



Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

April 2024



Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney

Front cover: Coronation street party

Back cover: Frosty Bardfield morning

With grateful thanks to all who contributed photographs to these pages.



GREAT BARDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting 26th April 2024

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Chair's introduction

Firstly, I would like to thank all those contributing to this Annual Parish Assembly and to our annual report for 2023–2024. In addition to the annual report by Great Bardfield Parish Council, many groups, clubs and societies have taken this opportunity to review and report to the community of Great Bardfield, on their own activities over the last 12 months. During the annual meeting, several present their reports in person. These plus the additional reports printed in our published Annual Report highlight the variety of community services and activities in this vibrant community and make this document a celebration of Great Bardfield as well as a valuable record.

Thanks particularly go to Kate Fox for liaising with all contributors and to Jenny Rooney for designing and editing this report and of course thanks to all those who provided photos to enhance it.

The Parish Council's full report will be presented by Janet Dyson, Vice-Chair. However, I would like to express my thanks, as Chair, to my fellow parish councillors for their time and commitment to the council. We work well together to provide a service to the community, within the powers of a parish council. We were pleased to welcome Peter Walmsley to the council, who offered his services and was co-opted following the parish council elections last May. We are also glad that Lynsi Hayward-Smith has recovered sufficiently to attend recent meetings and continue her valuable contribution to the council. She was greatly missed for a few months this year on health grounds.

Kate Fox is an experienced and knowledgeable Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, and we are most grateful for her support and guidance. Kate has a wealth of experience and contacts and always seems to know where to go for information or further guidance.

Thanks also go to our village handyman, Ian Ruffle, who keeps our village tidy, empties our litter bins, sweeps and clears paths, removes fly tipping



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle, Chairperson of Great Bardfield Parish Council

and undertakes repairs. Also, thanks to residents who give their time to the community including Mick Gell for his work in maintaining the Memorial Green and those who have stepped forward to help out with our community garden project, or who undertake unofficial litter picks of our verges in the summer.

One of our major challenges this year was to represent the community in objecting to the proposal for a substantial addition to Deer Park View and we thank Geoff Gardner, resident of Great Bardfield and an experienced planning consultant for representing us at the appeal hearing, and also to other residents and councillors who attended and spoke against the proposed development. We were most relieved that the appeal failed. We are hopeful that our Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, will help to protect the village against large-scale, inappropriate development proposals.



I would like to welcome our two District Councillors for the Three Fields ward, Michael Staines and Mark Ault, elected a year ago. They have proved to be enthusiastic and supportive, adding their voice to ours with regard to ongoing highways problems (potholes and flooding), our eroding bus services and concerns about the government's ongoing plans for the Wethersfield Airbase site. They have also set up a well-needed networking group for all parishes within our ward to discuss common issues. We aim

to work closely with our District and with our County Councillor, Graham Butland, who attends many of our parish council meetings, listening to our complaints and assisting us with grant funding opportunities from the County Council.

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

Neighbourhood Plan update

We will soon be at the stage of undertaking a 6-week consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan document to which all residents of Great Bardfield Parish will be invited to respond. The document is based on the latest national and local planning policy, on previous surveys and drop-in days, including a parish-wide questionnaire issued to all households last summer. Our drop-in session following this questionnaire displayed some of the key results of that survey of residents and has played a key part in establishing our local planning guidelines.

The Neighbourhood Plan team, which includes parish councillors and other local volunteers, are currently reviewing/approving the latest draft of the Neighbourhood Plan document and we expect the formal consultation, a necessary part of the process,

to take place in the next few weeks. The Plan also needs to be approved and accepted by Braintree District Council before going to a referendum, hopefully by the end of this year.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of the NP team for the continued support and attention to this vital project which will help shape the future development and conservation of our historic rural parish.

**Carolynne Ruffle, Chair
Neighbourhood Plan Team**





Great Bardfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 18th May 2023

1. Chairman's introduction

The Chairman welcomed members of the public attending including representatives of the many village organizations who would be presenting reports. She introduced the two newly elected District Councillors, Michael Staines and Mark Ault, together with Cllr Graham Butland our County Councillor. The election for Parish Councillors was uncontested but after 24 years' service, Simon Walsh, decided to stand down and Peter Walmsley was co-opted to fill this vacancy; Simon agreed to continue his work as Tree Warden to support the Parish Council. Although a detailed summary of the Council's work would be covered in the review of the year, the Chairman wished to touch on some of the things which have kept the Council busy. It has been a year of contentious applications and proposals that affected not just this village but the wider communities of the Pant Valley and the Three Fields.

The new pavilion building has progressed well thanks to the Working Party which includes residents Andrew Taylor, John Maidman and Peter Walmsley. The proposal for 57 houses adjacent to Deer Park View was refused although an appeal is expected. Cllr Kennedy has been the main representative on the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee and the Parish Council supported Braintree District Council in their decision to oppose the proposal on the grounds of unsuitability, likewise the subsequent

intention to house asylum seekers on the site. The PC supported the proposal for a temporary crossing in Finchingfield as and when works on the bridge are undertaken. More recently there has been the application for a 5G telecoms mast in the centre of the village and within the Conservation area which had the village 'up in arms'.

She wished to thank Jenny Rooney for once again collating and designing the Annual Report; the village 'handyman' Ian Ruffle who undertakes a variety of jobs to help maintain the village, Mick Gell who looks after the War Memorial and all those residents who give their time to make our community tidy and safe. She concluded by thanking the Parish Clerk, Kate Fox, for her commitment and support and her fellow Parish Councillors for their contribution in all the activities that the Parish Council undertakes.

2. Apologies

These were received from Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Walmsley and Mr. Will Edwards.

3. Parish Council Review 2022-23

Although the Parish Council was getting back to 'normality' with face-to-face meetings, the year was overshadowed by the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Council had nineteen applications to review, mostly small scale, the one exception being the proposal to build further housing adjacent to Deer Park View. Twenty-two applications for tree works were assessed by the Tree Warden. Modern technology also made its presence felt with a proposal to install a 5G high mast in the centre of the village close to the school resulting in a record 400 objections being lodged with BDC.

The Parish Council was closely involved with neighbouring parishes in respect of any proposals regarding the former Wethersfield Air Base which, at the time of the report, remain undecided.



A significant achievement this year has been the progress of the long-awaited new pavilion which is now in its final stages. It was fortunate that two helpful residents with the necessary skills came to support the work of the Playingfield Committee to take this forward and their help has been invaluable.

The bridge was closed for several weeks for new brickwork to replace that damaged due to salt corrosion and the pedestrian bridge has had new woodwork installed by ECC which gave an opportunity to install a further plaque to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

Highways matters are continually being discussed and problem areas raised with County including a '20s Plenty' campaign. Although the village is fortunate enough to have a bus service there is a gap in the provision for a direct link with Dunmow and the Parish Council is lobbying hard for this to be addressed.

4. Parish Council Financial Review 22-23

This brief report highlights key items of income and expenditure for the year further details of which are contained in the Minutes available to view on the Parish Council website: www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

Parish Income: The annual Precept is usually the most significant part of our income which in the 22/23 financial year was £46,000. However, in May 2022 the Parish Council were able to begin the long-awaited new pavilion project and, in addition to the money set aside for the project, funding was secured through a S106 Agreement with the District Council. This fund

has accumulated over the years by contributions from developers when they build new properties. In the case of Great Bardfield these include Deer Park View, Bushett Rise, Castle Shot and Smith's Yard. At the time of this report £81,000 has been received from this source.

Parish Expenditure: The Parish Council is responsible for key services and although costs always increase year-on-year, the previous 12 months have seen significant rises for everyone. Apart from the pavilion project other significant expenses were:

Street Lighting: £4,577

Grass Cutting and Open Spaces: £5,497

Town Hall Grant, CIP Rent & BT: £3,698

Insurance: £2,275

Precept: For the 2023/24 year the Parish Council has managed to hold the figure at 3.1% (22/23 3.5%) which was enabled by an increase in the tax base figure calculated by Braintree District Council, thus the parish could precept for a higher figure without an increased burden on the residents.

The graphics clearly illustrate that the largest item of income was 106 funding which fed into the largest item of expenditure, namely the new pavilion. The Parish Precept is the next largest income which supports all the other functions of the Council.

The Clerk reminded those present that a notice will be posted between 5th June and 14th July informing residents that they can view the PC accounts and details will also be available on the PC's website.

Overview: Annual Accounts – the external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's financial reporting and the reserves held for special projects. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor and published on the Parish Council's website at www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

5. District Council Report

In addition to the published report submitted by Peter Tattersley, Cllr Butland took the opportunity to provide update on the situation regarding the use of



the Wethersfield airbase to house asylum seekers and the legal process so far undertaken. There was real concern that this site was totally unsuitable due to its location and on-site facilities.

6. Essex County Council Report

Cllr Butland, who is our County representative and also Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage & Culture, explained that Essex County Council is responsible for £2bn of spending, the largest portion of which goes on Adult Social Care £506m – up £58m on last year. An allocation of £7.5m has been made to deliver 340 new mainstream school places and £275m to spend on major infrastructure. His full report is published in the Annual Report.

7. Town Hall Report and Accounts

John Maidman, Town Hall Chairman, gave a brief overview of the current position. The Town Hall Committee had put Covid grants to good use, when there was no income, by carrying out essential work, maintenance and refurbishment including the CIP and Caretaker's Cottage. The facilities are now back in full use by many groups and for various events. Carpet bowls had not resumed but a badminton group had recently started. The Community Fridge which was opened in December 2021, continues to be a great success, with thanks to the Co-op for their donations. He concluded by thanking his fellow Committee members. At this point Peter Keynton took the opportunity to promote the forthcoming Art Show which had a record number of entries and was a significant source of Town Hall income.

8. Bardfield Charities Report and Accounts

Pat Coles, Chair, explained the work of the Charities and that all applications are considered on merit and decisions made are confidential. Two new administering officers, Rev'd Alex Shannon and Nick Holland, had joined the Committee. This past year they have made contributions for fuel payments, disability equipment, educational support and hospital travel. She said the Charities have tried to reach out to the community to encourage applications in the hope that nobody missed out on support.

9. Bardfield Times Report and Accounts

Ray Coles presented the report, explaining that the increase in printing costs meant that the *BT* was running at a loss but was supported by income from the Cinema Club (admission charges for which would also have to be increased at some point). Some 800 copies were printed and distributed by a valued group of over 20 volunteers. He wished to record his thanks to: Jackie Newton the Treasurer and Kate Fox who managed the advertising. Janet Dyson, the Editor, spoke of the invaluable support from Joe Jones who managed all the layout work, without which the magazine could not be published. She added how much they valued the letters, articles and photographs from the community that make the *BT* so interesting.

10. Great Bardfield Primary School Report

The Chair of School Governors, Jane Tillotson, made the report on behalf of Liz Crow, the Headteacher, and emphasised how fortunate the school was to have such a dedicated Head. One of the highlights of the year was the completion of the new building, consisting of three classrooms with light and airy indoor and outdoor all-weather spaces. The school is very grateful to the PTA and Bardfield Charities who helped with resourcing these new areas. The published report gives full details of the many activities undertaken during the year. Linda Prior, Chair of the Horticultural Society, wished to mention their liaison with the school and the garden visit which they supported.



11. Pavilion Project

The Chair drew attention to the details in the Annual Report and the monthly updates in the *BT*.

12. Closing remarks

Before closing the meeting, the Chair asked if there were any questions from the floor.

1. Braintree Recycling Centre. Peter Benwell felt that the booking system was unnecessary and confusing leading to longer delays. Cllr Butland said it was part of a trial – until December – and encouraged feedback. Annie Woodcock said the website was unreliable and suggested it have a feedback link as the best way to collate comments.

2. David Slow raised the problem of potholes which were worse than ever and also that the pavements were becoming quite dangerous. Cllr Butland said that £17.5m had been set aside for work this year, although it would probably not be enough. Mick Gell asked about the JCB Pothole Pro that he had read about; he was asked to

email details. Lynn Joyce queried about the quality of the work and if jobs were inspected before payment made.

3. Bardfield Players: Ian Ruffle spoke of the need for more members in all areas; actors, backstage, technical, etc, and said that there would be an Open Afternoon on 15th July at the Town Hall and hoped residents would come along and join the Players.

4. Coronation Celebrations: Jane Tillotson wished to thank the Parish Council and all those involved in making it such a special day for the whole community.

5. Transport: It was disappointing that the DART team had not attended as planned as the opportunity would have been taken to, once again, lobby for a link bus to Dunmow. It was important that there was interest from residents and names should be given the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman thanked the County and District Councillors and all those attending.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Kate Fox
Parish Clerk



Sunset over Vine Meadow



Parish Council review 2023-2024

Following the local elections in May last year Carolynne Ruffle, Lynsi Hayward-Smith, Iain Graham, Darren Hockley, Paul Kennedy and Janet Dyson were elected unopposed leaving a vacancy on the council which was filled by the co-option of Peter Walmsley.

The Parish Council has met monthly, except for August when the Finance Committee met to formally sign off any outstanding financial matters. Parish Councils are consulted on various local planning matters referred to us for comment by Braintree District Council, which is the planning authority that ultimately decides on these matters. We had 33 applications to review, mostly small-scale extensions or works within the historical conservation area. The one exception to this was the proposal for a further 56 houses to be built adjacent to Deer Park View. This was the subject of an appeal by the developer, Croudace Homes Ltd, against Braintree's decision for refusal. At the appeal the Parish Council was strongly supported in making the case for refusal by local Planning Consultant Geoff Gardner. Members of the public, representatives of the Parish Council and the Historical Society also spoke at the hearing. The Inspector's decision was that the appeal was dismissed.

There have been 21 applications for tree works, mostly maintenance of over-growing trees or cutting back shading trees. These have been assessed by our Tree Warden, Simon Walsh.

The proposal to site a 5G telephone pole in the centre of the village close to the school and Conservation Area prompted significant opposition in the village with a record 400+ objections lodged against this intrusive telecommunications equipment. The application was withdrawn.

The Parish Council has been closely involved with neighbouring parishes in respect of any long term proposals regarding the former Wethersfield Airfield, which still remain undecided. The formation of a Pan Parish meeting promises to be an effective forum



Cllr Janet Dyson, Vice Chair

for sharing information and giving a stronger voice on matters of mutual concern to parishes when required.

Parish Councillors all serve in a voluntary capacity. In addition to the Parish Clerk, Mrs Kate Fox, who is an employee of the Council, Mr Ian Ruffle undertakes the role of Village Handyman ensuring that bins are emptied, and the environs are generally kept in good order. The thanks of the Parish Council are extended to these two hardworking individuals. We also thank volunteers who staff the Community Information Point, and particularly Mick Gell who looks after the Memorial green and gardens.

Work on the new Pavilion has progressed significantly this year. The members of the Pavilion Committee, all volunteers, have given their time



and expertise, working with the Parish Council to ensure that all the trades and utilities involved are effectively co-ordinated. The overhead power lines have been replaced with underground lines. The interior of the building is developing well with the plumbing and electrical work almost complete and the floor covering in progress.

The Parish Council is extremely grateful for the generous donations received from Bardfield residents which have helped to fund the interior fixtures and fitting and enabled the car park to be extended.

In October we were delighted to hear that we had won a bid for a grant to help us develop the Quiet Space behind the Town Hall into a Community Garden. This exciting project which was led by Cllr. Lynsi Hayward-Smith aims to create a space where people can come together for community activities such as gardening to grow food, celebrating events and meeting each other in a safe and attractive outdoor space. Plans include planting fruit trees, installing raised beds and introducing wildflowers, bird nesting boxes and bug hotels.

Unfortunately, due to Lynsi's sudden illness, the project was delayed but it has now been taken on by a small team of volunteers and work is progressing well.

Pipers Meadow continues to be carefully managed under the helpful guidance of Dr Doug Joyce who advises on how best to ensure rare species such as the Bardfield Oxlip can be encouraged to thrive in our locality. The recently planted trees have been diligently watered during the summer months by Ian Ruffle.

Highways and transport issues always provide challenges, from parking congestion to speeding motorcycles and cars. The deteriorating condition of the roads and pavements in and around the village is a major concern. Deep ruts and potholes have damaged many vehicles during the winter and the poor surface of our pavements is a constant danger to pedestrians. We have lobbied our County Councillors constantly on this issue. Lack of finances for the infrastructure is the reason given. This has also affected our public transport system with the bus service to Braintree currently under threat. We have so far had no success in our campaign for a bus to Great Dunmow – our nearest town. For those who have no car or are no longer able to drive the lack of public transport is a serious issue, limiting life opportunities.

The activities of the Parish Council are reported monthly in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Community Facebook page. Our monthly meetings are open to the public and there is a Public Forum at the start of every Council meeting when residents and can raise concerns and questions. The Community Information Point adjacent to the Town Hall is open on Thursday and Saturday mornings from 10-12 for refuse and dog-poo bags or just for a chat!

**Janet Dyson, Vice-Chair,
Great Bardfield Parish Council**



Parish Council financial review

For the year ended 31st March 2024

This brief report highlights key items of income and expenditure for the year, further details of which are contained in the Minutes available to view on the Parish Council website www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

Parish Income: The annual Precept is usually the most significant part of our income which in the 23/24 financial year was £48,000. However, the parish continued to benefit from remaining funds secured through a 106 Agreement with the District Council which amounted to £42,035.00 (net of VAT). In connection with the Pavilion, and following appeals in the *Bardfield Times*, donations of £5,560 have been received, which has been allocated for specific items.

Parish Expenditure: There will be no surprise to learn that the largest item of expense has been the pavilion project, the cost of which has been covered by the 106 money mentioned above and earmarked funds that have been set aside over many years for this specific purpose. The Parish Council is responsible for key services and costs have increased significantly particularly in regard to street lighting supply and insurance.

Precept: For the 24/25 year the Parish Council had reluctantly to raise its precept request resulting in an increase of £4.99 per household per annum for a band D property.

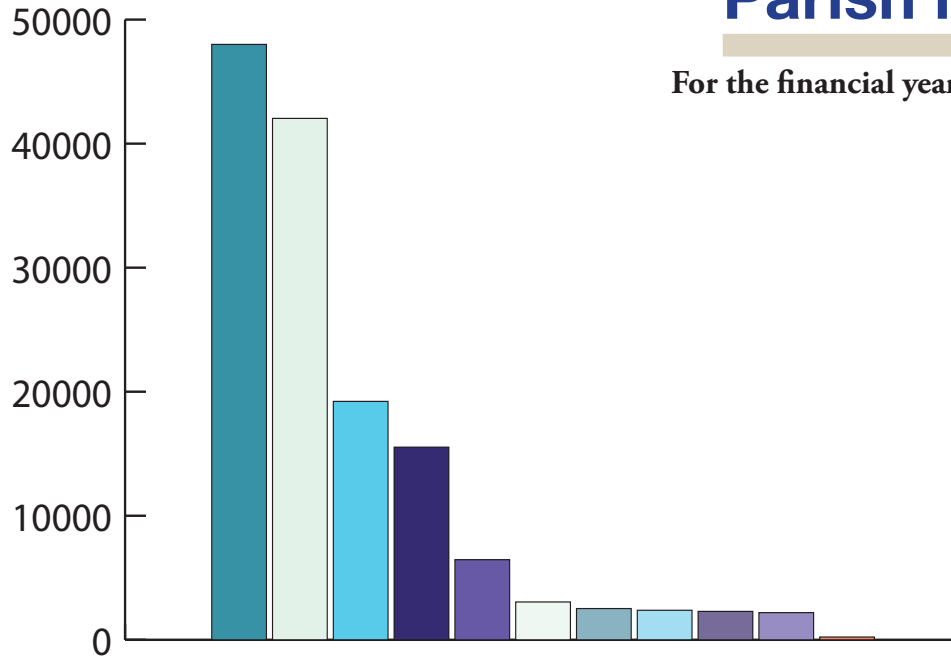
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Kate Fox
Parish Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Parish income

For the financial year ended 31.3.24

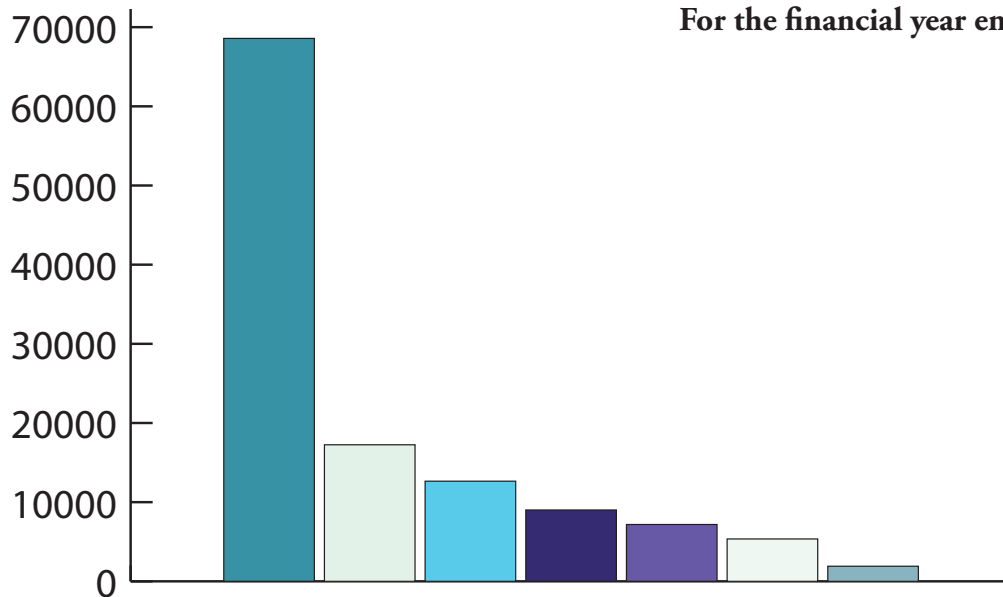


Parish precept	£48,000.00
106 funding contribution	£42,035.00
Pavilion project funds in hand	£19,220.00
VAT refund	£15,529.20
(£7,426.42 for second half of 22/23 and £8,102.68 for first half of 23/24 financial year)	
Donations and ECC grant (pavilion)	£6,459.00
BDC Community Garden grant	£3,050.00
Verge cutting/village cleaning grant	£2,519.37
Sundries/training bursary/substation rental	£2,379.74
Firework event	£2,290.00
Neighbourhood plan	£2,190.00
Pavilion and playing field	£223.00
Total	£143,895.31
Bank account balances as at 31.3.24	
Pavilion account	£65,448.76
Reserves account:	£56,021.88
Special projects account:	£8,680.25
Current account:	£970.00



Parish Expenditure

For the financial year ended 31.3.24



Capital schemes	
Pavilion Project	£68,582.00
Village amenities	
Grass cutting, Memorial green, open spaces	£4,328.44
Public lighting – supply and maintenance	£4,289.34
Town Hall grant and substation rental	£2,107.58
Verge cutting/street cleaning (agency arrangements)	£1,620.08
Playground refurbishment and utilities	£2,512.82
CIP: Town Hall rent/BT/copier	£2,389.36
Total	£17,247.62
VAT	£12,649.22
Staff/sundry expenses	
Salary, website, training, defibrillator supplies, dog poo bags	£9,011.33
Admin	
General admin, telephone, audit fee, tax, insurance, stationery, subscriptions, election	£7,178.55
Neighbourhood Plan	£5,350.00
Fireword event	£1,908.33
Coronation event, Annual Report	
Total	£121,927.05



Braintree District Council



Cllr Mark Ault
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Cllr Michael Staines
Email: cldr.mstaines@braintree.gov.uk
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Dear Residents of Three Fields,

We are honoured to serve as your representatives on the Braintree District Council, having been elected last May. Mark Ault and Michael Staines have been actively engaged in a wide range of district-wide activities to gain valuable knowledge and experience in supporting our volunteer Parish Councils, residents, and community groups.

Throughout the past year, our primary focus has been on establishing a strong foundation for our role as District Councillors. We have diligently attended Braintree District Council and Parish Council meetings, striving to be a highly visible and accessible team of Independent Councillors. Our commitment to actively listening to residents and advocating for the interests of Three Fields at all levels,

including Full Council sessions, has been unwavering. Our efforts have been directed towards addressing pressing issues such as flooding, infrastructure improvements, public transport enhancements, local taxation decisions, and planning matters. We have actively supported multiple parishes in opposing large-scale developments at Public Hearings and have championed sustainable rural businesses, including initiatives in Wethersfield.

The challenges we face require constant effort to stay informed and advocate for the best interests of our residents and communities. We deeply appreciate every interaction with residents, whether it be in person, through calls, texts, emails, or social media platforms. Your support and engagement are invaluable as we strive to better serve you.



Looking ahead, we are committed to furthering our support for local businesses to attract visitors and stimulate economic growth in our beautiful Three Fields communities and the wider Braintree District. We believe in promoting a vision of sustainable economic development that prioritises community well-being over excessive housing and traffic congestion.

In addition to supporting our Neighbourhood Plan teams in shaping the future planning direction of our communities, we are dedicated to facilitating connections among various community groups to foster collaboration and synergy for the benefit of all residents.

As we prepare for the Essex County Council elections next May, we seek your support to amplify the voice and priorities of Three Fields at both the County and District levels. Your feedback and input are crucial to our efforts to represent you effectively. For any inquiries or feedback, please do not hesitate to reach out to us as we are here to serve you and ensure that your voices are heard and your needs are met. Thank you for your continued support and engagement. Warm regards.

Mark Ault and Michael Staines
Independent District Councillors
for Three Fields



From dawn to moonrise, the beautiful countryside surrounding Great Bardfield





Essex County Council

I have pleasure in submitting my Annual Report to the residents of Great Bardfield on the work of Essex County Council (ECC).

It has been another difficult year for ECC as it, like all local authorities, endeavours to cope with an ever-increasing demand for its services. The Council has a total gross spend of just over £2 billion.

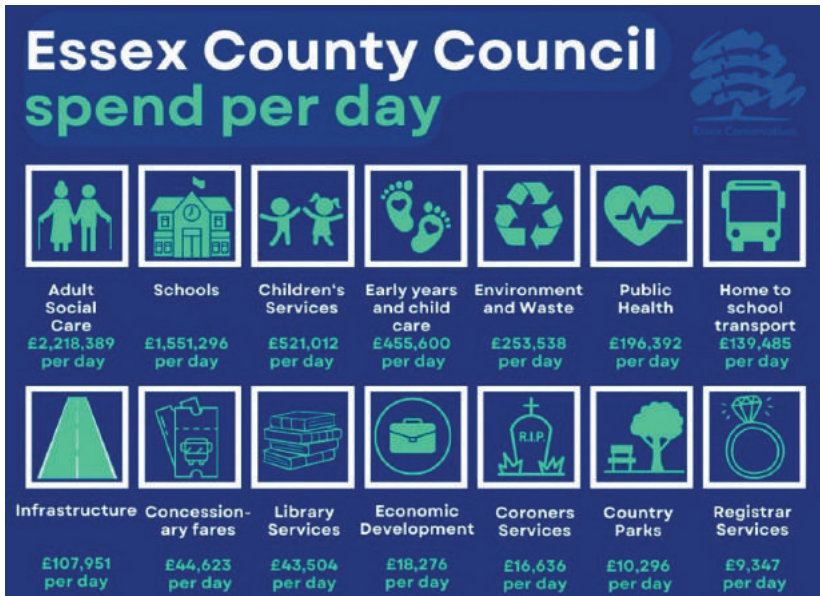
The breakdown of how the County Council spends its money is outlined in the graph below:

The Council has also allocated an additional £12 million for priority work on our highways. Additional crews will help to prioritise repairs raised by local councillors and bring forward some of the surfacing and patching schemes required across our



County Councillor Graham Butland





Graph showing the daily spend of ECC

large county. Last year the number of potholes repaired across Essex was nearly double the number repaired in the previous year.

During the year I have dealt with a number of issues raised by local residents and the Great Bardfield Parish Council. In addition to the usual matters of potholes and planning, the issue of the Asylum Centre at

Wethersfield has created a significant amount of correspondence.

If you have a matter that you wish to raise please contact me at cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk.

County Councillor Graham Butland
Member for Three Fields with Great Notley County Division



Graph showing the cost of repairing and improving our highways



Great Bardfield allotments

After the relative excitement of installing animal-proof fencing last winter, the past twelve months have been quieter in the allotments. So saying, all the plots are taken, many with new tenants. We were sorry to say goodbye to Maureen and Jim Dale, since they were two of the original plot holders in the Spring of 2010.

We suffered, as most gardeners did, from last year's summer drought, some of the fruit trees even suffered from sunburn! But necessary watering allowed us to sustain and eventually harvest our crops, even if both quantity

and quality were down on previous years. Two challenges confront us. The garden shed, housing useful tools, is looking the worse for wear and we might have to replace it. But with the rising price of wood today, this may well be a costly venture.

We have been experimenting with communal composting bins and this will continue into 2024; the jury is still very much out, but judging by the number of smart plastic bins appearing on individual sites, the portents look somewhat doubtful.

We look forward as always, to the growing season ahead and an enjoyable and profitable spring and summer.

Jonathan Davies

Bardfield Cinema Club

Our 15th season started in October 2023 with a slightly reduced audience, membership numbers having not recovered fully since Covid. However, we are pleased to welcome our regular visitors from Bardfield and surrounding villages. Perhaps from our title, 'Cinema Club', there is an assumption that entry is membership only, but we do welcome newcomers to the film showings who may prefer one-off visits without committing to annual membership.

Film presenting has been greatly enhanced this season with a new, wall-mounted, automatic screen and a laser-driven projector located in the ceiling space above the stage. This has resulted in less effort setting up – previously our old, free-standing screen required four people to erect and take down.

Projection, prior to the new equipment, was in the centre of the hall, and not always satisfactory. Picture quality is also much improved with the new screen surface. Our thanks go to the Town Hall Committee for this excellent equipment, and to John Maidman and Paul Boon for their good instruction for its use.

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 our net profit contributes to the running costs of the *BT*, and helps to fund, where possible, various requests for donations from within the village societies.

We look forward to the rest of this season's films, with notification of these in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Community Facebook Page and posters in the village.

Ray Coles



Town Hall report

It has been a busy year at the Town Hall. A wide variety of activities and classes take place in the Town Hall every day and most evenings. We are delighted that Ryan French's Badminton Club and Alison Burkert's exercise classes are now regular weekly fixtures. There have also been more children's birthday parties this last year than ever before! We are lucky to have so many regular users of the hall including the Bardfield Players who have their next production on 2nd, 3rd and 4th of May. The Town Hall is a veritable social hub, and is what makes Great Bardfield the vibrant village that we live in today.

We have had several successful fundraising events over the last year, raising a total of almost £4,500. These included our annual quiz in March, the Art Show in May, a Band Night with Bullen, Hall & West in July, the Boules Competition BBQ in September, our Christmas Craft Fair in November and the annual Carol Concert with Bardfield Community Choir and Bardfield Brass in December. We were delighted that we were able to hold the Carol Concert inside the Hall for the first time since Covid.

Our most recent event, the Town Hall Quiz, is always a popular event, and this year was no exception. Tables sold out within a week of it being advertised in the *Bardfield Times*. Once again, Iain Graham was our quiz master with his inimitable style and charm. He compiles the quiz himself which takes several weeks of hard work, and we are extremely grateful to him for giving up his time to do this.

All profits from our fundraising events go towards the maintenance and improvement of the Town Hall. The hall was built in 1859 by Henry Smith, a well-known Quaker who lived at Bardfield Hall. It has therefore served Great Bardfield for 165 years. In an endeavour to bring the hall into the 21st century, we have recently installed an electric-powered screen. We are very grateful to the Bardfield Charities for awarding us a grant for this project. The use of the screen is free of charge for our village groups. There is a small charge to private hirers. The Cinema Club

and the Horticultural Society have already put the screen to good use.

In September, we took advantage of an offer of free Broadband for community buildings from Gigaclear. Previously, we were sharing our internet connection with the Community Information Point. Now we have a much stronger and more reliable connection.

The Art Show, held over the late May bank holiday, is our biggest fundraiser. Artists pay a fee for each picture displayed and commission is charged on all sales. We remain extremely grateful to Katrina Ralston and Peter Keynton for organising the event. A huge amount of work goes into the show starting months in advance. Artists who have previously displayed their pictures are contacted; the show is advertised, artworks are received and carefully mounted on the white display boards. Over the two days of the Art Show, Katrina, Peter and their team process all sales, working out the commission to be deducted and how much each artist is owed. Volunteers serve refreshments in the kitchen over the two-day event. This year's Art Show will take place on 26th and 27th May.

Many thanks to all members of the Town Hall Management Committee and to Sarah Hymas our caretaker. A special thanks also to Great Bardfield and the wider community for your continued support.

Patricia Walsh
Treasurer

John Maidman
Chairman



Great Bardfield Charities

I am pleased to present the report of the Great Bardfield Charities covering the last 12 months from May 2023 to April 2024.

During the last year we have held (four) quarterly meetings where we considered all applications for grants received from our community, and two extraordinary meetings, related to the future management of the Cottage Museum. I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their continued commitment to the administration of The Charity and its funds.

We try to ensure that there is an awareness of the Great Bardfield Charities throughout the community. We display posters on the Village Notice Boards and in the Community Information Point, and details of the Charity are included in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Parish Council website, and on the Great Bardfield Charities Facebook page. However many of our residents do not know that the Charity exists and that financial help could be available for them in times of need.

The Trustees therefore 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.

Our quarterly meeting dates (February, June, September and December) can be found in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Bardfield Online Community Facebook page the month before the quarterly meeting takes place. **In situations of urgency, applications will be considered**

between meetings. The trustees will reply to all applicants.

The Great Bardfield Charities operates within a Scheme overseen by the Charities Commission which clearly defines the purpose and terms under which our funds can be allocated.

Examples of grants made in the last year include:

- Contributions for fuel payments for villagers receiving state pensions and disability benefits
- Social needs
- Provision of disability equipment
- Hospital travel and parking expenses
- 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
- Village groups, club and societies

We consider grant applications on their merits at the time of application. Decisions made are confidential and are made in accordance with the Scheme. We do our best to grant financial assistance to the residents and organisations in Great Bardfield but we do not have unlimited funds. Our ability to assist applicants is dependent on our financial position and other applications made at the time.



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.

The Charity expenditures over the Year April 2023 – March 2024 are outlined as follows:

Income:	£22,154.06
(including bank interest)	
Total expenditure:	£22,304.82

(NB. The imbalance in these figures is relational to the quarterly income starting in May of each financial year. Figures are unaudited at time of writing this report).

All applications to the Charity are considered carefully and without prejudice by the Trustees. Organisations or individual villagers can approach any of the Trustees for information and assistance in making applications.

The Charity Accounts are audited yearly by Bill Mules, and we thank him for his continuing 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:

Reverend Alex Shannon – Ex-Officio Trustee

Pat Coles – Nominative Trustee and Chair

Linseys, Bridge Street, Gt Bardfield 01371 810995

Debbie Rogers – Co-opted Trustee/Minutes Secretary

01371 811083

Mick Gell – Nominative Trustee and Treasurer

3, Mill Close, Gt Bardfield 01371 810113

Annika Woodcock – Co-opted Trustee

Yew Tree Cottage, Dunmow Rd, Gt Bardfield 07900 491636

Nick Holland - Co-opted Trustee and Secretary

33, Bendlowes Road, Great Bardfield 01371 810209



The Bardfield Times

Firstly, a big ‘Thank you’ to all those who contribute regularly to the *Bardfield Times*. It’s quite a commitment to write something every month and keep it fresh and interesting – your efforts are hugely appreciated. Without these regular articles we would not have a magazine! However, new contributions are always welcome so feel free to send in letters or articles by the fourteenth of each month. Photographs are also most welcome especially those that feature people – although you must have their permission, and that of parents in the case of children.

We’ve had some great covers this year including the March issue which featured Hatty Carder who, with her amazing team Wavebreakers, became the fastest female trio to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic. What an achievement.

The *BT* is a real team effort and once again I must thank the group of volunteers led by Ray Coles, who get 800 copies of the magazine out to every house in our two villages in all weathers. The magazine is free to all residents thanks to income from advertising ably organised by Kate Fox. Finances are managed by Jackie Newton and donations are made to other village organisations.

I would particularly like to thank our layout designer Joe Jones who finds time in her busy life to put together every issue of the *BT* with great expertise.

Volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to help with distribution

and delivery contact Ray Coles distribution@bardfieldtimes.com If you fancy being ‘Guest Editor’ for a month contact me drjanetdyson@gmail.com.

Janet Dyson
Editor

The Bardfield Times		
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31st March 2024		
	2023–2024	2022–2023
Opening balance	-2,289.66	£-2,846.01
Income		
Advertising	7,118.00	7,994.50
Subs/Sales	56.70	68.10
Fundraising/Cinema	1,922.00	2,081.50
	£9,096.70	£10,144.10
Expenditure		
Printing	8,325.00	10,005.00
Stationery	67.90	104.90
Postage	269.05	199.45
Siteground Renewal	14.99	362.45
Cinema	1,538.70	1,561.96
Donations	-	200.00
	£10,215.64	£12,433.76
Closing Balance	£-1,118.94	£-2,289.66

Current A/c: £1,976.26

Savings A/c: £3,087.33

Cash in hand: £ 50.00

Jackie Newton
Honorary Treasurer



Bardfield Community Choir



The Community Choir has had a busy and successful year. We have been pleased to welcome some new members and now have 45 singers.

Following our rousing performance of Handel's 'Zadok the Priest' (see photo below) to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III we have given a number of concerts. In Little Bardfield we sang to raise funds towards the long-awaited church toilet. Our Summer concert was held in Bardfield Town Hall featuring a selection of music ranging from Vivaldi to Abba with soloists from the choir including Helen Shannon who sang an aria from Vivaldi's 'Gloria' accompanied by Rev'd Alex on the oboe.

We joined with Bardfield Brass and many other local musicians for Music in the Garden held in the beautiful gardens at Whinbush Farm (see photo above). We were delighted that at Christmas we were able to hold the Town Hall Carol Concert actually inside the Town Hall for the first time since Covid. It was good to be back. We also sang carols with Bardfield Brass and audience participation outside The Bell ending with a hearty performance of 'Jingle Bell Rock'.

Our final celebration of Christmas was at the lovely service of lessons and carols held jointly by the Anglican and Catholic churches in St Mary's.

Since Christmas we have been busy learning some new music and reviving some old favourites in preparation for a summer concert. We meet every Tuesday at 8pm in the Town Hall. We are extremely grateful to our brilliant accompanist Avril Nelson who provides excellent support at our rehearsals and concerts.

New members are always welcome, so if you enjoy singing a wide variety of music for pleasure, email me at drjanetdyson@gmail.com.

Janet Dyson
Musical Director







Great Bardfield in Pictures

Top Row: Proms Night with Bardfield Brass, Bardfield School children en route to Spains Hall, Art Show, Next row: Iain Graham vs sousaphone, Ian Ruffle setting up Players' Open Afternoon, the allotments, Next row: Heartsong perform at Music in the Garden, Town Hall quiz, Sharon of The Bell receiving Good Beer Guide award, Boules winners Louise and Tom Grinstead. Bottom row: Remembrance Sunday, Morris Men outside the Town Hall, Band night at the Town Hall, Deli Delicious opens on Vine Street





Bardfield Horticultural Society

We began our year with a talk in February by Simon White from Peter Beales Rose Garden & Nursery in Attleborough Norfolk. He sparked lots of interest with his wonderful pictures for a coach trip visit later in the year.

Our Spring Show had over 200 entries and treated us all to a much-needed lift with the colours and smells of Spring in the hall. We had a wonderful display of crown collages from Bardfield school, and a good amount of excellent entries in our domestic section too.

We rang the changes and had a Spring Tea instead of supper which was well supported with lots of home-made goodies and a quiz.

The month of June saw 37 of us visit a very special local 5-acre garden which had some amazing varieties of plants and a very enthusiastic host to show us around and answer any questions. We were made most welcome.

We booked a coach trip as requested to Peter Beales in conjunction with the Tuesday Club. On a very hot day we



Visit to Peter Beales Rose Garden & Nursery

enjoyed seeing the abundance of roses and the largest collection of clematis in East Anglia.

Peter Beales has since, after many years in the same ownership been sold, so hopefully it will continue to thrive and specialise in the preservation of many rare and old-fashioned roses.

What an amazing Summer Show we had, over 230 entries in many different classes including Floral Art arrangements done in kitchen colanders which were most unusual and fun to see. Peter Morris our President presented Mandy Boon who has been a very valued member of our committee for many years with his special award. Well done Mandy!



Summer Show 2023



Spring Show 2023



Bardfield Primary School children's display spring 2024



Mandy Boon receives the President's Award from Peter Morris



Private garden visit 2023



Domestic skills in the Spring Show 2023

For various reasons we did not have a Harvest Supper in 2023 but it will be back for all of you to enjoy in October 2024.

Our AGM included a talk from Alex Stevenson from Jordans Farm, Wakes Colne on re-wilding. We served cheese, biscuits and wine to 47 people who came and supported us.

An exceptional event for us was in December, when 24 of us got together and made floral arrangements on the theme of, "A Candlelight Christmas". A super sociable morning with something lovely to take home and enjoy.

2023 has been a successful year for our society. We have made a few changes to events and got lots of new ideas for 2024. Watch out for information in

the *Bardfield Times*, social media and posters.

We have a great committee and healthy membership numbers but always encourage new people to join us and understand sometimes things need to change and move forward. If you would like to help in anyway please contact any committee member.

Happy gardening!

**Linda Prior
Chairman
Bardfield Horticultural Society**



Great Bardfield Historical Society

Children enjoyed the Open Afternoon in the Bawden Room



The Historical Society has been a continuing presence in the village, though on this occasion with perhaps a lower profile than has sometimes been the case. However one or two attainments caught the eye.

The continuing interface with teachers and children at Bardfield Primary School has been an important plus for the Society. This was evidenced by visits organised for the children to the village collection of work by

Great Bardfield Primary School children enjoyed their visit to the Bawden Room



the Bardfield Artists in the Bawden Room, with background explanations provided and questions welcomed. Similar visits took place to the village's Museum and Cage. The focus on the place of the village within a broader historical curriculum was also highlighted.

Interest in the Bardfield Artists continues apace; we've seen a number of guided visits to the village already, with more on the way in the summer months. Another highlight, coming later in the year, will be the exciting launch of a new, revised edition of the Dunells' *History of Great Bardfield* with input from fresh contributors as well as many new illustrations.

In October, we held a successful Open Afternoon, this with the intention of raising the profile and achievements of the Society as well as providing a powerful catalyst in the pursuit of new members.

The Society will hold its AGM on April 13th, with an illustrated talk by Ashley Cooper on 'Heroes and Villains of the Suffolk/Essex Border', refreshments will be provided and existing members as well as new will be most welcome. Future talks and events will be advertised via posters and the Community Facebook page and to members directly by email. To book a village walk or a visit to the Bawden Room contact Janet Dyson on drjanetdyson@gmail.com.

**Jonathan Davies, Acting Chair
Great Bardfield Historical Society**



Bardfield Brass



Bardfield Brass playing at their popular Proms concert

Bardfield Brass was established in 2001 by Sylvia Benham and Wendy Brayshaw who was a teacher at Bardfield Primary School. The then school head, Mrs Barney, was very supportive and kindly let us use the school hall for practice sessions on the understanding that we would encourage and teach children to play. That is still the principle ethos of Bardfield Brass, albeit the age range now is from 10 years old to several members who will admit to drawing their old age pension!

We welcome everyone; there is no requirement to be a certain level of player or indeed to be a player at all – many of Bardfield Brass’s players had never played a musical instrument prior to joining!

Neither is cost a barrier, as we are able to supply a range of brass instruments to prospective players.

We are a ‘fun’ band and whilst we work hard to continually improve our standards of playing we do not put a serious or high-pressured focus on progression or competition playing. Instead we try to ensure that everyone is having a good time and hopefully that comes across when we perform our repertoire of well-known and recognisable tunes from West End shows and contemporary ‘pop’ standards. We currently perform at a wide range of

events, including fêtes, garden parties and religious events, culminating in our annual ‘Proms’ concert at Great Bardfield Town Hall. This concert is a combination of traditional Prom classics many of which include audience participation and a sense of humour! We are very active during the Christmas period when we play Christmas music at various pubs and for the lighting up of village Christmas trees and lights.

Traditionally we also provide the music for the annual Remembrance Service on the Memorial Green, including the evocative bugle-playing of ‘The Last Post’.

At full strength we number 25+ players and the long-suffering Clare Plunket (née Cornell) is in charge of us. Sylvia still performs many of the organisational and financial duties for the band. If you are interested in joining our merry band, email BardfieldBrass@hotmail.co.uk. Alternatively phone Sylvia on 07904 196732.

Iain Graham
on behalf of Bardfield Brass



Playing at Music in the Garden



Freshwell Health Centre

Your surgery cares for 7,757 people living in Great Bardfield and surrounding villages, that is 122 more than a year ago. We have 1,322 people living in Great Bardfield, only 26 more than this time last year. We have 46 staff including six GPs and two advanced nurse practitioners. Our clinical team also comprises practice nurses, health care assistants, and radiologists.

Staff News

Our staff levels have remained similar to last year. We have a new advanced care practitioner, Lynette Scillitoe, working alongside the GPs and Richard Clancy. Dr Low is back with us and has resumed being our lead GP trainer. We have an excellent GP registrar in Dr Randika Liyanage who is seeing lots of our patients now. We continue to train the next generation of doctors and nurses and would like to thank our patients for their engagement with trainee nurses, registrar GPs, and Cambridge University medical students. Julia Ibbotson has joined us to help Eve to provide X-Ray services on site to save patients driving to Braintree or further afield.

Primary Care Network

The Colne Valley Primary Care Network continues to benefit from increased NHS funding and is expanding its staff. Some of their names are becoming increasingly familiar to you but if you hear from the people listed below, please be assured that they are bona fide and are working with the surgery on your care. We have four pharmacists and two pharmacy technicians who carry out medication

reviews over the phone and may contact you – they are Danielle Thrower, Mikey Donnachie, Lorna Wickes, Anastasia Gulyakova, Natalie Prior and Rebecca Andrews. We have also recruited a paramedic team; Ryan Williams, Jamie Frayne and Megan Dean who undertake many of our home visits and run an in-house minor ailments clinic. As well as responding to acute “on the day” visit requests, Simon Travis and his team are also undertaking preventative visits for more frail patients to assess and plan their care.

Our Low Carb Wellbeing Coach Sharon Withnell continues to work with the Low Carb patient group who get stronger all the time. We now have two Low Carb recipe books available – one for budget meals and one for vegetarian meals. Learn more about the health benefits here: www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk.

We have four social prescribers; Terri Sparks, Georgia Lardner, Michelle Vagg and Lindsay Gordon who can come out to visit if you are not able to travel. They can help with advice on benefits, access to services and activities to help reduce social isolation. Kerry Jerram and Lynita Camp provide support to our patients living with cancer. Patients can also access services on Saturdays at the PCN Extended Access Hub in Halstead (CO9 1EX) for telephone consultations, wound care, smear tests, medication reviews and GP and nurse appointments.

CREAMER Fund

We are grateful for the support of the CREAMER fund which pays for our X-Ray, Ultrasound, Dexa Scanning and Cryotherapy services. The NHS do not fund any of this in Finchingfield, so our Great Bardfield patients are able to use a local service. This is down to generous patient donations.

Find out more here: www.creamerfund.co.uk, www.freshwell.co.uk, @Freshwell_HC on X (Twitter), and Freshwell Health Centre on Facebook.

David Shedden
Practice Manager



CREAMER Fund

In this last year we have been attempting to evolve CREAMER to continue to improve the health of our local community despite the effects of the increased cost of living felt by everyone.

We feel very grateful to have such high calibre and dedicated doctors, nurses and ancillary staff at the Freshwell Health Centre. I would like to thank Dr Kim Andrews, Dr David Oliver, David Shedden and all their colleagues for their commitment and support for CREAMER in its aim to continue to enhance healthcare in this local community.

The constraints from Coronavirus have gradually receded. The books and jigsaws are back in the waiting room. I would like to particularly thank Christopher and Jane Blewett, Rosalie Wyatt, Stella Curry and Ines Warner for their industry in looking after these. Raffles are back. Many thanks to Rosalie Wyatt, Sylvia Gould and all her helpers for organising these. Both of these activities promote CREAMER to a wider audience which really helps.

Income from funding and donations in 2023 was £36,000 which is £8,000 more than 2022 but expenditure was up by £20,000. This increased expenditure is principally for diagnostic services: X-rays, Ultrasound scans, Heart Echocardiograms, Bone densitometry scans (for diagnosing osteoporosis) and liquid nitrogen to treat skin lesions. These all enable patients to be diagnosed and treated more quickly and closer to home avoiding the need to visit hospitals. A further defibrillator has been purchased



and the bleed kits are in hand to be placed at appropriate sites in the villages. A replacement 24-hour cardiac monitor and a second dermatoscope were purchased for the surgery. Visits by the Laughter Specialists to local schools and a local child and family have been very well received.

I would like to thank all my fellow trustees for their industry in driving CREAMER forward and particularly our secretary, Sarah McCarthy, and our treasurer, Debbie Rogers, for their continuing help throughout the year. They both have CREAMER at the forefront of their thinking wherever they are and always come up with useful ideas for us.

Dr Andrew Hildrey
Chairman





Great Bardfield Primary School



AIM HIGH – TRY YOUR BEST – GO FAR

As we near the third and final term of this academic year, it is hard to believe that almost two years have passed since my appointment as Headteacher of Great Bardfield Primary School. Since my last report, school life is as busy as ever and I am constantly astounded at how many different activities and events we manage to squeeze into the school year alongside our primary purpose of teaching and learning. This would not be possible without the unwavering commitment from my staff and the fantastic support from our parents, families, governors and the surrounding community. Our school is a special place for so many reasons and I feel extremely privileged to hold the role of Headteacher.

There have been many positive changes in school since last April. The fantastic new classrooms are now complete and our children are settled in to their new surroundings. Our beautiful new building consists of three new classrooms and houses

our youngest children. It is the showpiece of our school with light and airy indoor spaces in which our children play, explore and learn. It also includes a wonderful, secure outdoor area where children can take their learning outside throughout the day. We are very grateful to our PTA and Bardfield Charities who helped us with resourcing these wonderful new areas.

As with all new buildings we have had our fair share of teething problems although I am delighted to report that everything is now in full working order and we are finally preparing for a Grand Opening of 'The Oxlip Building'.

In May of last year, we had a super time at school celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III. Despite the terrible weather, the children and staff had a lovely time with lots of themed activities, singing, cream teas and classroom picnics! Our school gates were transformed for the occasion with the children producing the lovely 'jewels' which contained messages for the new king.

As the summer term arrived, we enjoyed two fantastic Sports Days. The



From this ...



... to this! The Oxlip Building



first day consisted of individual and team athletic events which were run by our Year 6 pupils. The children took part in a variety of activities including throwing, aiming, catching and jumping. They accumulated points for which there were individual medals and house team awards. The second day consisted of the more traditional races such as the egg and spoon, skipping and obstacle races. Across the two days, our children demonstrated resilience in bucketloads and we were so proud of their 'try your best' attitude. We welcomed our families to the field to enjoy a lunchtime picnic which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. There is so much planning and preparation which goes into an event such as this but seeing the proud, beaming faces of our children (and parents) makes it all worthwhile.

Also in June, our older children took part in a new adventure and visited Spains Hall Estate in Finchingfield to learn about how the introduction of a beaver colony is contributing to the natural flood management scheme in the area. They all agreed that it was a fascinating experience (and a long walk) and we hope to visit again in the near future.

If you have read any of my articles in the *Bardfield Times* you will be aware of the ongoing work of our remarkable PTA. Last summer, an idea grew around wanting to make some changes to our traditional Summer Fête. Before we knew it, the concept of 'Bardfest' was born! The event, held in our school grounds, was a roaring success with music, activities for the children, food and drink along with a 'market place' on the front playground. This year



*Our
Coronation
fence*



*Ben
making
a 'Royal'
afternoon
tea*



*Billy
celebrating
with his
trophy for
'Highest
KSI
Scorer'*



promises to be even bigger so do come along and join us on Saturday 6th July.

As the Summer Term drew to a close the whole school enjoyed our traditional trip to Frinton Beach. The weather was kind to us and we all had a fantastic day paddling in the sea, playing ball games, digging in the sand and enjoying a picnic lunch. Having grown up in the Midlands, it always seems such a luxury to live and work quite so near the beach and it was lovely to see the children and staff enjoying themselves without an iPad or laptop anywhere to be seen!

As the new academic year rolled around we made the decision to

change our class names to link with the village of Great Bardfield. After much research by the children, we decided to name each class after one of the Bardfield Artists; Garwood, Bawden, Aldridge, Rowntree and Ravilious, all of whom have a special link with the village. The children spent the first week of September learning about the artist linked with their class and produced some stunning artwork mirroring their styles. In recognition of Remembrance Day, some of our children, along with pupils from other local schools, exhibited their beautiful artwork at St John the Baptist Church in Finchingfield and it can now be seen on display in our school hall.

Towards the end of the Autumn Term, our programme of traditional Christmas events took place. Our youngest children did us proud in their Nativity, as did our older children who did a superb job during our Carol Service at St Mary's Church. We were very grateful to Father Alex who played the piano for us and to Bardfield Brass who added a lovely Christmas feel to the proceedings. We also enjoyed our Christmas Craft Fayre, organised by our brilliant PTA team. In somewhat



Casper, Prince, Reuben and Bertie enjoying the beach



KS1 Nativity



Our contribution to the Remembrance Day Art Exhibition

of a new tradition, the pantomime came to Great Bardfield Town Hall again and we even sneaked in a 'Mince Pies and Carols' afternoon for the senior members of our village.

In February we took part in NSPCC Number Day. This is an important day which not only raises awareness of the wonderful work this charity carries out but also raises the profile of Maths within school. This year, our

focus was on 'Fluency in Number'. Children spent a great day taking part in fun activities which revolved around improving their basic number skills such as counting, number bonds and times tables. These are core skills which are essential for being proficient in number throughout school and beyond.

Last month, just like many schools, we celebrated World Book Day. The



Freya in Year 4 enjoying NSPCC Number Day



Year 6 children enjoying their visit to Between the Lines bookshop



theme this year was ‘Reading for Pleasure’ and we held a competition which challenged children to be photographed reading in the most unusual of places. There were entries of children reading in all sorts of places including in racing cars, on trampolines, in trees, in supermarkets and even on on horseback! Every child had the opportunity to walk up to Between the Lines Bookshop in the village to listen to a story and exchange their World Book Day token for a book of their choice. We are so grateful to Janet and her team for allowing us to visit – hopefully this will become another firm tradition at our school.

In the last week of this term, we were thrilled to invite the senior members of our community to enjoy an afternoon of singing and music. After the concert, our Year 6 children served tea, coffee and cake and chatted with our visitors. Our Spring Concert has become somewhat of a tradition here at Great Bardfield and our audience was full of praise for our wonderful children.

Looking forward to the rest of the school year, we are hopeful for some

sunshine so that the children can enjoy the outdoor events of swimming lessons, Sports Days, educational visits and Proms in the Playground along with the many other activities that rely on good weather next term.

Great Bardfield Primary School is such a special place at which our children not only achieve and make progress in their learning but where they flourish through nurture, support and encouragement to become the very best versions of themselves.

Our children, staff, parents and governors are incredible and I am thankful every day that I get to lead this amazing school into the future.

Liz Crow
Headteacher

Felix in Reception reading to his guinea pig



Reuben in Year 5 treating us to a guitar solo





Pavilion update

Hello Gentle Reader.

As a member of the Pavilion Committee we are well aware of the old phrase ‘There is light at the end of the tunnel!’ On occasions however we are reminded that sometimes that light is an oncoming train!

We have dodged successfully most of those trains and managed to come up smiling, and the good news is that there is some real light on the horizon.

As a passer-by, you could be forgiven for thinking that nothing much has changed, but nothing could be further from the truth, as most of the work now is continuing on the inside. The electrics are completed and connection to the mains sewerage and drainage system has been successfully made and commissioned, (previously an ancient septic tank), and the internal plumbing for showers, sinks and loos is operational. The next step is to tile the shower areas and wash basins which is booked in to happen. When that is completed, the beverage room will be kitted out with a microwave and a fridge for the benefit of all users.

We are currently waiting for the newly screed floor in the changing rooms to dry, then following that, the floor covering for the whole building can be laid.

Now we come to the final rather large hurdle! We need to resurface the existing car park and incorporate the new car park (where the old Pavilion stood) to give us space for 28 cars plus two disabled bays. This is a very big and expensive job, and we are currently hampered by the work being carried out by National Power, (nothing to do with the pavilion building) who are removing the overhead lines and poles and putting them underground. This is taking much longer than expected, due to circumstances beyond their control, not helped by the atrocious weather! We expect some progress soon on this front.

In the meantime, it gives me a chance to once again throw myself on to the extremely generous residents of Bardfield! We would not have got as far as we have without you putting your hands in your pockets and purses whenever you have been asked, for



Recent shots of the Pavilion interior showing the excellent progress made

which we are very grateful and thanks again! So I promise this will be the last time (probably!), that I will have to do it! This is the final push, anything you can afford to give to the Pavilion fund would go towards a fitting facility for the use of everyone in the village.

If you do wish to donate, please get in touch with Kate Fox our Parish Clerk on 810111, or direct pay to bank account number: 20459929, sort code 60-83-01. No amount is too small (or too large!), and many, many heartfelt thanks to those of you who have already contributed.

Iain Graham
on behalf of the Pavilion
Committee



Tuesday Club



Christmas lunch in the Town Hall

Last year, 2023, was a good year for the Tuesday Club, thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of our committee, but most importantly all the members and visitors who join us each month.

We had a variety of speakers during the year, from a Valentine-themed afternoon in February, to *The First Essex Witch Trials* and *Reflections on the Great War*, which was followed by afternoon tea to celebrate the King's Coronation. The *Burlesque, Me and the WI* afternoon proved very popular, as did Janet Dyson's talk on *Tirzah Ravilious* and Will Edwards' *History of the Christmas Pudding*. It is always interesting to talk to the speakers and see the objects that they may have brought along. This year got off to a good start with Amanda Sutherland



Ooh la la!– Burlesque ladies in the Town Hall

talking about her 'creative journey', from sorting her granny's button box as a small child, to designing costumes for the London Opera House, to now running her own business creating unique accessories.

Sadly, we lost a very valued member, June Williams, in April. We all miss her, and her husband Bill Williams who died shortly afterwards.

We always have an outing in July, and on a very hot day we joined the Horticultural Society for a trip to Peter Beales Rose Nursery. It was nice to walk around the beautifully laid out gardens and see the roses in their natural setting, which of course had to end with a visit to the plant sales. Anyone for a Rambling Rector? After refreshments in the thankfully air-conditioned cafeteria our very helpful driver had to try to squeeze all our purchases into the boot of the coach!

Another annual event is the Christmas lunch in December, and as a change we decided this year to hold this in the Town Hall. With the help of some very good caterers it was a resounding success, and we



all had a very enjoyable afternoon. We support three charities, The Essex and Herts Air Ambulance Trust, the CREAMER fund and Farleigh Hospice. Our chosen charity for 2023 was the CREAMER fund, and a representative came to our January meeting to tell us more about the support they provide for the Freshwell Surgery, not only in buying equipment

for the surgery but paying the ongoing maintenance and associated staff costs. We were pleased to be able to give the fund a cheque to help them continue their good work.

All our talks are advertised in the *Bardfield Times* and on posters around the village. We welcome both men and women, so if you haven't been to one of our meetings before why not give us a try? We meet in the Town Hall on the second Tuesday of each month, doors open at 2.00 and talks start at 2.30. Visitors pay £5 including refreshments and it only costs £25 to join for the whole year. We look forward to meeting you soon.



Iris presenting a cheque for the CREAMER fund

Cherry Whitby

Still to come for 2024

May 14 th	Wild Life of Tanzania	Graham and Mary Brace
June 11 th	British Sign Language	Lindsey Barrell
July 9 th	Summer Outing	T/B/A
August 13 th	Hearing Dogs	Malcolm Domb
September 10 th	The Magic of the Theatre	Roger Manion
October 8 th	A History of the Rowntree Fruit Pastille	Will Edwards
November 12 th	Polydactyl Cats	Rose Griffin
December 10 th	Christmas Lunch	Venue T/B/A



The Bardfield Players



It's been a funny old year. Because of the need to reschedule the November 2022 play to March 2023 we did not have our usual play last May, leading to a slightly longer break between productions. We used this time to have a much-needed recruitment drive.

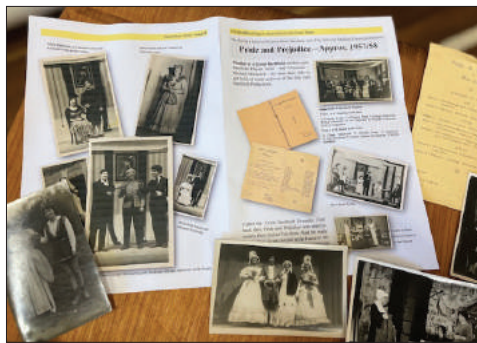
During the village garage sale, we erected some of the old scenery boards from our panto 'Treasure Island' on the green opposite the school. We had leaflets and a banner printed to advertise an Open Afternoon at the

Town Hall in July, and of course an advert in the BT. On the day we set up lots of costumes and props from previous productions, along with posters, a video of 'Treasure Island', the lighting desk, etc, for people to see.

The event was a little disappointing as we only had a dozen or so visitors. However we have managed to attract and maintain two more set builders, three actors and a trainee technician, all of whom have been very helpful in putting on our last show, 'Being of Sound Mind', and our next one 'In a Hole'. We are still in great need of an experienced techie!

'Being of Sound Mind', was a spooky drama about a will which left 13 million pounds to the distant and disliked members of the deceased family. All they had to do was spend the entire night in the house!

It turned out to be a very hard play to learn, and the cast did really well to do so. They produced very good performances, particularly Sally and Mike, who had never acted before. We tried very hard to make it as



All sorts of theatrical props, costumes and programmes were on display at the Open Afternoon



Cast members in 'Being of Sound Mind'



atmospheric and sinister as possible, and I think we succeeded. *Most* of the performances were brilliant and much enjoyed by the audience for the right reasons. However, the illusion was shattered during the Thursday night performance when a fit of giggles, engulfed the cast. The illusion was then completely trodden into the ground when the door got stuck and the only way the actor could get off the stage was by squeezing past it!

The audience found this hilarious! Unlike the director, who had a huge luvvie moment, and went to the pub before the end of the play. He had got over it before the next performance, having mended the door with the help

of Chris Couldrige. It is, as I always say, 'If we get it right, you will have a lovely time. If we get it wrong, you will have a lovely time'!

**Ian Ruffle, Chair
The Bardfield Players**



Rehearsals for the next play 'In a Hole'



St Mary's Bellringers

The bellringers who rang at St. Mary's, Great Bardfield on the day of the Coronation of King Charles III



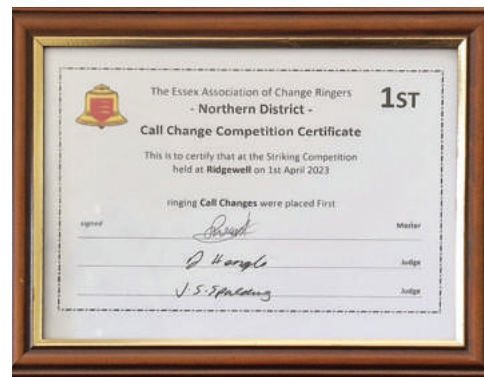
It's been another enjoyable year for the St Mary's bellringers where we continue to maintain and ring the 8 church tower bells and a set of 15 handbells. Over this year our weekly practices continued on a Thursday evening (handbells 18.30 – 19.30 and tower bells 19.30 – 21.00) and we continued to ring for services and key dates throughout the year.

Our aim in bellringing is always to make a good, musical sound whenever we ring (sometimes we are more successful than others, especially when we are learning something new!). In April we thought we would put our skills to the test in the annual bellringing "striking" competition. These competitions are held throughout the country – judges sit outside the bell tower and listen to a succession of ringing groups who ring a test piece of ringing. The aim is to ring the bells at even spaced intervals (which is called good striking). We entered the local Northern District (North Essex) competition. We joined forces with bellringers from Shalford

and managed to win first place – a fantastic achievement especially for our youngest ringer who conducted our test piece of ringing.

Throughout the first half of 2023, we joined the national bellringing campaign to "Ring for the King". This was a push to teach enough bellringers to ring every bell in the country on 6th May; the Coronation of King Charles III. Working with the other local bellringers we managed to successfully ring all the bells in our benefice (Wethersfield, Finchingfield, and Shalford) at the same time as the bells of Westminster Abbey. It was a proud moment to continue a

Great Bardfield and Shalford bellringers won first place in the local area striking competition.





century-old tradition of using bells to announce important national events (we were even given a commemorative pin badge to mark the occasion!).

Throughout the year we have continued to make use of our set of handbells – a wonderful old set of 12 bells plus 3 new bells that were cast in January 2023 following fundraising efforts and the kind support of the Bardfield Charities. In the summer our handbell group – The Bardfield Chimes - performed at Music in the Garden, which is a wonderful local event which raises money for charity. Christmas is of course our busiest handbell ringing time and this year we performed at even more events including the Dunmow Christmas market, in the atrium at Broomfield Hospital, and for the residents of a care home. We also loved ringing Jingle Bells at the Bardfield Town Hall Christmas Concert, accompanied by local children who ‘jingled’ bells and sang along.

In March we joined forces again with other bellringers in our benefice to go on a ringing outing – a day trip when you ring at several other bell towers and, of course, enjoy a lovely lunch at



The Great Bardfield Handbell Ringers during one of our Christmas performances

a pub! Each bell feels a bit different to ring and so ringing at each different bell tower is a fun challenge. We visited various villages along the Stour Valley in Suffolk and spent a very enjoyable day ringing. The highlight was having a demonstration of the unique set of bells at East Bergholt, which are rung by spinning the bells by hand (rather than pulling ropes).

We are looking forward to another year of bellringing fun and we hope to recruit more local Bardfield residents to join our friendly group!.

Nick and Sarah Holland
Tower Captains



The Pant Valley Benefice Bellringers (outside the East Bergholt bell cage)



News from St Mary's Parish Church



For the Parish Church, 2023 once again saw an event of great national significance being marked, which proved to be one of the highlights of the year. The celebration of King Charles' Coronation brought together individuals and groups from across the parish, with the skills of our team of bell ringers and the voices of the Community Choir bringing particular festivity to the occasion, complementing a wonderfully full programme of events across the village. It was one of three occasions when we were fortunate enough to have the Community Choir join us for a service, the others being our Harvest Festival and Carol Service. Other services of significance included the now traditional Shrove Tuesday pancake party, the service on Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial (as ever, wonderfully accompanied by Bardfield Brass), and further services over Christmas – for the school, and the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve. Music in the Garden made a return also, with soloists and ensembles from the village all contributing to a

wonderful afternoon, which raised a good deal for the church and other charities. Another fundraising event which was well-supported was the Autumn Fair, which included a very fine contribution from the Bardfield Chimes, whose programme of performances continues to grow!

Alongside all these highlights, however, the day-to-day work of the church continues to be just as important. I know from looking at the prayer board and candle stand that many people value the opportunity to come into the church to pray, or just to find some time of peace. We are very fortunate to be able to keep the church open in this way, and fortunate also that there is such a dedicated team of volunteers who work hard together to maintain the churchyard, and keep it all in a good and tidy condition.

Details of our services and other events and initiatives are printed in the *Bardfield Times* and displayed on church noticeboards, and we do always welcome those who would like to explore questions of faith. Often during Advent and Lent we have discussion groups to think about those questions, and we hope too that our regular Sunday services offer an uplifting way into the Christian faith for newcomers and returners alike. In 2024 we are looking to grow our engagement with children and families, with the forthcoming launch of a new parent and baby/toddler group, St Mary's Munchkins. And we continue to be available for families at significant moments in their lives, with each year seeing Christenings, Weddings and Funerals – all of which make St Mary's an important part of those individuals' stories.

The Rev'd Alex Shannon
Priest-in-Charge of Finchingfield,
Cornish Hall End, Wethersfield, Shalford,
Gt Bardfield and Lt Bardfield



News from the Quaker Meeting House



We continue to be a small but lively group who meet each Sunday. We hope you find out more about us from the articles which are appearing in the *Bardfield Times* – the first of these in the February issue.

The Meeting House continues to be used by local groups on both a regular and occasional basis. We are pleased that due to the Town Hall being already booked, our building will be used by the District Council for the election of the new Police Commissioner.

Many of you will have attended the celebrations over the Coronation weekend when many special stamp designers were awarded hand-made prizes for their art work and at least thirty children were crowned by the Rev'd. Alex Shannon. The setting

may not have been as splendid as Westminster Abbey but the specially made throne brought a new look to the inside of the Meeting House! It was a fun occasion for all involved.

We are hoping to encourage bees to our garden by scattering bee friendly wildflower seeds in the central “wild” area. This is in memory of Ted Bozman who was a member of our Meeting until he became too unwell to attend. He was a passionate bee-keeper and often kept us educated and entertained by his knowledge of bees and their interesting lives.

Sue Collins
Correspondent



Flora awarding prizes to stamp designers



Rev'd Alex 'crowning' children



Lt Bardfield Village Cricket Club

Little Bardfield Cricket Club in its glorious country setting



Little Bardfield Village Cricket Club is a community-run village cricket club, established in the year 1919. It has provided social cricketing opportunities to people of all abilities and backgrounds for over 100 years.

It's now the time of year when we eagerly anticipate the arrival of the cricket season, and we are particularly excited this year as things are shaping up with the club progressing in a number of areas. These developments are being guided by a Club Development Plan which was produced in 2022, with some key updates provided below:

Senior Cricket: Vastly reducing numbers of senior cricketers at the club has made the last few seasons difficult, but we are a stubborn bunch who refuse to give in.

We're excited to announce that local resident Rory Hitchcock is stepping into the captaincy role for 2024 and we have a number of new faces joining the senior playing side.

We are always on the look out for anyone who may like to join, whether a seasoned pro or someone looking for a new sport. You can find out more about the club and how to join by visiting www.lbvcc.co.uk or contacting Rory on 07904 874140.

Young cricketers of the future!

Junior Cricket: Following the successful reintroduction of junior cricket in Bardfield in 2022, we enjoyed another fantastic year in 2023 welcoming crowds of 8–11 year olds to the club each week through the summer. We continue to be dedicated to inspiring a love for cricket among local children and their families and are excited to introduce an additional older junior cricket offer to 12–15 year-olds in 2024.

Community Hub: Over the last few years the cricket club has worked hard to establish itself as a community hub where people of all ages can come together. The club now hosts a number of regular community events (as well as keeping our doors very much open on match days!) where local residents





Left: Fun times at the cricket club

Right: Senior Cricket team

can enjoy the benefits of a social and supportive environment.

Ground and Clubhouse: Recently we have been putting in a lot of work to improve the ground and clubhouse including vast improvements to our playing facilities, a new astroturf wicket being installed for the juniors, a full toilet refurbishment, a large new marquee for events, planting of new trees around the full perimeter of the ground, the list goes on. Unfortunately the club was broken into over the winter which caused a fair amount of damage. The only silver lining is that of course we do not keep anything of value in the club to be stolen.

Club Marketing: A concerted effort has been made to improve the marketing of the club. You may have noticed our lovely new sign on the road through the village. We have made improvements to our website and social media accounts. You can find and follow the club on facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) by searching Little Bardfield Village Cricket Club, or find more details about all of those at www.lbvcc.co.uk.

Income Generation: Of course all of these developments come at a cost (not to mention the spiralling costs of

energy and insurance bills!). We are working hard to diversify the income streams for the club so that we are able to serve our local community at little or no cost. This means spending a lot of time seeking and applying for local sources of funding which this year has brought a number of new sponsors to the club. If you or your company may be interested in sponsoring or donating to the club, please get in touch, either as a sponsor or by becoming a Vice President to the club.

In general, we would love to see more local residents come to the club on a match day or to one of our events. We have home fixtures every other Saturday throughout the summer, the kettle is always on and the fully licensed bar always open!

If anyone has any questions about any of the above, or anything else relating to the cricket club, please feel free to contact me, Will Slemmings on slemmings@hotmail.co.uk.

Will Slemmings
Club Chairman



Great Bardfield Parish Council



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle
Chair
01371 810986



Cllr Janet Dyson
Vice Chair
07957 483207



Cllr Iain Graham
07831 595555



Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith
07515 398402



Cllr Darren Hockley
01371 810836



Cllr Paul Kennedy
01371 810540



Cllr Peter Walmsley
07843 498243



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.

