



Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

April 2021



Annual Parish Report 2021

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Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney

Front cover: Pond dipping in the wildlife garden at the Primary School

Back cover: Sunset over the allotments (Wendy Meldrum)



Chairman's introduction

What a very strange and difficult year. For the second year running we are unable to present our annual report in person to the village. We are therefore limited to this written report, which usually accompanies our Annual Meeting, where we present the activities of the previous year, and hear from other important groups such as the village school, local surgery, clubs and societies. We are once again in lockdown, as we were a year ago. At that time, April 2020, I doubt any of us expected the situation to be so protracted, and to so adversely impact our lives, cause illness and death to so many, and to have such a long-term detrimental impact on society, businesses and individuals. We very much hope that the vaccination programme and 'roadmap' to relaxing the restrictive measures we have all had to live with for so long, will be successful in bringing more freedom to us all, to our local businesses, our school, and our social life. I am sure we will all remain somewhat cautious in the months to come but may be able to achieve some normality back into our lives, be able to visit friends and see friends face-to-face.

The Parish Council has continued to operate and undertake its business over the last year. Our meetings have been remote, video meetings. We have all become 'au fait' with such technology (or nearly). The Vice-Chair's report will give more detail on this but I would like to pick out some aspects that I feel need highlighting. Not least of this is the care we have seen in this community for



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

friends and neighbours, particularly at the start of the pandemic, when shopping was an issue for many. A village volunteer group was set up very promptly and support was offered to the elderly and vulnerable in our village. This has continued so that volunteers continue to deliver prescription medication (what I like to call the drug-run) dispensed from Finchingfield and Thaxted surgeries, to residents of this village, Little Bardfield and Walthams Cross. Many thanks go to all who volunteered and have been so reliable, and available, to support those in need. Also thanks to Lynsi Hayward-Smith for coordinating the volunteers and to Cllr Iain Graham who has opened the Community Information Point twice weekly, for distribution of medication and as a collection point for recycling bags etc, without the need to cross the threshold.

I know that the staff and governors of our village school have had a stressful



and busy year, ensuring that teaching has continued as smoothly as possible, both remotely and on-site for some. Teachers have had to manage their teaching to accommodate children learning at home and in school, at the same time, providing support to children and their parents. There has also been a lot of work involved in making the school 'safe', undertaking risk assessments, adjusting classroom layouts and ensuring that technology works for those that have had to rely on it. We recognise how hard everyone has worked to ensure our children continue to receive an education and are as safe as possible. Thank you, Mrs Kerrell, governors and staff.

Work for many has been disrupted, and several of our local businesses have had to remain closed for much of the last 12 months. Our pubs, cafes and several shops were classed as non-essential, so could not be open for normal sales though some have adapted to provide 'click & collect' or takeaway services. Grants have been available via Braintree District Council but it is not the same as operating your business and supplying your customers. Once these businesses re-open I hope the community will support them as they are vital to the vibrancy and success of our village. Unfortunately, we have seen the closure of our valued butcher's shop, following the sad death of Danny Smith last year, but it is encouraging to see that a new hair salon is due to open shortly. Another welcome addition to our retail services and, of course, we will all be needing attention to our lockdown hair-dos.

This Annual Report usually includes many written contributions from village groups and societies, highlighting their activities over the previous year. These

activities have been much curtailed, or have even stopped completely over the last year, proving how essential these are to our physical and mental health, and well-being. We are pleased to see contributions from several village clubs in this report. Even reading your reports on how you have maintained some connection with other members, or the difficulties your group has faced, paint an important picture of the impact of the pandemic on the community over the last year. We hope you all bounce back with enthusiasm. Thanks to all contributors, to Jenny Rooney for editing and compiling this report, and Kate Fox for organising us all.

Despite the pandemic and lock-down, and partly because of it, we have set up a Footpath Group to review the state of our footpath network. Thanks to Nigel Hill and Cllr Paul Kennedy, plus several volunteers, for their attention to our footpath network – see item on page 39 of this report.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Councillors and our valued Clerk, Kate Fox, for their continued support during the last 12 months. We have not all been able to be in the same location at the same time, other than virtually (no beers in the pub after a Parish Council meeting), but have managed to continue to work well together and ensure services are maintained. Some activities have slowed, or been made more difficult, but we continue to focus on the needs of the village. I would also like to thank our District and County Councillors, Cllrs Peter Tattersley and Graham Butland, for their attention and support over the last year, attending most of our Parish Council meetings, providing updates and advice, and taking up some concerns on our behalf.

I hope everyone remains safe and well, and that we can have a mega-village hug in the not-too-distant future.

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



Parish Council review 2020-2021

A year ago, I was writing about an emerging pandemic, and wondering what that would mean for all of us. Little did I expect such fundamental and long-lasting changes in our day-to-day way of life, and of course affecting as it does every one of us, the pandemic also had an impact on the way the parish council does business.

I am pleased to say that we managed to continue our business very much as usual, the major differences being how we met, and also how we as a parish council responded to the pandemic. Our regular meetings remained as scheduled, and took place via the Zoom internet meeting platform. Overall this proved quite successful, with agendas and other papers delivered electronically, and providing the broadband held up, each of us attending from our homes. We meet as a full council eleven times a year, avoiding August (traditionally a quiet month due to summer holidays) however we always schedule a finance meeting, and pick up any other issues at the same time which get formally reported at the September meeting.

One of our key activities is to review and comment on planning matters, and during the past year we dealt with 17 building applications, a few new builds but mostly alterations or extensions. We also comment on tree works and 14 applications were reviewed, most with no objection as they were mostly for maintenance works. As a close neighbour we were consulted about the proposed development on Bardfield Road, Finchingfield. Despite ours and many other representations, we were disappointed that the planning appeal granted permission. Another nearby concern was the movement and processing of earth and rubble waste in Little Bardfield. Essex County Council were consulted and they investigated this matter and concluded as far as they were concerned as the Waste Planning Authority, no planning breach had occurred.

Highways always remains a major topic of interest, and the lockdowns have highlighted how tight parking is around the village, and also how many of

us apparently commute out. Whether working from home gets embedded as normal practice has yet to be seen, but if detached from home schooling which some of you have had to manage at the same time, it may be an acceptable and more eco-friendly future.

Loud swarms of motorcyclists cause a lot of concern and we have joined up with neighbouring parishes to meet regularly with the police to discuss these problems. As a consequence we are seeing greater police activity along the main routes used by the bikers.

Daily exercise has highlighted how beneficial having access to the countryside has been for maintaining the health of one's mind and body. I have noticed a great increase in the numbers using the public footpaths and lanes around the village, and it has been great to see. This extra use has given the parish council an extra focus on our rights of way network and we have established a volunteer group who will assess and understand the condition and accuracy of the routes across our footpaths and bridleways.

Pipers Meadow has also become an important green space to visit, and perhaps quietly enjoy the riverside location. New picnic tables and benches have been installed and trees planted. Unfortunately some died due to the dry spring and have been replaced. I am pleased to say trees have also been planted on the green by Mill Close and we are grateful to Mr and Mrs Collins from Walthams Cross for their kind donation towards this initiative. Dr Doug Joyce has continued to



provide management advice for Pipers Meadow and he keeps a close eye on Long Green, in particular the small plantation we established a few years ago.

The footpath alongside school green has been resurfaced and we are grateful for the financial contribution from County Councillor Butland's Locality Fund which helped finance this project.

Another environmental concern has been the intense rain over the recent winter period, with many roads flooded, and some damage to pavements and property occurring in the village. I was able to bring the County Flood engineer in during one of these severe rain storms and we await his report with great interest. Many now believe these weather events are a manifestation of global warming, so we must need to think about how we best adapt to these events.

Many of our parish activities have had to be cancelled due to Covid including the annual firework display, which has been a key fundraiser for the pre-school and pavilion project. Other key events such as the two horticultural shows, school fete, and church bazaars have also dropped off the calendar, all key elements of our community life, and I like many look forward to their return.

The Neighbourhood Plan process has also ground to a halt due to the inability to meet and receive presentations or even get out and do surveys. Again, its revival is eagerly anticipated.

The recreation ground has also been well used for exercise and, when allowed, team sports. The Pavilion project appears to be gaining fresh

momentum, with a pragmatic review to make what we can do best fit a realistic financial envelope; this means plans have been tweaked and a project plan is emerging. Funding is gradually accumulating, and we monitor closely any grant opportunities that may finally bring this project to fruition.

The Community Information Point has remained open as much as possible, and a great team of volunteers have ensured this has been the case. Volunteers have continued to support those who are shielding by providing shopping and medication delivery service along with car transport for those requiring it. Many more have quietly kept an eye on neighbours, checking in with a phone call or a knock on the door. The way the community has responded is amazing, and it has been a widespread collective effort, thank you.

Finally, I finish by thanking the members of the parish council who give up their time and of course our long-serving clerk, Kate Fox who keeps us all in order.

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

*Members of the Great Bardfield Parish Council
attending a council meeting via Zoom:*

Top row l to r: Kate Fox, Carolynne Ruffle, Lynsi Hayward-Smith. Middle row: Simon Walsh, Paul Kennedy and Darren Hockley. Bottom row: Janet Dyson and Iain Graham.





Parish Council financial review

For the year ended 31st March 2021

This brief report is to highlight key items of income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Parish Income: The annual Precept is still the most significant part of our income with further income from grants totalling £3,390 in the form of £1,554 from BDC towards street cleaning and £836 from ECC for verge cutting (which are duties undertaken on their behalf) with a further £1,000 also received from our County Councillor's Locality Fund towards the cost of the refurbishment of the School Green path. Other fundraising and grant opportunities have proved more difficult during 2020/21.

The Pavilion Project: You may recall that in 2019 bad weather affected the annual Firework Display, impacting on the usual significant funds raised by this event, and this year it was prevented by the pandemic. However, thanks to all you who bought the dedicated Christmas cards which raised £245. Fundraising will hopefully pick up when restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, the Parish Council continues to allocate funds to the overall budget on an annual basis and this will be significantly enhanced from 106 funds that have come from recent housing development in the parish. This additional funding is only provided following the approval of a suitable application which is being developed at the moment.

Parish Expenditure: The Parish Council is responsible for key services and costs increase year on year. Some of our major expenditure this year:

- £4,355 on street lighting and maintenance.
- £4,000 on architect's drawings for the new pavilion.
- £3,777 in total on grass cutting, Pipers Meadow, care of the greens, verges etc, and street cleaning.
- £2,000 reinstatement of the School Green path.

Precept: For the 2021/22 financial year the Parish Council has increased its Precept request in order to keep pace with costs. However, this was done with the

benefit of knowing the parish tax base was increased to £569.90 and therefore the increase in Council Tax would not impact negatively on residents, with the aim of holding this to 1.4% (3% in 20/21). The reason for the increase in the tax base was the inclusion of the remainder of the properties at Deer Park View (14 in 20/21) being in the District Council's figures. So, although not all development is welcome, there is some benefit from even small pockets of additional housing.

Overview: Annual Accounts – the external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's finances and the reserves held for special projects. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor. Once approved these were published on the Parish Council website at www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings have also been suspended in their current form as social distancing is not possible, but have been held using Zoom technology and continue to be open to the press and public.

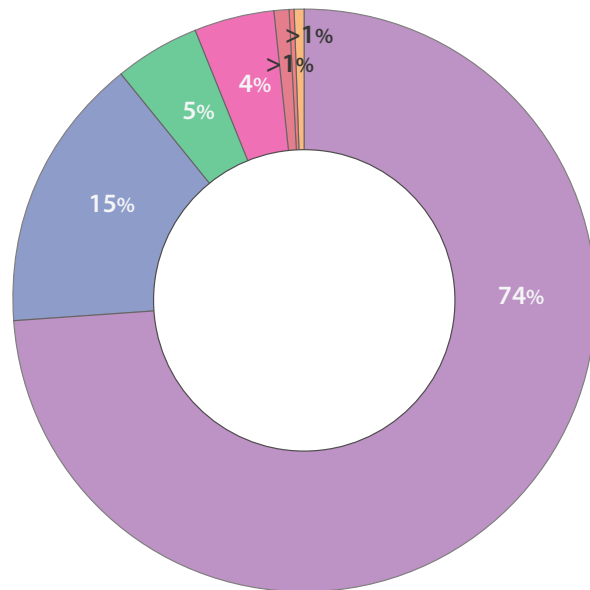
Kate Fox
Parish Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Parish income

For the financial year ended 31.3.21

- Parish Precept
- Neighbourhood Plan grant
- VAT refund
- Verge cutting/village cleaning
- Bank interest
- Pavilion and playing field
- Sundries etc

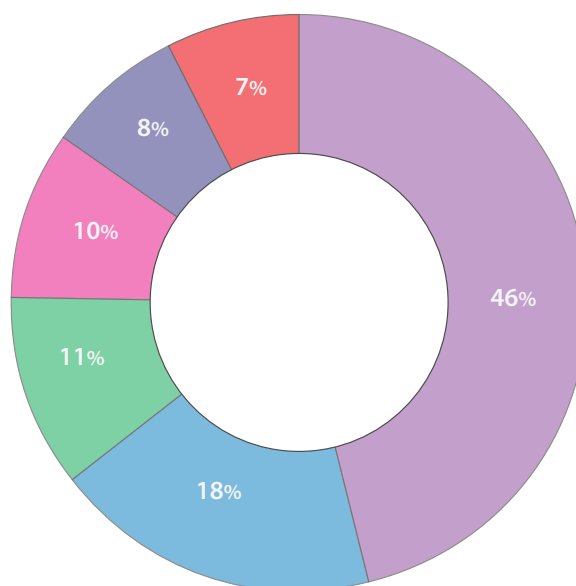
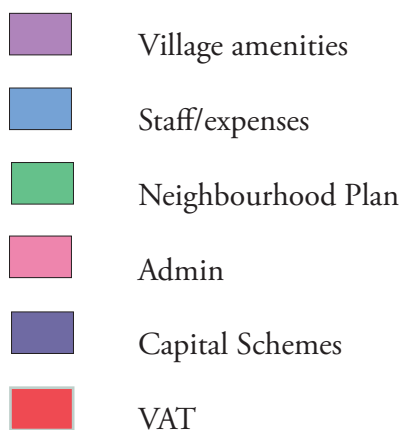


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|---|----------------|
| Parish Precept | £40,779 |
| Neighbourhood Plan grant | £8,460 |
| VAT refund | £2,631 |
| Verge cutting/village cleaning | £2,389 |
| Bank interest | £423 |
| Pavilion and playing field | £225 |
| Sundries/training bursary/substation rental | £222 |
| Total | £55,129 |
| Pavilion project fund as at 31.3.21: | £82,138 |
| Business reserves account as at 31.3.21: | £52,349 |
| Special projects account as at 31.3.21: | £6,551 |



Parish expenditure

For the financial year ended 31.3.21



| | |
|---|----------------|
| Village amenities | |
| Pavilion project | £4,385 |
| Public lighting – supply and maintenance | £4,355 |
| Grass cutting/Memorial/open spaces | £3,777 |
| Town Hall: grant and substation rental | £2,207 |
| CIP: Town Hall rent/IT and BT rental | £1,800 |
| Verge cutting/street cleaning (agency arrangements) | £1,093 |
| Subscriptions/donations | £981 |
| Pavilion maintenance/playing field | £658 |
| | £19,256 |
| Staff/expenses | |
| Salary/postage/stationery/website/sundries/training/audit fees/defibrillator/dog bags | £7,677 |
| Neighbourhood Plan | £4,500 |
| Admin | |
| General admin/telephone/audit/tax/insurance/Annual Report | £3,973 |
| Capital schemes | |
| School path, new litter bin | £3,261 |
| VAT | £3,039 |
| Total | £41,706 |



Braintree District Council report

It has been around one year ago that we last met face to face, and it has been a year like no other in the memories of most members and residents reading this.

Some of us have learned new IT skills to allow us to continue the best we can. Some of us have even learned how to mute and unmute our Zoom meetings.

Over the last year over 10,400 residents in the Braintree District contracted Covid-19 and regrettably over 360 related deaths were registered. We are sure we speak for all of us in expressing our condolences to the families and friends of those who have died or been seriously ill.

The District Council itself has faced many unique challenges. Facilities for staff to work from home have had to be provided. Arrangements for Council businesses to continue, together with those of Parish Councils and voluntary bodies, have had to be put in place to enable formal decision making to be made remotely. This has highlighted very clearly some of the deficiencies in internet connectivity in parts of our district.

The Covid expenditure to the Council has cost in excess of £3.55m with some £2.24m from loss of income. This includes other less obvious expenditure such as the need to financially support our leisure provider which operates on a not-for-profit basis and has had no income to maintain the swimming pools and other leisure facilities in a safe and sustainable manner in order to prevent them from closing down.

Officers and Members have aimed to keep Parish Councils and local businesses informed about the incidence and spread of the virus and the availability of financial support for those financially affected. The Council has administered and distributed government grants to around 7,200 local businesses with a total expenditure currently awarded at £39,838,458.00.

Council staff have had to learn new skills to carry out work in addition to their usual duties. EHOs have been seconded to operate the finer details of

the test and trace initiative. Economic Development and Revenue & Benefits Teams have been responsible for fielding applications and distributing government grants to individuals and businesses affected by the pandemic.

Council Officers and Members have aimed to keep parishes informed about the very latest developments in the incidence of Covid and the vaccination rollout and details of any financial aid that might be available to those affected financially due the lockdown.

Despite these considerable financial and staffing pressures the Council has continued to develop its environmentally friendly initiatives. We have established and earmarked reserves of £500,000 to take forward our green priorities.

We have also maintained the Councillor Community Grant scheme for 2021/22. New expenditure also includes a new artificial grass pitch at the Halstead Leisure Centre at a cost £750,000 and £100,000 for children's play areas.

We aim to support the future of the District by creating new jobs and making financial investments. Work on the creation of a three storey £14m Enterprise Centre on the new Horizon 120 Business Park and Innovation Park at Great Notley has started. This will provide a state-of-the-art energy efficient complex with shared meeting rooms, flexible workspaces, conference and training facilities and offices for smaller businesses to grow into. The Business Park also boasts the first all solar-powered electric vehicle-charging



centre in the UK, to supplement the 16 new dual electric vehicle charging points being installed across the District.

Additional funding has also been made available to improve the Town Centres of our three major towns.

The Planning Inspectorate finally approved part 1 of the Local Plan, and at the same time confirmed that the number of houses we have to provide for in the Plan period 2013-2033 is 14,320, or 716 per year. Disappointingly, Part 2 of the Plan is not due to be examined by the Inspectorate until July 2021.

The financial commitments and our ambitions towards maintaining service standards have been set against a background of prudent financial management. We are not intending to increase car-parking charges to help support our town centres as life gradually returns to normal and, unlike many other local authorities across the country, we did not increase our share of the Council Tax for 2021/22.

We have been immensely proud of the numerous voluntary organisations



Cllr Vanessa Santomauro



Cllr Peter Tattersley

across our Parishes who have supported the vulnerable by delivering medicines, food, and other basics during the lockdowns.

The Covid pandemic has affected people in a variety of different ways and as we come out of the lockdown there will be lasting problems of social isolation, loneliness, emotional instability and poor mental health. The Council, supported by our communities, will continue to do whatever it can to help ease these problems.

Cllrs Santomauro and Tattersley
Three Fields Ward
Braintree District Council





Essex County Council report

The last year has been challenging for all our communities as the effect of the COVID pandemic has been felt throughout the area. I congratulate all eight Parish Councils on maintaining their services to residents and for how many of them have helped to look after more vulnerable members of the community.

As the local County Councillor, I have been unable, due to lockdown restrictions, to get around the area as much as I would normally do. Nevertheless, working with the Parish Clerks and attending many of the Parish Council meetings via Zoom I have been able to deal with most local issues that have arisen.

Throughout the year Highways issues have tended to dominate the agenda together with flooding matters arising from the wet period in January and February. ECC invited each County Councillor to put forward 50 potholes in their Division for priority treatment. I forwarded all the potholes 'nominated' by the Parish Councils and they have been dealt with during the year. However, like painting the Forth Bridge, road repairs remain a never-ending task.

In February 2021, I facilitated a meeting between the Parishes and the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, on the issue of nuisance vehicles speeding through our villages. I am delighted that the Commissioner recognised the disturbance that this causes to residents and that he has agreed an action plan to tackle the issue.

Finally, in 2020-21 the County Council introduced a new Locality Fund whereby each County Councillor was allocated £10,000 to use in their Division to support local projects. I was delighted that I was able to support projects in all eight of the parishes as follows:

- £2,250 – Salings Parish Council to provide wooden gates at entry points to the village.
- £1,000 – William Bendlowes Charity towards a petanque terrain at Shalford Village Hall.
- £2,000 – St Mary's Church, Wethersfield towards urgent roof repairs at the church.



- £1,000 – Panfield Community Association towards roof repairs to the Village Hall.
- £1,000 – Great Bardfield Parish Council towards the refurbishment of the school green footpath.
- £1,000 – Great Notley Parish Council to support the upgrading of village maps at the entrances to Great Notley and White Court.
- £700 – Wethersfield Community Centre to complete room flooring.
- £400 – Friends of the Flitch Way to help maintain the area.
- £300 – Rayne Village Hall to purchase PPE and cleaning supplies during the pandemic.
- £132 – Finchingfield Guildhall to purchase a whiteboard.

Let us hope that 2021-22 will see a gradual and safe return to normality.

**County Councillor
Graham Butland**



Neighbourhood Plan report

The pandemic has certainly had a negative impact on progress with our Neighbourhood Plan. All meetings have been held online which doesn't make it easy to view maps and plans, or discuss major reports. The whole rationale of a Neighbourhood Plan is for the community to come together to build a plan for its future. Over the past year we should have been arranging community events to gain your opinions on the important features of our parish – hosting lovely displays and gatherings and sharing multiple opinions and questions about what we want for Great Bardfield. These events could not happen and we have been rather stymied in our progress. We hear that we are not alone and most Neighbourhood Planning Groups have had a difficult time in trying to keep the momentum going.

We have initiated a number of information and advisory reports over the year. Consultants were appointed to recommend Design Codes for future development (the design and features of individual properties, the development as a whole, and the materials used), and a Landscape Assessment of the village and its surroundings is underway. We expect these reports to be finalised over the coming months and hope to get residents' views by questionnaire and face-to-face events, once we are able, and feel safe to arrange public gatherings.

Here is a bit more information on what a Neighbourhood Plan is:

- an opportunity for a community to shape and influence planning



policy for their village/town. It ensures a community gets the right types of development, in the right place

- a neighbourhood document is written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than blanket policies set at national or regional level (though it must fit with national and local planning guidelines)
- it sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area which, once accepted by the community and the District Council, has legal status to help decide whether to approve planning applications
- funding for a Neighbourhood Plan is provided by Government grants, which enables the development of a bespoke Neighbourhood Plan with minimal cost to the community

So, creating a Neighbourhood Plan allows us to look at special and important features that we wish to preserve, how we might improve and enhance what we already have, the importance of the surrounding countryside and environmental issues, views into and out of the village and the future of development including 'green' initiatives. It is a big commitment and we need many different skill sets. So, if you love Great Bardfield, have an interest in the buildings, the environment or just want to help influence the future of the village, please get in touch as we always need, and want, a broad range of views and input.

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



Town Hall report

It has been a difficult year for the Town Hall. As soon as we went into lockdown in March 2020, all our regular clubs and societies were forced to cancel their bookings and our usual fundraising activities also had to be cancelled (the last being the Town Hall Quiz just before lockdown in March 2020). We reimbursed deposits and payments for private bookings too, as several parties were planned and then cancelled during 2020.

As restrictions lifted in early summer our Vice Chair, John Maidman, attended a course on the safe reopening of community buildings and spent many hours reviewing and establishing a Risk Assessment and Plan. The Hall was fitted out with several hand sanitisers, deep cleans undertaken, many notices put up and a one-way system into and out of the Hall established. We tentatively reopened for bookings in September. However most Clubs and Societies were still unable to restart due to continued social distancing measures. No Horticultural Society Shows and meetings, no Cinema Club, Choir, Tuesday Club, Carpet Bowls or Players. The only bookings we have had this year have been a few Zumba classes held in the autumn before we went into Tier 3, 4 and then another extensive lockdown.

Hence, this year we have had next to no income. However, we have been fortunate that the Town Hall qualified for the Government's Business Support Grant Scheme to cover loss of income due to Covid-19. This has kept us afloat until the Hall can re-open again and has enabled us to make the Hall Covid secure, repair a leak and the old boiler in the Cottage, paint the stage area and pay our bills! We are now considering the requirements for refurbishing the Community Information Point and the range of buildings in which that sits. Let's hope there are grants for that as it will be an expensive job.

A big thank you to our caretaker, Sarah Hymas, for keeping an eye on the Hall while it has been empty, giving it a regular deep clean, and ensuring there were no frozen pipes over the long winter months.

Many of you would have seen our magnificent Christmas tree with new light-up star, in December. Bigger and better than ever! A shame that we could not gather for the usual Christmas Concert. We are extremely grateful for the generous donations from the Parish Council, the *Bardfield Times* and Bardfield Charities to help us bring some Christmas cheer.

A pared-down version of the Bardfield Boules competition took place, under socially distancing rules, over the summer, with more teams than we might have expected, but no spectators and no Grand Finals Day. The competition is back for 2021 and hopefully we will be able to gather for the Finals early this autumn.

Thanks to the Town Hall Management Committee for continued support and actions during this difficult year.

Committee meetings have continued, via Zoom. Not ideal, but it has meant we can continue to plan for the care and upkeep of the Town Hall and will be ready for bookings again once permitted. It may take a little while for regular users to feel able to start up again. However we look forward to seeing the Town Hall as busy as previously, with many enjoyable and sociable events for all.

Carolynne Ruffle
Chairman

Patricia Walsh
Treasurer



Great Bardfield allotments

With the lockdowns, this was the year I thought the allotments would be weed-free and full of produce, but of course, people had to shield, were key workers, or were unwell themselves. For those who could maintain their plots, they were a lifeline to get outside and do something.

I am always amazed that people think you can plant your plot and leave it to get on with it. No, you have to maintain your plot, and the commitment has to be there otherwise in a short time it can get away from you.

For myself personally, I deliberately leave my digging for the winter months, January/February. It gives a reason to get up there and is so good for my well-being, hearing the birds, whilst digging on a cold day. I always leave feeling better.

The harvest was good generally with a variety of vegetables. One of the holders planted some small fruit trees that had a good yield for a first year, I think a couple of us are thinking about doing this in the future.

Rhubarb is crowning, some plots are planted with broad beans and purple sprouting broccoli, and potatoes are getting ready to plant on warmer days. seeds are ordered and a new gardening year is beginning.

Tansey Bolsom





Great Bardfield Charities

I am pleased to present the report of the Great Bardfield Charities covering the last 12 months from May 2020 to April 2021.

During this extraordinary and uncertain period we have held quarterly meetings, (latterly by Zoom), where we considered all applications for grants received from our community.

In February, we accepted the retirement of our Trustee, Tony Hayward. Tony, as Nominative Trustee, held the position of treasurer over many years, and we are very grateful to Tony, and thank him for his invaluable contribution to the group.

We are pleased to welcome Mick Gell as both Nominative Trustee and treasurer, into the vacant seat.

To ensure that there is an awareness of the Great Bardfield Charities throughout the community, posters are displayed on the Village Notice Boards and in the Community Information Point. Details of the Charity are also included on the Parish Council website, and the Great Bardfield Charities Facebook page. Our meeting dates appear in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Bardfield Online Community Facebook page the month before the quarterly meeting takes place.

The Trustees ask that villagers are mindful of family, neighbours and friends who may benefit, but not be aware of the Charity provision, or who are unable to make an independent application, particularly during the current effects of the coronavirus.

In extraordinary situations, urgent applications will be considered between

meetings. The trustees will reply to all applicants.

The Great Bardfield Charity operates under a Scheme, which clearly defines the purpose and terms under which our funds can be allocated. The Scheme is overseen by the Charities Commission which invests our capital fund, and it is the interest accrued quarterly from this capital fund which the Charity receives and thus allocates. Despite the national economic effects of the coronavirus, the sound investments of the Charities Commission have resulted in steady returns of income and as such we have been able to support the applications received.

As Trustees we are continually mindful of the generosity of our benefactors and it is only through them, that we are able today to financially assist the residents and organisations of the parish of Great Bardfield. However, the last bequest was gifted by Christiana Sams in 1994, and we would note again that through Ms Sams' wonderful legacy, our village Charity benefits substantially and continuously, making it possible to support over 40 vulnerable residents, twice yearly with a contribution to fuel costs, amongst the many other social benefits listed below.

The Charity Expenditures over the Year April 2020 – March 2021 are outlined as follows:

Income including £21,276.36
bank interest

Total Expenditure £20,962.27

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



Examples of grants made in the last year include:

- Contributions for fuel payments for pensioners and others in need
- Grocery vouchers
- Provision of disability equipment and hospital travel expenses
- Personal para-medical services
- Educational – supporting school curricular and extra-curricular activities, student projects and travel, school uniform and local school transport, equipment and books for school students, university students and apprentices
- Church improvements to facilitate auditory communication for parishioners
- Village groups, club and societies

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.

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

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

Pat Coles
Chair of the Bardfield Charities

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

Pat Coles – Chair

Linseys, Bridge Street, Gt Bardfield 01371 810995

Brenda Poston – Secretary

Bucks House, Vine Street, Gt Bardfield 01371 810519

Mick Gell – Nominative Trustee and Treasurer 01371 810113

3, Mill Close, Gt Bardfield

Debbie Rogers – Minutes Secretary 01371 811083

Mick Gell – Co-opted Trustee 01371 810113

3 Mill Close, Gt Bardfield

Annika Woodcock – Co-opted Trustee 07900 491636

Yew Tree Cottage, Dunmow Rd, Gt Bardfield



The Bardfield Times

It is a great credit to all involved with the *BT* that despite the difficulties of the past year the team have continued to produce the magazine.

We were very sad that during the year we lost our excellent editor David Yates as he and Joyce moved to Saffron Walden to be closer to their family. Thank you David for all you have brought to the *BT* over the years.

Having volunteered to take on the challenging task of filling David's shoes I can say that the magazine only works because of the support of a tremendous team of volunteers. From the deliverers, organised by Ray Coles and Paul Euesden, to the regular contributors who keep the articles and photographs coming in. Thanks to those who manage the finances: Jackie Newton, Treasurer, and Kate Fox who deals with the advertising, ensuring we have a regular income; and to Alicia Holmes who types any handwritten contributions.

A special mention is due to our layout designer, Joe Jones. Without her patience and professional expertise I would struggle! What a brilliant team.

One of our long-standing contributors who has decided that it's time to retire is Tony Hayward who has written the Countryfile articles giving insight into the world of farming since the magazine was launched in the 1980s. His articles provide an important record, mapping the social and political influences on farming over more than 40 years. In fact the complete collection of the magazines over this period provides an

interesting, unique and valuable resource showing how village life has changed and developed. So, as the village comes back to life after lockdown, please keep those contributions coming.

Janet Dyson
Editor

| The Bardfield Times | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Statement of Account for Year Ending 31st March 2021 | | |
| | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 |
| Opening balance | 1,107.29 | -509.74 |
| Income | | |
| Advertising | 8,107.00 | 9,075.50 |
| Subs/Sales | 6.20 | 106.25 |
| Fundraising/Cinema | | 2,686.13 |
| Donation | | 50.00 |
| | £8,113.20 | £11,917.88 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Printing | 5,700.00 | 7,772.00 |
| Stationery/Other | 19.65 | 128.38 |
| Postage | 173.84 | 176.62 |
| Siteground Sub | 14.34 | 348.65 |
| Cinema | 88.00 | 1,444.94 |
| Donations | 350.00 | 940.00 |
| | £6,345.83 | £10,810.59 |
| Closing Balance | £1,767.37 | £1,107.29 |

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Current A/c: | £7,096.00 |
| Savings A/c: | £3,043.64 |
| Cash in hand: | £ 155.00 |

Jackie Newton
Honorary Treasurer



Bardfield Community Choir

In December 2019 a choir of 40 sang joyfully at the Town Hall Carol Concert and joined with other singers at a Carol Service in the Catholic Church. Little did we know that these were to be our last public performances for many months.

Of all the activities that have been hit by lockdown live music-making has been one of the most difficult to overcome. I know that many people have missed their regular opportunity to get together to make music by singing and playing. It is still not clear what the requirements will be to enable choirs and instrumentalists to sing and play together safely but as soon as possible we plan for the choir to resume

our weekly rehearsals in the Town Hall. It would be wonderful just to make music for our own pleasure – is it too much to hope that we may be able to share some Christmas music in the Town Hall this year?

Janet Dyson
Musical Director

Bardfield Cinema Club

The Cinema Club will be approaching its twelfth season of showing a range of recently released films in the Town Hall. The season runs from October through to July, showing one film each month, and we anticipate resuming our Club activities in October, pending the lifting of Covid restrictions. Cinema Club has been a very popular activity in the village, attracting not only our own community but an increasing number of visitors from surrounding villages too. We currently have a membership of fifty-six people with audiences averaging fifty to sixty each month.

Thanks to the Bardfield Charities we were able to purchase the essential state-of-the-art projection equipment to allow us to show quality DVDs as soon as they become available, and in the coming year we look forward to catching up on the excellent films missed during the last twelve months. Details of these films will be found in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Great Bardfield Community web site.

We have a small team of volunteers who help set up the Town Hall each month and we serve hot and

cold drinks prior to each screening.

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

We look forward to opening our doors once more and welcoming you all back to Cinema Club 2021.

Ray Coles





Top row: Village turns out for Danny Smith, VE Day – Linda Gustar with her mum in her land army attire, a winner of the runner bean challenge, Remembrance wreath-laying by schoolchildren. Next row: Snowy windmill, Cllr Graham sorting prescriptions in CIP, Town Hall Christmas Tree. Next row: VE celebrations at Mill Close, annual Tractor Rally, Secret Stone Painter spreading love, frosty Gary the Goat (c/o Marjorie Paulyn), Bottom row: A new business is born, the Liam Giving Tree, (in memory of Liam Clarke) c/o Forbes family, Christmas flowers at St Mary's, January floods.





Bardfield Horticultural Society

Well, well what a year! All our lovely events planned throughout the year had to be cancelled. I believe it is the first time since 1977 we have held no Horticultural Shows here in Bardfield. Thank goodness we had a very successful talk in February from David Ward about Beth Chatto and her wonderful work and gardens. An afternoon event which was very well supported and enjoyed by 80 people. Who knew it would be the only thing we were able to do together in 2020?

The committee managed to get together once in the Summer for a socially distanced meeting in my garden where we presented Philip Chapman the President's Award for his sterling work on our committee for so many years. The sun shone and we discussed some new ideas for the future and thoroughly enjoyed being together for a chat.

The children's runner bean challenge was judged on that day,

every entrant was awarded a little something but the prize winners were Madelaine Woodcock, Edie Brockwell and Benjamin Yarrow. Every year we award the Banksian Medal for points gained in our two shows. As none were held this year it was agreed to give this to Tansey Bolsom who happily gives her time and is invaluable at our shows each year.

Every month throughout this year a *Bardfield Times* has appeared thanks go to our committee who have managed to find something to include and also to the *Bardfield Times* for continuing to publish. Well done!

As a society we are so encouraged by how many people have said they are missing the trips, shows and events we put on each year. It makes us realise how important these societies are in our village.

How we long to be able to do the things which we all took for granted in the past, a coffee out with a friend,

*Beth
Chatto's
garden in
February*





*Summer
succulents
in Beth
Chatto's
garden*

a visit to a garden, or a day out at the seaside, even a trip to the play park with the children sounds wonderful. A lesson for us all on how much we need each other, to survive and enjoy life.

When we are able to restart our events again please come and support us by joining in. Everyone is welcome. We would also appreciate some extra committee members to join us with new energy and ideas.

Some photos of things we have done in previous years have been included to cheer you up, and give us all new hope for things to return to normal as soon as possible.

Keep enjoying your hobbies and your gardens.

**Linda Prior
Chairman**



*Philip
Chapman
receiving
the
President's
Award*



Plantings at Long Green



*Field
maples
on Long
Green*

The trees and shrubs which were planted some ten years ago are now very well established.

Many of the field maples are in excess of 5m in height and are sufficiently mature to be able to set their characteristic winged seeds. Likewise, both the plantings of sweet chestnut and walnut have flowered and begun to bear fruits for the very first time. Among the shrubby species, the spindles and viburnums continue to flower and fruit well along with the existing hawthorn and blackthorn bushes.

*Cowslips
growing in
profusion*

Some routine maintenance work had to be carried out beneath the trees

during the course of the year to ensure that ongoing bramble and nettle growth was adequately suppressed, and also to prepare the ground conditions for the later sowing of bluebell seeds. In addition to the general site and fence maintenance, a small number of additional plantings of saplings have been made where open areas on the site have allowed: mainly hazel, oak and field maple. These rooted transplants had to be routinely watered during the dry summer months, but thus far all seemed to have survived (but may need nurturing for another year yet).

In the accompanying grassland adjacent to the track wild flowers continue to flourish with cowslips being a particular feature in the spring. Little maintenance is required here other than to ensure that sufficient light reaches these meadow treasures: but in future years it may be necessary to lift the tree canopy a little by removing some of the lowest of the tree branches.

DW Joyce





The Oxlip Recovery Project



The plantings in Piper's Meadow have suffered from rather mixed fortunes in the 2020 season. The tree felling and tree plantings carried out during the period from winter 2018 to early spring 2019 had a negligible effect on the oxlip population, and plants have continued to thrive much as before. The 'late-hay-cut' mowing regime seems to have been successful for encouraging plants and wildlife in general with the exception of a noticeable stinging-nettle invasion close to the river. Left unchecked this aggressive species would soon have spread further into the meadow, and so necessary control measures were undertaken to control it.

Less successful, however, has been the community tree-planting undertaken in March 2019. The dry summer conditions following planting resulted in poor establishment and survival of the trees and saplings, particularly those bare-rooted individuals: in all, one river birch and all five alders were lost, leaving just the four remaining more mature

birches. In the late summer of 2020 a decision was made to replace the dead individuals, and necessary site preparations made in advance of an autumn replanting. Replacement pot-grown saplings of native birch and alder were sourced from the Woodland Trust at very little cost and planted into their prepared spots in late November – an optimum time for such planting. It is hoped that these replacement saplings will have a better chance of survival, with a planned regime of regular watering during the drier months, combined with control of 'weeds and grasses' in the immediate vicinity of the saplings. During 2020 the issues of access and usability have been addressed and the contractor responsible for mowing the site has been advised as to what is needed.

At the southern end of the site, close to the entranceway, a well-mown amenity area with tables and seating has been established for those wishing to picnic or simply rest. This area is already in use and should prove even more popular in the future when current government restrictions are lifted. Also, the present figure-of-eight pathway traversing the whole site will continue to be maintained for the more adventurous and those simply enjoying more of what the meadow has to offer.

DW Joyce



Freshwell Health Centre

Your surgery cares for 7,532 people living in Great Bardfield and surrounding villages, a rise of 1.95% on last year. We have 41 staff including six GPs, two registrar GPs and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner. Our clinical team contains Practice Nurses, Health Care Assistants, musculoskeletal specialists, a Consultant Radiologist, a radiographer, a Low Carb health coach and a social prescriber. We have a large team of support staff including a dispensary team.

Staff News: We have had another year with a stable workforce which has allowed us to give good continuity of care despite the pandemic around us. We are a training practice and you will notice students and registrars sitting in on appointments sometimes. Your cooperation with this is a real help to them in their learning. This year we have had Dr Shanil Shivji working alongside Dr Chelvy Manoharan who has returned for a second spell with us.

Covid: Unlike many surgeries, we opened our doors to patients early on last year. We appreciate the way that you have observed social distancing protocols and our new one-way system. We switched to a telephone triage system last year where GPs called patients to assess their needs. This allowed us to consult with large numbers of patients remotely and to see those who needed it face to face. From 1 April 2021 we will be increasing the numbers of face to face GP appointments as, hopefully, the Covid restrictions ease.

PCN: We have now joined the Colne Valley Primary Care Network (PCN) along with the surgeries in the Hedinghams, Halstead, Earls Colne, Coggeshall and Kelvedon. Together we have vaccinated over 15,000 patients at our shared vaccination hub at Earls Colne. We are indebted to the patients, families, neighbours and volunteers who made sure that anyone in the village who needed a vaccination was able to get to The Pump House. The community response was heart-warming to see and many of you will have seen Freshwell staff at the Hub when you came for your vaccination. Some of our patients have helped out as

volunteers there too and we are grateful to them.

CREAMER Fund Support: We are so lucky to have the CREAMER Fund supporting patient care in our area. They have a new website www.creamerfund.co.uk which is worth visiting.

Dispensary: Our dispensary service has made major changes to adapt to the infection prevention demands brought on by Covid. We did not have space to have both patients waiting for an appointment and a dispensary queue indoors so had to turn our staff kitchen into a dispensary serving room overnight last April. We apologise for you having to queue outside in all weathers. The community stepped in to help residents out by organising collections and deliveries of medications for Bardfield patients to make sure that nobody in the villages was unable to pick up their prescriptions.

Low Carb: We have had considerable success in helping patients lose weight over the last two years. We have developed a practice website: www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk, a 4-week meal planner and a 6-week structured video course that our PCN health coach helps deliver via Zoom (visit cvpcn.co.uk/weight-loss-and-low-carb). We have also managed to help a number of our patients achieve remission of their type 2 diabetes, de-prescribe and some of our patients have even come off their insulin.

David Shedden
Practice Manager



CREAMER Fund

This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for us all. The CREAMER Trustees have not been able to meet in person since the AGM last March 2020. We will not be holding our AGM in March this year due to Covid restrictions. The Charity Commissioners do not require us to do so in these exceptional circumstances.

Although we could hold the AGM via Zoom, we would like to have a 'normal' meeting as soon as we are able to do so safely. As a health-based charity we feel we should not take any risks. In the meantime we will provide annual reports from the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The officers have kept the Trustees informed via Zoom, email and phone.

I would like to thank the Trustees for their support. We say goodbye to John Richardson, our 'Mr Fix-It,' who has decided to stand down after being a strong presence for many years. Jackie Jervis is also standing down due to personal circumstances. Jackie has been a huge help over the years, especially with the raffle, which she will continue to support when she can. Our thanks to you both.

We currently have a very strong team of elected officers in post, supported by David Shedden, Anita Clapson and the staff at the surgery.

Our Vice-Chair, Dr Andrew Hildrey, without whom there would be no CREAMER Fund, is a constant support. Sarah McCarthy is an excellent and proactive secretary, comfortable with modern technology and with vital help from her husband Rob, has moved us forward with a social media presence in the form of a Facebook page and an excellent website.

Debbie Rogers our treasurer, is another very busy member of the charity. Debbie has brought enthusiasm and new ideas and with the support of the Trustees she has explored several different avenues for the benefit of the CREAMER Fund. Through Debbie, we have recruited two new Trustees, Annika Woodcock and Philippa Venner. We welcome them warmly and look forward to working together.

The disruption from Covid has affected our fundraising enormously. Our Facebook and website presence has raised our profile and offered a way for the community to make donations and we have already received funds through the website.

This year we have spent a total £33,347.04 which includes spending on Ultrasound and X-ray, Physiotherapy services and equipment maintenance. Fundraising is an absolute priority but several ideas have sadly not yet come fruition because of the virus. They are delayed, not abandoned.

At the last AGM, I gave notice that I would be stepping down as Chair in 2022. I have enjoyed being involved in the CREAMER Fund since its inception in 1993, and working with dedicated, enthusiastic Trustees.

Christopher Blewett
Chairman



Great Bardfield Historical Society



*Above left:
The 'splash'
c. 1910*

*Right:
Miss Sam's
café and
the police
station
during
WWII*

*Boating on
the Pant c.
1930s*



On March 14th 2020 we held our AGM with an excellent talk by Clare Willetts, Collection and Exhibition Curator at Braintree Museum, on the *Women of the Courtauld Family*.

Although we did not realise it at the time this was to be our last meeting for many months. The programme of talks and visits we had organised for the coming year did not take place. The Cottage Museum, Bawden Room and Cage remained closed. However, at the time of writing it seems likely that some of our speakers are willing to

give their talks, starting in October in the Town Hall, and we are planning to send out a programme as soon as dates have been confirmed. It is unlikely that the Museum will open as the required distancing is not possible and many of our volunteers are vulnerable. However, it may be possible for the Museum and Bawden Room to be opened up for visitors by appointment.

There have been some extremely interesting local history articles published in the *Bardfield Times* during lockdown – great to see people doing research and sharing their memories.

Our publications have continued to sell through the bookshop so we have had a small income but the group visits to the village which have boosted our income in recent years have not been able to take place. Let's hope that by the autumn our usual activities will be underway – look out for announcements in the *BT* and on Facebook.

Janet Dyson
Chairman



Great Bardfield Carpet Bowls

When the Parish Clerk asked me for a report on the year, I did think of sending back a blank sheet of paper. Hasn't 2020 been awful?!

In my last report I told you that, with the outbreak of coronavirus, what was already a chaotic season, fell into disarray. Since early March 2020 all games were cancelled and the Essex Committee decided to leave the season open with the hope that the remaining games could be played before the new season starts. Unfortunately, that never happened. As we all now know the virus brought a halt to everything.

I represent the Essex Association on the English Association's Committee which held various meetings on Zoom. There has been no carpet bowls nationwide since the start of the pandemic with the exception of a few clubs which did try to reopen after the first lockdown. The English Association worked on a set of guidelines to follow in anticipation of a restart under restrictions and tried to get the sport on the list of government recognised indoor sports.

Locally I was in liaison with the Town Hall Committee about a restart after the first lockdown and brushed up on my risk assessment skills for a planned restart. Unfortunately, the second wave put an end to that.

The biggest worry now for those that oversee the sport is what the level of uptake will be when we are able to get back into the village halls and start bowling again. Having had a year without bowling, how many will want to start again?

Each year I tell you a little bit about the club for the benefit of those new to the village. Our Club has been going strong for over 30 years now, with club nights every Wednesday for all those years (until 2020). It is now even more important for clubs around the country to encourage new members to bolster numbers and bring in new blood and interest. Having been stuck inside for so long this is an ideal time to think about joining us. As I write this, the rate of infection is going down slowly and the rate of vaccination is rising. So, based on the government's predictions there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Soon it may be time to brush the cobwebs off my risk assessments and start up a conversation with the Town Hall Committee. I doubt whether there will be a summer league this year and so our focus at this time will be the winter league starting in September. We normally arrange some friendly fixtures with other clubs and villages in the area and attend various Charity events.

So, for those new to the parish; not only is it an ideal way of meeting new friends locally but also finding out about other villages in the area. We would really welcome some new faces into the club so if you think it might be worth a look; when restrictions ease, please do not be shy in coming forward. The Club normally meets all year round on a Wednesday at the Town Hall from about 7:45 pm.

This is a sport for all. Despite the name 'carpet' it is not the toy game that you play in your lounge. The bowls are 10cm (4 inches) in diameter and the carpet is 10 metres by 2 metres. Carpet Bowls is a proper skilful sport open to all, the young and not so young, the able and less able bodied. Finally; it is cheap as the club provides the bowls etc; it prides itself on its friendly nature and is as competitive as you wish to make it. If you would like more information about carpet bowls call me, Cliff 07582 540524, or Lynda 07977 403122.

Lawn Bowls. Unfortunately, Bardfield does not have 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. As this is an outdoor sport the risks were less and there was a limited 2020 season, with numbers severely restricted and with rigorous following of government social distancing rules. I personally did not attend my club at Castle Hedingham last year as I am in the clinically extremely vulnerable category and didn't want to chance anything. They were very good to me, offering to close the green to everyone else if I wanted to go for a practice!

It does look like there will be a more or less full

programme for 2021. There are clubs at Dunmow, Thaxted, and Stebbing to mention just a few. As I said above, Lynda and I play at Castle Hedingham. The outdoor season will soon be here so if you would like contact details, we should be able to help you out here too.

Clifford Richardson

The Bardfield Players

It's been a funny old year. We started rehearsing a play called *The Seance* in February 2020, with the intention of performing it the following May.

Prior to the commencement of rehearsals, we had the usual difficulties in casting. It is not that we lack enough talent, all of the actors associated with The Players are very good and adaptable, but matching up the genders and ages demanded by the script always seems to throw up difficulties (we could do with one or two men under 45). However, as usual, we overcame the difficulties and set to it full steam ahead, with Sheree Riley at the helm.

Rehearsals were going well, but as the weeks passed it became increasingly obvious that the country was shutting down. Disappointingly, the only safe and sensible thing to do was, for the first time ever, to cancel our production.

Over the year we have had a few Zoom quizzes, and play readings, which were fun.

Chris Couldridge Paul Boon and I (socially distanced of course) also took the opportunity to replace the roofing felt which had blown off in the wind, on our storage facility, with much more secure and long-lasting roof panels. So, hopefully, I will not have to go up there again and repair it again until I am 80!



In the hope of providing some entertainment to the village, Paul has made several videos of past productions available on YouTube. Other than that, things have been very quiet.

I do have hopes that we will be able to put on a show nearer the end of 2021, but we shall just have to wait and see.

**Ian Ruffle, Chairman
The Bardfield Players**



Great Bardfield Primary School report

AIM HIGH – TRY YOUR BEST – GO FAR

The 20th March 2020 will be a date that sticks in my mind for a long time. The beginning of the first lockdown was representative of many emotions for different people but on that day I remember feeling a sense of disbelief as I watched the children leave at the end of the day. I could not believe that our school would be closed for the majority of our pupils and at that time we didn't know how long that would be for; it felt surreal. Walking through the corridors the following week, there was a sad silence without the happy hubbub of the children's voices, laughter and the constant reassurance of the teachers' voices as they delivered their lessons. When faced with adversity, it is important to take positive action so I asked the children to draw rainbow pictures in support of the NHS. What we created with the pictures was an uplifting message for everyone in our village – our Wall of Hope.

In that first lockdown there was so much fear and uncertainty, half of our staff were shielding, forming our Home Team and the other half came in to school, forming our School Team. Initially we had sixteen pupils in school and we supported the pupils with a skeleton staff in a bid to keep everyone safe. That was the beginning of home learning for our parents and a learning curve for us as a school as delivering teaching in this way was an alien concept. That first lockdown was helped by the fact that it was in

the summer term and we were determined to get the children, both in school and at home, outside as much as possible. The children in school were able to enjoy the wildlife garden.



On 1st June it was possible to bring some of our pupils back to school, to a part time provision and our priority was our Year 6 pupils. The summer term for a Year 6 pupil is the one of the most significant elements of their primary school journey as they sit their SATs exams, go away from home for a week on their residential visit to the Isle of Wight and prepare to transition to secondary school. Sadly, the class of 2020 missed out on so many of these experiences; the children were so upset about not being able to sit their tests and were devastated that their trip was cancelled. Bringing these pupils back to school even for a few short weeks, in two separate groups, was key for their emotional well-being. The children still had the opportunity to take part in some of the end of year traditions such as the traditional shirt signing.

Wall of Hope





*The Class
of 2020
Year 6*

One of the most anticipated events of the school calendar is the final assembly at the end of the year. This is when the children get together and sing their hearts out, we make awards and then give the Year 6 pupils a rousing send-off. We were unable to do that this time and instead had an outdoor assembly for Year 6 pupils and their families. Everyone brought picnics and then we brought the children together to wish them luck as they moved on to the next steps on their school journey.

*Year 6
2020
shirt
signing*

As the summer term last year closed, we looked forwards with

optimism to the autumn term and the opportunities a new school year always brings. It was clear though that the school routines and operations were going to be far removed from normal, as we made the school as Covid safe as possible. We miss the normal routines more than anything: the ability to mix freely between year groups and see friends, parents coming on to the school playground and being able to play and have lunch and break together. Many sacrifices have been made but the children have taken it all in their stride and have been incredibly sensible and mature in how they have followed the new Covid safe rules. We are very proud of them.

When the children returned in the autumn term many of them had not been in school since 20th March as it had not been possible to have all pupils back at the end of the summer term. Therefore, we decided that we needed some Recovery Time and dedicated the four weeks at the beginning of the term to this, to allow the children to settle back into their classrooms,





into face-to-face learning and into being together again. Our parents did a fantastic job in the first lockdown with managing home learning but inevitably, without the normal learning experience of school, the children had some gaps. We identified these quickly and put in place a programme of interventions to allow the children to make solid progress and regain some of the lost ground. Teachers also offered some extra tuition sessions after school to support children with catching up.

In the face of many restrictions it was very important to have as many of the traditional school events as possible. We still managed to have our Great Bardfield Bake-off competition and raised a fantastic £175 – the most we have ever raised! We always love our Harvest Assembly; sadly this was not allowed under the restrictions however this didn't deter the children and each class still created some wonderful Harvest-themed pieces of work. Dragon class were very creative with their Little Red Hen Puppet show.

Another fun event that we have every year is Roald Dahl dress-up day. This is when all of the children dress up as their favourite character from one of his books and we have a day of stories and activities. Some of our Pixies decided to dress up as The Witches.

Being part of the wider community is very important to the school and every November it is our tradition to take the oldest children to the War Memorial in the village to lay a wreath on Remembrance weekend. Our School Ambassadors Alice and Charlie laid our wreath for us this year.

We also love going to St Mary the Virgin church in the village for our



traditional Christmas Carol Concert but sadly this was not possible this year. We still went ahead with some playground carols and our Reception and Key Stage One put on a Nativity and Christmas showcase for the rest of the school. We made the most of the circumstances we were in and ended the autumn term on a positive note.

To be faced with another lockdown at the beginning of January was a low point for the children, staff, parents and governors. We were just beginning

Our School Ambassadors lay our school wreath

The Nativity by Key Stage One





Roald Dahl dress-up day

to turn the corner at the end of the autumn term and were so pleased with the progress that the children had made since the first lockdown in the summer. This time the Shielding and Critical Worker criteria changed so we were able to have all staff in school. We averaged 42 children each day, more than double the number in the first lockdown. Once again our parents and pupils were faced with home learning and it was clear that everyone's resilience was going to be tested.

Taking part in Science week

This time we delivered the remote learning differently, having listened to the feedback from parents and looked at what was actually possible within the parameters of our school.



We wanted to enable the children to connect with each other and with their teachers so in addition to the learning that the teachers were having to deliver in school, and video lessons, we offered three Zoom sessions per day with the class teacher, a class assembly and a whole school assembly once per week. Offering this contact went a long way to supporting the pupils with their emotional health and well-being because they did not feel as isolated as they had in the first lockdown. Having this lockdown in the winter months was so much more challenging because it meant that pupils were not able to be outside so much.

On 8th March we were delighted to welcome everyone back to school again; it had been a very long 8 weeks! The children returned with so much positivity and enthusiasm for learning. This time the children reflected on how much they missed their friends and that sense of being together and companionship. Once again we had a recovery period so that the children could make the important adjustment to being back in school and learning in the classroom. Our routines and procedures have had to stay exactly as they were in the autumn term so that everyone can continue to be Covid safe. This three-week period involved being outside as much as possible and taking part in lots of physical activities. We are pleased that we have been able to continue to offer a sports club for each bubble and so that everyone can take part, we have offered this for free this year. Pegasus Class celebrated their return with a class cake.

Part of our Recovery activities has been a Science Week. Led by Miss



Steward our Science Leader. All of the children took part in practical investigations with eggs to coincide with Easter. The children had so much fun using and applying their science knowledge and investigative skills.

We have now been dealing with the challenges of the pandemic at school for over a year. There have been difficult times but I am very proud of what we have achieved in keeping our school operational and at every stage, putting the children first. This would in no way have been possible without the unwavering commitment and dedication of all of the teachers and staff. One of the best aspects of our school is that staff really care about and support each other; it is what makes us a strong team. It is this sense of togetherness, in the face of adversity, that has enabled us to face the barriers of the pandemic and move forwards. Our governors, and in particular Jane Tillotson our Chair of Governors, have been right behind key decisions and have ensured that we offer the safest and best learning opportunities for the pupils. We are lucky to have supportive parents who have tried their very best with the delivery of home learning and who have put their trust and faith in the school, at the most difficult times.

We are very lucky to have people come and volunteer at the school because they want to offer their support and skills, to help the children, in any way they can. For the last three years we have been extremely lucky to have had Juliet Garmoyle work with pupils offering them emotional support through play. She has enriched the worlds of many of our children and for some, turned their lives around



*Juliet
Garmoyle*

through her kindness, by making these pupils feel valued and special. Juliet also supported the school as a hard-working Governor. We were incredibly sad to learn that Juliet passed away in March. She was a true inspiration to our whole school community. We will miss her so much.

The opportunities of the summer term now stretch ahead of us and we are all determined to make the most of them. Our Year 6 pupils won't be able to go on their residential visit but we are hoping that the rules will lift and we will be able to enjoy a week of different activities in June. We have also tentatively booked a day at the seaside for the whole school in July.

When I look at our Wall of Hope that we made last year, I now see something very different. Last year it was uncertainty, fear and trepidation. A year later I see light, opportunity and laughter. Our school must move on from the dark days of this last lockdown and we must be ever mindful of how far we have come; stronger together.

**Mrs Alison Kerrell
Headteacher**



Great Bardfield After School and Breakfast Club

A year of lockdown restrictions for our charity club has been tough, to say the least. The lack of grants available for charities has meant we have suffered financially. Full-time staff are still employed and overhead bills still come in. Certificates need renewing, NI and pension contributions still need paying – but there is no money coming in. The restriction of a maximum of 15 children attending gave us little chance to recoup our losses when we reopened last autumn. We continue to apply/beg for grants and donations, as our club is vital to parents. Our insurers have refused to compensate us for losses incurred due to interruption to service, citing that Covid was not listed. We continue to fight this through the Ombudsman.

For over 25 years our After School and Breakfast Club has enabled parents to work/rest while we take care of their children in our purpose-built facilities in the grounds of the village school.

We ‘normally’ open from Monday to Friday during school terms. We are an Ofsted registered childcare provider, a registered charity and our committee is run by volunteers. Fundraising is a key element. The day-to-day running of the Club is undertaken by a group of friendly, DBS checked and qualified staff led by Pat Moore. Following bumper years of record numbers on roll, which paid for staff, licenses, overheads, food and craft resources, this last year we have only been open from September to December.

Taking staff off furlough mid-term to reopen is not commercially wise as parents are unsure about their work arrangements and, let’s be honest, there is little planning possible with lockdown. So, we will open again after Easter on 12th April, for both breakfast and after school, with parents masked-up and dropping off/collecting pupils from the school front gate only.

Respecting Covid, our Breakfast Club is only open from 7.30 at just £6.50 a head, including a cooked breakfast if wanted. Mary runs our Breakfast Club supported by Carol, who drops the children into their morning playground lines.

After School Club runs until 6pm every day (other than 5.30pm on Fridays). We collect your child(ren) from the classroom and take them back to our warm building to play, do craft activities, watch TV, play computer games, do homework and role play – with or without dinner. If they do afterschool activities at the primary school, our staff will collect them afterwards. Please note that due to Covid, pick-ups are only at 4, 5, or 6pm (5.30pm Fridays) as we need to escort them down to the gate.

If you are interested in finding out more about what we offer then ring 01371 811580 for an informal chat. Donations of craft, toys always welcome. More information about the Club can be found by following our Facebook Page for updates @Great Bardfield After School Club.



Mel Sims
Chair, Great Bardfield After
School and Breakfast Club



Great Bardfield Folk Club



*Above top: Anna and Ray performing online
Below: the Mains'l Haul Shanty Crew*



Julia Mascetti performing on a harp

The year started pretty normally from a Folk Club perspective. On January 9th we hosted our usual Local Artists' showcase. Three artists were featured; a relative folk club newcomer Julia Mascetti, who plays originals and covers with an unusual twist – she accompanies herself on a harp; regular performer Paul Brewer, who specialises in plaintive bluegrass ballads and songs which tell a good story; and finally, as organisers we (Anna and Ray) cheekily inserted ourselves into the third Local Artist slot (well, we ARE local!) and used the opportunity to try out some new songs we'd been working on in duo format. There was still time for a singaround, and January seemed to feature a particularly delightful crop of excellent self-penned songs from a variety of participants.

On February 13th we were treated to a 45-minute set of beautifully-written songs, performed with great

energy by the four-piece *Thursday's Band*. They are old friends, based in Cambridgeshire, and with their combination of two guitars, violin, viola, and three-part harmony always makes for a lovely evening. (The fact that their name matches the day the Folk Club meets just makes their appearance seem like destiny).

Sometimes at Folk Nights a theme seems to develop of its own accord, and in February the presence of shanty singers (the *Mains'l Haul Shanty Crew* from Maldon) in the audience tended to cause the other performers to select songs of a nautical nature. Audience participation was also a thread, as



performers selected songs with a good chorus in order to hear the shanty crew singing along.

On March 12th we were especially pleased to welcome the Bury St Edmunds duo *SimpleFolk*. They're a relatively new combination although each member separately has considerable performing experience. They chose their name to reflect their 'straightforward blend of two voices and one guitar,' and their repertoire of traditional and contemporary folk songs kept us captivated all evening.

By March we were well aware of the growing threat of Covid-19 and debated cancelling the folk club, even though much larger gatherings were still officially permitted. In the end, we went ahead, but took precautions – no hugging or touching, wrapped biscuits only, and lots of sanitiser. Looking back in hindsight, just being indoors with people seems like a risk – but we made the best decisions we could with the information we had at the time.

Later in the month we started to see folk clubs and festivals start to announce 'with great regret' and 'just to be on the safe side' that events were being cancelled or postponed. We decided to do the same, and notified the next few scheduled guests – who of course understood. Then on March 23rd we were told that all unnecessary social contact must cease.

As the weeks went on, we began to understand what this meant for musicians, performers, and all those associated with the music and performing arts industry. People found themselves without a livelihood – and although there was some assistance (belatedly) for self-employed people, many performers did not qualify for

it for various reasons. The world became a strange place. Some people lost loved ones or had frightening experiences with the virus themselves. We realised that we couldn't meet our friends and family. Key workers risked their lives every day, and the rest of us – performers and others – worried about our jobs and whether they would survive the lockdown measures.

And yet – there were bright spots in the gloom. Many musicians, ourselves included, sat in our gardens and played where people could hear us, or made videos and put them on social media. Several folk clubs found ways of going online. A lot of people – some sooner, some later – learned to use networking programmes like Zoom to meet up virtually in groups. Unfortunately, communicating by these methods involves an unpredictable time-lag, so the one thing we can't do is sing and play together like we could in the Friends' Meeting House – but we can perform for groups of people, and listen to others performing in far-flung parts of the country. Many musicians have found creative ways of making some sort of income – via crowd-funding, online concerts, and sponsorship programmes.

Indeed, in many ways the folk community, and probably other musical communities too, have become a much wider network. Online folk clubs often have people from Europe or North America joining them and we recently attended an online concert with nearly a thousand other households. We appeared at a charity online festival which raised £2,500. We've been 'employed' as sound technicians for fellow performers who wanted to make sure they sounded good on other people's computers – and all without leaving the house. In one sense, it's felt a lot more connected – in another, we can hardly wait until it's safe to meet again in person and all join in – harmonies please! – with the chorus.

Watch the club's website <https://greatbardfield-folk.wixsite.com/club> to see when we can get going again! Stay safe everyone.

Anna Bass and Ray Taylor



Our Forgotten Highways

Highways

What images does that word conjure up?

- cars
- potholes
- motorways
- traffic lights
- lorries
- roadworks

But they should also stir memories of:

- sunshine
- trees
- deer
- dog walks
- hares
- puddles
- flowers
- gates
- views
- grass
- brambles
- birds

These images are associated with what are commonly known as 'paths' but are more correctly classified as Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and these are also maintained by Essex County Council and their agents, Ringway Jacobs.

History

PRoWs are the remnants of a vast network of routes which were created, long before the motor car, to connect the farms, mills, churches, pubs, shops and villages in our rural landscape. Those connections which have not been upgraded to cater for our love affair with the motor car are protected for the use



of everyone and are recorded on a 'Definitive Map' which is stored at County Hall, with a copy available in the CIP. The first definitive map was created in the 1950s whilst the latest revision is dated 2002 and forms the basis of the information in Ordnance Survey maps. Any alterations to the map must go through a complicated legal process similar to a planning application. If successful these are recorded on a working copy of the map held by the County Council.

Our parish

Each PRoW is numbered and allocated to the parish they cross, so Great Bardfield has 36 paths, numbered





A byway in the parish of Great Bardfield



A bridleway in the parish of Great Bardfield



A footpath in the parish of Great Bardfield

from 1 to 40, covering about 30 miles. The paths are classified into three types defined by the way they can be accessed by their users.

Byways – these are the closest to being a road and can be used to travel on foot, horseback, pedal cycle and by motorised vehicles of all kinds, including horse-drawn. Vehicles must be taxed, insured and have passed their MOT check just as they would be

on the road. Coney Green and Long Green are our only byways and, in days gone by, most of our lanes would have had a similar feel.

Bridleways – the half-way house, where motorised vehicles are not permitted.

There are five :

- Tom's Lane, near Great Pitley Farm
- Black Lane, near Paul's Farm
- The Walk to Bluegate Farm and the Blue Egg
- The extension to The Walk towards Great Lodge and Park Hall
- The connection from Park Hall to Hunt's Farm

Footpaths – the remainder. You should only meet people on foot – no horses, bicycles or vehicles.

Survey

As with our road network, the monitoring and maintenance of our PRowS was a matter raised by the Parish Council but a lack of evidence made it difficult to progress concerns. A subcommittee, with the help of a group of volunteers, has spent the last six months walking, photographing and documenting all the paths in the Parish and are in the process of compiling a comprehensive report. Many issues have been highlighted, including:

- poor maintenance of bridges, gates and stiles
- overgrown vegetation and self-set trees blocking paths
- damaged or missing signage
- blocked ditches leading to poor winter drainage
- new fences and gates obstructing access



- lack of width and re-instatement of paths in arable areas
- PRowS which do not conform to the Definitive Map
- overuse of paths leading to erosion and excess mud

These issues will be raised with the relevant authorities to try to effect improvements.

Your help

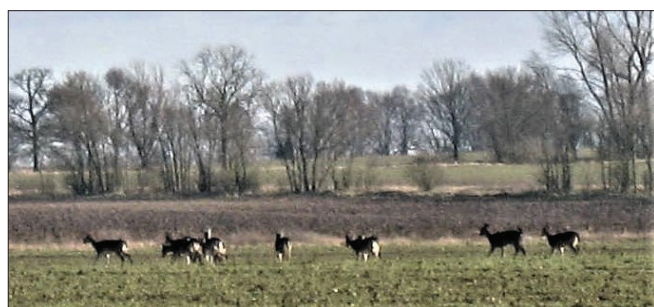
The last year has put pressure on our current network and a greater variety of linked routes would have helped. New PRowS, based on historic highways, which would enhance the range of routes available to the public are one way forward. However, a deadline, 31st December 2025, enshrined in government legislation will severely restrict the ability to create such new PRowS so there is some urgency to start the process. The committee need your help to identify where these improvements might be located and would welcome suggestions for



consideration. Contact can be made via the Parish Clerk.

The photographs, accompanying this report, show how lucky we are that this large parish has a diverse and interesting network of 'highways'. The aim is that this resource should be improved and better advertised so that the countryside is more accessible for all.

Nigel Hill





The Bardfield Volunteers

On 16th March 2020 just as the first full lockdown was announced Jan Andrews had a sleepless night and felt concerned about the virus and how some people would cope. She wrote to the Parish Council Clerk and put something on Facebook and many of us responded with offers of help. With that the Great Bardfield support group was born. Within three days 28 people had offered themselves and their services to the community. I had the available IT skills so offered to do a bit of co-ordination. The first offers of help rolled in offering grocery shopping, sourcing spare toilet rolls(!), befriending, prescription pick-ups, leaflet printing and distribution.

We had volunteers in most parts of the village and some in Little Bardfield. They put leaflets through the doors of their neighbours and offered their help.

Some people just wanted someone to talk to; let's face it, we were all a bit scared and a friendly chat was reassuring even if it was shouted from the end of the drive. Excess groceries were shared, from bananas to porridge, and over 50 people got support when they needed it.

Much of this support has continued. As time went by people were able to make their own arrangements with families and friends and the online food deliverers stepped up to the demand, but many vulnerable and lonely residents continue to receive support from a volunteer.

Prescription pick-up for those shielding was of concern to the Parish Council and the local surgery. We offered to facilitate a collection point in the village and the Thursday collection rota began with a team of two or four volunteers distributing prescriptions each Thursday. It was complicated to set up with data protection and Covid-secure systems, but thanks to Kate Fox and her negotiations and the vision of Freshwell surgery, we were able to set up a safe and efficient procedure.

As I write this article almost a year after the start of the first lockdown, 14 volunteers still deliver prescriptions to Bardfield residents every week, with

the help of Cllr Iain Graham as CIP co-ordinator, Kate Fox as liaison with Freshwell surgery and Cllr Carolynne Ruffle who was always available to pick up the slack!

In the recent floods our volunteer from Little Bardfield put on her wellies to walk to Great Bardfield to deliver prescriptions and the service continued in several inches of snow with roads that were barely drivable.

I am very proud of this community and its tremendous response in a time of crisis and would like to thank all those – too many to name here – who stepped in to give their support and continue to do so. Should we need volunteers in the future we know where to find them.

Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith CBE

Prescription pick-up point at the CIP



Great Bardfield Parish Council



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle
Chairman
01371 810986



Cllr Simon Walsh
Vice Chairman
01371 810451



Cllr Janet Dyson
07957 483207



Cllr Iain Graham
07831 595555



Cllr Darren Hockley
01371 810836



Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith
07515 398402



Cllr Paul Kennedy
01371 810540



Mrs Kate Fox
Parish Clerk
01371 810111
clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk
www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk

Community Information Point

Town Hall Cottages
01371 810327
gbcip@btconnect.com

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

