Ukraine flag and wrote a message for peace. We put these on our fence to remind everyone who passes through the village to spare a thought for the people of Ukraine.



We finished our spring term with an unexpected snowy day. It was great to have our uplifting Easter assembly and Easter Egg hunt this year. Because of Covid restrictions this hasn't been possible for the last two years. The children were delighted that the Easter Bunny was able to join us at the end of the assembly and then rewarded every child who solved the clues with a chocolate egg.

We are very lucky at Great Bardfield Primary School to have a fantastic team of dedicated and hard-working staff who love being with our fantastic children and who encourage them to be the best that they can be.

Our Governors, led by Jane Tillotson, work tirelessly and voluntarily give up so much of their time to support the school. We are also fortunate to have a fantastic PTA who have kept up their fundraising efforts this year to raise some much-needed money to support our meagre school budget.

We have been sad to say goodbye to some of our much-loved teachers this term. Miss Kyriacou our Year One teacher left us to begin a new career path as an assistant Educational Psychologist and Mrs Atkinson is off to have some new adventures in her life. It is always difficult when staff leave but we are excited to welcome our new Reception teacher Mrs Whittaker.

It has sadly not been possible to take part in any school trips this term. However, we do have some big plans for the summer term and hope to visit Colchester Zoo, the Science Museum and The Globe theatre in London. Our Year 6 pupils are very excited at the prospect of visiting the Isle of Wight as we restart our annual residential visits

in June. The summer term also offers a wealth of opportunities to get outside and enjoy the beautiful surroundings of our school and village.

We have also had a surprise visit from Ofsted this term! At our last inspection in 2017 we were pleased to be graded Good. It was always going to be a challenge to maintain this grade in the torrid time that we have faced, over the last two years in particular. As yet the report has yet to be officially published but I look forward to sharing it with the community when we receive it.

Lastly... It has been my privilege to be the Headteacher of Great Bardfield Primary School for the last 8 years. I will always be so grateful for the warm welcome everyone gave me when I started and I am incredibly proud of the children who currently attend the school and of our amazing past pupils. Our school is at the heart of our village and we appreciate all of the support that we get from local people. Our pupils learn and live our school values and ethos and I hope that it equips them for a good life ready to be the responsible citizens of tomorrow.



*Farewell
and
thanks
to Mrs
Kerrell
for all her
hard work
at the
Primary
School*

It is with sadness that I share the news that I will be leaving the school at the end of the summer term to take up a post at a bigger primary school in Harlow. I leave grateful that I have fulfilled everything that I promised to achieve when I started 8 years ago and that our school is in a very good place. The children, staff, parents, governors and village will always hold a very special place in my heart and I know that I will always be a 'Bardfield Girl!'

Mrs Alison Kerrell
Headteacher

*Our Year
6 pupils
love
working
with the
younger
children*





Great Bardfield Pre-school

It has been an unpredictable year at pre-school, as it has been for everyone. I would like to start by saying that the children have coped really well with all the different changes that each term has brought. I have been so proud of them all; they have dealt with each different situation and have taken it in their stride.

We have also got to say a big thank you to all the parents and carers for their support and co-operation over the last year.

We are lucky at pre-school to have such a dedicated team which has gone above and beyond, to help keep the pre-school running smoothly. Two staff members have passed their NVQs and one member of staff is now in the final year of her degree, so as you see it has been a very busy year for the whole team.

During the year the children have really relished participating in science activities, where they learnt about the parts of the body, how to make exploding fizzy coke bottles and colourful fizzing volcanoes. Outside play has been enjoyed by all, whether it's in sandpit, riding on the bikes or playing in the mud pit the children have had fun, fun, fun.

In September we were all so proud of our children who went up to primary school; after all the disruption that these children have had, they all progressed to the next stage confident and happy. They are a credit to their families.

We welcomed all our new children in September. They have settled so



well and are getting into the swing of the pre-school routine, the older children have been very good at helping the new and younger children settle within the group.

Over the last two terms the children have enjoyed making Christmas decorations, presents and cards to take home to their families.

The pre-school has brought a portable cooker this year that which has enabled them to see food cooked in the class and see what the new little oven can make. (All safety precautions were taken).

The children have planted plants for their mums for Mother's Day and made bird feeders for outside in the garden. The latest adventure is to enable them to become gardeners and grow their own food for snacks.

Although it has been one of the most difficult years, it has also been one of the most rewarding years, watching these children grow, become independent and confident little people which will enable them to enjoy the next part of their learning journey.

Kathy King
Pre-school Supervisor



The Bardfield Players

It has been a funny old year. We did a lot of play readings in the latter half of 2021, including a comedy that used the pandemic as its inspiration. Some people loved it; others hated it. But in the end, it was felt that it was still a little too soon to expect people to attend a production. So we carried on 'resting'. However the new year came round, and we decided to take the plunge once more, with a play appropriately called *A Bunch Of Amateurs* written by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman.

Our resumption of activity has brought with it a great deal more extra work, on top of the usual demands of putting on a play. We have revamped our website, which had been mothballed by BT the provider (thank you to my son Alex). Our bar team of Ian Holmes and Martyn Lennard, decided to retire, so a good replacement had to be found, which fortunately we have, in Chrissy Bray. This meant that we had to alter all of the access details for the card payment system.



Dale, Chris, David and Adrian all working hard on the current set



Niki Scripps, our secretary, also retired, so we needed a replacement for her as well. We were able to do this in the form of Marilyn Edwards (thank you Marilyn), and someone else to be the administrator of our Facebook page (thank you Jo Magro).

We also decided that after twenty years of the Co-op acting as our box office, we would use an online ticketing company, after having it highly recommended by other local groups. Once again there was a lot of work to do, but fortunately my dear wife Carolynne was equal to the task, and set it all up very successfully. You may have noticed that all the technical ability needed for all of the above, was provided by several people – none of which were me! I thank them all.

We are also in need of a new person to join our Techie team which currently consists of Paul Boon and Stewart Penny, Mike Jones having stepped down until he is able to retire from his proper job.

However, so far, the rehearsals are going well, and the 22nd of May should see the completion of yet another excellent show.

**Ian Ruffle, Chairman
The Bardfield Players**



News from St Mary's Parish Church

It was my great delight to be welcomed as Priest in Charge of the parishes of Great and Little Bardfield in October 2021. As in so many other areas of life, much of what has been happening at Church since then has been building back up those things which were so radically altered during the last two years of Covid restrictions. It was therefore wonderful to be able to hold a number of events once again which had been a traditional part of the calendar at St Mary's, particularly as Christmas approached.

We had an excellent turn-out for the Service of Remembrance, with the accomplished playing of Bardfield Brass to accompany our singing. The Autumn Fair was a great opportunity to invite many people into the church, and raised an excellent sum for church funds. Then it was delightful to welcome primary school children and their families into church for their Christmas Concert. As we drew closer to Christmas itself, we held a Christingle service once again, which provided an opportunity for our excellent team of bell ringers to showcase the church's newly-restored set of hand bells.

It has also been wonderful to welcome families into church to bless significant moments in their lives, now without the worry of restrictions or the prospect of last-minute changes of plan. I am always delighted to receive enquiries about weddings and Christenings, and look forward to celebrating many more in the months and years to come! Equally, pastoral support is always available at those sad but important times of saying goodbye to a loved one, which includes, but is not limited to, helping arrange a funeral service, whether in the church or at the crematorium.

As the church is there for the whole community, we were very pleased to be able to offer the building as a rehearsal venue for the Bardfield Community Choir (who sang so beautifully at my licensing service), and also as a meeting venue for the Parish Council. The school then paid another visit to church recently to help with the planting of new trees in the



churchyard. Other groups who might like to use the church as a place to meet or hold an activity are very welcome to contact us.

Finally, as we look to the future, we hope to expand the range of activities through which more people are made welcome in our church. In the short term, we are looking to re-establish some Sunday School provision, as well as the occasional social event during the week. The best way to keep up to date with what's going on is through the church pages in the *Bardfield Times*, to whom we are very grateful for helping us spread the word about what we do. And a notice of services and activities is also always on display on the board inside the churchyard gate. We look forward to welcoming you at a service or event very soon!

The Revd Alex Shannon
Priest-in-Charge of Finchingfield,
Cornish Hall End,
Wethersfield, Shalford, Great
Bardfield and Little Bardfield



News from the Church of the Holy Spirit

The history of Great Bardfield's Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit is one of human and spiritual endeavour. Built in 1954 it was the inspiration of Charles and Ursula Osborne. Charles ran the dairy next to the building and personally funded the £14,000 construction. Local man Will Sutton was closely involved in the project management and Jan Baroch, a devout Polish Catholic, laid no less than 12,000 bricks for the foundations in the first 40 hours. The framework of the circular windows are old iron cart wheels found in the village blacksmith's workshop. For more information please read Jenny Balcomb's excellent booklet on the history of the Church of the Holy Spirit, based on David Jarvis's original research.

Forward to the present day! Unfortunately for much of 2021-22 we have been without our Parish Priest, Fr Richard Rowe, due to ill health. In his absence we have been supported by priests from Clare Priory. This means our services have been confined to Sunday Mass and Holy days of Obligation. However, we are still giving instruction in First Holy Communion and Confirmation and have been able to arrange Baptisms.

We are presently donating to the Bibles for Ukraine appeal from the Bible Society.

A service of Seven Readings with Carols was held on Christmas Eve which was suitably festive and enjoyed by all.

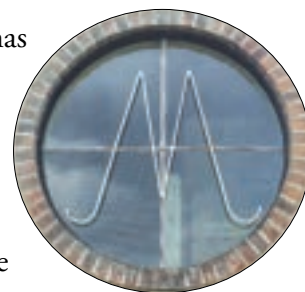
We have completed the Synodal Pathway Questionnaire. This is a



significant review which has been undertaken across the churches at the request of Pope Francis in collaboration with the clergy and laity. A Synodal meeting was held with the aim of compiling responses to questions about Catholicism in these times and suggest ways the church could develop to encourage growth and faith. The discussion included such topics as the treatment of divorcees, rules and regulations governing the practice of the faith, celibacy and the ordination of women.

Sadly, we have not been able to undertake any of the social events that we used to, although did manage a garden picnic for Fr Rowe's 80th birthday in 2021.

It is hoped that we will form a bond of ecumenism with Rev Alex at St Mary's and continue the warm relationship between the churches.



The Church of the Holy Spirit and, below, a circular window made from an old cart wheel

Kate Fox



News from the Quaker Meeting House



Bardfield Charities Trustees and Bardfield Quakers enjoying the sun outside the Quaker Meeting House in 2017

At our Meetings we now have three regular Quakers and three Attenders who all come regularly.

Sadly in 2020 we lost Angela Howard, our longest established member, to cancer. She was a member of the Bardfield Smith family. Angela died on 4th September 2020 having been part of Bardfield Meeting since her birth in 1939. She was buried with her husband Martin in Maldon. A memorial meeting was held on September 4th 2021 to which Friends representing the whole of her life contributed memories and reflections. We will be commemorating her long association with the meeting with a plaque in the garden.

During the months of lockdown we were lucky being a small number in a relatively spacious room so that we have had no difficulty in being socially distanced. After the Spring 2021 lockdown we opened on the Sunday before Easter.

We meet for 45 minutes followed by a time to talk about our thoughts during meeting, to reflect on any ministry that day and to generally catch up on our news. This starts as the remaining 15 minutes of Meeting and then continues over coffee. We are fortunate we can go outside to the garden

if the weather allows. We value the contribution from our attenders whose questions often cause us to look carefully at our Quaker faith.

We were delighted to be part of the licensing service for Rev Alex Shannon and he, with his family, were able to join us at our winter party which gave us the opportunity to thank those people and groups who have hired our Meeting House. We are likely to repeat such an event, but maybe in warmer weather when we can enjoy the garden.

We were pleased to have a visit from Bardfield Primary School's Years 5 and 6 pupils who were studying the Smith family and how their Quakerism defined their contributions to the village. We were able to outline Quakerism as well as enable them to count how many Smiths are resting in our burial ground – almost 50!

We value the groups who hire the Meeting House and their diversity, from lectures to a singers' group to a folk band. Now restrictions have been lifted they are steadily returning.

As far as our building is concerned in September 2021, we had the outside repainted. We spent some time in the garden clearing the ground underneath the large yew tree and the tree has also had some professional work done to raise the crown and minimise the overhang to neighbouring properties. Our regular gardener keeps the whole area neat and tidy.

Sue Collins
Correspondent



Tuesday Club

We are very pleased to announce that we are meeting again regularly on the second Tuesday of each month, in Great Bardfield Town Hall, starting at 2.30 pm.

When we had to close indefinitely at the end of March 2020, there was an interesting programme in place for the rest of the year. All the speakers were cancelled but agreed to come back when we started again. After many months of being careful and waiting for the Town Hall to reopen we resumed our meetings in September 2021.

We started with a get-together and a cup of tea. This was a good opportunity to meet up again, discuss the future programme and hopefully plan a Christmas lunch. After several enquiries we decided to meet for lunch at the Angel and Harp in Dunmow on 8th December 2021 when twenty-five members joined us. Unfortunately, due to the Covid restrictions the service was not quite as we would have wished but we all enjoyed our meal.

We started 2022 with an AGM. The committee was chosen, accounts verified and our programme for the year was announced. It was decided that the subscriptions, which had been

paid in advance from 2021 would be offset against the new subscription of £25 per annum and a visitor fee of £5 per meeting. The increase has been made necessary by the increased costs of speakers.

We have a total of 30 members which is very rewarding and new members are joining all the time.

Our Charity raffle each week continues to help towards the group's chosen charity for the year. We were able to make a donation of £140 on 11th January 2022, to Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust. It was presented to Roger Smith after an interesting talk about the Service and the staggering amounts of money needed to keep the helicopters and staff to be available to help us at a moment's notice. The charity for 2022 will be Farleigh Hospice, which we feel is a cause close to any one of us and our families and could be required at any time.

We have decided that for our July outing, we will again join forces with Great Bardfield Horticultural Society. Several of our members belong to both groups and it enables us to go further afield and also by coach. This year we plan to go to Hyde Hall on Saturday 9th July. Should anyone be interested in joining us on that date, please contact Iris Couldridge on 01371 810088.

For any further information, please contact me on 01371 811401 or email: adriennepoulson@btinternet.com.

Adrienne Poulson

Still to come:

10 th May	<i>Ups and Downs of Ballooning</i> by Edward Lubbeck and Sue Kidd
14 th June	<i>Braintree Town Hall – A Virtual Tour</i> by Michael Bardell
9 th July	Visit to Hyde Hall
9 th Aug	<i>Brave Men and Clever Women</i> by Carl Merry
13 th Sept	<i>Our Street</i> by Brian Carline
11 th Oct	<i>Stained Glass</i> by Sue Tracey
8 th Nov	<i>Saucy Seaside Postcards</i> by Martyn Lockwood



Maintaining our Ancient Highways

Reflecting on the work of the foot-path group over the last year, I am reassured that the origin of our paths go back thousands of years so slow progress is not no progress.

The biggest highlight of the year was the clearance of decades of unrestricted growth along the length of Black Lane from Charity Farm to Paul's Farm. Our thanks go to the volunteer group, the Friends of Flitch Way, who spent over 200 hours of skilled work making this ancient byway walk-able again. On behalf of us all, we thank you for allowing us to be able to savour this beautiful track. The good news is that they are keen to continue their efforts so you may see them at work elsewhere in the parish now that the weather is improving.

Unfortunately, further "efficiency savings" in the team supervising the contract for Public Rights of Way awarded to Ringway Jacobs by Essex CC has resulted in our having to build bridges with our new local officer. This has slowed progress on our wish to bid for funds to put in place drainage improvements on Black Lane near Charity Farm to make it passable during wet weather.

It is hoped in the coming year to be able to establish a local volunteer group so that the Parish Council can instigate further maintenance and improvements. Health and Safety requirements mean that we need a training slot before setting forth.

Nigel Hill



Clearance of Black Lane



Above: a pollarded oak

Below: Corn route



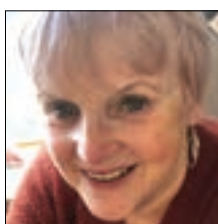
Great Bardfield Parish Council



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Vice Chairman
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Cllr Iain Graham
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Cllr Darren Hockley
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Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith
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Cllr Paul Kennedy
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Mrs Kate Fox
Parish Clerk
01371 810111
clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk
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Community Information Point

Town Hall Cottages
01371 810327
gbcip@btconnect.com

Open Thursday and Saturday 10 – 12 noon for information and advice. Dog-poo bags and clear recycling bags are available to residents of the parish free of charge.

