



Annual Parish Meeting for the Residents of Great Bardfield



8.00pm Friday 26th April 2013
Great Bardfield Town Hall

Cover: Summer Show, Great Bardfield Horticultural Society
Photo: Doug Joyce



Contents

Agenda.	4
Chairman's Introduction	5
Minutes of Meeting held 27 th April 2012	6
Parish Council Review 2013.	17
Financial Report.	19
Income and Expenditure Charts.	20
Essex County Council Report	22
Photo Spread	26
District Council Report	28
Parish Plan Refresh.	28
Great Bardfield Charities	29
Town Hall Report	30
Great Bardfield Historical Society.	31
Bardfield Horticultural Society.	32
Bardfield Oxlip Recovery Programme.	33
Plantings at Long Green.	34
The Bardfield Times	35
Freshwell Health Centre.	36
CREAMER Fund Report.	37
Great Bardfield WEA	38
Bardfield Players.	39
Primary School Report.	40
High Barn Arts.	44
Great Bardfield Carpet Bowls	45
Bardfield Community Choir	46
Great Bardfield Youth Club	47
Great Bardfield Parish Councillors	50



Great Bardfield Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 2013

To be held Friday 26th April at 8.00pm in the Town Hall

Agenda

- 1 Chairman's Introduction
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the Meeting held 27th April 2012
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 High Barn CIC – Presentation by Paul Boon
- 6 Community Speed-watch– Presentation by Tim Hayward-Smith
- 7 Parish Plan Refresh – Update by Paul Boon
- 8 Parish Council Report and Accounts
- 9 District Council Report
- 10 County Council Report
- 11 School Report
- 12 Charities Report and Accounts
- 13 Town Hall Report and Accounts
- 14 Bardfield Times Report and Accounts
- 15 Items of Report
- 16 Closing remarks

The Annual Parish Report containing the above reports, and those of other village organisations, is available on the evening to all those attending and additional copies will be available via the Community Information Point.



Chairman's Introduction

As ever a glance through the pages of this report will show that Great Bardfield continues to be a flourishing community with events and activities catering for a range of ages and tastes.

Last year I reported that work had begun on the English Rural Housing Association development at Castle Shot. One year later it is almost complete and all the properties have been allocated, the primary criterion being that of local connection. Inevitably some applicants were disappointed but we do have a well-designed scheme which looks good in its rural setting and meets the needs of local people.

In the light of the current national financial situation the Council again voted not to increase the Parish Precept. However, the result of this decision is that it is becoming more difficult to provide the level and quality of services we have been used to. Sources of funding for major projects such as the new Pavilion are getting harder to access and we have had to accept that, without either a major grant or a major loan it will not be possible to provide the sort of facility we had planned and hoped for.

Under the Localism Act, Parish Councils are being encouraged to take on more responsibilities and roles in providing facilities and services. However, without the funding to support this it is inevitable that rural areas will miss out. As I reported last year we have already had to argue very strongly the case for improving or extending services such as the Community Information Point (CIP), bus services and support for



leisure facilities. Without doubt, despite all the advantages of living in a beautiful rural area, we do suffer from a degree of deprivation in terms of access to services which are taken for granted in urban areas, a view not generally accepted in higher levels of local government.

So how can we improve our local services? Would you like more housing in the village? Would you be prepared to pay more to have the kind of sports and leisure facilities planned for the Playing Field? How do you see the future of Great Bardfield? Soon you will be able to have your say on questions like these in response to a questionnaire which has been designed by a group of volunteers and is shortly to be delivered to everyone in the village. Your responses will form the basis of the new Parish Plan. To find out more drop into the CIP or look at the Council's award-winning website which gives details of the work of the Parish Council, local groups, events and businesses and a village calendar of events.

Finally I would like to thank all those who give up their time and share their skills to make Great Bardfield such a lively, pleasant community – you can meet some of them on the following pages. ☺

*Janet
Dyson:
Parish
Council
Chairman*



Great Bardfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Friday 27th April 2012

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman referred to the 2012 Annual Report, copies of which were presented at the meeting, which contained reports from village organisations, together with those of our District and County Councillors. She said the report illustrated what a lively and vibrant community we live in, with many activities available for all tastes and ages – evidenced by the successful Boules competition which had entrants ranging in age from 9 to 85. In the 2012 Village of the Year application, 30 clubs and organisations and 16 regular village events were identified. It was estimated that as many as 300 people are employed here on a full or part time basis.

The Parish Council has worked hard to improve communication and dissemination of information in the village. The Community Information Point (CIP) not only is an excellent source of advice and information but also a place to drop in for a chat. There are plans to develop the CIP and increase the services available and a recent successful grant application has provided funding for internal decoration and the provision of a new computer.

The Council's award-winning website gives details of council services, local groups, events, businesses and a village calendar of events.

Several long term projects have moved forward including the

Affordable Housing scheme which it is hoped will be completed by March 2013.

The down-turn in the economy has had an impact on finances. Accordingly the Council agreed not to increase its Precept this year. However, if this were to continue it might not be possible to provide the desired level of service in the future. Generally, funding on a large scale is no longer available, and this has led to plans for the new pavilion building being revised to deliver some cost savings.

In conclusion, the Chairman said that it is clear that Great Bardfield is not a village which is standing still and, to keep our community alive, and to keep the balance of ages and the diversity of our population, it is recognised that we need to the infrastructure to ensure the community can respond to the changing lifestyles and demands of the 21st century. Thanks to the people who give generously of their time, skills and talents to make Great Bardfield such a lively, active community.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Roger Walters and Alicia Holmes.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 27th April 2011

These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting Proposed Norman Newton seconded Cllr John Finbow.



4. Matters Arising

There were no items.

5. Rural Policing

Unfortunately there were no members of the rural policing team present as planned. Any information received after the meeting would be published in the *Bardfield Times*.

6. Parish Council Report and Accounts

The Parish Council Review was presented by the Vice Chairman, Carolynne Ruffle, a summary of which is given:

At the 2011 election, the parish experienced its first poll for a number of years with eight candidates for the seven seats and, following a high turnout on polling day, the previous council members were re-elected. The members of the council continue to work well together as a team.

There has been progress with a number of major projects in the last year, including the **Affordable Housing** scheme. The plans were passed and the necessary paperwork agreed to ensure that people with a link to Great Bardfield would have priority in the allocation of the houses. The scheme comprises twelve units –one-, two- and three- bedroom houses which will be available for rent or part-rent, part-buy. Work started in March 2012 with completion and occupancy due in March 2013.

It has been discovered that the historical name for the area of land in Braintree Road, upon which the houses are being built is Castle Shot, and this has been recommended to the developer.

In the last twelve months the **Pavilion Project** has been re-energised. Following the reduction in funding opportunities and money available, the plans were revised to reduce the cost of the project. The Council are very grateful for the continued efforts of local people in raising funds for this project and have also continued to seek and apply for grant funding. In February we were awarded a grant of £7500 by The Big Society Fund operated by Essex County Council.

In the meantime the **playing field** continues to be maintained and the current pavilion and play area, and a new piece of play equipment was installed in the last year – a ‘flying saucer’. Unfortunately this site continues to suffer from some vandalism and plenty of litter. There is also a continual problem with dog-fouling and we are currently considering whether to ban dogs completely from the playing field area; a shame for those responsible dog-owners who clear up after their dogs.

The Parish Council supported another **Photographic Competition** which resulted in unexpectedly successful sales of Bardfield Christmas cards (three reprints in the run-up to Christmas) and another village calendar. Sales of these items resulted in additional monies towards the Pavilion Fund.

The **Community Information Point** is a very successful service offered by the Parish Council. Jenny Rooney and Kate Fox provide a twice quickly drop-in centre, somewhere you can obtain information, provide feedback and collect recycling and dog bags. We have been fortunate to obtain funding



to refurbish the interior (the exterior was repainted this year, thanks to the Town Hall committee) and we will also be updating our IT equipment.

The new Parish Council **website** was launched last year and is already an award-winner. Please remember to use the website to check up on local groups and societies, businesses and services. The website includes a village calendar of events so please let us know if you have an event you would like to be included.

The Parish Council continues to have a good relationship with the **School Council** which comprises pupil representatives for each class. The Officers of the School Council have attended two Parish Council meetings this year to report on issues they and other pupils of the school have noted in the village.

This year consideration has been given to 20 **planning applications**, including two extensions, two demolish and rebuilds and several applications for a variety of improvements such as replacement windows, roofs etc. There have also been seven applications for work on trees. Comments are submitted to Braintree District Council (BDC) and taken into consideration during the planning process.

This year sees the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee**. Unfortunately, no additional funding is available for us to contribute to celebrations as provided on previous occasions. However, the Parish Council have offered to help fund a children's tea party, a mug for each child in the village school has been purchased and a 'Jubilee' bench will soon be sited in the Quiet Space behind the Town Hall. We also received and planted a Jubilee

Oak on Causeway Green with help from children from the Primary School who have offered to keep it watered.

The village is proud of its network of **footpaths and bridleways** that enable residents and visitors to enjoy the surrounding countryside. The new path to the Blue Egg Shop and Post Office, not to mention the popular café, provides a safe and very pleasant route for walkers and cyclists. There have been problems in some areas with off-road vehicles using some of our green lanes and bridleways and causing extensive damage to these walkways so that they have been impassable by foot or horse over the winter. Damage was also caused to neighbouring arable fields. We are in discussions with Essex County Council (ECC) as to how we can protect these lanes against misuse and damage.

The Parish Council approached ECC about the erratic **bus services**. These discussions followed several reports by local people and visitors about lack of clarity as to where buses stopped for different routes. Recently new bus stops have been installed by ECC and we are requesting clearer timetables. We have supported the once weekly community bus service that now runs between the Salings and Saffron Walden via Great and Little Bardfield. We also continue to lobby for additional bus services, particularly to Dunmow and/or Thaxted.

In the last couple of months we have begun the process of refreshing our **Parish Plan**. We held a well-attended open meeting in February where residents provided their initial comments on the village; what they liked, their concerns and their suggestions for



improvement. This is the first step in consulting with local residents and will form the basis of the Parish Council strategy and plans for the next few years. A steering group has been set up comprising volunteers from the village and the first meeting was held recently.

The Vice Chairman concluded her report in echoing the comments of the Chairman, thanking all those who supported the work of the PC and gave of their time and skills.

2011/12 Annual Accounts

These were presented by the Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer of the Council. She explained that the income and expenditure was presented within the Annual Report, in pie chart format for an 'at a glance' overview. However, she had detailed figures with her if more information was required, and the full Audited Accounts would be made available to any resident on request.

Precept: In view of the general economic climate, and despite increasing costs, members agreed to freeze the Precept to avoid any additional burden on the parish rate. Unfortunately, this may not be possible to sustain in subsequent years, especially if BDC withdraw the Parish Support Grant, which they have indicated will be likely. Electricity supply and maintenance has increased, along with other areas of expenditure, including the Council's insurance premium to £1758.05. Also, for the first time for many years, there was a poll at the May Election at a cost to the parish £460.69.

As always, every endeavour is made to obtain grants for the work of the Council, to ease the burden on

the Precept. This is becoming more difficult since the recession and funding opportunities harder to come by however, all thought not as plentiful as last year, the following was achieved:

Grants / Donations / Fund Raising Achieved towards the Council's work:

- £400 from Essex County towards the Community Information Point
- £1,331 from BDC towards street cleaning/village handyman
- £2041.51 from the Photo Competition and sale of cards and calendars for the Pavilion Project
- £7,500 from the Big Society towards the Pavilion Project
- £4,000 from the Community Initiative Fund which was split between the purchase of new play equipment following removal of a broken item and the completion of the new website which won the EALC website of the year 2011/12.

In addition to general on-going expenditure, maintenance and repairs, the following was approved:

Donations – St Mary's Churchyard Maintenance and Essex Air Ambulance

Quite Space – continued maintenance to ensure this becomes a welcoming area when the work is completed and launched during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The Chairman added that two of the village's eldest residents, Peggy Swift and Kathy Slow – both 94 – had been asked to participate in the launch.

The following Council reports, are a summary of the reports presented in full within the Annual Report 2012, at the Meeting.



7. District Council Report

This was presented by Cllr John Finbow on behalf of himself and Cllr David Reid, and he explained that it had been another challenging year for the District Council as the funds still remain in Iceland and legal proceedings continue to recover the remaining moneys. The Council Tax precept has remained the same as last year, and reflects the hard work done by the Council's finance team, by the different departments and by cabinet members to control costs. Over £2 million savings have been achieved without hitting front-line services.

BDC have increased community transport and continue to support the CAB and BDVSA while many other councils have cut resources to the voluntary sector. The Parish Support Grant to parish and town councils has continued.

Keeping the District Clean and Green has been an important initiative, with its flagship 'Green Heart' project investing significant amounts of money in community and school environmental improvements projects. The 'Green Heart' is a good example of how with some financial help from the Council, communities can come together and achieve real outcomes for their area and BDC has provided over 900 trees to local communities.

Recycling rates continue to improve, regularly clearing 56% every month. The Household Recycling Centre in Shalford is now closed, and a brand new facility at Braintree's Springwood Drive is now fully operational and much easier to use with ground level skip access meaning no more steps to climb!

The balance between rural and urban interests continues to exercise many, and it is a live topic in many parishes. It is very much hoped that what replaces the Local Committee provides a strong mechanism to support those rural interests.

The Council has established the Mi Community Fund of £500,000 over the next four years to support local community initiatives and the Three Fields residents should approach BDC directly to obtain funding. This is intended to bypass the Local Councillors.

Over the past year David has served on the Audit Committee as Deputy Chairman and John has continued his roles as member of the Standards Board and the Licensing Committee.

John concluded by advising that at the recent AGM, Cllr Lynette Flynn had been appointed as the new Chairman of Braintree District Council.

There were questions from the floor querying why the School is treated a business and not provided with recycling bags and, likewise, the Town Hall which is a community asset and run by volunteers. Cllr Finbow said he would make some enquiries and report back to the Clerk. He also clarified that it was anticipated that all funds invested in Iceland would be returned following a Class Action by the LGA.

8. County Council Report

This was presented on behalf of Cllr Walters by Cllr Simon Walsh, County Member for Thaxted.

1. Budget

Setting the budget for 2011/12 was



one of the most difficult that Essex County Council (ECC) had produced in decades. The financial situation for 2012/13 and beyond continues to be challenging. At a Full Council meeting in February it was announced that ECC would maintain the freeze on council tax for the second year running, while continuing to deliver value-for-money services. By February 2013 Essex residents will not have seen ECC's share of council tax increase for almost three years.

2. Priorities

The Council set out an ambitious programme of work at the February Council meeting. Over the next five years, ECC's **key priorities** for Essex are:

- enabling every individual to achieve their ambitions by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county;
- securing the infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow;
- improving public health and well-being;
- protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people; and
- giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

3. The last 12 Months

ECC has done much to prepare for the budget while delivering improvements in key services:

- ECC has delivered £90m in savings and efficiencies in the current financial year and are on track to have saved £330m by 2013 – £30m over and above target.

- ECC has improved its children's social care services. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is still a way to go to deliver an excellent service, the commitment and hard work of the staff and partners has improved services to the county's most vulnerable children.

- ECC's adult social services continue to be one of the best in the country.

- ECC has continued to support apprenticeships in Essex through its innovative and highly respected apprenticeship programme, creating over 1,380 apprenticeships (including 150 directly within ECC and more with its public sector partners). The number of apprenticeships in Essex is now over 80% higher than before ECC launched its scheme – evidence that it has made a real difference to the life chances of young people and created new opportunities for them to gain vital workplace skills.

- ECC has worked with the district and borough councils to increase recycling rates across Essex to over 53%.

- ECC has secured, through membership of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, an enterprise zone in Harlow with the opportunity to create 5,000 new jobs in the key sectors of Medical Technology, ICT and Advanced Manufacturing.

- ECC has completed – on time and on budget – the Olympic mountain biking venue at Hadleigh and hosted a successful test event. Essex is now ready and proud to be an Olympic host county in 2012.

- The new A12 Junction 28 in North Colchester was opened over three months ahead of schedule.



- ECC has completed and opened the Roscommon Way Extension on to Canvey Island providing direct access to the Charfleets Industrial Estate, helping to tackle congestion and supporting regeneration and jobs growth in the area.

Proposals for a **Whole Essex Community Budget** will help refocus the way local and national partners make use of some of the annual £10 billion-plus of public sector spend. Over the next eight months, the specific detail of the Community Budget will be developed through research, analysis and consultation. The types of projects that could be considered include:

- Simplifying processes for older people using the health and social care system
- Reshaping local skills provision for young people – ensuring they gain the right skills, making it easier for employers to recruit and for young people to find work
- Joining up services to reduce the costs of dealing with problem families.

4. Support for the Essex economy and the most vulnerable people

The 2012/13 budget will invest in infrastructure to support growth in the Essex economy as well as continuing to prioritise services to vulnerable people. It includes:

- A new £20m Rolling Investment Fund in ECC's capital programme over five years to finance projects that unlock economic growth as part of our Integrated County Strategy (ICS).
- ECC secured through its Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) a share of £33m from the government's Growing Places Fund to support projects that

unlock economic growth. This funding will support projects that have been identified in the ICS.

- ECC has announced £5m to help roll-out super-fast broadband across Essex, with match-funding by the Government's Broadband UK fund and the private sector.

- A new partnership formed with *Ringway Jacobs Limited* to create the largest integrated highways partnership in the UK delivering significant savings over the next 10 years.

- Fees paid to foster carers have increased and the package of support available has been improved to enable more Essex children to be placed with carers within the county.

- ECC is reviewing contracts with suppliers of adult social care to ensure the council is paying a fair price for care services that are competitive and delivering best value to the customer.

- The new budget again gives assurances that not one of ECC's valued 73 libraries will close.

- ECC will be the first local authority in the country to raise funds through a new innovative Social Impact Bond to finance intensive family and community based work with young people on the edge of care or custody.

- As it is not just the young and old who may be vulnerable, ECC has announced that £100,000 will be made available through credit unions across Essex.

5. Savings and efficiencies

Difficult decisions had to be made and in total the new budget includes £123m of savings and efficiencies, though some £67m of these was announced 12 months ago.



6. Other initiatives

At the Full Council meeting in February, it was announced that a sum of money would be devolved to local highways panels for local prioritisation of work in the following areas:

- Traffic management improvements
- Tackling congestion
- Safer roads (including casualty reduction)
- Public rights of way improvement
- Cycling programme
- Passenger transport improvement programme
- Minor improvements schemes

The amount allocated to each district/ borough area will have a floor of £400,000 and a ceiling of £1 million. All local County Members, and district or borough members where they wish to be involved, will be able to prioritise and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for projects or schemes within the allotted budget.

The process to build a waste plant has begun with the award of a contract to *Urbaser Balfour Beatty*. They will be building a MBT plant at Basildon that will treat the county's residual waste by reducing it in volume and turning it into a semi-inert solid substance that can go to landfill until such time as a market can be found for it.

ECC Trading Standards has continued to play a major part in supporting business in Essex and protecting residents from exploitation. In these hard times Trading Standards are worried about an increase in doorstep crime which is the worst form of crime as generally the perpetrators prey on the vulnerable and old sometimes getting

many thousand of pounds from people for shoddy or non-existent work.

7. Recognition for ECC Councillors

Cllr Peter Martin, Leader of ECC was made an MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to Local Government.

Cllr David Finch, ECC Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, was recently awarded the 'Outstanding Contribution to Finance Performance' award at the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) Councillor Achievement Awards 2012.

9. Great Bardfield Primary School Report

The Chairman highlighted some of the main points of Mrs Barney, the Head Teacher's, report, which contained delightful photographs of the children celebrating the Royal wedding.

The restoration of the swimming pool began last May at a cost of £15,000, which was part funded by the PTA, Now they are able to offer swimming lessons to other schools.

The school has some talented children and is always proud of what they achieve both in and out of school. Successes are shared at a weekly Celebration Assembly when there is an open invitation to parents to attend.

Forty-two athletes took part in the Uttlesford Schools Partnership Track and Field event at Helena Romanes in the medium-size schools section, and the boys came first!

Year 6 children enjoyed their Challenge week on Hayling Island, and the school thanks the Bardfield Charities for supporting those families



who are unable to meet the full costs.

As part of the Year 6's life skills work, they all gained the St John's Ambulance First Aid badge as well as the Bikeability cycling safety certificate.

The Senior School Council has also attended a Parish Council Meeting where it shared the views of the children with the Councillors

The children have been involved in a number of fund raising charity events. Over 160 Smile Boxes were presented to George Mills for his work in Chernigov. Over £170 was raised on Children in Need Day and more than £280 for Sport Relief when parents and children walked the extra mile.

The school was delighted with the Year 6 SATs results, achieving percentages above Essex and National averages. This year it has concentrated on improving writing using the "Pie Corbett" method.

As a result of reduced numbers the school moved from six to five classes with mixed ages in all classes for the 2011/12 academic year.

There have been a number of staff changes over the year — Mrs Loader went on maternity leave in June; Ms Gardner left to take up a post in Bocking in July; Mr Curzon left at Christmas to become Deputy Head at a school in Stansted; Mrs Martin LSA took up a post in a Takeley school and Mrs Burt became Office Manager in a larger school. However, they were pleased to welcome Mrs Pennick who teaches Year 1; Mrs Berkeley as the new Office Manager and Ms Melhuish as the new school cook. Mrs Barney said the school dinners are delicious and they have practically doubled the

numbers of children who are taking up hot dinners with fresh produce sourced locally. Parents regularly join their children for lunch.

On behalf of the staff and children at the school, Mrs Barney thanked the community for its continual support.

10. Charities Report and Accounts 2011/12

In addition to the overview published in the Annual Report, the Chair of Great Bardfield Charities gave the following report and explained that the Charities Committee is accountable to the Parish Council. The officers are

Pat Coles – Chair

Nominative Trustee

Tony Hayward - Treasurer

Nominative Trustee

Brenda Poston – Secretary

Co-optative Trustee

Debbie Rogers

Co-optative Trustee

Alan Bray – *Ex Officio Advisory Trustee*

In addition to the quarterly meetings, the Trustees held an extraordinary meeting in February 2012, with the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the Great Bardfield Historical Society.

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

Total income including interest was £18,070.00. Twenty one varied applications from individuals and organisations within the village were considered and grants made to the value of £8,980.00. Winter fuel applications increased this year and payments of £11,600.00 were made between December 2011 and March 2012.

Total Expenditure was £20,580.00.



During the year Capital funds value has decreased by 5.75% and bank interest has been minimal.

It should be noted that these figures may be at a variance with the audited figures which will be available at the end of June 2012.

All applications to the Charity are considered carefully and without prejudice by the Trustees. Organisations or individual villagers can approach any of the Trustees at any time with requests for assistance in making applications. Dates of the Charity meetings are recorded in the *Bardfield Times* as a reminder to those who may wish to make an application.

Full details of the Great Bardfield Charities can also be found on the village website and a copy of the report and accounts are lodged with the Parish Council.

A question from the floor asked if the dates of the meetings could be agreed in good time to be included in the parish calendar and Pat hoped to be able to provide these.

11. Town Hall Report and Accounts.

The report was provided by Jim Bray, Chair of the Town Hall Committee:

After a few years of declining bookings, this year has shown a significant increase in casual bookings and two new regular groups are starting up, both in the health and fitness category.

The boiler broke down at the end of February, but a new one is now up and running. This is a big expense, exacerbated by 20% VAT; however the upside is that the new boiler should be more economical to run. This year the exterior of the CIP and cottage rooms have been decorated. Many window

frames were rotten, with some needing replacement, others being repaired until next time.

In early April the hall floor was stripped and resealed. This caused some disruption to users as it takes five days to complete, however the result was very good.

Fund-raising activities over the year have been the usual mix: quiz evening, Christmas draw and Carol evening, Boules tournament, a Murder mystery play, the 200 Club, and the Art and Craft show.

All these events require organisation and much catering. Many thanks must go to the dedicated committee members and their families and friends who also help to make these events successful.

The Chairman concluded by stating the committee is grateful for the grant and rent from the Parish Council, and with their own fund-raising efforts should be able to keep the Town Hall charges fixed for yet another year.

Copies of the Income and Expenditure Accounts to 31st March 2012 were lodged with the Parish Clerk.

12. Bardfield Times Report and Accounts

The report was presented by David Yates, Joint Editor:

The BT team works very hard to continue to keep the magazine running and delivered free of charge to every household in the village. This is proving to be increasingly difficult as printing costs increase but it is hoped that this year they won't have to increase the annual costs to advertise in the publication. The team continues



to introduce varied items for readers to enjoy. Two new features, both well received by our readers, have been initiated: *Village People*, a monthly series of interviews with local characters by Joyce Yates; and *Village Places*, an occasional series recently initiated by Janet Dyson. Joyce's article and obituary on June Long received a particularly positive response from villagers and seems exactly what a magazine like ours should be doing.

David Yates has been pleased to join the team as joint editor, responsible in the main for proof-reading copy and commissioning new material.

Fund-raising events are also organised by the BT team to meet the costs of producing the magazine. The Bardfield Cinema Club is gathering momentum and it is hoped to extend the season by showing films in the summer months. The Open Gardens Day held last


summer was great a success and will be repeated at a future date.

13. Items of Report

There were no items of report.

14. Closing Remarks

The Chairman thanked all those present for supporting the evening and those who made presentations on behalf of the various organisations.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30. 

*New
affordable
housing
almost
ready at
Castle
Shot*





Parish Council Review 2013



Carolynne Ruffle – Vice Chair

As Vice Chair of the Great Bardfield Parish Council I am pleased to present the Parish Council Review for the last 12 months, i.e. May 2011 to April 2012. In the last 12 months we have held 11 full Parish Council meetings plus additional meetings on specific subjects or issues.

This time last year we were waiting to hear about the planning application submitted by English Rural Housing for our planned **Local, Affordable Housing scheme** on Braintree Road, to be known as Castle Shot, the traditional name for the field on which it has been built. We are very pleased to see the progress with this development of 12 units, one-, two- and three-bedroom flats and houses.

Eleven are to be rented and one is part-buy, part-rent. Applications exceeded the available units and all have been offered to people with a close, local link to the village. Due for completion very shortly, we expect the

properties to be handed over to their tenants in the next few weeks.

The **Community Information Point** is funded by the Parish Council and any grants we can get. This facility, open two mornings a week has proved very successful in providing information and assistance to residents. We also collect feedback and information from visitors. We no longer receive doggy bags from the district council so the Parish Council decided to fund the supply of these bags itself. Recycling and green bags are also available to residents. We have also purchased an A3 black and white copier. The copier is available for use by local groups. A new printer was kindly donated by a Bardfield resident, Alfred Wheeler.

We continue to have a good relationship with the **School Council**. Officers of the School Council have attended a Parish Council meeting this year to report on issues they and other pupils of the school have noted in the village. Their concerns mirror those of other residents, mainly problems with litter, dog mess, large lorries and speeding vehicles.

Planning applications considered this year include an application for a development of converted farm buildings on the outskirts of the village. The other applications mainly comprise extensions to existing properties or improvements such as replacement windows, roofs etc.

We have also considered several applications for work on trees. Our comments are submitted to Braintree District Council and taken into consid-



eration during the planning process.

We have had problems in some areas with off-road vehicles using some of our **green lanes**. We are expecting the damage to Long Green to be repaired by Essex County Council shortly and are also pleased that after some robust discussions with ECC and our county councillor that we may be able to get restricted access for inappropriate vehicles in winter months, when most of the damage occurs.

Regular issues raised by residents this year include the ever-increasing **pot-holes**. We have repeatedly reported these and ask that residents do the same. Essex County Council have a pot-hole reporting facility on their website. We have seen some long-standing pot-holes mended recently but others seem to appear

in their stead. Another problem is **dog-mess** which seems to be getting worse in many locations around the village despite many calls for owners to clear up after their dogs and a supply of free doggy-bags at the CIP.

A committee of Great Bardfield residents has been very busy over the last few months in preparing a survey covering issues raised at an open residents' meeting in 2012. A questionnaire will soon be distributed throughout the parish and residents' responses will be used by the Parish Council to refresh their **Parish Plan**. This will form the basis of the Parish Council strategy and plans for the next few years.

Thank you, as always, for your support tonight and during the year. ☺

*Castle
Shot April
2013: The
Clerk and
Cllrs with
David
Steel,
(BDC),
Steven
Bland,
(ERH)
and James
Taylor,
(ERH)*





Parish Council Financial Report

For the year ended 31st March 2013

This is a brief report to highlight items of income and expenditure. Full accounts will of course be available to view when these are prepared for annual audit

Precept: In view of the general economic climate, and despite increasing costs, Members agreed to freeze the Precept to avoid any additional burden on the parish rate. Of course this has to be balanced with the Council's ability to carry out their responsibilities and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Electricity supply and maintenance has increased, along with other areas of expenditure, including the Council's insurance premium to £1834.17 (from £1758.05).

As always, every endeavour is made to obtain grants for the work of the Council, to ease the burden on the Precept. This is becoming more difficult given the recession, and funding opportunities are harder to come by. However, although not as plentiful as last year, the following were achieved:

Grants, donations, and fund-raising achieved towards the Council's work:

- £1400 from Stansted Airport Community Trust to purchase a computer for the Community Information Point
- £1,330 from BDC towards street cleaning/village handyman
- £2,131.50 from the Photographic event and sale of cards and calendars for the Pavilion Project

- £348.35 profit on the Firework Display

In addition to general on-going expenditure, maintenance and repairs, the following expenditure was approved:

- Donation to St Mary's Churchyard maintenance
- Donation to Essex Air Ambulance

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: as mentioned last year, work continued on the Quiet Space which was officially opened when a commemorative bench was installed. Jubilee mugs were also purchased to present to children at the village school when they held their celebration. ☺☺

Kate Fox – Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer



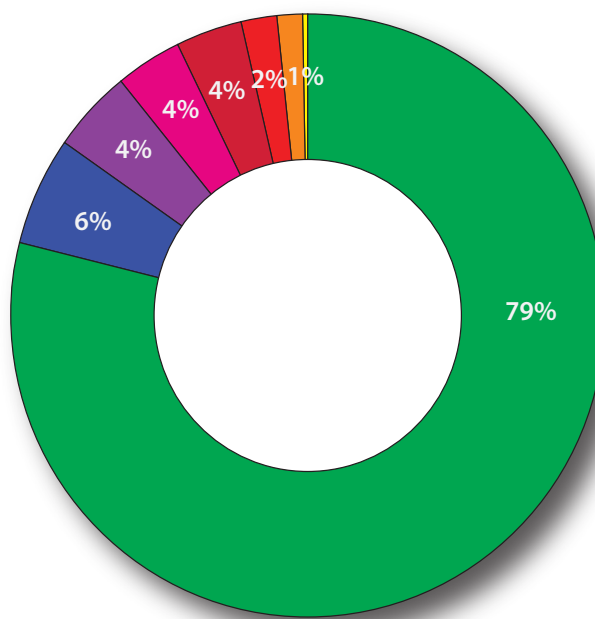
Mrs Kathy Slow and Mrs Evelyn Swift on the new Jubilee bench



Parish income

For the financial year ended 31st March 2013

- Precept + Parish Support Grant
- VAT Refund
- Verge Cutting/Village Cleaning
- Grants
- Community Information Point
- Sundries & Substation Rental
- Pavilion/Playingfield Hire
- Bank Interest



Precept + Parish Support Grant	£31,163.00
VAT Refund	£2,202.00
Verge Cutting/Village Cleaning (Agency Arrangements)	£1,749.00
Grants	£1,500.00
Community Information Point	£1,400.00
Sundries and Substation Rental	£800.00
Pavilion/Playing Field Hire	£532.00
Bank Interest	£18.00
Total	£39,364.00
Pavilion Project Fund stands at:	£45,525.00
Reserves Stand + Special Projects acc:	£36,819.00



Parish Expenditure

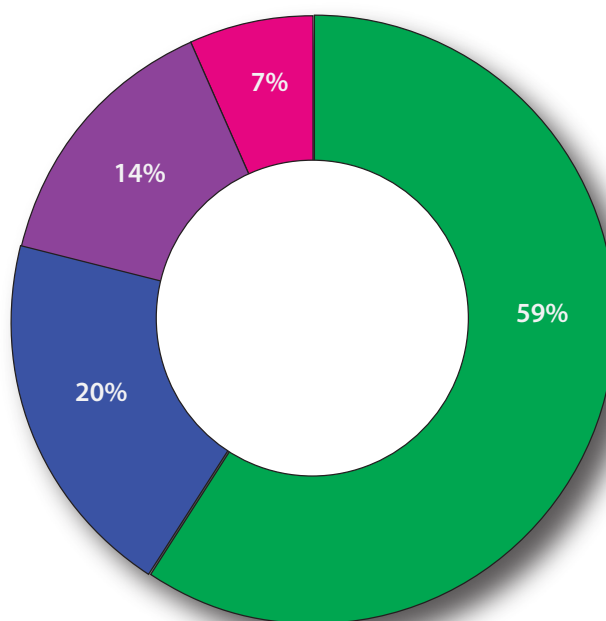
For the financial year ended 31st March 2013

■ Village amenities/
Capital schemes

■ Staff/expenses

■ Admin

■ VAT



Village amenities/ Capital schemes	
CIP: Town Hall Rent /IT and BT Rental/Staff	£3,979.00
Grass Cutting/Pipers/Memorial/Churchyard/Open Spaces	£3,336.00
Public Lighting – Supply and Maintenance	£2,426.00
Pavilion Project	£2,323.00
Town Hall: Grant + Substation Rental	£2,106.00
Capital Schemes	£1,929.00
Playing Field Pavilion	£1,330.00
Verge Cutting/Street Cleaning (Agency Arrangements)	£930.00
Subscriptions and Donations	£907.00
Staff/expenses	
Salary/postage/copying/misc office exp/sundries	£6,446.00
Admin	
Gen Admin/Telephone/Audit/Stationery/Insurance	£4,694.00
VAT	
VAT	£2,117.00
Total	
	£32,523.00



Essex County Council Report



Cllr Roger Walters

1. Essex County Council's (ECC's) budget for 2013–2014 was agreed by Full Council on 12th February, with vulnerable people, businesses, motorists, pedestrians and first-time buyers among those who will benefit. The council has also agreed to freeze council tax for the third successive year.

The authority would be spending £180m over the next four years on maintaining and enhancing its network of 8,500 miles of roads and footpaths. This would mean the council will be investing an additional £35m over the next two years, on top of the amount it had already pledged to spend.

Under the budget agreement the council will also:

- Invest almost £18m in providing nearly 1,000 additional school places.
- Invest £2m in providing accommodation for vulnerable people.
- Ensure Essex is a place where businesses can grow and flourish by

investing £7.7m in improving broadband capacity and set aside £2m to support the Essex Economic Growth Strategy.

- Review options for investing £1m into a Community Resilience Fund to build capacity within communities to tackle local issues themselves.

The council will make £55m savings and efficiencies, which will be delivered with the minimum possible impact on front line services.

2. In partnership with the district and borough authorities, ECC will also launch a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to help first time buyers get onto the property ladder and get the property market moving.

Across the county there are up to 6,000 people who can't afford to take out a mortgage to fund the purchase of their first home. The support ECC will be offering, which will take the form of a financial guarantee for up to 20 per cent of the loan value, will help some of these residents.

3. Essex residents will continue to benefit from improvements to ECC's Customer Services as part of a programme introduced in 2012 to make it easier for residents to find the information they need, whether it's through www.essex.gov.uk or the award winning Customer Service Centre.

Over the past year, improvements to the website have seen 1.4m visitors benefit from the ability to book, report and pay for more services online, fitting in with their busy lifestyles and



enabling ECC to deliver services more efficiently:

- www.essex.gov.uk/schools providing greater online functionality such as the catchment area search for school admissions and the ability to apply online for free school meals and school transport
- www.essex.gov.uk/adultlearning an improved way to search and book courses
- www.essex.gov.uk/highways a quicker and more efficient way to report highway defects
- www.essex.gov.uk/fis the ability to search for childcare providers across Essex
- Plus an online appointment booking service for birth and death registrations enabling customers to book their appointment with a Registrar any time of the day.

In addition, the call centre has been upgraded and its capacity increased to ensure that as many calls as possible can be resolved at the first point of contact. During 2012, there were more than 650,000 calls to the Customer Service Centre. During 2013/14 the improvements will continue to a number of online services and residents will be able to apply for blue disabled parking badges online as well as refer themselves or a relative for a social care assessment.

4. ECC is launching a new website to keep residents informed of plans to improve the provision of superfast broadband in the county.

The Superfast Essex website will feature information on how the project is progressing, case studies of those that have benefited from faster broadband

speeds, and a link to a tool that checks current broadband speed. The website will also allow residents and businesses to register their need for better broadband where they are. It is important that as many residents and businesses sign up to www.superfastessex.org as possible. This information will then be used to decide which areas of Essex will receive an upgrade first.

The county council has been working with partners across Greater Essex as well as BDUK and now the procurement process can begin. At this stage, the project has commenced an Open Market Review to determine the exact area where to spend public money to bring better speeds to Greater Essex. This consultation is expected to be complete by early April and then by summer a preferred supplier will be contracted to begin works.

Currently there are approximately 180,000 households (30%) in the county that do not receive superfast broadband services of at least 24mbps. The aim of this project is to enable at least 90% of Essex premises to have access to superfast broadband and the remaining premises having access to at least 2mbps by 2015.

To register your interest in getting superfast broadband, or to find out more about the project, visit the new website www.superfastessex.org.

5. At the Cabinet meeting on 19th February, ECC has approved the public health priorities for the county in preparation for taking over responsibility for Public Health on 1st April this year.

Currently public health services are commissioned by the five Primary Care



Trusts. When the PCTs are abolished on 31st March the local authority will take over this responsibility. The vision for Essex is that residents should enjoy long, healthy, disease-free lives – wherever they live and whoever they are. The Department of Health has confirmed that ECC will receive ring-fenced grants of £48,874,000 for 2013/2014 and £50,242,000 in 2014/2015 to commission public health services.

The allocation covers both mandated services such as the National Health Checks programme, National Child Measurement Programme and Sexual Health Services and any further services that ECC commissions locally to improve the health of Essex residents and tackle health inequalities. These will be based on the needs of local Essex communities, shaped by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Some of the local priorities are as follows:

- Alcohol and Drug Misuse
- Breast Feeding
- Obesity
- Physical Activity
- Mental Health
- Smoking

6. On 13th February Essex County Council Registration Service launched the Tell Us Once (TUO) programme, a government initiative aimed at easing the burden of notifying multiple local and central government departments of a birth or death. Tell Us Once is an optional service for residents or friend/relatives of residents to be able to report births and deaths only once to local and central government departments; who will, in turn, inform other agencies on the citizen's behalf.

The programme will include remote offices in Billericay, Halstead, Witham Library, Harwich Hospital and Great Dunmow from 18th February.

The service is an addition to the statutory registration of births and deaths already being delivered by Registration Officers across Essex. Citizens reporting a birth or death will be able to take advantage of the Tell Us Once service either face-to-face at the time of registration, or at a later date by completing the online form or by telephone using a case reference number provided by the Registrar. In Essex the potential benefit for customers is extensive as 12,500 deaths and 17,000 births are registered across the county every year.

The information can be shared with a number of central and local government departments including:

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax
- Council Tax Benefit Office
- Libraries
- Blue Badges
- Adult and Children's services
- Council housing
- Department for Work and Pensions
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Identity and passport service
- DVLA
- MOD, Service Personnel and Veteran's Agency
- Jobcentre Plus

For more information on the Tell Us Once service in Essex, please visit Tell Us Once births or Tell Us Once deaths.

7. What have I been doing this year?
As Deputy Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Waste I have been



involved in the creation of a new economic strategy for Essex that focuses on the creation of jobs. I am a director of Visit Essex, the business that encourages tourism and tourism jobs in the county. I am very involved with IGNITE the new Braintree Enterprise Partnership that is providing support, advice and space for new business start-ups in Braintree; creating local jobs for local people.

I have worked as part of the team that has delivered one of the highest county recycling rates in the country at 52%.

Locally, I have remained a Braintree District Councillor and as Chairman of the Local Development Framework Committee I am playing my part in shaping Braintree district for the future. I also remain a Parish Councillor for Great Notley. In addition to

dealing with issues raised by constituents, mainly relating to traffic and road condition issues, I have continued my responsibility for Essex County Trading Standards. Trading Standards plays a very important part in protecting business and the public alike, but my particular interest is in door-step crime.

This is the worst form of crime as the perpetrators target the old and vulnerable living in their own homes often defrauding them of thousands of pounds, so please be vigilant for your neighbours and if you have concerns about traders working at their house phone 08454 04 05 06 for advice. Better still if you need a Tradesman or your neighbour does, visit www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk to find a Trading Standards recommended and approved Trader.



*Aerial
view
of High
Street
Great
Bardfield*





Bardfield 2012 in pictures

Clockwise from top left: Kate Fox at Castle Shot, Madame Boules (AKA Carolynne Ruffle), Mud-dogs U15s squad, (with below) Janet Dyson, Alicia Holmes and Kate Fox at Castle Shot, Fanta'tastic Fun day at GBYC, Bowler, Tom Graham, of Little Bardfield Cricket Club, Boules Finals day, Christina Knight in action, Bardfield Players on set of Trivial Pursuit, Christingle Service at St Mary's December 2012, English bluebells near Long Green.





District Council Report

There was no report on the work of the District Councillors at the time of going to press.

Should you wish to contact the District Councillors for The Three Fields Ward their details are:

Cllr John Finbow

Fairy Farm
Toppesfield Road
Blackmore End
Braintree,
Essex CM7 4EP
Tel: 01371 850321

Email cllr.jfinbow@braintree.gov.uk

Cllr David Reid

Elms
Dunmow Road
Great Bardfield
Braintree
Essex CM7 4SF
Tel: 01371 811856

Email cllr.dreid@braintree.gov.uk

Parish Plan Refresh

The Parish Plan Refresh document is an update to the original plan and appraisal of the parish carried out in 2003 which culminated in the published document, the Village Design Statement. In February 2012 we organised a community workshop open to all residents to discuss matters of concern within the village, or highlight positive aspects which we wanted to preserve or develop. Discussions took place in small groups and each group then took their thoughts and views and categorised them. Concerns ranged from speeding traffic through the village to the lack of fast broadband in our area.

Shortly after, a steering group was formed to come up with a list of representative questions based on the findings of the workshop. The group is now drafting a questionnaire, which will be

sent to all residents, children as well as adults, to gauge opinion on the key topics. The response from the community will be presented to the Parish Council as an official record of the thoughts and views of local residents and will form the basis of the refresh document for Great Bardfield's Parish Plan. The Parish Council will then be able to put in hand specific measures to further improve the village, and meet the needs of the community and the visitors it attracts.

The steering group meets on a monthly basis and we are currently finalising the selected questions. Next stage is to agree the final "look and feel" of the questionnaire prior to printing and distribution.

☺☺

Paul Boon, Chair PPR



Great Bardfield Charities

The first of the Great Bardfield Charities was established over 100 years ago when a philanthropic resident bequeathed funds in his will for the benefit of other residents. Since that time many other residents have left money in their wills to the Charity for the benefit of others.

The Great Bardfield Charities today comprises a number of different charities. In general the Great Bardfield Charities are able to assist with social, educational, health and welfare needs of residents of Great Bardfield.

The Charity operates under a Scheme which clearly defines the purpose and the terms under which we operate, and this Scheme is overseen by the Charity Commission which invests the capital funds for us and we receive the interest quarterly.

Last year we received income of 318.543 and were able to make payments totalling £20,597 for the benefit of residents of Great Bardfield. Audited accounts are lodged annually with the Parish Council.

Examples of grants made last year include:

- youth projects
- help with fuel costs for the elderly
- books for university study
- baby and toddler groups
- educational projects/equipment
- provision of medical equipment
- other clubs, societies and groups
- personal assistance
- religious groups
- sporting clubs

If you wish to make an application to

the Great Bardfield Charities, either on your own behalf or on behalf of a local group or organisation, please write to one of the Trustees listed below.

If you know of anyone else in the village who could benefit from the Charity's assistance, please encourage them to apply. It is helpful if you provide as much information as possible, including quotes/costings, so that the Trustees can fully consider your application. We meet four times a year to consider applications. Meeting dates are notified in the *Bardfield Times*.

However, in extraordinary circumstances the Trustees will consider applications between meetings. If you wish to speak to someone to discuss an application please feel free to contact any one of the Trustees listed below. Please note that all applications are **strictly confidential**.

Pat Coles (Chair)

Dell Cottage, Dunmow Road, Great Bardfield 01371 810780

Brenda Poston (Secretary)

Bucks House, Vine Street, Great Bardfield 01371 810519

Tony Hayward (Treasurer)

Littles Farm, Beslyns Road, Great Bardfield 01371 810320

Debbie Rogers

Dixons, Bridge End, Great Bardfield 01371 811083

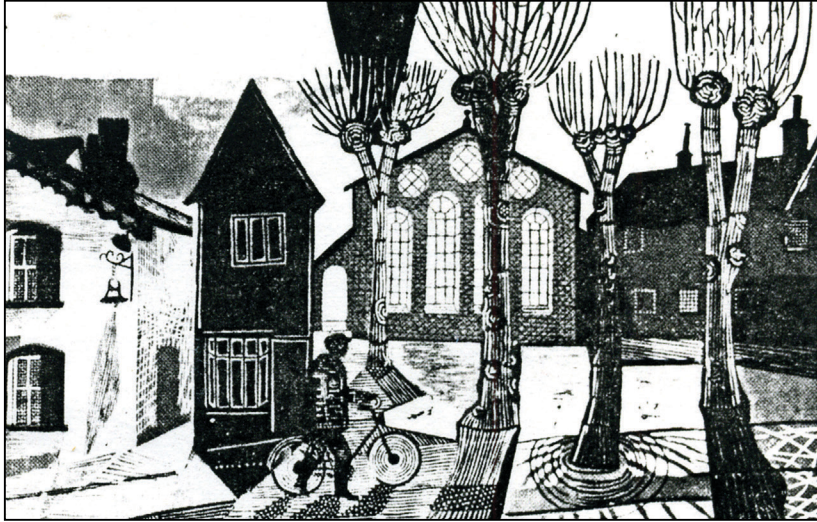
Alan Bray

Claypits Farm, Wethersfield Road, Great Bardfield 01371 810489

Tony Hayward



Town Hall Report



*Great
Bardfield
Town Hall
by Edward
Bawden*

Jim Bray — Chairman

This year we have had a good number of hall bookings, both regular and occasional. All our existing clubs have continued using the Hall regularly, including fitness groups, Bardfield Cinema Club, Bardfield Community Choir, Toddlers, the Bardfield Players and Stage Right for our younger performers. We also have held our usual mix of functions to help with Hall funds, and these have all been very successful.

Last year's Art and Craft show coincided with village Jubilee celebrations, but we held our own and it was as successful as ever. Many thanks to all involved with running the show, particularly to Jill and Dawn for organising the exhibitors as well as Jenny and Carolynne for serving the lunches and refreshments over the weekend.

At our Christmas Carols and Town Hall Draw the Community Choir helped raise the volume and quality of the singing. With the ticket sales the event raised

several hundred pounds. Thank you to all the local businesses, friends and committee members for donating prizes.

We held our annual quiz in January with around 90 participants fed and entertained raising a considerable sum.

Over the summer months we held our annual Boules tournament, and this year the competition concluded again with an

exciting finals afternoon. As ever some passers-by did seem a little bemused at the goings on, but left us to it.

All we achieve is very much down to a dedicated committee, together with their families and friends of the Hall who help out at various events. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their help and support over the year.

We do appreciate that with all the other pressures on the Parish Council purse strings its contribution represents money that could go elsewhere. But it really does help very much with our finances and takes much of the burden off our own fund-raising efforts to keep the Hall in good order for people of the village to use.

Maintenance to the Hall itself has not been kept up over recent years as much of our finances and effort has been spent on the cottage rooms and CIP. This year we will be attending to the exterior of the Hall which has been left too long and is now in a rather poor state. ☺



Great Bardfield Historical Society

At the March AGM we paid tribute to our Patron, Ariel Crittall, who died in September 2012, just before her 97th birthday. Ariel was a life-long advocate for the arts and an artist in her own right. She supported the Historical Society over many years, particularly in relation to recording the history of the Bardfield Artists during the period of the open house exhibitions of the 1950s, which she helped to organise. Jenny Rooney gave a presentation celebrating Ariel's life and work, beautifully illustrated with images from her life, including examples of her paintings, several of which are in the Essex County archive.

It is appropriate that our new Patron is Richard Bawden, another artist with significant connections to Great Bardfield. We were delighted that he was able to attend the AGM and look forward to establishing a long and fruit-

ful relationship with him. The Cottage Museum and the Cage are open from Easter until the end of September. Many thanks for the time given by the Committee and volunteers who staff the Museum during the season. We have a number of publications on aspects of the history of the village which continue to sell well. The society monitors all planning applications for alterations to listed buildings in the village, raising issues whenever this is relevant. We also host visits and give talks to other historical societies and groups which helps to boost our income.

We are always pleased to welcome new members and volunteers to help in the Museum – training is given! For more information contact Jenny Rooney (810572) or myself (810838).

Janet Dyson – Chair

Talks and Visits for 2013

May 1st	The Battle of Waterloo: Graeme Cooper (High Barn)
June 5th	Riot and Rebellion in the English Countryside: William Tyler.
July 31st	The Timber-framed Buildings of Great Bardfield: John Walker
Sept 4th	Cosmo Lang: Archbishop in War and Crisis: Rev Dr Robert Beaken
Sept 18th	An Evening with Artist Chloe Cheese
Mar 1st 2014	AGM and Social Evening

Unless stated otherwise all meetings are in the Friends Meeting House at 8pm.

Visits are planned to **Webbs Windmill**, Thaxted on 22nd June; the historic churches of **Strethall** and **Ickleton** on July 20th and a **Guided History Walk around Great Bardfield** on 21st Sept.

To book a visit, please telephone Carolynne Ruffle 810986.



Bardfield Horticultural Society



The Summer Show – always a colourful day

The year 2012 proved to be a season of mixed fortunes for the Bardfield Horticultural Society. The severe early-spring drought was immediately followed by the wettest summer for 100 years, challenging gardeners and farmers alike.

The year began in February with guest speaker Jim Buttress, former superintendent of the Royal Parks and Gardens based in London. He was both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about all aspects of the capital's gardens from Buckingham Palace to St James' Park and beyond.

The Spring Show was held at the end of March and brought forth a wealth of early flowering shrubs, perennials and bulbs. The daffodils were particularly good as were the displays of arts and crafts by the children from Bardfield School. The local Inter-Village Floral Competition was hosted by Bardfield although sadly (for us) won by Finchingfield. The

traditional Spring Supper held in April was well supported with a sumptuous buffet to feed the brain followed by a quiz to exercise it. However, the good fortune was not to last and the adverse weather in June led to the cancellation of the summer garden-visit to Joan and Stephen Bazlinton in Stebbing.

In July we learned of the sad death of Marion Kemp, one of the Society's longest serving committee members – she will be greatly missed for her talents, as a cook, wonderful flower arranger and as a dedicated and active supporter of the horticultural group.

The weather was a major influence in determining the fortunes of those who entered the Summer Show in August. However, many clever gardeners managed to master the adverse cold and wet conditions and produce a range of top-class vegetables and summer flowers. These, combined with over one hundred entries from the primary school-children ensured a very successful event. The Inter-Village Vegetable Competition was also hosted by Bardfield which, thanks to Peter Morris, was awarded first prize in the competition – a magnificent example of skill and determination.

The finale to the year was undoubtedly the Harvest Supper, a sell-out, at which guests were treated to a rich array of cold meats, salads and home-made desserts whilst enjoying entertainment courtesy of the Bardfield Community Choir.



Lynne Joyce



Bardfield Oxlip Recovery Programme

The Bardfield oxlip recovery programme continues to prosper in Piper's meadow and on the Ash Ground under the stewardships of the Bardfield Parish Council and the Jordan family at Great Lodge Farm, respectively. Plants thrived during the wet spring and summer in contrast to many other creatures such as insects, and particularly butterflies, which suffered greatly.

The oxlips which have ultimately survived transplanting are now fully established at both sites and the long term prospects for permanency look encouraging. Both sites will have to be carefully monitored for some time to come yet, however, particularly in relation to damage from deer. Efforts are already in hand to minimize grazing-related damage on the Ash Ground where the problem is more acute. It is hoped that in 2013 a proposed plan of more extensive fencing, designed to protect plants both on the Ash Ground and in the adjacent Purple's Spinney can be implemented. This initiative is being driven privately, along with plans to extend further plantings of oxlips in other suitable locations elsewhere on the farm.

The oxlip programme in 2012 is best summarised as a year for consolidation and monitoring rather than continued planting and expansion. The long-term sustainability of oxlips at the chosen sites needs to be addressed and the sites managed accordingly. The initial goal, that of accruing knowledge and experience needed to establish populations in the wild, has been achieved,



and the emphasis now switches to one of field management. In this regard a routine mowing regime has been established, under the administration of the Parish Council. The meadow receives two full cuts during the year: the first a "topping" in early March to allow the oxlips to break through and flower above the canopy of herbage, followed by a main "hay cut" during late-August when the grass is removed: this helps to reduce soil fertility. Whilst to some the uncut grass on the site during mid-summer presents a somewhat untidy appearance, Piper's Meadow is a haven for wildlife of all sorts (as well as oxlips) which do not universally benefit from a closely manicured environment. To allow for "comfortable" access across the site times, a figure-of-eight pathway is regularly mown by the contractor: enjoy a walk round. ☺

*Oxlips at
the Ash
Ground,
Great
Lodge*

Doug Joyce



Plantings at Long Green

*English
bluebells
grown
from
locally
sourced
seed*



Work to improve the appearance of the general habitat of Long Green was started in the spring of 2010 with the planting of over 100 bare-rooted native trees and shrubs/bushes. During the dry spring weather of both 2010 and 2011 the young saplings struggled to establish. Frequently water had to be carried to the site in an effort merely to keep the young plants alive. In 2012, however, the spring rainfall meant that artificial watering was unnecessary and at last the young trees and bushes can be regarded as fully established. And whilst the ongoing problems of litter have persisted, the previously experienced vandalism from off-road vehicles was not repeated. Deer and rabbit damage has similarly been less of a problem than expected. However, the “site” has some way to go before it can be regarded as mature and able flourish unaided, but the signs are encouraging. Already several of the trees and bushes have flowered and wild cowslips (grown from seed collected locally) have established in several places beneath them.

Further along the lane and to the south of the planted site, seed of our native bluebell has been sown amongst the trees over each of the past three

years. The broadcast technique of sowing seed onto bare ground in the autumn has proved to be very successful and already plants from the 2010 sowing have mature leaves and presumably larger bulbs. Bluebells take several years to flower from seed but the signs are hopeful. Annual seed-sowing along the lane will continue for several years to come yet, and until such time as natural reproduction can take over.

Along with the bluebells a small number of oxlips have been transplanted in an oak grove adjacent to the track. Thus far these oxlips have survived but have still not prospered, partly due to the dry spring seasons experienced and the somewhat parched and unforgiving environment. The plants have flowered, set seed and germinated, but the self-sown seedlings have struggled to establish themselves: and likewise with the artificially sown seed close by. Even under ideal conditions oxlips take at least two years to “mature” and during this period they are very vulnerable to adverse growing conditions. Alternative sites along the lane are currently being sought. ☘

Doug Joyce



The Bardfield Times

The magazine continues to thrive and is delivered free to over seven-hundred households within the parish by a long-suffering but good-natured team of eighteen volunteers. One source of revenue is the **Bardfield Cinema Club**, which is prospering under the new stewardship of Carolynne Ruffle.

There have been several changes of personnel over the last year. Lizzie Craig (joint editor), Vivienne Kerry (advertising manager) and Ray Coles (distribution) have all left. Their years of sterling service should earn them the thanks of the community.

They have been replaced by Jenny Rooney, joint editor, whose expertise in publishing has much improved the appearance of the magazine; Kate and Ian Fox, who are currently working on updating the adverts and improving their visual quality; and Frances Isackes, who is the new distribution manager. Again, our village proved swift in providing volunteers for a good cause. Jackie Newton remains in efficient charge of the finances, perhaps the least rewarding and most worrying of the posts.

We rely heavily on our ever-prompt regular contributors, of course. Tony Hayward, for example, has found time in a busy farmer's life to supply us over many years with his excellent *Countryside* column, a source of genuine interest and insight. We're glad to say that there has been an increase in the number of contributions of articles and letters from villagers this year, a trend we hope to encourage.

Particularly pleasing has been the series of interviews by teenager Katie Rees; involving young people in the magazine has always been one of our aims. Heartening also has been the number of messages the magazine has received, some from people from outside the parish, complimenting the publication for its interesting content and professionalism.

David Yates (Joint Editor)

Jackie Newton – Treasurer

The Bardfield Times			
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31 st March 2013			
		2012 – 2013 £	2011 – 2012 £
Opening Balance		428.82	1896.34
Income			
	Advertising	6254.00	4869.00
	Subs/sales	114.80	195.96
	Donations	30.00	5.00
	Fundraising		
	Open Gardens		1060.00
	Cinema	1978.10	1302.68
		8805.72	9328.98
Expenditure			
	Stationery	7.24	60.95
	Printing	7400.00	7460.00
	Postage	129.50	90.62
	Cinema	1284.85	1120.41
	Other	70.43	168.18
		8892.02	8900.16
Closing Balance		(86.30)	428.82
Current a/c £967.65			
Cash in hand £140.35			



Freshwell Health Centre



Commission which will be inspecting our premises and monitoring our performance from April.

Staff News

We are fortunate to have a very consistent and dedicated team at Freshwell and are very aware that this is an important asset. Caryl has been manning our

In the midst of the NHS restructuring itself (again!) and battling to meet financial efficiency savings, the Freshwell Health Centre team remain consistent in our aim to provide high quality, timely, local care for patients. The health centre has now been open for 20 years and has developed and evolved throughout that time to increase the services we offer and keep up-to-date with changing demands.

Our in-house ultrasound, gynaecology, minor surgery and cardiology services continue to be well reviewed by both our own patients and those from neighbouring practices. We continue to welcome other providers of health and social care to use our facilities including Citizens Advice, the Pain Team from Broomfield, The Village Agents, The Hospice Outreach Project (HOP), IAPT Counsellors, Dieticians, Health Visitors, District Nurses and Midwives.

Over the last six months we have made some modifications to our facilities to meet requirements to be registered with the Care Quality

reception desk for the whole 20 years that we have been open and Bridget has worked as one of our practice nurses for an impressive 25 years! We have, however, had some staffing changes in the last year. Following the birth of her lovely son in October, we are about to welcome Dr Andrews back from maternity leave and are delighted that Dr Walker will be with us full-time from this month. Our Dispensary Assistant, Chris, left at the end of 2012 after graduating and being offered a management training post. The new staff we have taken on over the last year have fitted into our team well.

CREAMER Fund Support

Thanks to the CREAMER Fund and their tireless fundraising efforts, we have been able to make some major improvements to our facilities in the last year. Our main projects have been digitalising our diagnostic services, a new ultrasound machine and a new gold-standard DEXA scanner to look at bone density and help prevent fractures. The CREAMER Fund has



also kindly provided numerous pieces of other equipment including chairs and bookcases in the waiting room, otoscopes, pulse oximeters and a light-weight stretcher. Please come in and view the wonderful paintings we have on sale (all proceeds to CREAMER) and support the raffle they will be holding in June.

Patient Feedback

Thank you to all patients who took the time to complete one of our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaires. Again, we received lots of encouraging comments which are a real boost to staff morale. We were allowed to develop our own questionnaire again this year — for this we owe many thanks to our Patient

Reference Group (PRG). This group of volunteer patients gave us their priorities for questions and helped guide our action plan following the results. A report of their involvement and the results of the survey are available to view on our website www.freshwell.co.uk If you would like to become part of this group, please ask at reception or fill in the online application form. The workload is not onerous and we would love more patients to become involved.

As always, we welcome your ideas and feedback, either by phone (01371 810328), post or in person. ☺

Linda Cutts, Practice Manager

CREAMER Fund Report

Most of the work of the CREAMER Fund Trustees is done by two people, Kay Painter (Treasurer), who pays the bills and who is now also negotiating on our behalf when purchasing equipment, and Sylvia Gould, who organises the fund raising activities, with support from a team of wonderful helpers.

Both of these people just get on with the work in hand. Most of the time they are the only ones who know the amount of effort needed.

This year has seen the retirement of Iris Jealous, who has been another of the 'just get on with it' types. Iris has raised the profile of the books and puzzles in her 15 years, and made a substantial amount of money for the CREAMER Fund.

This year we have been able to invest a lot of money into equipment. For example at our November meeting, we agreed a purchase plan of £120,000. We have decided to hold £5000 in the account to cover servicing and calibration so we can always use the equipment that is in place. However we do not intend to build up a huge reserve and 'sit on it'. All of this money was raised or donated within the community that you are part of. Thank you all.

When they have been audited, our accounts are posted on our notice board at the surgery, so that you can all see exactly where the money goes. ☺

Christopher Blewett



Great Bardfield WEA



Thomas Cole's "Kaaterskill Falls"

Great Bardfield WEA has been offering courses in the village for many decades. We usually run two courses a year, in the Autumn Term and in the Spring Term, meeting at the Friends' Meeting house on a Monday evening. Each course consists of ten lectures with the audience encouraged to participate with their own views and experiences.

We are a friendly group, always welcoming life-long, as well as new members. Over the years the subjects have ranged from art history to world discovery, poetry to philosophy and music to literature. Depending upon the chosen subject or tutor, our audience can vary in number from ten to thirty. In addition

to the lectures we also try to include a day-outing to further explore a relevant topic. Even those villagers who might not have been able to attend the course are welcome to join these outings.

Our two most recent courses covered art history and a combination of philosophy and psychology.

The art history course covered the landscape artists of the American Hudson River School (see left). Although this was a shorter course than usual, members continued to meet to present and discuss their own findings to the group. Indeed it led to a series of outings to London art galleries, London museums and a Cambridge theatre.

Our latter course this year was entitled "Why People Believe Impossible

Things" and was presented by one of the WEA's most successful tutors. It was a hugely enjoyable course covering diverse topics such as of phrenology, astrology and graphology.

The WEA and our branch welcome adults

of all ages. For more information please contact Annette Joyce (01371 811233) or Ros Gourgey (01371 810832) or the WEA website on www.wea.org.uk

A better world – equal,
democratic and just;
through adult education
the WEA challenges
and inspires individuals,
communities and
society.

WEA vision statement

Annette Joyce



The Bardfield Players

The Bardfield Players have continued their popularity of previous years, by providing two very well received plays, *Trivial Pursuit* and *Black Comedy*, in 2012. We also continued our run of success at the North Essex Theatre Guild awards last year, gaining the Unsung Hero award (Iris Couldridge), Best Set (*Trivial Pursuit*) and runner-up Best Actress (Suzanne Williams).



Audience numbers have been good, although a phenomenon, known in professional circles as “The X Factor – Factor” has had an effect on numbers attending on Saturday evenings. For this, and other reasons, ie it is much more fun for us to have an audience to play to, however small, rather than an empty hall, we have had performances on Wednesday evenings as well as Thursday, Friday and Saturday which have proved popular.

We have, after many years of using the limited storage space kindly provided by the Town Hall, saved enough money to build our own 21st Century Storage Facility. With the permission of both the Town Hall committee and the Parish Council, a concrete base has been laid and we are awaiting delivery of the said building. This will give us space to separate our flats, doors etc, so that they can be accessed easily, instead of being in the huge pile that they currently make. We will also be able to store props, furniture etc, in advance of them being needed. There are also several other items that we are looking to invest in in the future.

We do have a lot of very keen and able people who form the Players, but there is always room for more help, and as far as the actors are concerned, we would benefit from a wider age group to choose from (I can only get away with being 40 for so long). So at the risk of being ageist and offending the very talented group we currently have, if there are any talented people under 35 who would like to come and join in, then please do!

To end, I would like to congratulate, and wish immense good fortune to both Ruth Stokes and Roz Hine. Both of them have been a part of the Bardfield Players and are now making their way in professional theatre. ☺

Ian Ruffle. Chairman



Cast rehearsing Black Comedy November 2012



Primary School Report

A school never stands still – and as so many things happen over a year, I hope I can give a snapshot of school life since April 2012.

In June, we celebrated the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee**. The children completed portraits of the Queen which were displayed in the hall; they also designed and painted commemorative plates. Everyone came to school dressed for a 'Royal Garden Party' and enjoyed sitting down together for lunch. A special assembly was held and we were delighted to have Councillor Mrs Ruffle, Vice Chair of the Parish Council to present mugs to every child which had been donated by the Parish Council. A very special visitor also arrived and assisted with the presentation. All the children danced traditional dances – a fabulous day for all.

Musical Experiences: Two experienced musicians from the Brandenburg Sinfonia brought their bassoon, and double bass, to share a light-hearted performance with the children which included many interactive activities.

Later in the term, a group of Year 5 pupils attended the Stanley Hall Opera workshop and dress rehearsal of Mozart's *Impresario* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*. The children were praised on both days of their participation and behaviour.

Young Entrepreneurs: It was like *The Apprentice* in the Year 5/6 Class at the end of the summer term. The children had been set a challenge of making a new 'truffle chocolate.' They worked in teams to create advertising, packaging, a TV advert and of course the making and selling. Each group was loaned £5 to source ingredients. At the end the children had to repay their loan out of what they sold. The eventual winners kept their profits whilst the other groups' profits were sent to charity.

The Year 6 Challenge Week took place at Ashburton House, Sussex, just before the end of the summer term. The children (and leaders) eagerly took part in various challenges of fencing, kayak-ing, archery, climbing, abseiling,

*Right:
Jubilee
lunch for
all the
school*



*Far right:
Little Red
Hen pizza
making
fun*





and a zip wire experience, in addition as a variety of team building activities. The children also enjoyed a camp fire and disco and met pupils from other schools.

The School Council has been responsible for a number of activities; they have worked with Councillors from Finchingfield and Shalford and have since used Skype technology to talk to each other. They also asked for improvements to the Butterfly Garden and Quiet Area and as a result, a new 6ft fence was installed, the area was levelled, and a bark-chipping surface replaced the bare ground. New steps were built leading up to the area.

At the side of the field behind our fruit trees, a scrub land was cleared retaining the trees for additional shady places. New trees have also been planted along the edge of the field which was part of the Jubilee Tree Planting initiative, one of the trees was an oak.

Lunch time: The children wanted plates and trays to be used for their lunches, the children were delighted when this happened! School Council really makes a difference!

	English School	National	Maths School	National
Level 4 +	87%	85%	100%	85%
Level 5+	32%	37%	64%	39%

Well done to Year 6 for their hard work, determination, and achievement in their end of Key Stage 2 SATs and Teacher Assessments. This year children took tests in reading and maths, whilst teacher assessment was used for writing.

A new school year began in September, with the school being organised into five classes with mixed classes in all but Year 3. Our numbers fell once again from 125 to 120. There are fewer school-age children in the area and not so many people are moving into the village. This is the same for all local small schools.

The Olympic Torch: We were delighted to welcome Kate, to our Celebration Assembly, to talk about her run with the Olympic torch in Saffron Walden. Kate, a local martial arts teacher, gave an inspirational talk to our children and shared pictures of her unique moments with the torch. The children were in awe!



*Far left:
Kate
with the
Olympic
torch
Left:
Jubilee
mugs
given
to all
children*



Staffing: we welcomed Mrs S Naylor to work with our Year 3 class one day a week. Mr Middleton retired as Caretaker and Mr A Beavis was appointed. Mrs C Geddes did a sterling job in the interim when Mr Middleton was away from work.

Mrs Morrison, our senior midday assistant resigned. We also welcomed, Mrs Weston and Mrs Rust as Learning Support Assistants.

Village Cluster: Great Bardfield School is pleased to work very closely with Finchingfield, Wethersfield and Shalford Schools. The Headteachers have regular meetings, teachers moderate work with each other and visit each other's classes, and we have also offered joint training activities, this is the way forward for small schools. Our new Chair of Governors, Bryan Chapman, has been instrumental in getting the other Chairs of Governors working together as well

Governor news: Mrs Janet Dyson stood down as Chair of Governors after many years, but continues her position on the governing body. The school thanked her for her continuing support over the years.

Barley Lands visit: Early in the new term, our youngest children visited Barley Lands Farm to research the story of the Little Red Hen. Each child got the opportunity to make a pizza from the flour that been ground. The children had a wonderful time going around the farm looking at the animals as well as finding about farming in the past. The children even planted some corn for next year's crops! Our Year 4/5 class went to West Stowe to learn more about the Saxons.

Thinking of others: It's always good to have George Mills in school to share the wonderful work he does for the Revival Centre in Chernihiv, Ukraine. We are always very grateful to our children and parents for making up 'Smile Boxes.' When a family visits the Revival Centre, they are given a box to take home. George told us that each family sits down at the table and gives out the contents carefully so that the whole family has a share; the boxes are really treasured by the families.

The children also raised £185 for Children in Need by bringing their bears to learn alongside their owners who wore their sleepwear for the day! Cakes made by Year 6 were also sold.

*Right:
Mothers'
Day stall
Far right:
School hall
ready for
Pamper
afternoon*





*The
popular
Friday
cake stall*

On **Comic Relief Day**, the children raised £281 by dressing oddly, some wore their clothes inside out, some back to front, some wore odd socks and shoes and some had very strange hairstyles. We started the day by inviting parents and families for breakfast and then they could go into class and learn with their children.

Quantum Theatre visited to work on developing story-writing with our Year 1 and 2 children. The focus of the play was on how to re-tell a familiar story, by telling the story from a different character's points of view. They explored who was a goodie and who was a baddie and what made them so. Year 1 and 2 children from Wethersfield and Shalford Schools also joined us.

The PTA is always active, thinking up ways to support the school financially. Sadly, the summer fete, had to be cancelled because of the bad weather, however they ran a successful *Bardfield's Got Talent* evening and an amazing

inflatable day, Festive Fun, and a relaxing Pamper Afternoon. Parents also organise a Friday afternoon cake stall.

For some time now the PTA and community have been instrumental in providing funds for our laptops. However, in the early hours of the last day of the autumn term 45 laptops were stolen. This was very upsetting for us all. Fortunately, everything was insured, but we will still lose money from excess fees and putting in additional security.

We are looking forward to celebrating the school's **150th anniversary** in early summer. One of the events is to prepare a book of memories from past pupils. We hope many people will come forward and share the times they had at Great Bardfield Primary School.

On behalf of the staff and children at the school, we would like to thank the local community for their continual support. ☺☺

Anne Barney – Headteacher



High Barn Arts



The Idiot Bastard Band featuring l to r Ade Edmonson, Phil Jupitus, Roland Rivron and the legendary Neil Innes playing to a packed audience at The High Barn

Over the past ten years The High Barn has built a reputation as a highly respected music venue and seedling ground for creative development in music and the performing arts.

Early this year we decided to build on our reputation and form High Barn Arts (HBA) a Community Interest Company (CIC). Because there are no shareholders any profits generated are reinvested into the business.

Being a CIC enables us to seek funding and sponsorship for a wide range of projects. We have various sponsorship packages available for individuals or businesses who wish to get involved and support the community with us. We are already partners with the Nathan Timothy Foundation Song-writing Charity, which provides song-writing programmes to enhance and support children's learning and well-being. Additionally we will be providing facilities for lectures, classes, and workshops, etc. These activities will

directly contribute towards the future of the venue as well as supporting the community and the arts programme. The already well-established music, filming and recording aspects of the The High Barn will be further developed within HBA with the aim supporting many more emerging artists.

High Barn Arts is dedicated solely to its community purpose. It will contribute to the cultural, social and economic benefit of the community as a whole. We already have a strong team of volunteers who support HBA by assisting with sound engineering and managing live performances. We are grateful for their support and delighted that they value this opportunity to learn more about the music industry. To get involved, or just for more information, please call 01371 811291 or visit www.highbarnarts.org. 

Paul Boon, HBA Director.



Great Bardfield Carpet Bowls

The Club has been in existence in Great Bardfield since 1990. Last year, for the first time the number of members fell below the level needed to fulfil fixtures in the Essex County League and we had to pull out. We did however continue our affiliation with Essex County. It was very disappointing for those members who enjoy playing competitively in the league but we arranged some friendly fixtures with other clubs and villages in the area.

We attended various Charity events and all of the Essex County competitions which are held at Braintree. Everyone who represented our club did us proud. Our pairs won the competition and are now County Champions. They go on to represent Bardfield/Essex in the Six Counties Champion of Champions (Essex, Herts, Beds, Suffolk, Norfolk & Cambridge) and the National Champions of Champions held in Blackpool.

Since our drop in numbers we have remained positive and have encouraged a few new members to join us. Next season we hope we can rejoin the league. But we must not rest there; we still need a few more members to bolster our numbers.

For those new to the parish it is an ideal way of making new friends and getting to know other villages in the area. Is there anyone new to the area who would like to try their hand? We would really welcome some new faces so if you think it might be worth a look please do not be shy in coming forward. We meet on a Wednesday at the Town Hall from about 7:45 pm.



I would like to dispel a couple of myths which might prevent you from joining. Firstly bowls is not a sport for old fuddy-duddies, just look at the competitors in the world bowls championships you see on TV; it is a sport for all. Secondly, despite the name 'carpet' it is not the toy game that you play in your lounge. Carpet bowls is a skilful, mixed sport open to all — the young and not so young, the able and less-able bodied. Finally it is cheap as the club provides the equipment. It prides itself on its friendly nature and is as competitive as you wish to make it. If you would like more information call me, Cliff, or Lynda on 810782.

Sadly Bardfield no longer has an outdoor lawn bowls green now but there are many clubs around that would welcome any interest you may have in the full size game. There are clubs at Dunmow, Thaxted, and Stebbing. Lynda and I play at Quendon. ☺

Clifford Richardson

Lynda and Clifford celebrating their Pairs victory



Bardfield Community Choir

The Community Choir continues to grow and now has 60 members of all ages. Our aim is to sing for pleasure. You do not need to be able to read music and no previous singing experience is necessary. Most of our music is arranged for three or four parts; sopranos, altos, tenors and basses. During the last year we joined with the Bardfield Band to give a summer concert in the Church, entertained the Horticultural Society at their Harvest Supper in October, and, once again, sang carols at the Town Hall Christmas Raffle Evening, with plenty of audience participation. We try to include music for all tastes in our programme ranging from pop, folk and jazz to classical. New music this year has included *The Seal Lullaby* by Eric Whitacre and

songs by Adele, Bob Dylan, Irving Berlin, John Rutter and J.S. Bach. This summer we plan to run some extra small group sessions for those who like singing madrigals.

Singing is fun and makes you feel good! New singers are always welcome so if you enjoy singing come and give it a try. We meet on Tuesday evenings at 8pm, usually in the Town Hall. We each pay £2 per rehearsal which covers costs of hiring the hall and buying or hiring music.

For further information phone 810838 or visit 'Choir' on the Parish Council website. ☺

Janet Dyson, Musical Director

Great Bardfield Allotments

After such a wet 2012 summer it was very surprising that any of us got vegetables, but once again we managed with some successful results and some disappointments.

Consequently, due to the weather this meant hardly any watering so luckily our water meter was hardly used – just the water butts. The two compost bins that were provided by the Rural Community are up and running and the strimmer has proved useful for the smaller jobs.

The year was so different from previous years, where we would often meet fellow plot holders gardening,

have a chat, share news and talk about what we were growing. It seemed this year that you would go to your plot anytime of day, and there would be no-one about, although you could see people had been to their plot, weeding and harvesting.

So as we start another season, with all the plots still taken. They are beginning to look like everyone is getting ready for what we hope will be a much better summer. ☺

Tansey Bolsom



Great Bardfield Youth Club



*Great
Bardfield
Youth
Club*

Despite generous support from the wider community, I feel our Youth Club is, once again, perilously close to shutting down. I apologise for this rather negative report but there is little point in pretending all is well when clearly it is not as good as it could be.

The current members do seem to consider the Club to be somewhere to go nuts with their mates on a Friday night rather than involving themselves in a wider spread of activities. Last year we tried and tried to organise trips to Stubbers outdoor activity centre but there was never any interest. Dawn Luxford and I took members to the Essex Boys & Girls Clubs (EBGC) fishing competitions on two Saturdays which the members enjoyed. However, when I couldn't make the third Saturday, we couldn't raise any support for transport from parents so the children missed the third competition.

In the summer, subsidised by 'Fanta', through EBGC, we held a 'Fanta'tastic Party on the playing field.

We put massive effort into it organising games and activities with prizes, decorations, BBQ, 300 free cans of Fanta, bunting, balloons etc and we publicised it for weeks. It started at 2pm but by 3.15pm we had only two children, a brother and sister from Great Saling. The total attendance, late in the afternoon was eleven and by then it was too late to run most of the games. We had explained to members that photos of the best party could win 30 free tickets to Alton Towers. Darren Hockley kindly spent the afternoon taking photos but needless to say, with such pathetic attendance, we won nothing.

Then in July and August came the break-ins. On Friday 13th July, supervisors found the front doors ripped open, internal doors smashed, the £25 float and entire tuck-shop stock stolen. In August, I arrived to clean and tidy the pavilion again to find the front doors wrenched open. Inside, was far worse than the first break-in. All the internal doors were smashed open and water



*Right:
fishing
fun with
EBGC
Far right:
Steve with
new best
friend*



pipes had been ripped off the walls in a frenzied attack. Water was spraying everywhere. This time, all the drinks were gone along with the children's Wii console and games.

But as Shakespeare said: *"The robbed that smile steal something from the thief"* and the response from the wider community was something to smile about. One older gentleman gave us a £25 cheque to replace our stolen float and two 'senior' couples gave us generous donations to help us back on our feet. The Bardfield Charities gave us £250 and another kind villager gave the Parish Council a donation towards fixing the damage. Roger Prior and Ian Fox both gave their time freely to collect materials and to hang new exterior doors and fix internal doors and locks. Noticeably, all this help came from older, wiser members of the community, nothing from parents of Youth Club members. Added to this the supervisors stepped up (some of them), and cleaned, tidied and sorted rubbish, all aiming at providing a better environment for the members. In September there was a major mistake and we let the older primary

school children join the club in the Autumn term. This shouldn't happen until their last term and I believe it has had a detrimental effect on the Club. At this age, they just aren't mature enough and the result has been to force older members away from the club which they see as 'childish'. Next September, if the club continues, I hope we will not be accepting the new members until their summer term.

In January we applied and paid to enter the EBGC 5-a-side tournament. Again, Dawn and I were scheduled to run the agreed squad of seven to Chelmsford on the Saturday morning. Predictably, during the previous few days, all the players backed out and GBYC didn't take part.

The dark evenings of winter are always a challenge to the Youth Club and we face an almost insurmountable problem keeping the youngsters in the pavilion where we can supervise them. Nowadays this is made worse by older boys hanging around in the playground, attracting the younger ones out. Recently, one of the supervisors, challenging the wandering members was hit on the head by a stone in the



*Fanta'tastic
fun day*

dark. This supervisor no longer feels inclined to help these kids and has resigned from Youth Club duties. Thanks kids – very helpful.

Most recently, on 23rd March we agreed to host the EBGC mobile activity day. Youth Clubs from all over Braintree and Uttlesford were due to attend. On the Saturday of the activities more snow arrived and despite massive effort by us, only Ashdon YC made it and a few of our own members.

As you can imagine, given the effort that is put in, it's pretty demoralising when our own members don't bother to support us and in particular their parents. We are losing supervisors quicker than we are able to recruit them and personally, after five years, it's wearing a bit thin. I think we urgently need a new leader with fresher ideas and unbridled enthusiasm.

Of course it's not all bad. I'm very pleased that we are able to help some of our youngsters. Laura Pearson and Freddie Robinson, have been fulfilling the voluntary section of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards by helping at the Youth Club. Freddie in particular has shown a committed and responsible

approach to this role, organising activities and in some cases, even controlling the primary school members!

Supervisor Cheryl Mellon has vastly improved our communication methods using the website, Facebook and developing an online newsletter. However, I fear for how this will be maintained as Cheryl is due to move from the village. Jan Andrews, Dawn Luxford, Mandy Boon and Jenny Mills have continued their support. New supervisors Lisa Searle and Stuart Ray have had a major input and hopefully Paul Robinson will renew his full support soon.

We've got a few things planned for the summer and with the light evenings it's always much more fun so we'll carry on for the next term but I fear come the autumn, we will need to make some difficult decisions. ☹️

Steve Slemmings – Chair GBYC



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