

## **Community & Social Engagement**

As Chair of Barton PC, it is important to me that people have access to information, news and decision making that we make on behalf of our Parish. We make this possible through the minutes of our meetings, letter drops, notice boards, website, the Parish Magazine and by being visible. Even though I have now lived in Barton for 14 years, I am still meeting new people, some of them on my Road! When residents have wanted us to hold Public Meetings because they are concerned about something affecting them, we have done that and by listening we have been able to gain a better understanding of some of the issues. We cannot always be of the same opinion, but we can listen and do our best to resolve differences, and compromise where necessary. I would like the residents of Barton to know that the Parish Council can always be contacted via the Clerk. The Council have also been working on a new Parish Council Website making sure it is compliant with the new accessibility rules and presented in a format that is both user friendly and easy to manage. The Council are also drawing up a policy for Information Management.

## **Planning**

The Parish Council have continued to review all planning applications in Barton in line with current policy. We held a Public Meeting on the 30th January with regard to Barton House and its complex planning proposal ( application has subsequently been withdrawn).

The PC has registered with the new planning access system that has been formed by the merger of the Cambridge City and SCDC systems and is known as the IDOX public access site. Any resident can log on and this only requires name and relevant contact details at :-

<https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org>

The Councillors as 'consultees' have a more detailed site to access.

## **Pavements and Cycleways**

After much Public concern the PC along with Highways, resolved some of the issues of the 'Quick Win' improvements to the resurfacing of the footpath/cycle-way alongside Comberton Road especially safety issues with regard to the angled cement blocks. The aesthetic aspect will be addressed in Autumn as part of a bulb planting and wildflower scheme. The PC have also been in touch with SCDC about formally planting wildflower verges as these need to have the appropriate permissions.

A donation from Barton Gardeners was suggested as part of their wind up proposal and by ex-members who are prepared to help with a bulb planting scheme around Barton. The areas for further planting have been identified.

The PC have received their voucher for three Free trees from SCDC as part of their 'sustainability and eco drive'. We haven't been able to take receipt of the trees as yet due to the temporary closure of various nurseries.

The Working Group completed a thorough walk of the village looking at overgrown areas and infringements to pavements. Letters were sent and residents notified of their responsibilities. The PC further commissioned additional works to cut back overgrowth in specific areas to enable easier access to pavements.

Streetlighting:- The PC took on the requirement for (all) PC's in Cambridgeshire to take direct responsibility for payment of some (but not all) street lights in Barton numbering 34 in total.

## **Highways**

The Parish Council held a Public Meeting on the 25th February to discuss Traffic & Transport Problems. In summary these included static traffic outside the local Primary School, speeding issues in most areas of Barton, the density of traffic at peak times, pollution from car emissions, pedestrian crossings on New Road and Wimpole Road, as well as possible speed reduction. The meeting was well attended, in excess of 48 residents were present. There was representation from both SCDC and County Council, as well as John Coppard from the South Cambs Police force to support a petition from the local school children.

The Parish Council have purchased a piece of equipment known as MVAS (Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign) to help provide us with real data as well as make drivers aware of their speeds.

The PC paid for traffic data boxes to be sited in key areas around Barton. This would also enable some historic comparison.

Councillor Martin has also had further sites approved for the recording of data. The Working Group and other supportive members are putting together a strategic bid for long term improvements in Barton and for our community. Speed-watch sessions and training will resume after we are out of this current lockdown.

## **Amenities and Open Spaces**

Whilst there has been some crossover as mentioned above, The recreation ground has been fully utilised during the last year with junior teams from Comberton using the football pitches. Rabbits continue to be a problem, but we are in the countryside! The playground is in good order. A new basketball backboard has been installed and a broken Spinner in the children's play area replaced. The roundabout has had some temporary repair but needs further surround work. All equipment has been safety checked and a separate report produced. The Brick Shelter in the play area is still there. Some quotes were received to knock it down and for the time being it is not a priority. It was considered that Comberton Village College Art Department may be approached with a view to designing an appropriate mural for the inside and some soft features such as trellis and planting to improve the look. A plan for new apparatus and options is currently being investigated.

At various PC meetings over the last year there has been mention of new and revised leases for the Tennis club, Bowls Club and BRIG. These are all under way and at different stages of completion. I too would like to thank the Committees of these various Clubs for the voluntary time and effort they give in order to keep these facilities running for the benefit of the Barton Community.

Additional bins have been placed on the recreation ground (3) to help minimise the issues of dog fouling. A further one has been sited on the entrance to the Granchester footpath. A report of Japanese knotweed in this area was also made to SCDC and it is now on their file to keep a check on.

A High-bar was fitted to the Recreation gate to prevent any illegal encampment and there is a policy in place to lock the main gate each evening. The closing times reflect seasonal changes. Ballast and gravel have been used to fill up the holes on entrance to the Recreation Ground from High Street.

An Official Transfer of land from Church Close to the Church took place at the last Parish Council meeting in March.

A charity named Froglife approached the council with regard to looking after the pond in terms of its frog life. Whilst the PC were supportive, the Charity's funding application was not successful in this instance It is awaiting further bids.

Various new signs have gone up around the village, No Parking on the church Wall, Opening/ Closing Times of the Recreation Ground Gate. We were able to put up the welcome to Barton Sign on the Comberton road and Thanks to Tim Radford for the Natural Lattice Fence it went on.

## **Consultations**

As a Parish council we are inundated with consultations whether it is East West Rail, views on the Metro, Guided Busways, Park and Ride, Sustainability, Neighbourhood Watch, to name but a few. As a Council we try to ensure we have both representation at meetings and responses to these via our working groups, A brief report from these meetings are summarised by the attendee and circulated to the Councilors and then further discussions raised at full Parish Council meetings. The Clerk too has attended regular training and Clerk support groups. New Councillors are also encouraged to attend a basic training day when these are available. If at any time a resident of Barton would like to be part of a consultation group then please do contact Ian Minto, The Parish Clerk.

### Future Plans -

- Road & Traffic Safety Improvements
- Revise the Parish Plan ( working party to be set up)
- To Update and Revise all Policies
- To Activate Website in line with Communication Policy and Management
- New noticeboard at Conkers, boards inside bus shelters where possible to maximise public access to PC news, Consultations contacts etc.
- Review tree safety (we are responsible for those on public land).
- proposal for a new bus shelter on New Road near Kings Grove.

## **Voluntary works**

Cleaning of Bus shelters, removal of graffiti and repairs of wooden panels as necessary..

Cleaning and painting of rails and posts around the village Pond.

Installation of a Bench around the pond.

White Lines painted to demarcate parking bays next to the Village Hall

Clearing of drains for Playgroup

Pond Clearing & Litter Picking

As ever we are indebted to the Residents of Barton who make a contribution large or small in helping to maintain our village. John Boocock who maintains a quiet presence and eye for detail, Margaret Penston for her management of the Village Website and patience whilst we work at developing a new one, Sue Clemmo for painting the posts and rails around the pond and refreshing the benches, and all the others I may not be able to name but recognise their efforts.

I would personally like to add my thanks to Chameera and Udeni at the village stores for their efforts in this time of crisis for keeping the shop stocked, supporting the isolated through home

delivery and being a hub of support. I too have had an overwhelming response for volunteer helpers to collect shopping, prescriptions, having chats etc. Local firms have all offered home delivery if needed. This is what makes Barton a special place to live. After this, I hope we can all remember what connects us with our community.

Finally, I would like to thank the Clerk and Councillors for all their hard work over the last year.

Thank you

Sarah Pitchford

Chair of BPC