



LITTLE BERKHAMSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Dear Resident,

March 2022

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the village hall on Wednesday 30th March and EVERYONE is very welcome. This is not a PC meeting. It is a village meeting where residents can ask more about the work of the PC, provide feedback and tell us what they would like to see happening over the next year. The actual meeting will be fairly short and then we invite you to socialise over a glass of wine (or a cup of tea) and nibbles afterwards.

Here I provide a report of the Parish Council's activities over the last year. It has been a challenging time with life starting to return to normal but Covid never quite going away. Through our work this year the Parish Council has been focussing on encouraging villagers to safely reconnect with each other, making full use of the lovely facilities we are lucky enough to have.

Much of the PC's work revolves around the management and maintenance of the Village Hall, Community & Cricket Pavilion and the recreation field and other open spaces. This year, in an effort to make it more attractive to renters, we reinstalled the internet into the Village Hall and put down matting on the field. Parking in the village has always been difficult and the matting protecting the grass at the top of the field will provide hirers with parking throughout the year and not just in the summer months. In addition, we have ordered more picnic tables and benches, a cycle rack and permanent outdoor table tennis table for the field and we have replaced the old litter bins. This has been made possible from grant money provided by the European Commission to help communities recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic and lockdown.

The work refurbishing the Community and Cricket Pavilion has continued this year with the improvement of the bar area. This has been a joint venture with the Cricket Club and we are keen to see villagers enjoying this facility alongside the cricketers during the summer.

Every Friday morning from 10am to 12 noon the pavilion has been hosting the Community Café. It has been lovely to see residents supporting this venture and baking delicious home-made cakes to share.

The rubbish littering our roads is a dreadful eye sore and thank you to all those who regularly pick up litter outside their properties and on walks around the village. There is now a box outside the village hall containing litter picking equipment for anyone to borrow. The Spring litter pick had to be postponed but in early June over 30 wonderful volunteers came and helped clear up the village roads. The Five Horseshoes kindly provided a sandwich lunch for everyone after the event, and the sun even managed to make an appearance. This is not a glamorous task but there is great satisfaction to be had in seeing the hedgerows litter free and everyone has fun working together. The next litter pick is on Sunday 3rd April, meeting at 10.30am on the field. If you are available to help, please contact Councillor Elaine Hunter elaine_hunter@sky.com

The war memorial was cleaned by a specialist company this year just in time for a short Remembrance Sunday ceremony and now looks very smart.

During lockdown many people seem to have decided to make home improvements and there has been a marked increase in the number of planning applications submitted to East Herts Council. We aim to be supportive in this process and visit sites where possible. The Parish Council however is only a consultee and does not decide on the outcomes of applications.

Fast traffic through the village has always been a major concern to residents and 20's Plenty for Little Berkhamsted have continued to campaign alongside 20's Plenty for Hertfordshire for a 20mph speed limit where people mix with motor traffic. Not only do these schemes typically lead to 20% fewer casualties, they also tie in closely with other policies to address climate change, improve air quality and enable more people to walk and cycle – especially for short journeys. Herts County Council are starting to put in heavily engineered schemes on a few roads across the county but villages like ours are ranked very low on the list.

The Parish Council are committed to supporting the campaign for 20mph speed limits throughout Hertfordshire where people live, work, shop, play or learn. If you are interested in helping with this campaign, please contact littleberkhamsted@20splentyforus.org.uk

Without a Recreation Committee it has fallen to the PC to encourage residents to come together and organise social events. Unfortunately, the resurgence of Covid cases before Christmas meant the much-anticipated fireworks evening and 'Strictly the Final' night had to be cancelled. We did however hold a very successful village picnic last August which allowed everyone to get together again and enjoy a relaxed family day.

We have started planning further community events and over the June bank holiday weekend we join the rest of the country in celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. On Thursday 2nd June the Cricket Club will be hosting a BBQ on the field and they will have the bar open. Apple Day Care have kindly sponsored a live singer for the evening and we will mark, with a plaque, the two oak trees planted on the field as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Project. The Welcome Back Fund has enabled us to commission a village beacon from Mill Green Forge, Essendon which will be lit at the same time as the hundreds of others across the country and the Commonwealth. Sunday 5th June will see 'The Big Jubilee Lunch' on the recreation field along with fun and games for the children and a light hearted cricket match. Please come along to both of these events with your families and friends and join us in marking this historic occasion.

I would like to thank all the councillors who work tirelessly in their own time to make all these things happen for the benefit of the residents of Little Berkhamsted. Very sadly Councillor Peter Kent passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in December from a rare form of blood cancer. Peter was very involved in all areas of PC work and is greatly missed.

I would also like to acknowledge the village's unsung heroes who give their time in many different ways for the benefit of everyone. To name a few: Bridget, who is responsible for the pretty planters in the village, Doreen, who keeps the bus shelter clean and Jerry, who cuts the grass at the War Memorial and keeps the area clean and tidy. A huge thank you to you all – and everyone else who goes out of their way to make Little Berkhamsted a beautiful and friendly place to live.

The PC have decided that in the interests of the planet, this is the last year we will publish a hard copy of this report. In future the Chairman's Report will be available on the website and will be emailed to all residents whose details we hold. If you would like to be kept up to date about life in the village and in the East Herts area, please sign up on the home page of the website, at www.littleberkhamsted.org.uk

I look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday 30th March at 7.30pm.



Penny Stokes

Chairman Little Berkhamsted Parish Council