

BARTON PARISH COUNCIL

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**BARTON PARISH COUNCIL****ANNUAL REPORT 2016****Part 1**

based on **The Annual Parish Meeting**
which was held on **Tuesday 26th April 2016**
at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Barton CB23 7BD.

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<http://www.barton-cambs.org.uk/>

- **Chairman of Barton Parish Council - Bev Edwards**

Your Councillors

A new team of Parish and District Councillors was elected on 7 May 2015.

Four new Parish Councillors - Andrew Friend, Lorraine Mooney, Sarah Thomas and Barbara Tomes.

- Generally the first Tuesday of every month except August from 7.30pm
- Prior to every meeting, and for up to 10 minutes if required, members of the public are invited to bring any matters to the attention of the Council. Thereafter they may listen to Councillors debate at their meeting.

In August we (normally) do a walk around the village as a group. This is useful for highlighting any problems (potholes in pavements, overhanging trees, problems with notice boards, the village signs,

Attendance 2015-16

Bev Edwards	11
Andrew Friend	11
Hugh Greenfield	9
Lorraine Mooney	11
Margaret Penston	10
Mike Radford	7
Nigel Siddall	12
Sarah Thomas	9
Barbara Tomes	11
Francis Burkitt	5
Stephen Frost	1

Meetings

The May meeting

The PC Annual Meeting at which committee and working group members are decided. Our next is next Tuesday - May 3rd.

Chairman - B. Edwards, Vice Chair - M. Penston

Committee Chairs:

- Planning - B. Edwards
- Recreation Ground - H. Greenfield
- Highways - S. Thomas

Representatives:

- Barton Recreation Improvement Group (BRIG) - N. Siddall
- Village Hall representative - B. Tomes
- Neighbourhood Watch liaison - B. Edwards
- Barton Energy Group - B. Edwards, A Friend, M. Radford.

Keeping you informed

- Come to a meeting, raise issues, listen to debate
- Minutes of meetings on the Conkers Notice Board
- Parish Jottings in the Parish Magazine
- The Barton website

(<http://www.barton-cambs.org.uk/>)

- Facebook page (Barton Village Cambs)
- Speak to Parish Councillors around the village

Village Achievements

Villagers have worked very hard and enthusiastically on many projects to enhance village life and improve or maintain village amenities. The Parish Council is proud to have been associated with these projects and activities; several of which it initiated, others in which it had more of a supporting role. We are sincerely grateful to everyone involved, particularly the Jubilee and Village Day Committees, Barton BeaVers and Burwash Manor. Some of 25 achievements we recognised:

- Opening of Church Close Nature Reserve - 2009.
- Provision of a timber & tile bus shelter in New Road - 2008.
- New playground equipment on the Recreation Ground (zip wire, climbing unit etc.) - 2010.
- Providing at least 20 village benches (installed by the BeaVers) - 2010/2011.
- A new Sports And Social Pavilion on the Recreation Ground, costing £160,000 - 2011.
- The Jubilee Bus Shelter, built from fine green oak - 2012.
- Relaying the path from Barton to Grantchester, at a cost of over £3,700 - 2014.
- Arranging for an old telephone box to be converted to a library - 2015.

Some issues we've faced this year (most dealt with by our hardworking Clerk)

- Dog mess (most dog owners are responsible - thank you).
- Blocked rainwater drains.
- Growing numbers of commuters parking all day.
- Rats, especially in Kings Grove.
- A blocked culvert.
- Overgrown hedges.
- Inconsiderate parking, especially in High Street and outside the White Horse.
- A rabbit fence behind St. Mark's Cemetery blocked access for walkers.
- Noise complaints - 'Strawberries and Cream' music festival.
- Poor siting of a street light in High Street.
- Children suffering from splinters on the skate ramp.

Planning

Between April 2015 and the end of March 2016 there were 19 planning applications and 6 for tree works. The Parish Council is given 21 days to comment on planning applications before a decision is made by South Cambs officers. Usually the applications are for some kind of extension. The rules for extensions and outbuildings have been relaxed somewhat in recent years. Councillors try to make a site visit before deliberating in full Council because this gives a much clearer picture. A similar procedure is followed for tree work which normally concerns properties in a conservation area. It is important that Councillors comment purely on material considerations. Councillors have received training about planning in February, but are also conscious that there is a housing shortfall in the current Local Plan for the Cambridge area.

More unusually for Barton there were two new-build applications, a single dwelling at 46 High Street and an outline one for three houses at 15 Comberton Road. In both cases Councillors recommended refusal. After considerable lobbying, these applications were considered by the South Cambs Planning Committee and given approval. We were therefore surprised that an application for an extension at 221 Wimpole Road went to appeal and was refused.

Highways

Our roads are getting busier.

Sarah Thomas (chair of our Highways Committee) drew up a list of issues.

We now have funding for an uncontrolled crossing point and 20mph flashing signs:

A £15,000 project: £10,000 from Cambridgeshire County Council £4,000 from Burwash Manor, £1,000 from the Parish Council.

A team of 20 Speedwatch volunteers will monitor speeds on our roads.

A priority was crossing the road at the school.

New speed limits have helped, but crossing the road is a worry for many.

Loss of a village icon

A high wind destroyed our conker tree, which was thought to be 150 years old. After much discussion, the owner of the land decided to plant flowers and not a new tree.

Other happenings at Conkers

"The driver obviously thought they were in a Ford" Who put the duck on the pond?

(From the village Facebook page) "Did it prove she was a witch?"

The Skate Ramp was dangerous and was causing splinters. After research and site visits, a long-lasting new surface was selected and has been installed.

The Recreation Ground

A survey has been carried out to assess future playground equipment needs. This is now being evaluated. The new equipment will probably be funded by contributions from owners of new houses. A donation of £660 from Barton Oil Club (Agricole) has been used to buy new picnic tables. These are being installed by Barton Beavers.

The Telephone Box

The old BT phone box is now a Book Exchange. Thanks to everyone involved, including:

- Patrick De Backer, who bought it for us (for £1, and a lot of work!).
- John Boocock, who cleaned it up and fitted it out.
- Sue Clemo, who painted it.
- Val Baines and Elizabeth Tompson, who collected the books and manage the kiosk.
- and anyone else involved who I've missed out!

IT'S CRAMMED FULL OF LOVELY BOOKS.

PLEASE USE IT, AND TELL OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT IT.

Assets Of Community Value

Assets Of Community Value can be protected by a community from change of use against their wishes. We have listed The Hoops and the White Horse. (RIP David Saby)

The Village Defibrillator

The defibrillator at Barton School has now been installed in a lockable box so it is available for village use. To ease pressure on Parish Council funds, the cost of this has been funded by a public appeal. The appeal was organised by Sarah Thomas and raised over £840. Training in the use of the defibrillator will be organised shortly.

THIS COULD SAVE LIVES. THANKS SARAH!

Housing Survey

Is there a need for extra affordable housing in Barton? If so, under what conditions?

The Parish Council commissioned Cambridge ACRE (rural community council) to carry out a survey. Are villagers supportive of building extra homes? ACRE selected Hastoe Housing Association to fund the survey. The survey has been completed but is not available until Hastoe and the District Council have examined it.

We expect to see the results in late May, and will discuss them publicly. We understand over 25% of villagers responded, which is about average. Some 78% of respondents are in favour, the second highest ever (usually 55% to 75%). We expect that responses will be qualified (e.g. houses must not be on Green Belt land).

Finances

Our finances are sound, but our reserves are slightly below the recommended level. We are aware that we are spending public money, and increased the precept reluctantly. All Parish Councils are obliged to publish financial reports on their web sites, but many are not very compliant. This makes it difficult to compare Barton to other councils. However, the benchmarking that we have been able to do indicates that we provide good value for money.

We will continue to seek grant funding for projects where this is practical. We save thousands because so much work around the village is done by Barton Beavers.

An increasing amount of money is being spent on street lighting - over £1,000 a year. We light up the A603 with your money! We can expect to have to take on more responsibilities like this as the County's and District's finances come under further pressure.

City Deal Consultations

Cambourne to Cambridge Bus Route - preferred route to be selected in September 2016;

Western Orbital - preferred route to be selected in December 2016.

Public Meeting on March 5th, Exhibition at Barton School on March 9th, Parish Council Special Meeting on March 18th; Over 65 people attended the public meeting. Over 55 people responded to our questionnaire.

Our written response to the City Deal Board reflected the collective view of the Council and the village.

All proposed options rejected, except for cycling improvements along Barton Road.

A Park and Ride site further out, say at Lords Bridge or the Eversden crossroads, had some support. We felt there is no long-term strategic vision. Smart traffic management could improve traffic flows in and around the city. A direct A428/M11 link or junction near Girton is necessary. There was considerable interest in the light rail and tunnelling ideas of Cambridge Connect.

Queen's 90th Birthday Sunday 12th June

The 90th Birthday Committee is organising a Village Street Party in

School Lane. Free admission, with a raffle to support the event. Donations welcomed.

A wonderful afternoon/evening with cake, drinks, games, bouncy castle, barbecue and music.

The 90th Birthday Committee: Barbara Tomes (Chair), Lin Heaton (Secretary), Sue Clemo, Andrew Friend, Meta Greenfield, Debbie McNeil (School), Margaret Penston, Jonathan Woods.

Should we have a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan must conform to Local, National and EU policies. It can identify the most suitable sites for development. It can help to determine what type and design of development should take place. It involves local consultation and a referendum.

Four members of the Parish Council attended a seminar to explain Neighbourhood Plans, and will advise the PC on the implications.

Recognition Of Exceptional Service



John Boocock - British Empire Medal

Margaret Penston - Parish Councillor Of The Year

Anne Coulson - Village Hero

YOU ALL MAKE US VERY PROUD!

Thanks

Thanks to Patrick De Backer for being such an excellent clerk, working for many more hours than he's paid for. Thanks for my fellow Parish Councillors for the long hours that they spend in meetings, when they could be at home with their families. Thanks to John Boocock, and to all other volunteers who help to make this community so special. And to Margaret and Barbara for the refreshments.

Thanks to you all for being here tonight, and for your support.

- **County Councillor – Stephen Frost**

Stephen sent in the following report:

Since the county council election in 2013, no one political party has been in control at Shire Hall and no party has a majority on any of the council's committees.

During last year there were changes made to the level of membership on the main service committees. This allowed for representative changes to be made, and I moved from the Health committee to the Children and Young Peoples committee (CYP). It has been extremely interesting as I have seen another side to the County structure. I have continued to be a member of the Highways Improvement Advisory Panel for South Cambridgeshire and was pleased to see many of my Parish Councils making appeals earlier this year, including Barton.

The County Council's 2016-17 budget

The County Council decided to increase its portion of the Council Tax by 2.0% for 2016-17. This followed a lengthy meeting where proposals ranged from no increase in the County Council's portion of Council Tax to nearly a 4% increase. The 2% increase was in line with responses to the Council's budget consultation where about one-fifth of respondents supported no increase, about 60 per cent an increase of up to 2%, and only about a fifth an increase of as great as 4%.

Shared Services

A few years ago, Cambridgeshire County Council and Northamptonshire County Council agreed an arrangement (known as Local Government Shared Services – LGSS) to share a number of back office services such as legal services and human resources. This has resulted in economies of scale for both councils. Over the years other councils such as Northampton Borough Council and Norwich City Council have joined LGSS. At its most recent meeting, the county council agreed to Milton Keynes Council joining LGSS. This will result in further savings to all the councils in LGSS.

Greater Cambridge City Deal

Greater Cambridge City Deal between national government and the County, City and District councils was agreed in 2014 and gives the local councils a grant of £100 million for the period 2014 – 19 to address infrastructure issues. Under the arrangement further tranches of £200 million for 2019-24 and £200 million for 2024-29 will come to the local area provided certain conditions are met.

The City Deal Executive Board has prioritised two specific routes to/from Cambridge, the A428 to Cambourne and the A1307 Cambridge – Linton – Haverhill route. There have recently been

consultations on high-level transport concepts on the A1307 corridor and on a so-called Western Orbital Route between the M11/Madingley Road junction and the M11/Trumpington junction. Consultation on possible major schemes will be held **starting in June**, and it may well be appropriate to respond about any impact on local villages.

- **District Councillor – Francis Burkitt**

Francis reminded us that South Cambs has statutory powers over some 120 items, but he highlighted the following.

Dustbin collections cost some £6 million per year; better logistics have reduced the cost by 10%, or £12 off the council tax.

A government inspector is still assessing whether the future Local Plan is "sound". In the meantime developers continue to put pressure and ideas forward, for instance the Barton North Landowners Association.

Francis has been promoted to be Vice Chair of the City Deal Board and therefore now has to give a more dispassionate public view of "Cranebridge" transport proposals. He stated that there was a need to de-clog central Cambridge, for us to get out of our cars more, especially at peak times; car sharing hubs could be a possibility; buses must go where people want.

- **Clerk to Barton Parish Council – Patrick De Backer**

The accounts for 2014-15 had been audited satisfactorily by both internal and external auditors. The draft accounts for 2015-16 were now available for inspection, showing a breakdown of expenditure £27,653 and income £32,497, and reserves earmarked for specific projects. The Council had a healthier balance than previously, £26,785 on 31st March 2016. The focus had been on replacing the skateboard surface and improving the tennis courts. Training and familiarisation happened in the areas of housing and planning. Expenditure on crossing improvements at Wimpole Road and New Road is expected in the near future. The precept for 2016-17 has been raised to £20,000, an increase of £4.39 per band D property, total £51.68. Barton remains a prudent council with a low level of precept compared with neighbouring villages.

N.B. The draft annual accounts 2015-16 are available under Finance on

[http://www.bartoncams.org.uk/files/accounts/BARTON%20PC%20Annual%20Accounts%202015-16%20\(draft\).pdf](http://www.bartoncams.org.uk/files/accounts/BARTON%20PC%20Annual%20Accounts%202015-16%20(draft).pdf)

- **Matters raised by Parishioners:** none.