



# Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

April 2023



Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney  
Front cover: Celebratory Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee tea party  
Back cover: Sunset over Vine Meadow  
With grateful thanks to all who contributed photographs to these pages.



## **GREAT BARDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023**

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# Annual Parish Report 2023

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## Chairperson's introduction

Welcome to those attending the 2023 Parish Assembly to hear, first hand, the Parish Council's Annual Report to residents of Great Bardfield and to those reading this report in your own time. This report is our opportunity to give a summary of our activities over the last year. We thank all those clubs, societies and groups that have provided their own reports. These highlight the variety of community services and activities in this vibrant community and make this document a celebration of Great Bardfield and a valuable record.

I would also like to thank Kate Fox for liaising with all contributors and gathering in the various reports, and to Jenny Rooney for designing and editing the report. Thanks to all those that provided photos to enhance the report.

We have had to hold this meeting later than usual due to District and Parish Council elections. We are not permitted to hold our Parish Assembly in the run up to the elections. The term for Parish Councillors is four years and ends in May. As I write this report, in early April, we have just learnt that the Parish election will be uncontested and that 6 of the previous 7 candidates have been elected unopposed.

I can, however, announce that Simon Walsh, who has been a Parish Councillor for 24 years, and my Vice-Chair for the last four, has decided to retire and did not stand for re-election. I would like to thank him for many years' service to the Council with a particular focus on the environment and as our 'tree warden', giving advice to the Council on applications for tree works in the Conservation Area. Simon has agreed to continue to provide such advice – I asked him in the pub so he is committed now. During his time on the Parish Council, Simon has held terms as a District Councillor and a County Councillor, so it has been useful to have access to his knowledge and advice on our relationships and communications with both of these Councils. Thank you, Simon.

There is now a vacancy on the Parish Council, as we have seven seats, based on the population of the



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

village. Though we will be quorate, hence able to make decisions and continue with the business of the Parish Council, we have six months in which to co-opt another member.

We have two new District Councillors for the Three Fields ward, elected recently. We will continue to work closely with our District and County Councillors, representing Great Bardfield. Thanks go to County Councillor, Graham Butland, and to Peter Tattersley, who has now retired as a District Councillor and we wish him all the best for the future. Graham and Peter have attended many of our Parish Council meetings, listening to our gripes about potholes and poor bus services, responding positively to applications for grant funding, and keeping us up to date with District and County Council activities.

A fuller summary of the Parish Council activities will be provided by Simon, our previous Vice-Chair.



However I would just like to touch on some of the things that have kept us busy this year. It seems to have been a year of contentious applications and proposals that affect not just this village but the wider communities of the Pant Valley and Three Fields. They have certainly kept us busy:

- Progress on the Pavilion Project – thanks to the Working Party, including residents Andrew Taylor, John Maidman and Peter Walmsley.
- The proposal for 57 houses adjacent to Deer Park View, to which we objected, was turned down by Braintree District Council. However, we understand that an appeal is pending, so we will be opposing this once more over the coming months.
- We supported BDC and local residents in a planning enforcement issue at Black Gables, now awaiting a fresh planning application in accordance with the planning inspector's requirements.
- Councillor Paul Kennedy has been our main representative on the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee, with a focus on the proposal to build two prisons on the Airbase. No planning application has been submitted, and more recently the government have announced their intention to house asylum seekers at the Base. The Parish Council have supported BDC in opposing this as the location is remote, with poor infrastructure and public transport links. Should this proposal go ahead we hope that national government will provide sufficient financial support for BDC and other local councils to provide additional necessary services and to ensure that current local services will not be stretched even further for all residents. I am also hopeful that local communities will offer understanding and support to temporary residents at the Base.
- We have supported the proposal for a temporary crossing in Finchingfield, as and when any extended works on Finchingfield Bridge are undertaken. In addition, we supported the Historic Buildings Officer's requirements for ensuring protection to local listed buildings

during the works and for suitable materials as appropriate in this location.

- More recently we have seen the village up in arms over the proposal to site a 5G telecoms mast in the centre of the village and within the Conservation area. BDC have determined that, due to the sensitive location, this could not be erected under permitted development rights. We are waiting to hear if the applicant will appeal this decision, put in a full planning application, or consider other locations.
- The Neighbourhood Plan which we hope will be out for consultation with residents later this year.

Finally many thanks to the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Kate Fox for her commitment, expertise and support given to this Parish and the Council for many years. Our village 'handyman', Ian Ruffle, undertakes many maintenance jobs around the village, empties the litter bins and clears overgrown paths. Mick Gell looks after Memorial Green and we thank them both, together with other residents who give their time to make our community tidy and safe. Thanks to all those that decorated our village for the recent Coronation and helped with the Street Party. Hopefully a celebration to remember.

May I thank all of my fellow Parish Councillors for their contribution and support in all the activities that we, as a Parish Council, undertake.

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

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# Great Bardfield Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### 1. Chairperson's Introduction

The Chairperson welcomed members of the community, our District and County Councillors, Rev Alex Shannon and Headteacher, Alison Kerrell, to the first assembly held since 2019. She pointed out that we had still been able 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.

The Chairperson's introduction is published in the report in full but she reiterated her appreciation of all those that have contributed to this year's report and particularly to those that present them in person at the Parish Assembly. The Council were very pleased that Kate Fox, Parish Clerk, 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. This recognises good practice in governance, communication and achieving the standards of performance expected of a good council.

She thanked her fellow Parish Councillors for their contribution and support in all the activities that the Parish Council undertake. This includes, but is not limited to, the

progression of our pavilion project; improving the footpath network; keeping our streets clean and our street lights working, and of course commenting on planning applications within the Parish. Pressure is maintained 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. It remains important to protect the benefits of living in this caring, vibrant community, to look after its history and environment and work to make improvements to it for our residents. She reminded those present that Parish Councillors are volunteers and give much of their time to this community. The current term expires next year and Parish Council elections will be held in May 2023. She invited 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 they do.

The Chairperson thanked our District and County Councillors, Cllrs Peter Tattersley and Graham Butland, for their support over the last year, attending most of our Parish Council meetings, providing updates and advice, and taking up some concerns on our behalf. Their reports appear in the Annual Report.

In the last year the parish have welcomed the new vicar at St Mary's, Alex Shannon, who has the unenviable task of leading the ministry of the Pant Valley Churches. She also wished 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.

Thanks go to many other members of this





community for providing assistance and care for the village; to the governors who support and manage our village school, our volunteer group that continues to deliver medication to those unable to collect it themselves and to all those who get involved in village activities and societies which help provide assistance for others. She welcomed the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance whose representative would provide an insight into their work. in person. As many of you know, the Air Ambulance has provided much-needed help to residents of this village in the past and we as a Parish Council also support them financially.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish Council and community of Great Bardfield, she wished to congratulate Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth on her long reign in this her Platinum Jubilee year. A number of activities are planned in the village to mark this occasion. The footbridge adjacent to the main bridge over the River Pant, originally installed in her Silver Jubilee year in 1977, will have a plaque installed to mark its recent repair in her Platinum Jubilee year.

## **2. Apologies**

These were received from Cllrs Walsh and Hockley.

## **3. Guest speaker**

A presentation by Mr Roger Smith on a *Day in the Life of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance*. Mr Smith highlighted details of the working pattern of the crew and how originally there was one pilot and one paramedic but now there was a crew of two pilots, one doctor and one paramedic, with Essex and Herts now a combined force running a helicopter from both North Weald and Earls Colne. The role of the service is to attend critically sick and injured people and get them to an appropriate hospital in the quickest time. This is particularly vital in rural areas when road access can be more challenging. Mr Smith explained how vital donations are as the cost of running the service, £9m a year, not counting the salaries of paramedics which are covered by government funding. The Chairperson thanked Roger for a very informative talk and he was happy to stay take further questions at the end of the meeting.

## **4. Parish Council Review 2021-22**

After two years of Covid regulations, the Parish Council is gradually returning to 'business as usual'

and has resumed formal meetings back at the Town Hall. Throughout the restricted period, the Council 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 Weathersfield Prisons development, and the planning sub-committee.

The Covid period demonstrated the strength of our local community in supporting others, with a robust volunteer network continuing to collect and deliver prescriptions and do regular shopping for those still isolating. Many quietly look out for the wellbeing of a neighbour ensuring all is well and they are not feeling lonely. The war in Ukraine 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 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 itself 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.

The Council is involved in wide-ranging issues and has 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 of two members from each parish, and we are represented there. Many of our residents have already expressed their concerns and these will be reflected in any representations should the application occur.

Another area where significant progress has been made is the Pavillion 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 the process along and get matters settled without the usual delays brought about by having monthly meetings.

It is hoped 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 the North Essex Parking Partnership have been asked 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.

Open spaces, including Pipers Meadow, the Quiet Space and the village greens continue to be well used. Thanks go to Dr Doug Joyce for his continued advice on the management of these areas and to Ian Ruffle, our village handyman, for keeping trees watered and the 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! Thanks go to the team who ensure it is kept open and staffed and 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.

#### **4. Parish Council Financial Review 2021-22**

The report highlighted key items of income and expenditure for the year although further details are contained in the Minutes available to view on the Parish Council website: [www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk](http://www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk).



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, but we 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. 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.

In this and the coming financial year the biggest expenditure is the ongoing cost of 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.

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 and Town Hall grant, CIP rent and British Telecom, £3,584.

The external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's finances and the reserves held for special projects. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor. These are published on the Parish Council website.

#### **6. District Council Report:**

Cllr Tattersley referred to his full published report and only wished to add that COVID figures were still high although cases appeared less serious. He praised the volunteers and community groups who had come together to support those in need and said this was very evident in Great Bardfield. Looking to the future, BDC's plans include supporting affordable housing schemes, raising income to reduce Council Tax by investing in offices and business units and contributing towards highway improvements which might otherwise not happen. The Council

were continuing to provide funding for the Councillor Community Grant Scheme which had been supporting community organisations since 2016. He was pleased to note that a 2021 customer satisfaction survey showed 89% of residents were satisfied with Braintree District as a place to live and 80% were satisfied with the way BDC ran things.

#### **7. County Council Report**

Cllr Butland highlighted some key points in his published report. For the coming year the County Council's budget would be £1,083 billion and by far the largest area of expenditure of £470 million, is on Adult Social Care which covers just 70,000 residents. This is 43% of the budget and means the remaining 57% has to be split across all the other areas, including children's services, highways, and waste.

#### **8. Town Hall Report**

The Chairman, John Maidman, referenced the difficult year in regard to COVID but, with the help of grants from Braintree District and Essex County Council, they managed to keep going financially until the Town Hall could once again be hired. Since then it has been in frequent use with village organisations and other events – the first fundraising event was the Boules BBQ in October followed by a band night to mark the official opening and a welcome return of the quiz night. During the summer, refurbishment started on the CIP, store room and cottage and most recently the Community Fridge was installed.

#### **9. Charities Report and Accounts**

Pat Coles, Nominative Trustee and Chair, gave an overview of the work of the Charities. The published report contained further details together





with examples of grants made in the last year which included fuel payments, help with social needs, and applications from students. She asked those present to spread the word as all applications would be given consideration. The Charities income over the 21/22 financial year was £21,793.06 (including bank interest) and expenditure was £21,269.80. Pat concluded by thanking her fellow Trustees and in particular Brenda Poston, who had recently stood down as secretary, after her long-term commitment.

#### **10. *Bardfield Times***

The editor, Janet Dyson, began by thanking the previous editor, David Yates for the superb job he had done and how much he was missed since his move with his wife Joyce, to Saffron Walden. She spoke of the work of the *Bardfield Times* team including the invaluable distributors and of course the contributors without whom there would not be such interesting articles. She paid tribute to Michael Hitchcock who for many years had contributed enjoyable articles about his life in the village and had sadly died on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **11. Great Bardfield Primary School**

The Headteacher, Alison Kerrell, was in attendance to present her report, which is a significant part of the Annual Report. She highlighted some of the various activities and events that had taken place, despite the negative impact of the pandemic. The children had undertaken several trips including Legoland, bowling and the cinema. The children had continued their charity events for Macmillan and Smile Boxes for Ukraine. She was proud of all that had been achieved with the support of hardworking staff and Governors.

The school had a surprise visit from Ofsted this term (following the last inspection in 2017 when they were graded Good) and she was pleased to say that they had an equally good report.

Sadly, this would be her last report as she has taken up a new post to begin in September 2022, but said how fortunate she was to have spent eight happy years in Great Bardfield and to have worked with amazing children. The Chairperson wished to express the appreciation of the Parish Council for the contribution made by Mrs Kerrell with best wishes for her future.

#### **12. Pavilion Project**

Cllr Graham explained how the project had finally come to fruition with a special committee of parish councillors working with members of the community. The support of Andrew Taylor and John Maidman has been invaluable as they brought expertise and many hours of volunteer work. He was pleased to confirm that the build would start in May with completion by the autumn. Architect's drawings and plans were available to view at the end of the meeting when he was happy to take any questions. The Parish Council have earmarked funds over some years and added to these would be Section 106 funds held on our behalf by BDC. However, he added that to ensure the build could be completed to the highest standards support from the community would be helpful and donations, both financial and physical were welcome.

#### **13. Closing Remarks**

The Chairperson thanked the District and County members for attending and all those who presented their individual reports. She added how gratifying it was to see such good attendance from the community and hoped they felt better informed and encouraged them to read the Annual Report in their own time.

**Kate Fox**  
**Parish Clerk**

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## Parish Council review 2022-2023

The Parish Council usually meets monthly, except for August due to various holiday commitments of its members. In addition, a further meeting was cancelled due to the sad passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. However, in August a small group met to formally sign off any outstanding financial matters that had arisen during that time.

As with most years we have been busy assessing and commenting on various planning matters acting as a consultee as they are referred to us for comment by Braintree District Council, which is the planning authority that ultimately decides on these matters.

We had nineteen applications to review, mostly small-scale extensions or works within the historical conservation area. The one exception to this was the proposal for further housing to be built adjacent to Deer Park View; in addition some twenty-two applications for tree works, mostly maintenance of over growing or cutting back shading trees were assessed by the Tree Warden.

Modern technology has also made its presence known, with a proposal to site a 5G telephone pole in the centre of the village close to the school. A record 400 objections have already been lodged against this intrusive telecommunications equipment.

The Parish Council has been closely involved with neighbouring parishes in respect of any proposals regarding the former Wethersfield Airfield, which at the time of writing remain undecided.

The Parish Council comprises



*Over 200 letters of protest against 5g mast delivered to Braintree District Council*

people of this parish who all serve in a voluntary capacity. In addition, it employs two people: the Clerk, Mrs Kate Fox and the Village Handyman, Mr Ian Ruffle who ensures that bins are emptied and the environs are generally kept in good order. The thanks of the Parish Council are extended to these two hard-working individuals.

For many years, indeed all the years I can recall over the time I have served as a Parish Councillor, there was a wish to have a new Pavilion at the recreation ground. It seems at last the planets have aligned, providing an acceptable plan and appropriate funding for this all to go ahead. We were fortunate to have the help of two residents who are familiar with these matters, bringing together the necessary skills to help bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion, and the new building is now in place.

Highways matters always provide plenty of challenges, from parking congestion to speeding motorcycles and cars. The village greens have in recent months suffered from large vehicles overrunning and damaging the grass leaving ruts which are difficult to repair, more consideration to these important green spaces would be appreciated. The Quiet Space and



*New pavilion nearly complete*



*Rear of new pavilion*

Pipers Meadow continue to be carefully managed under the helpful guidance of Dr Doug Joyce who advises on how best to ensure rare species such as the Bardfield Oxlip can be encouraged to thrive in our locality.

The bridge was closed for several weeks for new brickwork to replace the ones damaged due to salt corrosion. On a positive note, the pedestrian bridge crossing the river has had new woodwork installed by the County Council, and we were pleased to use the opportunity to install a further plaque to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

We were happy to support other parishes in a '20's Plenty' campaign and certainly would be keen to see a reduced speed limit in the vicinity of the school.

The village is fortunate to have a regular bus service, but a gap in provision is a direct link to Great Dunmow, so the Parish Council is seeing if such a route could be provided.

This year is an election year for many local councils, including the Parish Council. So I sign off by saying thank you to our present members and look forward to seeing the new council later in May.

**Simon Walsh**  
**Vice-Chairman, Great Bardfield**  
**Parish Council**





## Pavilion update



*The early days of construction*



*Work starts on the interior*

For those new to the village, the creation of a bespoke pavilion on the recreation ground near the children's play area has been many years in the making. After many set-backs it is finally coming to fruition and will provide much-needed facilities for the football club and any other village groups needing a small meeting room or venue for a child's party etc.

Anyone walking past the site might be forgiven for thinking that work had come to a premature halt. I'm glad to report nothing could be further from the truth. To explain where we are, there are three main cornerstones to the construction that will underpin the new pavilion facility for today and for the future. These are:

- The foul water drainage connection to the mains sewer is now completed
- The new building, its foundations and surrounding paths are 85% complete
- The new electrical supply is on order from National Power and we are waiting for a commencement date for this work.

The insulation is now completed internally to the external walls and the floor and all the sanitary units and shower units have been ordered. Additionally, the internal walls and doors are now fitted.

By the time you read this, our main contractor will be back on site and working on the construction of a full-width wooden balcony to the front of the building, a concrete ramp and a handrail to the front door to provide full step-free access for anybody who

requires it. Along with this, he will lay a hard composite pathway to all four sides of the structure.

Once we have in place the new electrical supply, we will be fitting new electrically-operated security shutters to all doors and windows and we can go ahead and commence the demolition of the old pavilion, and bid it a fond farewell, which will make space for an additional car parking area.

In conclusion, sometimes it seems to take a long time to progress, but when we look at where we are and what we have achieved, we are very pleased to confirm that all this has been achieved despite rising costs, whilst remaining within our budget.

The Parish Council and the working party could not have got this far without the expert help and guidance of three people, Andrew Taylor, John Maidman and Peter Walmsley, all ably supported by our Parish Clerk, Kate Fox.

**Iain Graham**  
**On behalf of the PC and the**  
**Pavilion Working Party**



# Parish Council financial review

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

This brief report highlights 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](http://www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk).

**Parish Income:** The annual Precept is usually the most significant part of our income which in the 22/23 financial year was £46,000.

However, in May 2022 the Parish Council were able to begin the long-awaited new pavilion project and, in addition to the money set aside for the project, funding was secured through a S106 Agreement with the District Council. This fund has accumulated over the years by contributions from developers when they build new properties. In the case of Great Bardfield these include Deer Park View, Bushett Rise, Castle Shot and Smith's Yard. At the time of this report, £81,000 has been received from this source.

**Parish Expenditure:** The Parish Council is responsible for key services and although costs always increase year-on-year, the previous 12 months have seen significant rises, for everyone. Apart from the pavilion project other significant expenses were:

- Street Lighting: £4,577
- Grass Cutting and Open Spaces: £5,497

- Town Hall Grant, CIP Rent and BT: £5,175
- Insurance: £2,275

**Precept:** For the 2023/24 year the Parish Council has managed to hold the figure at 3.1% (22/23 3.5%) which was enabled by an increase in the tax base figure calculated by Braintree District Council, thus the parish could precept for a higher figure without an increased burden on the residents.

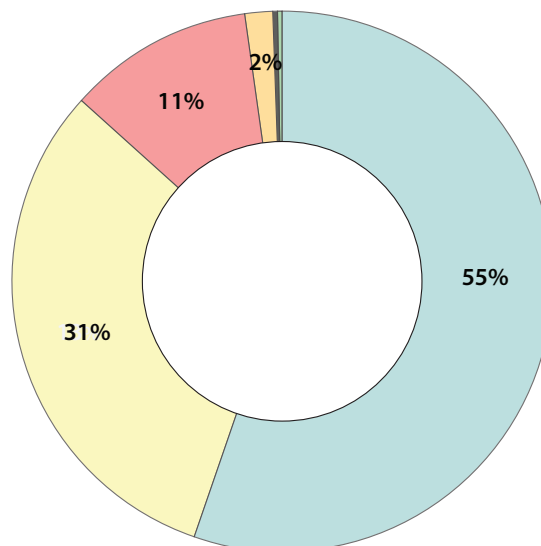
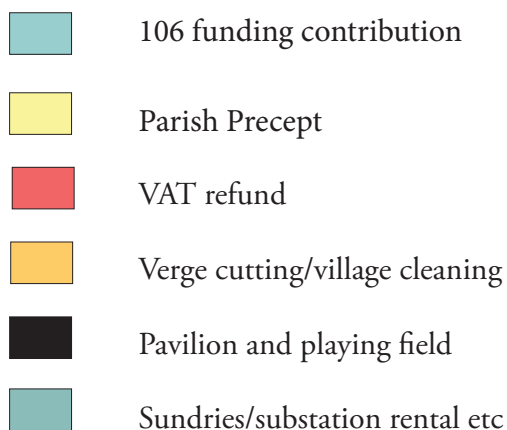
**Overview:** Annual Accounts – the external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's financial reporting and the reserves held for special projects. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor and published on the Parish Council's website at [www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk](http://www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk).

**Kate Fox**  
**Parish Clerk and**  
**Responsible Financial Officer**



# Parish income

For the financial year ended 31.3.23



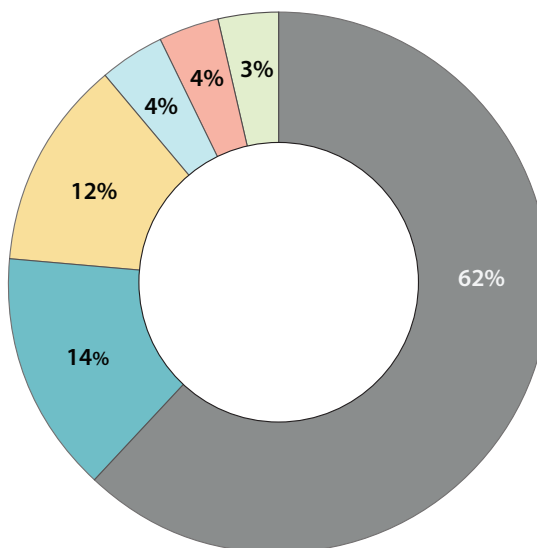
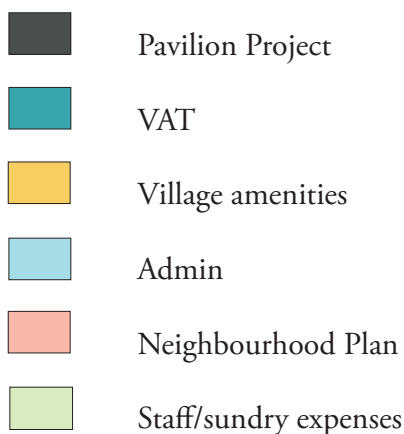
106 funding contribution	£81,711.00
Parish Precept	£46,000.00
VAT refund Apr–Sept 22	£16,200.00
Verge cutting/village cleaning	£2,452.00
Pavilion and playing field	£275.00
Sundries/training bursary/substation rental	£212.00
Bank interest	£69.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£146,919.00</b>
<b>Bank account balances as at 31.3.23</b>	
Pavilion project fund (inc. 106 reimbursement):	£84,310.00
Business reserves account:	£31,636.00
Special projects account:	£9,794.00
Current account:	£149.00





# Parish expenditure

For the financial year ended 31.3.23



<b>Capital schemes</b>	
Pavilion Project: Inc. foundations, pavilion building, foul water drainage system, cladding, sanitary ware	£87,856.00
<b>VAT</b>	£20,486.00
<b>Village amenities</b>	
Grass cutting, Memorial green, open spaces	£5,497.00
Public lighting – supply and maintenance	£4,577.00
Town Hall – grant and substation rental	£3,698.00
Verge cutting/street cleaning (agency arrangements)	£2,326.00
CIP: Town Hall rent/IT and British Telecom	£1,477.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,575.00</b>
<b>Admin</b>	
General admin, telephone, audit fees, tax, insurance, stationery, Annual Parish Report, subscriptions, donations	£5,820.00
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	£5,079.00
<b>Staff/sundry expenses</b>	
Salary, website, training, defibrillator, zoom, copier, dog bags	£4,786.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£141,602.00</b>



## Braintree District Council



*Councillor Peter Tattersley*

This will be my last report after 12 years as your Braintree District Councillor.

The role, as well as enjoyable, can be quite challenging. There are a number of residents who have genuine concerns and various opinions and viewpoints over developments and activities in the area, and who look to their elected members to represent their views.

However, there are also various self-interest and lobbying groups who have been particularly disappointed with my approach to some major infrastructure proposals and feel that I could have done more to represent their views.

My approach has always been to avoid giving my personal opinion until after formal proposals have been received by the Council.

Once the actual proposals, rather than conjecture and rumour are received, they will be reviewed

by officers who will carry out the necessary consultative and investigative processes, including those from myself, local individuals, statutory organisations and communities, before they make recommendations to the democratically-elected Planning Committee and Council for a decision. I continue to believe that is the correct and sensible approach.

Whatever other comments I receive from constituents, I have always aimed to respond to all telephone calls and emails promptly and accurately, and point them to the appropriate organisation if it is not the direct responsibility of the District Council, and help whenever I can. I have done my best to keep Parish Councils, through their clerks, aware of events, activities, and opportunities and help guide them through the various District Council procedures and direct them to key officers they might otherwise not know about.

It is tempting to look back over the past few years and consign to memory some of the difficulties we all faced during the Covid pandemic and its aftermath. Queuing outside supermarkets, closed schools, workplaces, pubs and restaurants, travel restrictions, inability to meet family and friends, lost loved ones, health worries, vaccine availability, face masks, cancelled holidays, closed football grounds and swimming pools, restricted leisure activities, and many others.

I remain proud of my district and parish councillor colleagues, council officers and communities across



the district who pulled together to recognise the problems and health issues faced by all residents and helped organise vaccines, made Covid testing kits available across the district, arranged food and prescription deliveries, provided emotional support and looked after the most vulnerable.

Officers at the Council distributed many millions of pounds of grant aid to support struggling businesses. These and many other activities created many unsung and uncredited heroes and we should all be grateful for their efforts and dedication. Even now there are still residents cautious about leaving their homes and some who still need support.

A Braintree District Council report to the Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> March (on the BDC website) gives an update:

- The progress and achievements from the 2019-2023 Livewell Strategy, including Start Well, Stay Well, Feel Well, Eat Well, Be Well and Age Well.

- A summary report on the Council's Covid response, 2020-2023.
- An update on the response from residents on the cost of living issues.
- Details of the development of the next Livewell Strategy during 2023.

I wish continued success to all the communities in the Three Fields Ward and to the appropriate elected representatives who succeed me in representing the whole of the Ward, and to communities across the Braintree District, on the Braintree District Council.

**Cllr Peter Tattersley**  
**Three Fields Ward**  
**Braintree District Council**

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## Essex County Council



*County Councillor Graham Butland*

I have pleasure in submitting my Annual Report to the residents of Great Bardfield on the work that Essex County Council (ECC) has carried out during the year.

In May 2021 I was appointed as the ECC Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage & Culture.

During 2022 we launched the Essex County Council Arts and Cultural fund to provide funding to help organisations and practitioners deliver a broad and exciting range of work and activity to engage with and bring residents together.

The arts, cultural and creative projects supported by the Essex County Council Arts and Cultural Fund, will contribute to the Levelling Up Essex Strategy and play an integral part in enabling the objectives of Essex

County Council's wider objectives as set out in Everyone's Essex.

Of the 47 successful projects that received funding many are designed to support economic regeneration, help alleviate mental and physical health issues, and highlight the importance of climate change action to the county's residents.

ECC has published its budget for the 2023/24 financial year. In it, we have outlined how we propose to spend the £2bn we are responsible for. This includes investment in the key areas that will benefit all residents. It also includes how we will continue to look after the county's most vulnerable people.

We are putting an extra £68million into services next year. Amongst other areas, next year, we are planning to spend:

- £506million on adult social care – £58m more than last year
- £275million on major infrastructure projects, such as new schools and road improvements
- £200million on achieving our net zero targets
- £7.5million to deliver 340 new mainstream school places ahead of next September

We will expand our roll-out of new community supermarkets to help people with the cost of living. We will also continue to invest in highways





and footway maintenance and repairs. Our support for businesses will continue through the Backing Essex Business programme. This will help to encourage business growth across the county.

While we are continuing to invest in key areas, council finances are under pressure across the country. Inflation, rises in energy prices and interest rates, as well as increased demand have added £74m more to our costs this year.

Balancing this with the need to limit the impact on household budgets, means a proposed Council Tax increase of 3.5% Council Tax increase, plus a further 2% ring-fenced to Adult Social Care. For an average Band D property household, the ECC element of Council Tax will increase by £49.05 next year, or 94p per week.

During the year I have dealt with a number of issues raised by local residents and the Great Bardfield



Parish Council. These have included the inevitable potholes, planning issues, the proposed 5G Mast and a number of individual issues raised by residents.

If you have a matter that you wish to raise please do not hesitate to contact me at [cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk).

**County Councillor  
Graham Butland  
Member for Three Fields with  
Great Notley County Division**

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## Great Bardfield allotments

After the relative excitement of winter last year, with animal-proof fencing being installed, the last twelve months have been quieter in the allotments.

So saying, all the plots are taken, many with new tenants. We were sorry to say goodbye to Maureen and Jim Dale from our group, since they were one of the original plot holders when it all got underway in the Spring of 2010.

We suffered, as most gardeners did, from last year's summer drought, some of the fruit trees even suffered from sunburn! But necessary watering allowed us to sustain and eventually harvest our crops, even if both quantity and quality were down on previous years.

Two challenges confront us. The garden shed, housing useful tools, is looking the worse for wear and consideration will have to be given to replacing

it. But with the rising price of wood today, this may well prove to be a costly venture.

We have been experimenting with communal composting bins and this will continue into 2023; the jury is still very much out currently but, judging by the number of smart plastic bins appearing on individual sites, the portents look somewhat doubtful.

These issues aside, we look forward as always, to the growing season ahead and an enjoyable and profitable spring and summer.

**Jonathan Davies**

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## Bardfield Cinema Club

Our 14<sup>th</sup> season started in October 2022 and continues to thrive despite the lasting legacy of Covid affecting our membership numbers.

Despite this, we regularly average between 30 – 40 cinema-goers per film, and to date have not increased membership or guest entrance prices. However, rising costs of refreshments and minor (other) expenses will have to be met before our next season commences.

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, and Paul Boon who brings advances in technology to our equipment as necessary.

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 notification of these in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Bardfield Community Facebook page and posters in the village.

**Ray Coles**

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## Town Hall report



*Bardfield Brass and the Community Choir carolling around the tree*

Following two years of reduced activity due to Covid restrictions the Town Hall has bounced back into activity and is well and truly open for business.

Village activities have returned, with the exception of Carpet Bowls who have struggled to retain their membership. They took a six-month break over the winter but are hoping to return on Wednesday afternoons. We are delighted to welcome a new village activity. Ryan French has started up a Badminton Club on Wednesday evenings.

We have had several fundraising events over the last year and the total amount made from these events was £3,038.64. These included our Annual Art Show, Quiz Night and Boule Competition. Also, a Band Night to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee helped by the Parish Council from

whom we received a Jubilee Grant of £250. A Craft Show was held for the first time as a standalone event in October, and we hope to make this an annual event.

We were pleased to host the Bardfield Primary School children in December to see a production of Dick Whittington performed by a travelling theatre company. Recently Bardfield Players have performed *Dirty Dusting* their first production since Covid.

Once again, this year we had a wonderful Christmas Tree outside the Town Hall and are extremely grateful to have received donations from the *Bardfield Times*, Bardfield Charities and the Parish Council. Bardfield Community Choir sang Christmas Carols around the tree on what was an extremely cold and icy night but mince pies and mulled wine were served to warm everyone up. Let's hope that this year we can hold the Christmas concert in the Hall!

During the year we have continued undertaking a number of major refurbishment projects: the exterior of the CIP, Store Room, Bawden Room and Caretaker's Cottage was painted in beautiful pastel colours; the CIP has been restored and painted after many years of damp and neglect, and a new bathroom was installed in the Caretaker's cottage. We have also replaced the fixed stage lights with low energy bulbs.

The Community Fridge which was opened in December 2021, continues to be a great success. Thank you to the Co-op for continuing to provide the food for the Fridge and to Sarah (our caretaker) for managing it on a thrice weekly basis.

It is wonderful to see the Town Hall coming to life again after the last few difficult years following the pandemic. This would not be possible without the support by members of the Town Hall Committee whom we thank.

**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 2022 to April 2023, and to welcome to the Body of Trustees Rev. Alex Shannon (Ex-Officio trustee) and Nick Holland (Co-opted trustee and secretary).

During the last year we have held four quarterly meetings where we considered all applications for grants received from our community, and two extraordinary meetings, related to Trustee appointments and the future management of the Cottage Museum.

We try to ensure that there is an awareness of the Great Bardfield Charities throughout the community. We display posters on the village notice boards and in the Community Information Point, and details of the Charity are included in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Parish Council website, and on the Great Bardfield Charities Facebook page. However, 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.

Our quarterly meeting dates (February, June, September and December) can be found in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Bardfield Online Community Facebook page the month before the quarterly meeting takes place. **In situations of urgency, 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.

Examples of grants made in the last year include:

- Contributions for fuel payments for villagers receiving state pensions and disability benefits.
- Social Needs
- Provision of disability equipment
- Hospital travel and parking expenses
- 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, clubs and societies

**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 bene-





factors 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 2022 – March 2023 are outlined as follows:

Income including bank interest:	£22,137.85
Total expenditure:	£22,693.39

*(NB. The imbalance in these figures is relational to the quarterly income starting in May of each financial year. Figures are unaudited at time of writing this report).*

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 continuing 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:**

**Reverend Alex Shannon – Ex-Officio Trustee**

**Pat Coles – Nominative Trustee and Chair**

Linseys, Bridge Street, Gt Bardfield 01371 810995

**Debbie Rogers – Co-opted Trustee/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

**Nick Holland - Co-opted Trustee and Secretary**

33, Bendlowes Road, Great Bardfield 01371 810209



# The Bardfield Times

A sure sign that the village is coming back to life after Covid is the flood of articles, photos and announcements for the *BT*. It is these contributions which provide variety and interest.

Thanks to our Layout Designer Joe Jones who puts the magazine together so skillfully, to Kate Fox who manages the advertising, ensuring an income sufficient to keep the magazine going and allow us to make donations to village organisations; to Ray Coles and Paul Euesdon who manage the distribution, to Jackie Newton our Treasurer, and of course to the team of people who deliver the magazine to every house in Great and Little Bardfield in all weathers – that's 800 copies! Village magazines play an important role. A post on social media is momentary, here today and gone tomorrow, or even sooner! I know many people keep their copies of the *BT* and there is a complete archive in the CIP dating back to the 1970s. Future researchers of village life will find village magazines a treasure trove of social history of the life of rural communities.

We welcome contributions of all kinds – letters, articles, photographs. A reminder that any photographs should have the permission of the subjects and of parents in the case of children. We also welcome more volunteers to help with delivery of the magazine – contact Ray Coles [distribution@bardfieldtimes.com](mailto:distribution@bardfieldtimes.com).

**Janet Dyson**  
Editor

The Bardfield Times		
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023		
	2022–2023	2021–2022
<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>£-2,846.01</b>	<b>£1,767.37</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Advertising	7,994.50	6,866.50
Subs/Sales	68.10	57.52
Fundraising/Cinema	2,081.50	1,053.20
	<b>£10,144.10</b>	<b>£7,977.22</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Printing	10,005.00	8,400.00
Stationery	104.90	22.85
Postage	199.45	169.08
Siteground Sub	362.45	14.34
Cinema	1,561.96	896.96
Donations*	200.00	1,320.00
	<b>£12,433.76</b>	<b>£10,823.23</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£-2,289.66</b>	<b>£-2,846.01</b>

## \*Donations

Town Hall Christmas Tree,  
Air Ambulance

Current A/c: £4,275.87  
Savings A/c: £3,050.61  
Cash in hand: £ 50.00

**Jackie Newton**  
**Honorary Treasurer**



## Bardfield Community Choir



*The Community Choir at St Katharine's Church*



*Rev'd Alex and Helen Shannon duetting*

It has been a delight to get back to singing and performing after the restrictions of Covid. We have welcomed several new members and are back to full strength with over 40 members.

This year the Choir has sung at weddings, church events, funerals and memorial services. We were saddened at the loss of one of our founder members Anne Arthur and performed some of her favourite music at her memorial service. On one of the hottest days of the summer we took part with other musicians in the Music in the Garden event held at Whinbush Farm, Walthams Cross, home of Julia and Andrew Collins.

At Christmas, Jim Bray drove us around the snowy village on his tractor and trailer and, accompanied by Bardfield Brass, we serenaded the residents of Deer Park View and Bendlowes Road with Christmas carols and songs, ending up with more carols and mulled wine around the Christmas tree outside the Town Hall.

During the Spring Term we worked hard to prepare a programme for our first proper concert for several years, a programme of songs, readings and solo items in Little Bardfield Church, ranging from Handel to Abba. It was a joyous occasion with a good audience on a sunny April evening. The choir performed magnificently after the forced hiatus of Covid and did themselves enormous credit.

At the special service held in Great Bardfield Church to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III we were proud to sing Handel's Anthem *Zadok the Priest* which was performed by the Choir of Westminster Abbey the day before.

As Musical Director I am immensely grateful to our brilliant accompanist Avril Nelson, to Jackie Newton who manages our funds and to Marilyn Edwards who has stepped in to help when I have been unavailable. Singing is life-affirming and a very sociable activity. New members are welcome, you do not need to be able to read music. We rehearse every Tuesday from 8 – 9.15pm in Bardfield Town Hall and members pay £2 per week towards cost of music and hall hire.

If you are interested in joining the choir please contact me on [drjanetdyson@gmail.com](mailto:drjanetdyson@gmail.com).

**Janet Dyson**  
**Musical Director**









## Great Bardfield in Pictures

*Top Row: Village boules tournament final, Bellringers' Jubilee window display, 5g mast protest, Next row: Remembrance Sunday, Lola Fox outside Place House's Jubilee display, the popular bottle stall at St Mary's Church fete. Next row: Elite cycle race through village, Heartsong performing at Music in the Garden, village jumble sale. Bottom row: Annual charity tractor rally, Carolynne Ruffle placing wreath in memory of Elizabeth II, planting of Jubilee oak at St Mary's, Luke Bishop doing the village empty bottle run.*







## Bardfield Horticultural Society

Another year has gone by and our society is still going strong thanks to a superb, enthusiastic, hard-working committee and others who are always ready to help out when needed.

Our Spring Show saw many entries and was a great success. Floral arrangements in fresh lemons were most unusual and very colourful. As usual we had good support from Bardfield School which is very much appreciated.

We had garden visits to Easton Lodge and we had a coach trip to Hyde Hall which we shared with the Tuesday Club. The sun shone for us all day. If you have never been to this garden, it is well worth a visit and on our doorstep too.

Our Jubilee Tea was a very special occasion and enjoyed by everyone. The prosecco flowed freely and the food and ambience were superb. An event to be remembered hopefully for many years.

We were worried about the entries for our summer show as the drought

had had a devastating effect on our gardens; however no need to worry as our supporters came up trumps on the day and the show was a riot of colour. One judge commented it was the best show he had attended this year! Many trophies and cups were handed out, engraved and ready to be displayed on shelves for another year

Our president Peter Morris gave his award this time to Dawn Willett who has been involved with our society for many years and it was very well deserved.

Sadly, we lost a very valued member of our committee, Pip Chapman, in August. He was our raffle king and also a keen exhibitor in our shows. He is very much missed by us all.

Our Harvest supper was also well attended. We were entertained by a local magician Jack, who was kept busy going around the tables sharing his tricks with us all. The food as always was five-star standard!

We were in for a real treat in October at our AGM when Barbara

*Children's  
floral  
artwork  
and  
decorated  
Jubilee  
crowns*





*BHS  
Spring  
show (1)  
and  
Summer  
Show 2022*



*Visits to  
Easton  
Lodge (1)  
and Hyde  
Hall*

Segal showed us many lovely slides of the Gardens of East Anglia which can be visited easily from here. We enjoyed cheese, biscuits and wine prepared and served by members of our committee. We welcomed our new treasurer Helen into the fold and she has already been a great asset to us. Good things are worth waiting for!!

If you are interested in becoming involved with us at any of our events please don't hesitate to get in touch. We always appreciate new ideas and realise we sometimes need to make changes to keep our thriving society alive.

**Linda Prior  
Chairman  
Bardfield Horticultural Society**



*Dawn  
Willett  
receiving  
the  
President's  
Award*





## Plantings at Long Green



*Coney/Long Green plantings maturing nicely*

A short time after the Oxlip Recovery Programme was officially revealed to the public, work began on restoring trees, shrubs and wild flowers to the corridor of land running part way along the length of Coney/Long Green. Supported by the Parish Council, the objective of the plantings was to improve the general appearance of the byway to the benefit of the community.

On a rather derelict area of land on Coney Green, a short distance from the main Bardfield to Braintree road, just over 100 trees and shrubs were planted in the spring of 2010 along with cowslips grown from seed collected from nearby. Further along the byway leading into Long Green locally sourced seeds of the English bluebell, were sown over several seasons and at various locations amongst the trees bordering the roadway. Alas, the bluebells have proved to develop very slowly from seed, not helped by the dry, hard soil conditions beneath the trees, but flowers can be found in late April, albeit still rather sparsely.

Like the Oxlip Recovery Project, this plan to improve a locally amenity is now largely completed. But unlike the ongoing pasture management needed to preserve Piper's meadow, Coney/Long Green can be left to nature to take care of itself. Trees are the final stage in ecological evolution in our context, and

as such will continue to flourish with a minimal amount of intervention. The fencing put up to discourage people and animals from damaging the young trees is becoming increasingly redundant as annual growth expands and thickens trunks and branches with maturity. And aside from controlling brambles that ingress from the verges bordering the site most "weedy interlopers" are suppressed by the canopy of trees above and their roots below. Some unwelcome issues arising from careless dumping and fly-tipping have been experienced, and these problems can never be completely disregarded: but damage arising from off-road vehicles driving through and over young trees and shrubs is now considerably less important than it was in the start of the project.

In summary, over the past twelve years or more, the trees and shrubs within the Coney Green "mini-arboretum" might be best described as "maturing-adolescents"... and as a reminder for anyone wishing to know more, below is a list of those species originally planted, all of which have prospered:

Wild cherry	Spindle
Walnut	Field maple
English alder	Hazel
Hornbeam	Guelder rose
Whitebeam	Oak
Silver birch	Sweet chestnut

**D W Joyce**





## The Oxlip Recovery Project

The Oxlip Recovery Programme is now more than 20 years on from its inception following a meeting and tour of the village with Ray Tabor, the then Chairman of the Essex Wildlife Trust. The original objective of restoring the Bardfield Oxlip back into the centre of village where it was unequivocally identified almost two hundred years ago has been fulfilled, and the pendant yellow bells of flowers can be enjoyed by all during the month of April; in appearance much like Cowslips, but genetically distinct and a little more “refined” and paler in colour than their near cousins. The plants themselves are slow to spread from seed but being long-lived they increase steadily in size and each year the display of colour improves.

It would be foolish to believe that the job is complete, however, and that nature can be left to its own devices without the need for management and the intervention of man. A permanent pasture such as represented in Piper’s Meadow would soon revert to scrub, and ultimately woodland, if simply left alone. This can already be observed since the large willow trees adjacent to river were cut down a few years back: sapling willows, possibly derived from hidden underground roots, are already appearing over much of the site and could quickly take over if left unchecked. Perhaps the simplest means of controlling this unwanted natural progression is to manage the meadow in a traditional manner, albeit without the help from domestic livestock. Essentially, all of the summer herbage should be cut down and removed in the manner of a late hay-cut towards the end of August or early September, thereby reducing the overall fertility of the meadow. This process steadily slows the competitive growth of the more vigorous grasses and herbs and allows for a greater diversity of native plants to establish, including the oxlip. Thus far the removal of such herbage has not been practised and fertility has increased in time rather than the reverse. Attempts have been made to introduce yellow rattle, *Rhinanthus minor*, into the meadow (a



*The Bardfield Oxlip*

native plant which is parasitic on grasses) in an attempt to reduce the grass sward. But so far this has largely failed possibly due to the inherent high fertility of the site as also indicated by the abundance of nettles as well as coarse grasses.

However, the now established trees which were planted close to the river have survived despite our recent dry summers. The additional “whips” which replaced trees lost from the original plantings made in March 2019, have also survived thanks to regular summer watering during their crucial period of establishment, and one year more of close monitoring should see them able to prosper unaided. The clearance of grasses and weed growth from around the bases of the trees has also helped to maintain growth and development, but such management will be needed to be continued for a while longer. In many ways the Oxlip Recovery Programme has met all the objectives originally set and the new challenge is to focus



*Common  
blue  
damselfly  
sunning  
itself*



*Bumblebee  
feeding on  
knapweed*



*The aptly  
named  
hogweed  
bonking  
beetle  
(Rhago-  
nycha  
fulva)*



*Small  
skipper  
feeding on  
knapweed*



rather more towards developing and maintaining a healthy wildlife meadow as a sanctuary for a wider range of plants, insects, birds, small animals and the like – a mini nature sanctuary, if you will, close to the centre of the village.

This progression from a simple “grassland pasture” to a more complex meadow environment is already happening by the hand of nature alone. After the oxlips have finished their season towards the end of spring, a walk through the meadow during the summer months will reveal the flowering of Ragged-robin and Meadowsweet in the wetter parts of the site and Meadow cranesbill and Common knapweed where the soil is sandier and drier. All these additional flowers help to attract the bees, butterflies and insects, which can be easily enjoyed by walking the figure-of-eight pathway from the gate and picnic tables towards the river bank.

However, it must be stressed that in order to maintain such a haven for plants and wildlife, including our precious oxlip, it is essential to reduce the overall nutrient-fertility of the site by cutting and removing herbage by the early autumn and not returning it to the soil in the form of a plant-based mulch.

**D W Joyce**

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## Great Bardfield Historical Society

The Cottage Museum was given a thorough spring clean by Jenny Rooney, Mandy and David Slow. We had sufficient volunteers to reopen on Sunday afternoons from May to the end of September with shorter hours and are planning to do the same this year. Thanks to Nigel Hill for organizing the rota and managing the keys. Thanks also to Doug Joyce for tending the museum garden which features cottage garden plants which would have grown in the C16<sup>th</sup>.

The Bawden Room is open on request and during the last year has attracted more visitors than the Museum. This is partly due to a surge of interest in the lives and work of the Bardfield Artists helped by the release of the film *Drawn to War* made by Margy Kinmouth for Foxtrot Films which explores the life of Eric Ravilious as a War Artist. Parts of the film were shot in Great Bardfield. Jenny Rooney and I were very excited to be invited to the premiere of the film at the Curzon Cinema in Mayfair.

Income for the Society has been generated through groups from all over the country booking the 'Artists' Walk and Talk' which begins with a talk in the Bawden Room and an opportunity to see the village collection of work by the artists, followed by a walk around the centre of the village to see the houses where they lived and worked. We've had very positive feedback on these visits and have bookings right through this summer. I'm grateful for the help given by Jenny Rooney and Peter Keynton in leading the visits and to Mandy Slow for help with refreshments when required. Recent additions to the collection include works by some of the women artists: Tirzah Ravilious, Denise Hoyle and Chloe Cheese. We have also been loaned an interesting oil painting showing School Green and the Primary School from the Causeway, by June King, which was discovered in a Long Melford antique shop.

Our other main source of income is from the sale of publications about the history of Great Bardfield, all written by local authors. A map showing the locations of the Artists' houses with background



*Yawning Woman by Tirzah Ravilious*

information is selling well and has been reprinted, and we are delighted to have sold over 1,000 copies of *Artists of Great Bardfield: Bardfield Shows Beautiful Things*, which was published in 2017. Our publications are available in the Museum, Bawden Room, CIP and at Between the Lines Bookshop. There are regular articles in the *Bardfield Times* on interesting aspects of village history.

At our AGM this year we were delighted to welcome Rev'd. Alex Shannon who gave a fascinating and very topical talk: 'Royal Rites, an exploration of the Symbols and Rituals of the Coronation'.

If you would like to join the Society and would be happy to volunteer in the Cottage Museum please contact our Secretary, Marilyn Edwards: [mazjedwards@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mazjedwards@yahoo.co.uk)

**Janet Dyson, Chair  
Great Bardfield Historical Society**



## Freshwell Health Centre

Your surgery cares for 7,635 people living in Great Bardfield and surrounding villages, 57 more than a year ago. We have 1,294 people living in Great Bardfield, which interestingly is only 15 more than this time last year. We are not sure why that is but the anticipated population growth with all the new housing developments has not yet had the impact we were expecting. We have 47 staff including six GPs and two Advanced Nurse Practitioners. Our clinical team also contains practice nurses, health care assistants, and radiologists.

**Staff News:** In the last year we have increased our clinical team by employing another Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Evelina Snezko, to work alongside the GPs and Richard Clancy. Dr Jo Mackin has been working with us on maternity cover for Dr Low who is due back in July when she will resume being our lead GP trainer. 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. Dr Ed Twimasi is now offering ultrasound scanning for us. Eve continues to provide X-ray services on site to save driving to Braintree.

**Primary Care Network:** Our involvement in the Colne Valley Primary Care Network gives us access to a greater number of clinical colleagues to help give you better care. Many of you will have had contact with the great team who are working alongside us. We have two pharmacists and two pharmacy technicians who are carrying out our medication reviews over the phone and may contact you; they are Danielle Thrower, Mikey Donnachie, Lorna Wickes, and Rebecca Andrews.

Our Low Carb wellbeing coach, Sharon Withnell, is well known to many of you through our Facebook page, Guildhall meetings and other activities led by our patients. We now have two new Low Carb recipe books available – one for budget meals and one for vegetarian meals. You can learn more about the health benefits here: [www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk](http://www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk). We have

two social prescribers, Terri Sparks and Jenny Bartlett, who can come out to visit if you are not able to travel. They can help with advice on benefits, access to services and activities to help reduce social isolation. Kerry Jerram has also joined us to work on providing support to our patients with cancer. The PCN run the First Contact Physio service from the Pump House Surgery for us. They can offer telephone advice to patients with new musculoskeletal complaints.

**CREAMER Fund:** We are fortunate to have the support of the CREAMER Fund and have been able to resume the second-hand bookstall in the waiting room. Thanks to your donations the stall is thriving, and we also stock a regularly-changing collection of jigsaws. The Easter Raffle has taken place and we will start planning the Christmas Raffle in December.

**Dispensary:** We were pleased to reopen our indoor dispensary counter recently after having to move our serving area to an outside window during Covid. We have had to do some major alterations to configure the dispensary but hope that patients now enjoy being back in the warm when picking up their medication. We appreciated your patience and understanding while the work was going on.

**David Shedden**  
**Practice Manager**

*[www.freshwell.co.uk](http://www.freshwell.co.uk)*

*Twitter: @Freshwell\_HC*

*Facebook: Freshwell Health Centre*





## CREAMER Fund

This last year has been largely influenced by the continuing coronavirus pandemic. The NHS has had to evolve to look after patients safely and within those constraints the Freshwell Health Centre has remained outstanding.

CREAMER has similarly had to evolve: our income generation has been changed. We have curtailed raffles and all other face-to-face contact. We have looked into on-line/internet and Q-reader aspects of giving. We are very grateful to the community for their support and donations particularly through legacies and endowments. I would particularly like to thank Mr and Mrs Patient for donating the proceeds of their open garden events and Dr David Oliver and Dr Kim Andrews for donating the profits for their low carbohydrate cookbook.

Income in 2022 totalled £28,950 which is £4,900 less than the year before and just over £1,250 less than the expenditure.

We thank Dr David Oliver, Dr Kim Andrews and David Shedden and all the staff at Freshwell Health Centre for their commitment in supporting CREAMER in its aim to help the whole community: improving access to healthcare through provision of facilities, equipment and support services.

The majority of CREAMER's expense (£30,955) has been the maintenance and associated staff costs for the previously purchased X-ray, ultrasound, echocardiogram, bone densitometry and other diagnostic equipment. All the diagnostic facilities



within the practice have enabled patients to be investigated closer to home, reducing waiting times and providing diagnoses and treatment sooner. During 2022, approximately 1,000 patients benefited from the ultrasound and X-ray facilities alone. This reduced the need for patients to visit hospitals with the consequent inconvenience and risk of catching infections thus providing a "diagnostic hub" which the wider NHS is trying to implement. CREAMER has also supported the purchase of a wheelchair, medical trolley and further asthma diagnostic equipment.

CREAMER has funded 22 defibrillators within the wider community and will fund "bleed kits" which will enable rapid treatment for severe bleeding injuries by health professionals. They will be positioned next to the defibrillators. The latest defibrillator agreed to be funded this year will be at Great Saling village hall and sports field. Use of the Sick Poor Fund is enabling The Laughter Specialists to visit six local primary schools which is very well received.

CREAMER needs to evolve with the changing health climate and we would be very happy to receive any suggestions. Finally, I would like to thank all the trustees for their greatly valued input. In particular Sarah, our secretary, and Debbie, our treasurer, for all their time and trouble which they fit in to their already busy lives for which we are truly grateful. They continue to bring their individual and much appreciated flair to everything.

**Dr Andrew Hildrey**  
**Chairman**



## The Bardfield Players

It's been a funny old year.

After the Covid-enforced interval, we resurrected ourselves with a production of *A Bunch of Amateurs* by Nick Hornby and Ian Hislop. This tells the story of an amateur drama group (like ourselves) called the Stratford Players, and their director Margery (played by Carolynne Ruffle) who put on a production of *King Lear*. In an attempt to make some money to save their barn theatre, they invite a fading Hollywood star to take the lead role, Jefferson Steel (played by Steve Hudspith). Thinking that he will be playing Lear at Stratford-upon-Avon, he accepts. When he finds out that he is in an amateur production, he is livid. But fearing the backlash if he backs out, he stays. The two egotistical characters of Lear and Steel, mirror each other throughout the play, culminating in a brilliant performance of the speech on the heath with thunder, lightning and rain cascading down onto the stage of the Town Hall. Both Carolynne and Steve had huge parts to learn and carried the show on their shoulders, very ably assisted by the director Louisa Ruthven and the rest of the cast and crew. Marcia Bryan won an award for the best supporting actress.

That was in May 2022.

A couple of months after that we began rehearsals for our November production with *Dirty Dusting*, a quite different play (which is what we like to do) concerning three elderly office cleaners who, faced with redundancy, decide to operate a telephone sex line from the office they clean at the weekends. Their plan is to make some money before they are thrown out by their nemesis, the supervisor Dave Smith (played by Rodney Foster, who to be honest was probably sixty years older than the character should have been but we used that to our advantage, and Rodney was great).

Rehearsals were going well, until one Thursday evening, six weeks before the first night, I received a phone call informing me that one of our cast members would not be able to continue with the play due to a serious personal matter.



I went to the Town Hall that evening and told the director about the call. This put an immediate halt to the evening's proceedings, and we went to the pub.

Over the next week we searched for a replacement for the role, but unable to find anyone, I decided that we should call off the production until someone could be found, and resurrect the play at a later date.

Time passed and we were able to find two likely candidates for the role, but not for November 2022.

Booking the Town Hall for a large event like a play, can be a very difficult and precarious process. At that stage I was unaware when Easter would fall, when the Art Show would be on or what date the Coronation would take place. All of these dates had to be avoided (along with the Town Hall Quiz, the Horticultural Society Spring show and Katie Parker's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party). With the help of Sarah (Town Hall caretaker), I found a clear week at the end of March/beginning of April 2023. Success!

Rehearsals re-started and set-building began which was difficult because we still had to avoid getting in the way of other Town Hall users. At this point Rodney shared the news that he had been diagnosed with cancer, but that it had been discovered some months ago



A Bunch of Amateurs – *rehearsing their King Lear*



A Bunch of Amateurs – *Cordelia's death*



*The cast in various stages of rehearsal for this spring's production of Dirty Dusting*



*Rodney Foster*

and though the treatment had taken its toll on him, he had been cured. All was good.

The three-night run commenced on schedule to packed audiences and two-and-a-half practically seamless performances took place. But then at the beginning of the final act on the final night the Bluetooth connection

to the laptop operating the sound effects failed. The actors continued by answering telephones that didn't ring, while I fiddled about with wires and buttons at the side of the stage, but eventually we had to stop the show. Stewart our techie and Sheree the director managed to reconnect the system and the play recommenced, ending to rapturous applause.

The next day, a good number of people arrived to take the set down and tidy away, after which we had a very nice roast lunch at The Bell. As Rodney left to go, we shook hands, and he told me how much he had enjoyed being part of the show, I said that it was a pleasure, as always. Sadly, only a couple of days later, Rodney was found dead at his home.

On behalf of the Players I would like to extend our condolences to all Rodney's family and friends. He was a real trouper and we will greatly miss him.

**Ian Ruffle, Chair  
The Bardfield Players**





## Great Bardfield After School Club



**I**t has been a very tough few years since Covid for our charity Club – we cannot lie.

We received no grants from the Government or local councils, unlike nurseries or other fortunate sectors, despite letters and begging phone calls. We were told repeatedly that our sector was not being supported during the Covid pandemic. We continued to pay the same overheads, although our numbers of children had to be lower to comply with Covid rules, so we have eaten into our rainy-day savings. Many parents now work from home too and therefore don't need our service. Despite all this we wanted to support those parents who did and pleaded for funding and food donations from kind charities and the local Co-op. I would like to personally thank The Bardfield Charities and Co-op, without whom things would be even harder.

Great Bardfield After School and Breakfast Club provides out-of-school care for children at the school or about to join. We are based in purpose-built facilities in the school grounds which we share with the pre-school. The Club

opens from Monday to Friday during term time. We are an Ofsted registered childcare and a registered charity.

Tim Hayward-Smith, part of the original fund-raising team, lives in Bardfield. I moved to the South Coast with my daughter Olivia, at Christmas, but continue to Chair. Tim and I believe in the benefits of the Club, enabling parents to work, the same way as when our children attended the local Club.

Our team, led by the brilliant Pat Moore and supported by Mary, Carol, Kathy and Sue, is qualified in childcare and teaching as required by Ofsted. They have looked after village children since we first opened our doors in 1997. Our staff work tirelessly on minimum wage due to our financial restrictions and even clean the building themselves to again try and cut costs. They take your children to and from the classroom and can feed your kids breakfast or a light snack after school. I thank them for everything they do.

Our Club continues to provide a varied programme of themed activities for our children. Activities have included; yoga, football, craft-making, film club. TV, computer games, lego and plenty of craft and toys keep them happy as well as helping them socialise with new friends.

If you are interested in finding out more about what we offer then just ring 01371 811580 for an informal chat. We are desperate for volunteers of any age, who can spare, say, two hours a month and help with DIY, accounts, fundraising – anything to make the load lighter.

Please support us by booking your children in – you can use us for as few hours as you need per week. All monies go back into the Club and will help us to continue to be here for the village – the alternative would be very sad.

**Mel Sims, Chair  
After School and Breakfast Club**





# Great Bardfield Primary School

## AIM HIGH – TRY YOUR BEST – GO FAR

As the new Headteacher of Great Bardfield Primary School, I can hardly believe how quickly the months have raced by since September. I accepted the role of Headteacher with a clear vision of how I intend to keep our wonderful school moving forward. Having had the privilege of working at Great Bardfield for many years, I understand how important it is to achieve a balance between respecting our traditions and school ethos whilst developing innovative ways of doing things. The well-being of every member of our school population is, and will remain, my absolute priority. By keeping our children at the heart of everything we do in school and by providing essential knowledge and experiences, we begin to prepare them for their future success. Great Bardfield Primary School is a truly special place and I feel very lucky to be able to come to work with such amazing children and staff every day.

In September, there were many changes to our staff team. Emma White moved into the role of Deputy Headteacher and Ellen Smith became our Senior Teacher. We also officially welcomed Carolyn Dodkins along with Jonathan Singh as new class teachers and Debra Mills as a Learning Support Assistant. We were also very pleased to welcome Anna Steinbauer as our Catering Manager and Natalie Ford as our new Catering Assistant. All of my staff here at school go the extra

mile for our children every single day and I am truly grateful for what each of them brings to our wonderful team. In



our small school, every member of my staff has many roles and there is great strength in how we work collaboratively to support not only our children but also each other.

There have been many positive changes in school so far this academic year, one of the biggest being the building of our new classroom block which we expect to be completed by the end of the Summer Term. After a busy summer clearing the contents of our infant classrooms and outbuildings, we were excited to finally see the old demountables demolished and the building project begin. Our new building will consist of three new classrooms and will house our youngest children. It will be the showpiece of our school with light and airy indoor spaces in which our children will play, explore and learn. It will also include a

*Our new class-rooms – nearly complete!*





*Our Year 6 children running the Macmillan Coffee Morning*

*Leprechaun Class on 'Save the Children' Christmas Jumper Day*

new outdoor area where children can take their learning outside throughout the day and in all weathers. We are very grateful to our PTA and Bardfield Charities who have helped us with resourcing these new areas.

In September, we were deeply saddened by the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Our Year 6 ambassadors led the school in laying flowers and moments of quiet reflection. I was so very proud of the respect our children showed during this time of mourning.

On a happier note, we held our traditional 'Bardfield Bake Off' and coffee morning in aid of Macmillan.



The event was a huge success and together we managed to raise an outstanding £289 towards this amazing charity. Our Year 6 pupils did a brilliant job of serving tea, coffee and cake to the many parents and family members who attended the coffee morning and cake sale.

Fundraising for people beyond our school gates and community is very important to all of us at Great Bardfield. This year we have taken part in fundraising not only for Macmillan Cancer but also for the Braintree Foodbank, Young Minds, Children in Need, the NSPCC and Comic Relief. We are so lucky to have parents and carers who support our fundraising work and help our children to understand that it is important to help those who may be less fortunate than ourselves for many different reasons.

In the Autumn Term, Christmas is always a very special time of year, full of traditions and festive activities, and this year was no exception. We were treated to a marvellous Nativity performance from our youngest children, followed by our traditional Carol Service at St Mary's in the village. We were very grateful to Father Alex who played the piano for us and to our Year 6 children who shared the story of the Nativity through readings and a traditional tableau.

We also enjoyed our Christmas Craft Fayre, organised by our new PTA team, which raised almost a staggering £3,000!

In a break with tradition this year, instead of us travelling to Chelmsford to watch a pantomime, the pantomime came to Great Bardfield Town Hall! Everybody had a fantastic time and feedback from the children suggests





that we may have started a popular new Christmas tradition.

Participating in sport both inside and outside of school has so many benefits for our children. Alongside keeping healthy there are opportunities to experience competition, make new friends and work as a team to name a few. So far this year our children have taken part in 'Scootfit' and Teddy Bear Runs in school and football, golf, cross country and dodgeball events outside school. This is all made possible by our membership to the Uttlesford School Sports Partnership and we are determined to take part in as many events as possible as the year continues.

The Spring Term brought with it NSPCC Number Day. This year we used the day to focus on finance and careers. The children came to school dressed for their future careers and what fun we had thinking about how we earn and spend money in the real world! We also managed to raise over £100 for the NSPCC.

Also in the Spring Term we took part in British Science Week which, this year, was a celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths themed around 'connections'. The children enjoyed a wealth of activities such as finding out how the elements of the human body are linked and how a tractor can be connected to space! It was wonderful to see the different ways in which our children found and explained connections across our curriculum and beyond and they all agreed that they really enjoyed our Science themed week.

Last month, the children entertained over fifty senior members of our community with a Spring Concert followed by tea and cake.



The children thoroughly enjoyed performing some of the songs they had been learning and I was so proud of our talented musicians. It was wonderful to hear such positive praise for the children from members of our audience. In the future, I hope we can find other opportunities within the school calendar to welcome members of our community into school.

At Great Bardfield Primary School we are constantly looking for ways to make links with our beautiful village and its community. Staff continue to adapt our bespoke curriculum for the subjects of Science, History, Geography, Art & Design and Design

*Posting letters to Father Christmas*

*Unicorn Class during Science Week sharing work on animal classifications*





*The Girls football team achieve 2<sup>nd</sup> place*

*Right: The next Head Teacher of the school?*

*Alice treats audience to a solo on the tenor horn*

Technology which seeks opportunities to use the local area to enrich the learning experiences of our children. We try to explore the village as often as we can and learn about the things that make Great Bardfield special; the Oxlip and the many buildings of historical note such as Brick House, Place House and Sgt Bendlowes Cottage to name a few.

As we approach the Summer Term we are looking forward to celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III; marking this moment in history with lots of special activities in school. All of the events and activities which usually enrich our curriculum will also be taking place during the final term



of the year. The Year 6 children will be taking part in their residential trip to The Isle of Wight, there will be sports days, swimming lessons, a trip to the beach and our fantastic 'Proms in the Playground', all nestled amongst the daily business of teaching and learning. We also look forward to our very first 'Bardfest' on 8<sup>th</sup> July; a twist on our usual summer fete. This promises to be a lovely afternoon with live bands, market stalls, bouncy castles and much more. We hope that many members of the parish are able to come along and join us.

Great Bardfield Primary School is such a special place in which our children can not only achieve and make progress in their learning but where they can flourish through nurture, support and encouragement to become the very best versions of themselves. Our children, staff, parents and governors are incredible and I am thankful every day that I get to lead this amazing school into the future.

**Liz Crow**  
**Headteacher**







## Neighbourhood Plan

Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan for Great Bardfield has picked up over the last year following a difficult period due to Covid restrictions.

We have now undertaken research, information gathering and consultation. Our community questionnaire sent to every household last summer had an above-average response rate. Together with a follow-up pop-in event at the Town Hall, this helped to inform us of the community's hopes, concerns and aspirations for the future development of the village.

We have appointed an experienced consultant who has prepared many successful Neighbourhood Plans in Essex, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and await the document's first draft. This will include information from a number of independent assessments, such as housing need, design codes, landscape assessments and, of course, community feedback.

The Plan must also be guided by national and local planning law and policies, so must reflect the recently adopted Local Plan for Braintree District Council, and be approved and ratified by that Council.

In the next few months the community will have the opportunity to read the proposed Plan document and comment on it before it is finalised and approved. A village referendum will be necessary to confirm the

community's acceptance of the Plan before it is used as planning guidance for Great Bardfield.

So, watch this space for future consultation. Once this Plan is in place it will have legal status and act as the Parish's own planning guide for future development. Although the Neighbourhood Plan must focus on planning issues, other concerns or hopes raised during our consultations will be used by the Parish Council to work towards other improvements, enhancements and conservation for the village.

**Carolynne Ruffle, Chair  
Neighbourhood Plan Group**





## Tuesday Club



In 2022 our group was 30 years old. It was formed in 1992 after breaking away from the W.I. which had become both very expensive and less relevant to rural communities like Great Bardfield. We meet in the Town Hall at 2.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month, except July and December, when we have a summer outing and our Christmas lunch. All the meetings and outings are open to anyone who wishes to join us.

During 2022 we had a variety of talks, Brian Carline took us back to our childhood with *Our Street*. His very humorous observations of everyday life growing up in a northern mill town, were not too dissimilar to the recollections of our own childhoods. As always Mac Beanland's talk on *My Farming History* proved extremely popular. As was *The History of Harrods*,

and *Saucy Seaside Postcards*. During the 1940s and 1950s some councils banned or censored their sale as they were considered obscene.

We always try to have a summer outing in July, (see photo above), and we joined together with the Horticultural Society on a coach trip to RHS Gardens at Hyde Hall. It was a beautiful sunny day but very hot; the gardens were magnificent in all their summer glory. All in all a great success which we hope to repeat again this coming summer with a coach trip to Peter Beales Roses in Attleborough, Norfolk.

We're pleased that we had 38 visitors come to our talks in 2022 which boosted our raffle, the proceeds of which go to three local charities that we continue to support: The Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust, Farleigh Hospice and The C.R.E.A.M.E.R Fund. All these charities are reliant on donations and volunteers to keep going.

Our chosen charity for 2022 was Farleigh Hospice. Their representative Selina Mayhew came to our January 2023 meeting and gave us an update on their work with both patients and their families – they



*Iris Couldridge and Marilyn Edwards*

now also offer grief counselling for children. We were pleased to give them a donation of £150 from our raffle.

Our first meeting of 2023 saw a change to our club. Three members of our committee retired after many years, including our chairperson, Adrienne Poulson, who led us brilliantly for 10 years. A new committee was elected and voted in, but no one felt they could take on the role and responsibilities of chair. In the end we decided to 'job share' the role amongst the new committee. We thanked Adrienne,

Helen, our secretary, and Dorothy, our refreshments organiser, for their dedication over the years and presented them all with gifts of potted plants.

At our February meeting we celebrated Valentines Day in a big way. Our talk *Love is in the Air* was the history of Valentines Day, with a themed quiz, raffle and refreshments of heart-shaped decorated cakes and biscuits.

All our talks are advertised in the *Bardfield Times* and on posters at strategic points around the village. If you've never been to one of our meetings why not give us a try? This year we've had four people who came as visitors and left as members.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

**Iris Couldridge**

### Still to come for 2023

9 <sup>th</sup> May	<i>Reflections on the Great War</i> followed by afternoon tea to celebrate the King's Coronation	Carole Sleightholm
13 <sup>th</sup> June	<i>Burlesque, Me and the WI</i>	Lindsey Burrell
July	Summer Outing	T/B/A
8 <sup>th</sup> August	<i>The Bag Lady</i>	Sheila Gunson
12 <sup>th</sup> September	<i>The Magic of the Theatre</i>	Roger Manion
10 <sup>th</sup> October	<i>The First Essex Witch Trials</i>	Rose Griffin Twiddell
14 <sup>th</sup> November	<i>Christmas Puddings</i>	Will Edwards
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Lunch	Venue T/B/A





## St Mary's Bellringers



It's been another enjoyable year for the St Mary's bellringers. We have 8 tower bells that we ring and maintain and a set of 12 (soon to be 15) handbells. Over this year we practised weekly on Thursday evenings (handbells 18.30 – 19.30 and tower bells 19.30 – 21.00) and rang for services and key dates throughout the year.

In May 2022, our tower bellringers celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with extended pieces which we call Quarter Peals. It was an opportunity for many of our members to ring new things and draw on the ringing experience at our other benefice churches. These closer ties with bell towers nearby has really benefitted us as we now share ringers for key services and support each other's ringing practices. In addition to the towerbell ringing, our tune-ringing handbell group gave various jubilee-focused performances (see photo above). You can find clips of these on our Facebook page by searching for 'Bardfield Chimes'.

We joined in the village jubilee window decoration competition by entering and creating a bellringing queen who was seated inside the ringing room behind our tower window (see centre page spread). Our medal is proudly on display in the tower!

Sadly, a few months later we were commemorating the life of our Queen as part of a national protocol of mourning. Our ringers were proud to be part of the ancient tradition of marking the death of the monarch with 'muffled' ringing at agreed national times. None

of our ringers had ever taken part in such a nationally significant event so it was quite an experience for us all.

In the summer the handbell ringers were delighted to perform at Music in the Garden, at Waltham's Cross. During the latter part of the year we focused on increasing our number of handbells and raised money by 'busking' at various Christmas events, via personal donations, and from a very kind grant from the Bardfield Charities. We are eagerly anticipating the arrival of our three new handbells from the Bells of Whitechapel foundry.

We'd love to welcome more people into our friendly band – you don't need to be musical; just able to hold a rope and reach above your head. We are supporting one new member who is learning bellringing as part of the skills section of her Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award. For more information contact: [bardfieldbellringers@gmail.com](mailto:bardfieldbellringers@gmail.com).

**Nick and Sarah Holland**  
**Tower Captains**



## News from St Mary's Parish Church



For our Parish Church of St Mary, the year 2022 was, as for so many other organisations, one of continuing a gradual return to a world without pandemic restrictions. It was therefore possible for the church to play a full part in observing two events of great national importance, first celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth, and then, later in the year, remembering with thanksgiving her life of service to this country. For the Platinum Jubilee, it was a particular delight to welcome both the singing of the Bardfield Community Choir and the playing of the Junior Band of Bardfield Brass to enrich the service and the well-supported refreshments following.

Aside from these two exceptional landmarks, we were delighted to have a number of established services and events to celebrate in and around the church. These included the familiar Service of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday (with Bardfield Brass supporting our

singing beautifully as ever), the Autumn Fair, our Christingle Service (with our ever-growing team of handbell ringers performing at both of these), and an opportunity to welcome the school again for their Christmas carol service. We also had a more extensive Harvest Festival celebration than in previous years, with the Community Choir singing, the handbells ringing, and a harvest lunch following the service. Shrove Tuesday drew an excellent crowd for a church pancake party (see photo), and last summer we also saw a return of the much loved Music in the Garden, which gave a performing opportunity to many local groups and individuals, while raising an excellent sum for church funds and other charities.

We have continued to welcome families into church to bless significant moments in their lives. I am always delighted to receive enquiries about weddings and christenings. 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.

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. The continuing work of the church is supported by a wonderful team of volunteers, to whom I extend my sincere thanks for their hard work. There is always room for more, however, so please do let us know if you would like to help in any way to support your Parish Church, and 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 Quaker Meeting House



We are pleased to report that despite the smallness of our weekly Meetings we have slightly increased our regular attenders and from time to time we are visited by Quakers from larger Meetings elsewhere in Essex. Our visitors appreciate the special place that is our Meeting House.

Our building continues to be used by regular groups as well as occasional hirers. We were pleased to welcome members of the community to our garden for the prize-giving following the Platinum Jubilee window competition as seen in the photographs on the left. In the spirit of equality, which is one of our firm Quaker beliefs, everyone received a prize hand-crafted by Flora. The garden and possibly, if the weather is not clement, the Meeting room will also be used for the coronation event that Flora has initiated.

Otherwise the year has been a fairly quiet one for us, although the same cannot be said for the world as a whole. Events such as the war in Ukraine and subsequent cost of living crisis, political turmoil last Autumn and the end of the Queen's 70 year reign have influenced our reflections in Meeting and our discussions over coffee.



**Sue Collins**  
**Correspondent**





## News from the Church of the Holy Spirit

I arrived in Great Bardfield on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022, to take up my appointment as the new Parish Priest of Holy Spirit Catholic Church; a very beautiful and peaceful village church. The Parish is made up of different villages in addition to Great Bardfield: Finchingfield, Cornish Hall End, Wethersfield, Little Bardfield and Thaxted. We have different Committees to help manage the life of our church e.g., the Church Council, Finance, Liturgy, Safeguarding, Health & Safety etc.

Significant events have been the funeral mass for our former vibrant Parish Priest, Fr Richard Rowe on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and was well attended by Catholics and Church of England friends and parishioners. We had a special mass in September for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In November we gathered for the Remembrance mass in honour of our gallant heroes. In December, we organised an ecumenical Christmas Carol Service, well attended and refreshing.

As any Christian community we share in the plight of others with special collections for those in need, especially the Ukraine and Turkey emergency support fund. The Parish is involved with the local foodbank – with both volunteers and donations and CAFOD.

We celebrated Easter this year with Lenten services and of course the Paschal Triduum which was well attended – welcoming new people from around the villages. We are also



*Welcome  
to Fr  
Celestine  
who joins  
us from  
Waltham  
Abbey*

looking forward to the visit from Bishop Alan in December this year for the Confirmation service.

Finally we look to the future with hope as we undertake our daily responsibility. Weekday mass is held at 9.30am Tuesday to Friday, on Saturday evening we have been able to recommence the vigil mass at 6.00pm held in Thaxted (at St John the Baptist) and Sunday 9.30 am in Great Bardfield.

**Rev. Fr Celestine Onwuekwe**  
**Parish Priest**



## Public Rights of Way

As all Public Rights of Way (PROW) are owned and maintained by Essex County Council, the Parish Council needs to abide by its rules which means that any organised work party must seek permission and have statutory training to ensure legal and safe working practice. Public Liability insurance is invalidated if short cuts are made.

Frustratingly, the availability of training and resources is limited but, once trained, our team of willing volunteers can begin work in earnest on maintaining safe and easy access to our footpath network – clearing overgrown paths, fallen boughs etc. Currently the plan is to use our sessions to improve

the signage along the footpaths from the Recreation Ground to Waltham's Cross (FP16 & 36) and to cut back the blackthorn vegetation along the valley route to Finchingfield (FP37 & 38).

In the meantime, please do continue to get out and about to enjoy our varied scenery. Please report any issues you encounter via the Parish Council clerk, Kate Fox.

### Footpaths Working Group



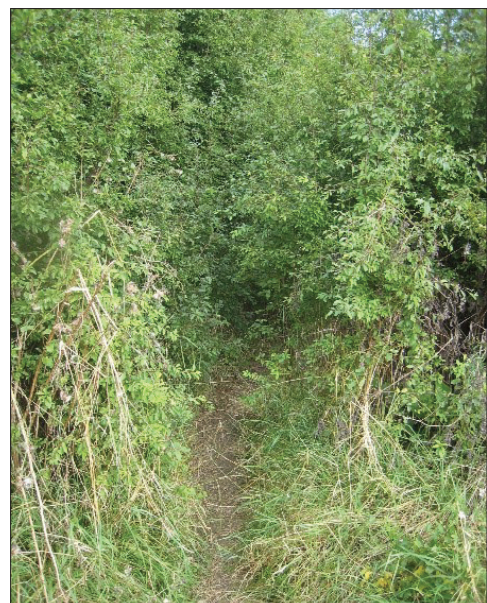
*Have you walked this PROW?*



*Finish of a November day*



*Is this a PROW?*



*Blackthorn challenge*

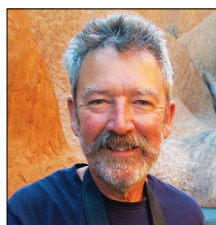




# Great Bardfield Parish Council



**Cllr Carolynne Ruffle**  
**Chairman**  
01371 810986



**Cllr Simon Walsh**  
**Vice Chairman**  
01371 810451



**Cllr Janet Dyson**  
07957 483207



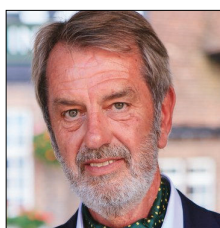
**Cllr Iain Graham**  
07831 595555



**Cllr Darren Hockley**  
01371 810836



**Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith**  
07515 398402



**Cllr Paul Kennedy**  
01371 810540



**Mrs Kate Fox**  
**Parish Clerk**  
01371 810111  
[clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk)  
[www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk](http://www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk)

## Community Information Point

Town Hall Cottages  
01371 810327  
[gbcip@btconnect.com](mailto: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.







