



Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

May 2025



Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney

Front cover: Landscape Artist of the Year winners

Back cover: A spring walk

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



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Chair's introduction

My role for the Annual Parish Meeting is primarily to extend thanks to many people for their time, enthusiasm and support to this community.

Firstly, I would like to recognise and thank the members of your Parish Council, all of whom are volunteers, who give time and energy freely to ensure that the activities of the Parish Council, both those required of us by law, and those we have the freedom to provide, are undertaken and completed in an appropriate, cost-conscious and beneficial manner. I would like to thank the Vice-Chair, Janet Dyson, and the other members of the Council: Iain Graham, Darren Hockley, Paul Kennedy and Peter Walmsley. We all have our strengths, and I appreciate all their support and attention to Parish Council matters,

The Vice-Chair's report will outline the main activities of the Council over the last year. However I would like to emphasise our thanks to those on the Pavilion working party (Iain, Darren, Paul and Peter), plus two residents, John Maidman and Andrew Taylor, whose time, skills and experience were invaluable in bringing this project, finally, to completion. We hope you will all join us on June 1st to celebrate the completion of this project, view the pavilion and have some fun at the playing fields.

We were sad to receive the resignation of one of our members recently, Lynsi Hayward-Smith, who had been a highly valued member of the Parish Council bringing much experience, wisdom and support to the Council. We thank Lynsi for her work on the Council including her role on the Planning and Personnel Committees, environmental projects and our representative on the Braintree Association of Local Councils. Due to Lynsi's recent departure we now have a vacancy on the Council and have started the process to find a new Parish Councillor.

Our appreciation and gratitude for her knowledgeable and enthusiastic support to the Council, go to Kate Fox, Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Kate is a fully qualified Clerk and has a wealth of experience. She provides us with



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle, Chair

advice and information to enable us to make proposals and decisions for the benefit of the village, and she provides administrative support and financial governance for the activities of the Council.

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 and undertakes repairs. Also, thanks to residents who give their time to the community including Mick Gell for his work in maintaining Memorial Green and those that have stepped forward to help out with our plans to establish working parties to maintain and improve community assets such as the village greens, playingfields, footpaths and benches.

We were delighted that 20 residents joined the recent litter pick and village tidy that took place in April. Also this year a new bench was donated by the Hitchcock family which has been situated on Memorial Green in memory of Diana and Michael Hitchcock, long-



term residents of Great Bardfield and proprietors of the fondly remembered Hitchcock General Stores and Post Office on the High Street. The bench faces towards the location of their shop and adjacent home, and a paved area in front of it protects this corner from further damage by HGVs, a regular problem until this area was redesigned with help from the Hitchcock family.

The Annual meeting and this Annual Report are greatly enhanced by the contributions made from many groups, societies and 'bodies' that benefit our community by providing financial support, healthcare, education, sporting and social opportunities. We are most grateful to all contributors, particularly those who have attended the meeting in person to present their reports. The report is available to all residents who would like a copy and is also available online. It includes many photos highlighting the activities in the village over the last year. We rely on you all to provide these to showcase the vibrancy of our village, and highlight how much time and effort many people put in, in their own free time, to providing services and activities for those living and working in this vibrant community.

The Parish Council were particularly pleased to see two new events introduced in 2024 – the Scarecrow Competition organised by the PTA to raise funds for the village school, and the Landscape Artist of the Year arranged by Helene Brown, Amelia Rubbins and Abi Snow to encourage current 'Bardfield Artists' to showcase their creative talents by painting views of the village in a relaxed and informal competition. Both events are scheduled again for 2025 and it is anticipated

that they will achieve the popularity of other long-standing events, such as Bardfest, Arts and Crafts weekends, the Garage Sale and Boules Competition.

By contrast, we were saddened to see the recent closure of the After-School Club which was established by a committee of parents nearly 30 years ago and provided much needed after-school care and a breakfast club for many families in the village over many years. I know that some families moved to Great Bardfield specifically because of this facility. Unfortunately, increased costs and lack of funding opportunities for a facility of this kind had led to its closure.

In addition to our thanks to those that contributed to this report, thanks go to Kate Fox for liaising with all contributors and to Jenny Rooney for her design and editing skills to pull the report together as a celebration of life in Great Bardfield during 2024 – 2025. The report has received awards and compliments over the years from outside the village.

The Parish Council also thanks our District Councillors for the Three Fields ward, Michael Staines and Mark Ault. They attend our monthly meetings, when able, and have provided their support particularly around planning, highways and public transport issues. We work closely with our District Councillors and also with Graham Butland, our County Councillor. Their written reports are included in this published document.

We really appreciate the support from all residents of Great Bardfield. It is pleasing to see the love and support given by the community to the community, and there is much done that is not seen or celebrated here. Those who collect neighbours' medication for them, do shopping, give them lifts to attend doctor, dentist and other appointments. Those who keep the churchyards tidy, arrange fundraising events and attend them. There are many other acts of kindness which are pleasing to hear of or to see.

A community lives and thrives by the attention of those that live and work there.

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



Neighbourhood Plan update 2025

The beautiful glebe meadow looking up to St Mary's



We are hoping that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) will be completed in the next year, after many hours of work by the NP team, obtaining expert reports and consulting with village residents over several years. The Great Bardfield Neighbourhood

Plan team comprises local volunteers, with support and advice from expert consultants. Thanks go particularly to the current team Andrew Collins, Jonathan Davies, Janet Dyson, Kate Fox, Carolynne Ruffle and Richard Winsborough for their continued attention, enthusiasm and support in drawing this extensive process to completion.

During 2024, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was presented to the village. Responses and comments were received during a six-week consultation period in July and August. This consultation also invited comments from statutory bodies, including Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Essex Highways, Environmental Bodies, Major Utility Companies and other Parish Councils in Essex. The responses were collected, assessed and reviewed by the NP team. This led to some revisions to the proposed document and the Plan plus associated supporting and statutory documentation,



including the Landscape Assessment Plan, a Basic Conditions statement and Consultation Statement were submitted to Braintree District Council (BDC) – our local planning authority. Once they have completed their final assessment it is BDC’s responsibility to appoint an independent examiner under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Once the examination is completed, a referendum of the local community will be arranged by BDC, to ensure agreement with the Plan. So, there is still some process to go through before the Great Bardfield Neighbourhood Plan is finalised.

We will be relieved for the process to be successfully completed after several years, interrupted by the pandemic, and the work involved to meet a number of statutory requirements. Though a Plan will not prevent development it has influence over what is considered acceptable for our historic and rural community.

Three parcels of land in Great Bardfield have been submitted by their respective owners to the District



Parcels of land submitted as sites for potential development marked in red

Council for consideration as potential development sites (see attached map). The Parish Council has objected to each of these sites as we feel they are not appropriate for development and have used the draft plan to support our objective to protect the village against unacceptable development.

**Carolynne Ruffle, Chair,
Neighbourhood Plan Team**



Catkins and bluebells growing in the parish



Great Bardfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 26th April 2024

1. Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed members of the public attending including representatives of the many village organisations who would be presenting reports; she also welcomed County Councillor Graham Butland. She presented the 2023-2024 annual report which gave an overview of the work of the Parish Council during the year and contained contributions from many village groups, clubs and societies. These highlight the variety of community services and activities and make this document a celebration of Great Bardfield as well a valuable record. She wished to especially thank Jenny Rooney who produced the document, supported by Kate Fox; Mick Gell who worked tirelessly maintaining the Memorial Green and Ian Ruffle the village handyman. She expressed her thanks for the support of her fellow Councillors and welcomed Peter Walmsley to the council, who was co-opted following the 2023 elections. All members were glad that Lynsi Hayward-Smith has recovered sufficiently to attend recent meetings.

One of the major challenges this year had been to represent the community objecting to the application for a substantial addition to Deer Park View. There was much relief when the Appeal failed. Work has continued on the Neighbourhood Plan with further public consultation to take place on June 15th. Once adopted it

is hoped that this will help protect the village from large scale, inappropriate development proposals. One of the biggest projects ever undertaken by the Council is the new pavilion building which would be reported on later in the meeting.

2. Apologies

These were received from Cllr Paul Kennedy, Cllr Darren Hockley and Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith; Jenny Wright, David Shedden, Ray Coles, Ian Ruffle John Maidman and Jackie Newton.

3. Parish Council Review 2023-24

The Vice Chair, Cllr Janet Dyson, wished to highlight a few aspects of the work of the Parish Council over the last year.

Planning: the PC is not the planning authority but are consulted on all applications in the parish. This year it reviewed 33 applications – mostly small-scale works within the Conservation Area, the one exception being the application for a further 56 houses on land adjacent to Deer Park View which was refused by Braintree but the subject of an appeal by the developer. We were ably supported at the Appeal by local Planning Consultant Geoff Gardner. Strong objections were made by Parish Councillors, the Historical Society and village residents. The Planning Inspector dismissed the Appeal.

There have been 21 applications for tree works – any tree work in a Conservation Area requires permission – our Tree Warden, Simon Walsh, assesses all applications.



This time last year the village was outraged by a proposal to site a 5G telephone mast in the centre of the village close to the greens and school – there were more than 400 objections and the application was withdrawn.

Along with other parishes there have been ongoing discussions about the future of Wethersfield Airbase.

The Council were delighted to win grant funding for a project led by Cllr Lynsi Hayward-Smith for the conversion of the Quiet Space behind the Town Hall into a Community Garden. Volunteers have begun work on this project.

Good progress has been made on the Pavilion project – the subject of another report but many thanks to the Pavilion working group and to village residents who have made generous donations to this project.

Highways and Transport feature on all our Agendas and we are heartily sick of potholes and the terrible state of our roads and pavements.

We are also deeply frustrated by the lack of appropriate bus services in this rural area. Our campaign to save the service to Braintree and get a service to Great Dunmow continues.

Finally, she thanked her colleagues on the PC saying they are a good team. Special thanks to Chair, Carolynne Ruffle and the Clerk, Kate Fox.

4. Parish Council Financial Review 2023-24. The brief report highlighted key items of income and expenditure for the year, further details of which were contained in the Minutes available to view on the Parish Council website: www.greatbardfield-pc.go.uk. The bar charts shown within the report provided an accessible overview of key areas of income and expenditure.

Parish Income: The Annual Precept is usually the most significant part of the Council's income which in 23/24 was £48,000. However, similar to last year, there was a further sum of £42,035 available under 106 contributions. This was enhanced with donations from the community and ECC of £6,459.

Parish Expenditure: The Parish Council is responsible for key services and once again the previous 12 months has seen increases in the cost of many services. Apart from the Pavilion Project which has been covered by 106 monies, donations and earmarked funds, other significant expenses were a) Grass Cutting – greens and open spaces £4,328; b) Public Lighting – maintenance and supply £4,289; c) CIP: Rent, Broadband, Photocopier £2,389; d) Playground – refurbishment and utilities £2,513.

Precept: For the 24/25 year the Parish Council had reluctantly to raise the precept request resulting in an increase of £4.99 per household per annum for a Band D property. This will provide for the expected and known increases in the coming 12 months.

5. Braintree District Council Report: There was no representative to speak but the report was included in the Annual Report.

6. Essex County Council Report: Cllr Butland's written report was published in full in the Annual Report. He highlighted the amount needed to be spent on adult social care and children's services (not including education) which together accounted for 47% of the annual budget. He took questions from the floor which mainly related to the lack of highway maintenance in regard to potholes; this



coming year ECC have allocated an additional £12M for priority work.

7. Town Hall Report: There was no representative to speak but the report was included in the Annual Report.

8. Great Bardfield Charities Report and Accounts: Pat Coles, Chair of the Charities, presented the report and introduced two of the Trustees present, Annika Woodcock and Mick Gell, and highlighted the areas in which help has been given – educational needs, contributions for fuel payments, hospital travel and para-medical services. The Charities try to reach out to people in need and encourage applications from parish residents.

9. The Bardfield Times Report and Accounts: The Editor, Janet Dyson first thanked the *BT* Team; Joe Jones whose skills enabled the magazine to be put together for printing; Ray Coles and his team of volunteer distributors who deliver in all weathers to Great and Little Bardfield; Kate Fox who looks after the advertising that generates funds and Jackie Newton who as Treasurer manages those funds.

Once again there have been some great covers illustrating many village activities but the March edition was particularly interesting as it featured resident Hattie Carder who with her team became the fastest female trio to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic. New volunteers are always welcome and she invited anyone who fancied to be a 'guest editor' for a month.

10. Great Bardfield Primary School: Chair of Governors, Jane Tillotson, began by saying how fortunate the school was to have Liz Crow as Headteacher and praised the way in which she has developed the school's involvement in the community. The

three new classrooms for the youngest children are now complete. The published report covers the school year and illustrates just how active the school is in all aspects of a child's development.

11. Pavilion Project – Update: Cllr Graham was delighted to say that the finishing line was in sight – definitely before the start of the football season. He emphasized the point that the pavilion will be a community building, available for small group events such as children's parties and wellbeing activities such as Pilates.

He apologised for the current state of the car park area which was due to work being carried by NPower to bury existing overhead cables underground and nothing to do with pavilion work. However as both a thank you and by way of an apology the team working for NPower offered to carry out significant external works at no cost which will help the budget although fund raising will continue.

Cllr Graham spoke of the significant support provided by John Maidman and Andrew Taylor – lay members of the Pavilion Committee – who brought invaluable skills to the team to help drive the project forward and Cllr Walmsley who is a project manager for a large building company.

12. Closing remarks

Before closing the meeting, the Chair invited any questions from the floor and thanked Cllr Butland for attending. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Kate Fox
Parish Clerk



Parish Council review 2024-2025

The members of our Parish Council are: Carolynne Ruffle, Chair, Janet Dyson, Vice-Chair, Iain Graham, Darren Hockley, Paul Kennedy, and Peter Walmsley. There is a vacancy following the resignation of Lynsi Hayward-Smith.

The Parish Council met monthly throughout the year, with the exception of August, when the Finance Committee convened to sign off any outstanding financial matters.

As a statutory consultee, the Council reviewed 30 planning applications referred by Braintree District Council. These were mainly for small-scale extensions and works within the historic conservation area. We also received 21 tree work applications, largely for the maintenance or reduction of overgrown and shading trees. These were assessed by our Tree Warden, Simon Walsh.

The Council continues to collaborate closely with neighbouring parishes concerning the running of the Wethersfield Asylum Centre and its impact on the local area, and the long-term future of the former Wethersfield Airfield—an issue that remains unresolved.

Parish Councillors serve entirely in a voluntary capacity. We are ably supported by our Parish Clerk, Mrs Kate Fox, and by Mr Ian Ruffle, who serves as our Village Handyman ensuring bins are emptied and public spaces are well maintained. We extend our sincere thanks to both for their commitment and hard work. Our appreciation also goes to Cllr Iain Graham and other volunteers who operate the Community Information Point, and also to Mick Gell for his continued care of the Memorial Green and gardens.

Progress on the new Pavilion has been significant this year. We look forward to celebrating its grand opening in June.

Pipers Meadow remains under careful stewardship, guided by the expert advice of Dr Doug Joyce, who helps protect rare local species such as the Bardfield Oxlip. The newly planted trees have been kept



Cllr Janet Dyson, Vice Chair

well-watered over the hot summer, thanks to Ian Ruffle's dedication.

It is unfortunate that the proposed improvements to the Quiet Space were not able to go ahead in the planned form due to the increased marshiness of this site. We believe this to be due to underground springs. Some trees have been planted there but the wet ground was not suitable for the raised beds and the Parish Council has donated these to the village allotments where they will be put to productive use.

We continue to monitor areas around the village that could be improved. In April twenty volunteers of all ages donned hi-vis jackets, picked up litter, trimmed overhanging brambles, and weeded overgrown areas. Several bags of rubbish were collected to be disposed of by Braintree



Litter pickers tidying up our village



District Council, especially from the village entrances where many beer cans, bottles, and takeaway boxes were found. We appreciate the community's efforts to keep our village tidy. More activities are planned for the summer.

Highways and transport continue to pose challenges, particularly regarding parking congestion and speeding vehicles. The deteriorating condition of roads and pavements is a pressing concern. Deep ruts and potholes have damaged many vehicles over the winter months, while uneven pavements remain a hazard to pedestrians. We have consistently lobbied Essex County Council about these issues, though the lack of infrastructure

funding is cited as a limiting factor. Public transport has also been affected. The Number 9 bus service to Braintree has been discontinued and although the introduction of the DigiGo scheme provides for occasional journeys this is not a satisfactory replacement for a regular, reliable bus service. Efforts to establish a bus service to Great Dunmow continue to be unsuccessful. This lack of access is a serious concern, particularly for residents without a car or those unable to drive, as it limits independence and opportunities particularly for older and younger members of the community.

Parish Council activities are reported monthly in the *Bardfield Times* and shared via the Community Facebook page. All monthly meetings are open to the public and begin with a Public Forum, where residents are welcome to raise concerns or ask questions. The Community Information Point, adjacent to the Town Hall, is open on Thursday and Saturday mornings from 10am to 12 noon – for refuse and dog waste bags or simply a friendly chat.

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

The completed pavilion ready for its unveiling on June 1st





Parish Council financial review

For the year ended 31st March 2025

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

Parish Income: The annual Precept is usually the most significant part of our income which for 2024/25 was £51,000. Over the previous two financial years the parish had benefited from funds secured through the 106 Agreement with the District Council – funds which enabled the completion of the new pavilion building. These funds have now been fully utilized, however donations have continued to be received from residents for which the Council are very grateful and a very successful firework event raised a further £815. Additional income was derived from the ECC verge cutting allowance, the BDC grant which goes towards village maintenance work and the District Councillors' Community Grant of £500 which enabled the purchase of a new bench at the playingfields.

Parish Expenditure: The completion of the pavilion building resulted in expenditure of £65,024 in 2024/25. This sum included completion of the car park, drainage works, internal fixtures, other verandah furniture and floor covering. We were considerably helped by the generous donation of labour and machinery provided by Murphys and BPH Rail, without which the car park would not have

been completed. The Parish Council is responsible for some key services and costs continue to increase in these areas, including salaries, street lighting, ground maintenance and insurance.

Precept: For the 25/26 year the Council, mindful of the negative impact of the cost-of-living increases on the residents, were able to submit a Precept that resulted in a charge in the parish element of the rates, of just +3.9% or £2.25 per household per year (£4.99 in 24/25). A balance has to be drawn between keeping the parish rate as low as possible while still being able to undertake key services for which it is responsible.

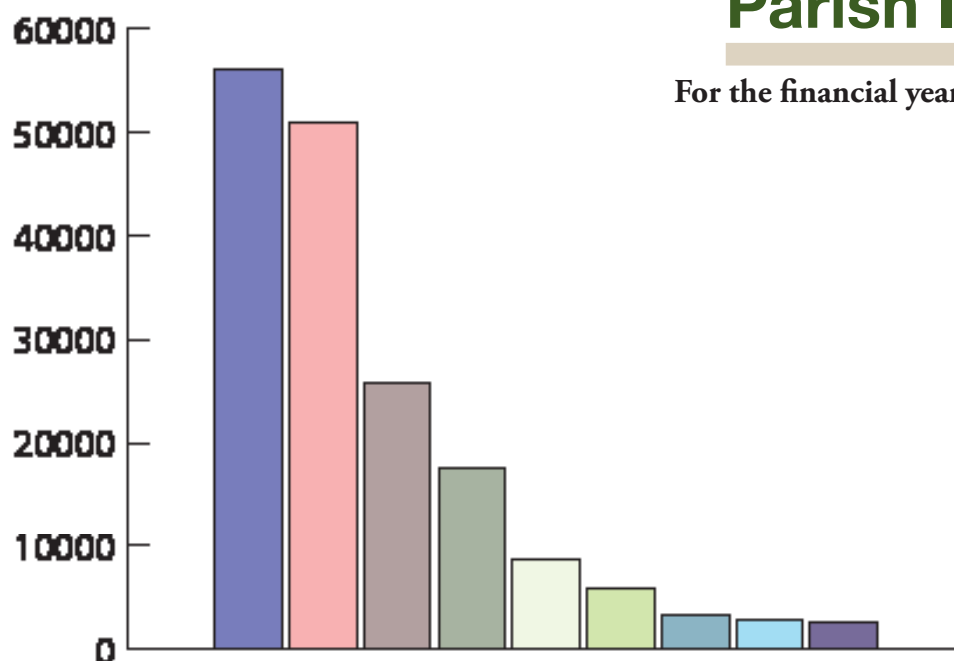
Overview: Annual Accounts – the external auditor was satisfied with the transparency and management of the Council's financial reporting and the reserves held for special project. The Annual Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 were approved without reservation by PFK Littlejohn, the appointed auditor and published on the Parish Council's website at www.greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

Kate Fox
Parish Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Parish Income

For the financial year ended 31.3.25

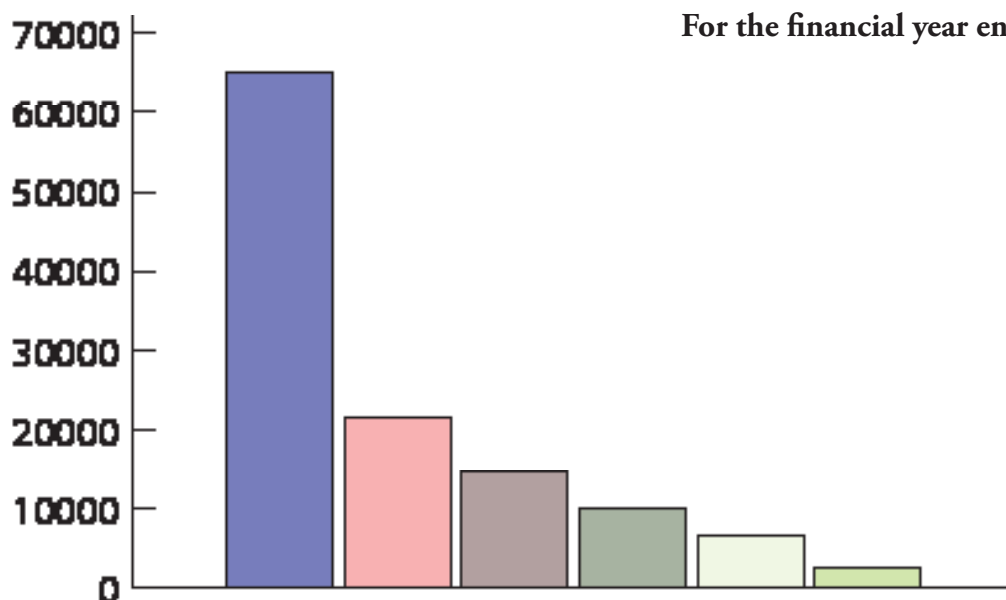


General reserves	£56,022.00
Parish precept	£51,000.00
Pavilion project funds in hand	£25,754.00
VAT refund	£17,579.00
Special projects funds in hand	£8,680.00
Pavilion project	£5,824.00
Firework event	£3,315.00
Sundries/training bursary/substation rental	£2,811.00
Verge cutting/village cleaning grant	£2,546.00
Total	£173,531.00
Bank account balances as at 31.3.24	
General reserves	£58,041.00
Special projects account	£24,103.00
Pavilion account	£3,328.00
Current account	£244.10



Parish Expenditure

For the financial year ended 31.3.25



	Capital scheme: Pavilion project	£65,064.00
	Public lighting – supply and maintenance	£6,448.00
	Grass cutting, Memorial green, and other open spaces	£5,089.00
	Playground refurbishment, maintenance and utilities	£4,417.00
	Town Hall grant and substation rental	£2,108.00
	CIP: Town Hall rent/BT/copier	£1,840.00
	Verge cutting/street cleaning (agency arrangements)	£1,515.00
	Total	£21,417.00
	VAT	£14,679.00
	Staff/sundry expenses	
	Salary, website, training, defibrillator supplies, dog poo bags	£10,134.00
	Admin	
	General admin, telephone, audit fee, tax, insurance, stationery, subscriptions, election	£6,455.00
	Firework event	£2,500.00
	Neighbourhood plan	£76.00
	Total	£33,844.00
	Grand total	£120,325.00



Braintree District Council



Cllr Mark Ault
Email: cldr.mault@braintree.gov.uk
Mobile: 07903 744481



Cllr Michael Staines
Email: cldr.mstaines@braintree.gov.uk
Mobile: 07922 487966

Dear residents, how time flies! Over the past year, it's been a real privilege to work alongside the Parish Council and so many of you to support the priorities that matter most to our community.

Together, we've made real progress in the areas within our District Council remit – from planning (including advancing the Neighbourhood Plan) and shaping consultations on the Local Plan, to helping navigate waste collection improvements. We've spoken up at key Council meetings and helped residents engage with Braintree District Council to secure positive, practical outcomes.

We've also stepped up on County matters too – addressing concerns around Highways, making the most of the bridge closure by pushing for additional repairs, and working with police and fire services to tackle rural

road safety, speed, and noise issues. Public transport remains a priority. We've had rich conversations with many of you and local groups about DigiGo, compiling clear, robust feedback that we've delivered to County officers and the Cabinet member. In February, we supported seven parishes across the division to submit a joint "Love Your Bus" grant application with DigiGo which was successful and will deliver £49K to improve the NORTH zone especially on weekday evenings. At the same time, we've been working to direct S106 funds from Towerlands to secure a more sustainable, long-term DigiGo NORTH service.

We've continued to speak up on wider County matters – from voicing concerns about waste incineration to responding to emerging plans for Devolution. And throughout, we've consistently made it clear to the Home



Office, Ministry of Justice, ECC, BDC, and our MP that Wethersfield is not a suitable site for housing asylum seekers or for future prison development. We're proud to support the Finchingfield and Wethersfield Neighbourhood Plan, offering a more sustainable, community-focused vision for this significant site.

As Independents, we answer only to you – not to any party whip. We listen, we act, and we use both formal and informal settings to champion your concerns and shape better outcomes.

Looking ahead...

We share your disappointment at the cancellation of the County elections – denying over two million residents across Essex the chance to shape their future. But we are moving forward, preparing for the upcoming Mayoral election and navigating the opportunities and challenges of Devolution and Local Government reorganisation.

We're actively collaborating with like-minded Independents, Green supporters, and the National Independent Network within the Local Government Association. We're looking far and wide for lessons from other regions to make sure the Greater Essex Combined County Authority delivers real, meaningful improvements – especially here in Great Bardfield and rural North Essex.

Our vision is clear:

- The right number of affordable, high-quality, secure homes for local people not speculative estates on green fields swamping our villages.
- Distinctive, thriving communities connected by reliable, affordable public transport.

- A vibrant unique economy boosted by inward and international tourism.

- Stronger local voices in planning and rural service provision.

- A Council that puts people before party politics – always.

Please do get in touch with your thoughts, ideas, or questions – we're here to serve you, stand by you, and make your voices heard.

Warm regards

Mark Ault and Michael Staines
Independent District Councillors
for Three Fields



Essex County Council



County Councillor Graham Butland

Dear Residents. It is my great pleasure to present my eighth Annual Report to the residents of the Three Fields with Great Notley Division of Essex County Council (ECC). This was going to be my final report as I was not intending to seek re-election at the elections scheduled for May 2025.

However, the election of a new Government in July 2024 has seen plans for a reorganisation of local government brought forward at pace. The existing County Council, two Unitary Councils and 12 District, City and Borough Councils will, over the next couple of years, be replaced by between two and five new Unitary Authorities. As a result, the Government have cancelled this year's County Council elections, and all existing County Councillors will continue in office for at least a further year.

In May 2026 there will be an election for a Mayor for Essex who will be responsible for the strategic direction of a number of issues across the whole county. He or she will be elected by all 1.5 million electors. It is anticipated that elections to the new Unitary Authorities will take place in 2027 and that on 1st April 2028 ECC and the District Councils, such as Braintree District Council, will cease to exist.

In the meantime, the County Council will continue to deliver services covering Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Highways and Waste. For interest, the proportion of the Council's expenditure on these major areas are: Adult Service Care 43%, Children's Services 13%, Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport 11%, Waste 8%.

In previous reports I have referred to the fact that Highways continues to dominate my postbag. Inevitably potholes are raised on many occasions. Residents may be interested to know that they can raise issues direct with ECC. Below is how this can be done:. (You may also find it handy to keep the following list of useful contacts.)

The budget for 2025/26 includes an additional £12.3 million EXTRA for Highways in Essex.

However, it not just potholes that consume significant resources, there is also: -

- £54m invested annually in home to school transport for around 14,000 children
- £16m invested annually in delivering the concessionary bus pass for older people and those with a disability
- £11m invested annually in supported local bus services across the county
- £9m of one-off BSIP+ grant from the Department for Transport invested in a range of projects including Love Your Bus grant funding for Parish and Town Councils to support their services; investments in improved bus services; better journey planning and information via Travel Essex; continuing the DigiGo service when the DfT pilot funding expired; and testing new ways of growing bus services.



- 10-year contract covering the replacement, maintenance, and cleaning of 1,400 bus shelters across Essex County Council
 - £1.1m invested annually in the 12 Community Transport schemes to support those unable to access mainstream transport because of age, disability, or rurality
 - £1.5m invested annually in Park and Ride services
 - £0.4m invested annually in bus timetables and Realtime screens and services.
- Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Councils

across my electoral division for their help and assistance throughout the year.

If you have any issues that you wish to raise with me I can be contacted at cllr.graham.butland@essex.gov.uk

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

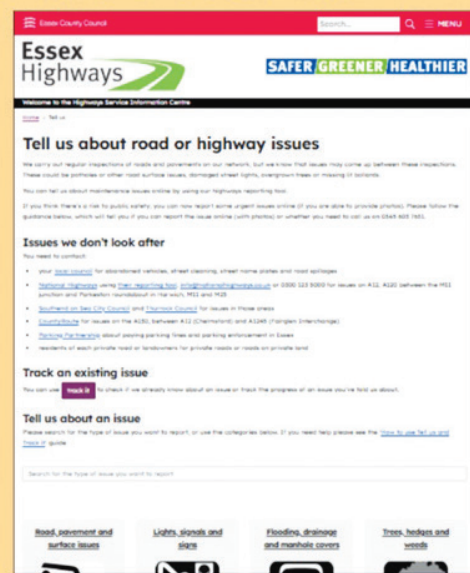
EASIER THAN EVER TO REPORT HIGHWAYS DEFECTS IN ESSEX

Residents and road users have more options when reporting road defects following a major update by Essex Highways. The update comes as users will no longer be able to raise issues via third-party sites, such as Fix My Street, from 1 January 2025 due to the lack of detail they provide inspectors.

The 'Tell Us' webpage by Essex Highways has been tailored to capture all necessary information. This now includes different types of emergencies and if issues have worsened over time. The 'Track It' webpage lets users see the progress of reports, from inspection to repair, and whether similar issues have already been raised.

Issues logged through third-party platforms are often duplicates of reports already received via Tell Us, or unrelated to the roads managed by Essex Highways. By moving exclusively to Tell Us, Essex Highways can ensure the 50,000 reports received annually are managed in one place, resulting in a faster and more transparent process.

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport at Essex County Council, said: "We are committed to streamlined and efficient services throughout the council to provide value for residents, and our highways are no exception. By using Tell Us, residents can be confident their concerns are handled directly and that they will receive updates along the way."



Useful contacts

In an emergency: If you think there's a risk to public safety, do not report it online, please call us immediately on 0345 603 7631 or if you have hearing problems you can use our text phone service on 0345 758 5592.

Fallen tree: To report a fallen tree obstructing the highway, please contact Essex Highways: <https://www.essex-highways.org/tell-us/trees-hedges-and-weeds>. To report a fallen tree on the highway that is a risk to public safety call 0345 603 7631.

Power cuts: In the event of a power cut in your area, report it to UK Power Networks by calling 0800 316 3105 or simply 105. You can also report and check power cuts in your area at ukpowernetworks.co.uk/powercut.

Flooding: You can keep an eye on flood warnings here: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>. Essex County Council is the local flooding authority: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/floods-emergency-planning>.



All profits from the Cinema Club go directly to support the *Bardfield Times*. Our largest expense remains the film licence, which allows us to legally

We look forward to welcoming you to the remaining film nights of the season. Details of upcoming screenings are published in the *Bardfield Times*, on the Community Facebook Page, and on posters around the village.

[illegible]

20 *Great Bardfield Parish Report 2025*



Town Hall report

Great Bardfield Town Hall provides a community space for village clubs and societies. Regular users of the Hall are Bardfield Community Choir, the Bardfield Players, the Horticultural Society, Cinema Club, Tuesday Club, the Historical Society, the Parish Council, Ryan French's Badminton Club and Alison Burkert's Exercise classes. The Hall can also be hired out for private parties and other events.

The Town Hall Management Committee is responsible for its upkeep and maintenance. The committee organised several fundraising events over the last year raising £4,117. These included our Annual Art Show in May, a Craft Fair in October and most recently a Quiz Night in March, .

The village Boules Competition, organised by Madame Boules, also raises money for Town Hall funds. The money we raise goes into improving the facilities at the Town Hall, and we have just renovated the back stage toilet. This much needed improvement will benefit the Bardfield Players, bands and other performers. Future plans include the installation of disabled toilet facilities and electric hand driers. Over the last year, the electric screen and projector, which was installed at the end of 2023 thanks to a grant received from Bardfield Charities, have been put to good use by the Cinema Club, the Tuesday Club and the Horticultural Society.

Last December Sheila Keynton stood down from the committee after several years' service. We thank Sheila for supporting the work of the committee. Fortunately, Sheila will continue to help her husband Peter organise this year's annual Art Show together with Katrina Ralston. We are hugely grateful to them for organising this major event.

Last year we were delighted to welcome two new members to the committee, Chris and Amy Wright. They recently moved to Great Bardfield and wanted to get involved in the village. I'm not sure if they know what they've let themselves in for yet! Chris is an electrician and his skills have already been put to good use at the Town Hall and Amy, who is training

to become an electrician, has kindly offered to take over the role of secretary from Katie Parker who has worked tirelessly in this role for more years than she can remember, and we greatly appreciate her immense contribution.

The annual Art Show, which is always held on the last Bank Holiday in May, is always our biggest fundraiser of the year, and 2024 was no exception with more pictures sold than ever before.

Last December we once again had a beautiful Christmas tree on the Town Hall forecourt, and our thanks go to Ian Holmes for organising this. Early in the month we were delighted to host Great Bardfield School's annual panto, and also our traditional Carol Concert with Bardfield Brass and Bardfield Community Choir. The Hall was full to capacity with standing room only. Mulled wine and mince pies were enjoyed by all and put everyone in the Christmas spirit. Just before Christmas, we were entertained for three days by the Bardfield Players with their excellent Panto *Cinderella and the Green Goblin*. All four performances were sold out, and the Town Hall was again full to capacity.

We are grateful to the community of Great Bardfield for their continued support of our fundraising events. Many thanks to all members of the Town Hall Management Committee and to Sarah Hymas, our caretaker.

Patricia Walsh
Treasurer

John Maidman
Chairman



Great Bardfield Charities

I am pleased to present this report on behalf of the Great Bardfield Charities, covering the twelve months from May 2024 to April 2025.

Over the past year, the Trustees held four scheduled quarterly meetings to review and assess all applications for financial support received from within our community. In addition, we held five extraordinary meetings focused on the future management of the Cottage Museum. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Trustees for their ongoing commitment to the careful administration of the Charity and its funds.

Raising Awareness in the Community:

We continue to work to raise awareness of the Charity and its purpose. Information is regularly shared via village noticeboards, the Community Information Point, the *Bardfield Times*, the Parish Council website, and the Great Bardfield Charities Facebook page. However, it is clear that many residents remain unaware that the Charity exists – or that it can offer financial support in times of need. We therefore encourage everyone in the village to consider whether friends, neighbours, or family members may benefit from support but are unaware of the Charity or are unable to apply themselves. Trustees are happy to offer guidance on how to make an application.

A Growing Need:

This year, we have seen an increase in applications from individuals and families experiencing financial

hardship – an unfortunate reflection of the ongoing economic climate. The Trustees remain committed to considering each request with care and fairness, while continuing to manage the Charity's resources responsibly.

Meetings and Applications:

Our regular quarterly meetings take place in March, June, September, and December. Dates are announced in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Bardfield Online Community Facebook page in the month prior. In urgent cases, applications can be considered between meetings. Trustees will reply to all applicants.

Grant making and Oversight:

Great Bardfield Charities operates under a formal Scheme regulated by the Charity Commission, which sets out the terms under which our funds may be allocated. Examples of grants awarded over the past year include:

- Fuel payments for residents in receipt of pensions or disability benefits.
- Social needs.
- Health-related expenses, including paramedical services.
- Educational assistance, supporting school curricular and extra curricular activities, student travel and school trips, local school transport, equipment and books for university students and apprentices.
- Village support, groups, clubs, and societies.

Each application is considered individually and confidentially, based on its merits at the time. While we strive to help as many applicants as possible, our support is necessarily limited by the funds available and the volume of applications received.

The Cottage Museum:

In addition to our grant-giving work, Trustees have been engaged in ongoing discussions with the Great Bardfield Historical Society about the future of the Cottage Museum. This historic almshouse is owned by the Charity and leased to the Historical Society, but sadly the museum is no longer financially viable.



A public meeting was held in March to inform residents of the situation and to seek suggestions about the future of the building. At the time of writing, no decisions have been made, but both the Trustees and the Historical Society are committed to keeping the community updated as discussions progress.

Acknowledging Our Benefactors:

As always, we are mindful of the generosity of our benefactors. It is through their legacy that we are able to offer support to residents and organisations within the parish of Great Bardfield today.

Welcoming a New Trustee:

We are also pleased to welcome a new Trustee and Cathy Stuttle will formally join the Charity at our June meeting. We look forward to the valuable experience and insight she will bring to the Trustee body.

Financial Summary: April 2024 – March 2025

Income including bank interest: £23,027.13

Total Expenditure: £18,498.85

*Note: Figures are unaudited at the time of writing.
Any imbalance reflects the quarterly income schedule beginning in May each financial year.*

All grant applications are considered carefully and without prejudice. Individuals and organisations are welcome to contact any Trustee for guidance or support in submitting an application.

The Charity Accounts are audited yearly by Mr Bill Mules and we thank him for his continued professional support.

This report, together with the audited accounts, is lodged 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

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. Topics covered range from gardening and nature to local history and news from our Parish Council and village organisations, as well as from our excellent primary school. Articles exploring the rich history of the village capture the interest of many readers who enjoy the fascinating stories of early residents and reading about events that have shaped the character of the village. We also provide coverage of the annual art show, theatrical productions and the popular boules tournament which demonstrates the talents and energy of our village.

The *BT* also provides an effective forum for publicising local events and offers paid advertising space for businesses. New contributions are always welcome. Do you have a story to share or an interesting photograph? Feel free to send in letters or articles by the fourteenth of each month. Photographs are most welcome especially those that feature people – although you must have their permission, and that of parents in the case of children.

The *BT* is truly a combined effort. Huge thanks go to Ray Coles and his team who deliver 800 copies across our two villages. Thanks to advertising revenue managed with great care by Kate Fox, the magazine remains free to all residents. Our finances are

stewarded by Jackie Newton, enabling us to support other village groups through donations. Special thanks go to talented layout designer Joe Jones who somehow finds time in her busy life to expertly bring each issue to life. If you'd like to get involved we'd love to hear from you. Whether it's helping with distribution contact Ray Coles: distribution@bardfieldtimes.com, or stepping in as Guest Editor for a month contact me: drjanetdyson@gmail.com.

Janet Dyson
Editor

The Bardfield Times			
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31 st March 2025			
	2024–2025	2023–2024	
Opening balance	-£1,291.74	-£2,289.66	
Income			
Advertising	7,269.00	6,920.00	
Subs/Sales	87.00	50.70	
Fundraising/Cinema	2,358.35	1,922.00	
	£9,714.35	£8,892.70	
Expenditure			
Printing	10,175.00	8,325.00	
Stationery	22.25	67.90	
Postage	226.20	237.85	
Cinema	1,499.68	1,538.70	
Donations	135.00		
	£12,058.13	£10,184.44	
Closing Balance	-£2,343.78	-£1,291.74	
Current A/c:	£ 428.32		
Savings A/c:	£3,133.13		
Cash in hand:	£ 50.00		

Jackie Newton
Honorary Treasurer



Bardfield Community Choir

It's been another year of enjoyable singing for the Community Choir. We now have 45 singers ranging from teenagers to octogenarians – all in fine voice! We enjoy singing a wide range of music from classical to jazz and pop, and give several performances each year. In December we combined with Bardfield Brass for the Annual Christmas concert in the Town Hall which opened with youngest member Connie Woodhouse singing beautifully the first verse of "Once in Royal David's City". As well as traditional carols the programme included popular songs, readings and solos. Trombonist Alfie Holland gave a fine performance of "Holy Night". The village Handbell Ringers played a selection of Christmas music and children from the audience joined with the choir to perform "Let it Go" from *Frozen*. The Choir also performed Herbert Howell's beautiful carol "Here is the Little Door". Our celebration of Christmas concluded with a lovely service of lessons and carols held jointly by the Anglican and Catholic churches in the Church of the Holy Spirit.

This term we are learning some new music and reviving some old favourites including "Somewhere

over the Rainbow" in preparation for a summer concert. We are also challenging ourselves with the Vivaldi "Gloria" and Elgar's difficult part-song "My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land". And then there's Take That's "Shine" and a few Abba songs to lighten the mood. A small group of singers from the Choir now sings for the morning service in Great Bardfield Church on the first Sunday of every month.

The Choir rehearses every Tuesday at 8pm in the Town Hall. We couldn't manage without our fantastic 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



Informal photos taken at choir rehearsals







Great Bardfield in Pictures

Top row: Playground improvements, Garden Fiesta, Mac Beanland's book signing,

Second Row: BHS Autumn Social, Scarecrow competition winner, Kate and Iain scoring the Town Hall quiz.

Third row: Landscape Artist of the Year event, Yr 5/6 girls football squad, school children enjoying World Book Day, Grumpy Cat from the panto

Fourth row: Panto finale, BHS Summer Show, Ceramics stall at Craft Fair, Art show at Town Hall





Bardfield Horticultural Society

Our year began with a talk by Lucy Skellorn from Benton End Gardens entitled *Revival of a Garden and Plant Collections* who gave us an interesting account of the work being carried out to reinstate her great grandfather's garden and discover as many of his self-bred irises as she could, which have now become almost extinct.

The Spring Show had 224 entries and lots of visitors in the afternoon too. We had an exceptional array of flowers from Bardfield Primary School and our president Peter Morris awarded them with a special certificate from The Essex Guild of Judges for this effort which we had framed and presented to them at a school assembly. A superb effort from them considering the pressures all schools are under in this day and age.

In April we were invited to visit Whinbush Farm. A nice local venue and 36 members enjoyed exploring this wonderful garden. Thank you Andrew and Julia for hosting us. We

donated £170 to St Mary's church from this visit as requested by them.

In May we tried something new and had a Garden Fiesta which was well attended. We had a superb plant stall, garden quiz, garden-themed games, a hanging basket demonstration and seed planting for the children plus a bunny hunt! Our team of helpers came up trumps again and served refreshments all day. We have decided to repeat this again in 2025 with a few changes. Our garden visit in summer was cancelled as the owner had recently undergone an operation but has asked us back for 2025 which we look forward to in June.

The Summer Show was a riot of colour with 231 entries. It was good to see more handicraft exhibits but we were down on domestic entries. Come on you budding cooks lets have a bumper year in 2025!

We won the Intervillage Cup with a fantastic display of vegetables. Thanks to the committee and especially Peter Morris with a tray of such a high standard.

One of the highlights for me this year was a trip to Ulting Wick garden in September. Weather was perfect, colours and variety of plants exceptional. An informative introduction from the enthusiastic owner and excellent cakes too! Twenty eight people



A well-deserved certificate for the school



Spring Show 2024



joined in this super afternoon. We enjoyed joining in the village Scarecrow Festival and had great fun creating Bill Barrow outside 1 High Street.

Our Autumn Social in the Town Hall saw 55 guests enjoy a ploughman's supper with desserts and wine followed by a great entertainer Bryan Thurlow as Horace Potter who told us of his fictional life in a large Suffolk Garden. He was excellent and it made a lovely change. Our committee worked really hard to put on this event and we are so appreciative of this.

At our AGM in October, we had an interesting talk from 'Plants' of Great Bardfield. More cheese and wine which was shared by 40 of us. Thirty folks came to our floral art morning in December. A huge success. Special thanks go to our secretary Mandy Boon for her invaluable input. Next year we have booked the Town Hall for this so we can enjoy a little more space to work in.

I have been chairman since 2014 and feel it is time for someone else to take on the role and bring new enthusiasm to our society, so please get in touch if you feel you would like to contribute in any way.

Our aim is to promote and make gardening fun for everyone. We are a very friendly bunch of people who would welcome some new faces.

**Linda Prior, Chairman
Bardfield Horticultural Society**



Whinbush Farm garden visit



Bill Barrow enjoying the sunshine



Summer show vegetables 2024



Trip to Ulting Wick garden



Great Bardfield Historical Society

This year has been my first as Chair of the Historical Society, and it has been both rewarding and eventful.

In October, we had the pleasure of hosting Emily Deal, who gave a fascinating talk on Lady Hervey and the story of Ickworth House in Suffolk. Emily, formerly the National Trust's Digital Curator and Collections Officer at Ickworth, is now embarking on a doctorate about Lady Hervey. She's a familiar face in our village, having grown up in Great Bardfield. In fact, my wife and I bought our home from her parents in 2023, making it particularly delightful to welcome her back.

The talk was a resounding success, and we're now planning a trip to Ickworth House for a guided tour led by Emily. If you're interested in joining, feel free to reach out: tim_regan82@hotmail.com or 07817 063125.

This year has also brought challenges as we consider the future of the Cottage Museum. The Great Bardfield Charities must relinquish ownership of the old almshouse cottage, which houses the museum, either through transfer or sale. Following a meeting with the trustees of the Charities, we jointly chaired a village-wide meeting to share this news and rally community members with energy and ideas. We remain committed to supporting the Charities in the hope of finding a dedicated team to take on the cottage and preserve this cherished part of the village for heritage purposes.

November marked a milestone for the Historical Society with the

publication of a beautifully revised edition of Wilfred and Betty Dunell's *A History of Great Bardfield*, meticulously compiled and edited by Jenny Rooney. The first edition, released in 1986, has been enriched with new photos, explanatory notes, and additional chapters on topics like our horse fair, straw plaiting and corn dollies, the Millennium celebrations, and Elizabeth de Burgh. Over the next year or two, you'll hear more about Elizabeth as we join the celebrations of her founding of Clare College in 1326.

This year, the Bawden Room drew great interest, partly because of exhibitions mounted by the Fry Gallery on Bardfield artists and by the Dulwich Art Gallery focusing on Tirzah Garwood. We were delighted to acquire three lovely additions to our collection: 'Costume Design' by Audrey Cruddas, generously loaned by Silas Clifford Smith; 'Bridge Street Through Eye Lashes' by Sheila Robinson, donated by Chloe Cheese; and a limited edition of miniature woodcuts by Eric Ravilious.

Looking ahead, our AGM is just around the corner, on Thursday 22nd May 2025. We'll keep the meeting short, as we're excited to host archaeologist Rebecca Batley, who will deliver a captivating talk on Anne Neville, queen and wife of Richard III. Originally scheduled for January, the talk had to be postponed due to illness, but we're delighted to have Rebecca join us at the Town Hall – don't miss it!

Finally, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to our dedicated committee members – Janet Dyson, Jenny Rooney, Kate Lloyd, Pat Coles, David Slow, George Wilder, Norman Newton, and Nigel Hill – whose hard work has kept the Historical Society thriving and made my first year as Chair so enjoyable.

**Tim Regan, Chair
Great Bardfield Historical Society**



Parish Plotters, Gt Bardfield Allotments

The Vine Meadow allotments is a space that gives sanctuary in a peaceful and tranquil setting where the colours of the changing seasons can be seen across the unspoiled small valley beyond. How lucky we are to be in Great Bardfield and to have the use of the space c/o Mrs Lowe, thank you.

Ten allotment plots remain in full use and the hardy Plotters have welcomed the recent spring warmth and dry spell to prepare the ground for sowing. The potatoes are in, some seeds are sown and we wait in anticipation for the risk of frost to be gone.

Some monster veg was grown last year, with one pumpkin weighing in at 44 pounds (almost 20 kgs) and it is good to see village youngsters learning about and enjoying “growing your own” and just how easy and rewarding it is. A bumper crop of raspberries last year led to an almost daily production of jam and a stockpile for the winter. Colourful carrots of all shapes and sizes, beautiful beans, greens of all sorts and copious courgettes filled baskets and trugs and the early radishes made a hot and spicy treat. One Plotter is particularly successful at asparagus, an early summer treat well worth waiting for, to be cut when fresh and short. Summer salads proved successful

and one clever Plotter made a demon rhubarb chutney ... yum.

After boundary clearing in September, a rabbit found a hole in the fence and helped itself to some low hanging Brussels sprouts and some leek tops. The damage was repaired and we are once again secure. We look forward to another bumper season of summer fruit, salad and early veg, for before we know it, the dark days of autumn and winter will be upon us once more when we harvest the fruits of our labours for the Sunday roast treat: main crop spuds, parsnips, carrots and leeks galore. But before that, here's to another happy and fruitful growing season.

Adrian Thomson





Freshwell Health Centre

Your surgery cares for 8,092 people living in Finchingfield and surrounding villages, that is 335 more than a year ago. This represents our biggest annual increase for a while. We have 1,362 people living in Great Bardfield, 40 more than this time last year. We have 50 staff including six GPs, one registrar doctor and two advanced nurse practitioners. Our clinical team also comprises practice nurses, health care assistants, and radiologists.

Staff News

Staff levels have grown slightly from last year. We have an excellent GP registrar in Dr Humera Khuram who has been here for a year and many of you will now have met her. We continue to train the next generation of doctors and nurses and would like to thank our patients for their engagement with trainee nurses from ARU and Essex University, registrar GPs, and Cambridge University medical students.

Primary Care Network

The Colne Valley Primary Care Network (PCN) continues to offer more services. Whilst not employed by the surgery they work for our local network under guidance from our GPs. If you hear from the people listed below, rest assured they are working with the surgery on your care. We have four pharmacists and two pharmacy technicians who carry out telephone medication reviews and may contact you – they are Danielle Thrower, Lorna Wickes, Anastasia Gulyakova, Natalie Prior, Trina Bowers, Sian Wilson and Rebecca Andrews.

Our low carb wellbeing coaches Sharon Withnell and Patricia Daway continue to work with the low carb patient group. 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 patients living with cancer. Children and young people now have access to a mental health practitioner in Erin Tricker and there is a musculo-skeletal practitioner, Samuel Agbaje, who offers physiotherapy advice to patients once a week.

Our patients are also able to 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.

Breast Cancer Screening

This year many of you will be invited to attend the breast cancer screening service operating out of Braintree. We would encourage you to respond positively to this invitation, especially as the service is nearby for the first time in recent years.

Low Carb Project

The Freshwell low carb project continues to grow and improve the lives of an increasing number of people. We have recently featured on BBC 1's *Morning Live* when Mark Lane visited the surgery to see how patients were benefitting from taking control of their diet. The recipe books continue to sell well. The facebook group (Freshwell Low Carb Support Group) is a patient-led support group that shares recipes, ideas and inspiration. It has 4,200 members. For further information visit our website: www.lowcarbfreshwell.co.uk, Twitter: @Freshwell_HC. Facebook: Freshwell Health Centre.

David Shedden
Practice Manager



CREAMER Fund

This year has proved challenging for many charities including CREAMER.

CREAMER has provided further defibrillators now totalling 24 and seven bleed control kits which are situated in strategic sites in the villages of our local community. Any replenishment costs are provided by the parish councils and community projects.

The NHS continues to change and general practice has not been at the top of funding priority since the COVID pandemic caused a major hiatus in elective secondary care.

We are very fortunate to have such a committed and forward-thinking primary care team. I would like to thank all the doctors, nurses, receptionists, management and all ancillary staff for their unfailing care and industry in these continuing difficult times.

NHS funding for the provision of primary care diagnostic services is no longer available and so the majority of CREAMER's expenses now provide for the running of the X-rays, ultrasound scans, heart echocardiograms, "osteoporosis" bone scans and heart monitoring devices. These all enable patients to be investigated quickly and closer to home without the need to travel and wait at a district hospital but the costs for this provision have risen quite sharply.

Income from fund-raising and donations for CREAMER in 2024 was £31,541.57. Total expenditure was £69,226.67. Thus a deficit of £37,700 per annum.



CREAMER has been fortunate enough to receive several generous large legacies in the past but CREAMER now has residual funding to only manage fewer than five years if the current annual deficit continues.

CREAMER's future focus must be to increase its annual funding to cover the running costs for these diagnostic services within the community or they will have to be ceased.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for all their help with raffles, collecting tins, book sales and general all round promotions; in particular our indefatigable secretary, Sarah McCarthy, treasurer, Debbie Rogers and our Vice Chair, Chris Blewett.

Dr Andrew Hildrey
Chairman



Great Bardfield Primary School



COURAGE – COMPASSION – COMMUNITY –

As we approach the final term of this academic year, it's incredible to think that nearly three years have passed since I took on the role of Headteacher at Great Bardfield Primary School. The past year has been as busy as ever, and I am continually amazed by the sheer number of events and activities we manage to fit into the school calendar, all while staying dedicated to our core mission of the education of our children. None of this would be achieved without the dedication of our wonderful staff and the invaluable support from parents, families, governors, and the wider community. Great Bardfield is truly a remarkable school, and I am deeply honoured to lead it.

At the end of every year, my staff and I take time to reflect on the past twelve months, celebrating our achievements and setting clear priorities for the future. As the new academic year began in September, we had carefully assessed our successes and set out our goals and aspirations to ensure that the children of Great Bardfield Primary School continue to thrive. After much thought, research, and discussion, this year we introduced our new school motto: Courage, Compassion, and Community. These core values serve as guiding principles in everything we do, shaping the way we learn, interact, and support one another. By embedding them into

our daily routines and curriculum, we strive to create an environment where every child feels empowered to take on challenges, show empathy, and make a positive impact on the world around them. Each week in our Celebration Assembly, we recognise children who have truly embodied these core values by awarding them special certificates.

As the Autumn Term drew to a close, we embraced the festive season with a wonderful programme of traditional Christmas events. Our youngest children shone in their Nativity performance, while our older children impressed everyone during our beautiful Carol Service at St Mary's Church.

Continuing a newer Christmas tradition, the pantomime returned to Great Bardfield Town Hall, bringing laughter and joy to all. Meanwhile, our 'Mince Pies and Carols' afternoon was a heartwarming opportunity to sing together and share festive cheer with the senior members of our village.

*KS2 Carol
Concert at
St Mary's*





*Our entry
in the
village
Scarecrow
Festival*



With the start of the new year, we welcomed a fresh team of parents to take the helm of our PTA. I would like to publicly extend my heartfelt gratitude to our previous leaders for their unwavering dedication, hard work, and perseverance since I became Headteacher in 2022. Their incredible efforts in fundraising have provided our school with an array of invaluable resources – from furniture for our new classrooms and endless supplies of glue sticks to reading books, play equipment, classroom essentials, new flooring, a full set of Chromebooks, football goals and so much more.

Being a small rural school with limited funding and significant financial challenges, the support of the PTA is nothing short of transformative, enriching the educational experiences of our children in countless ways.

The Scarecrow Festival in September was a resounding success and one which we hope will become a tradition within our community.

Looking ahead to the remainder of this year, we are excited about a host

of upcoming fundraising initiatives, including 'Break the Rules Day' and a 'Colour Fun Run'. I am confident that our new team will bring continued passion, creativity, and enthusiasm to their roles, leaving a lasting and positive impact on our school community.

In February, we participated in NSPCC Number Day, an important event that not only raises awareness of the incredible work done by this charity but also highlights the importance of maths in our school.



*Hnat
enjoying
model
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as part of
Mindful-
ness*



Janet Dyson welcoming our children to Between the Lines on World Book Day



This year, our theme was ‘Time,’ and the children had a fantastic day dressing up as different times of the day or their favorite moments of the week. Engaging, time-themed activities filled the day, making learning fun while reinforcing key mathematical concepts for the children.

In March, we joined schools across the country in celebrating World Book Day with a series of exciting literary activities. We had the pleasure of welcoming two local authors, who captivated us with their storytelling, led engaging writing workshops, and, hopefully, sparked a love for writing among our children. A highlight of the day was a visit to Between the Lines,

where every child had the chance to exchange their World Book Day token for a book of their choice. We are incredibly thankful to Janet and the team for their warm welcome and for giving our pupils the opportunity to explore our charming village bookshop.

Over the past couple of years, one of our key priorities has been to enhance our children’s experiences in developing an active lifestyle and expanding opportunities for competitive sport. This academic year, we are proud that our children have participated in a record number of activities, festivals, and competitions, truly making the most of these exciting opportunities. In the Spring Term alone, our Year 1 students took part in an Active Maths session at Felsted School, while our Key Stage One children engaged in a ‘Scooter Safety’ session. Our Key Stage Two pupils attended a swimming gala at HRS and participated in a Multisports Event in Saffron Walden. Our Year 3/4 girls joined a football event in celebration of National Girls Football Day, and our Year 5/6 children competed in a football tournament with other local schools. Additionally, eight of our KS2 children participated in an archery competition, where our Year 3/4 team secured an impressive 2nd place! These events are made possible through our membership with the Uttlesford School Sports Partnership (USSP), and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the dedicated staff. Their unwavering support ensures our children have access to these invaluable, confidence-boosting opportunities.

At Great Bardfield, we are committed to fostering the holistic development of our children, nurturing their personal, emotional, intellectual,

KS2 multi-skills sports festival





social, physical, and behavioural growth. This year, we have introduced our Enrichment Curriculum which is designed to integrate key elements such as mindfulness, team building, outdoor learning, performing arts, British values, and cultural capital into the children's journey through our school. Each Wednesday, our children take part in enrichment sessions which rotate every half term. Through



this approach, we aim to inspire our children to become well-rounded, respectful, and engaged members of society, equipped with the skills, values, and confidence to thrive in an ever-changing world.

At the end of the Spring Term, the children enjoyed our traditional Easter Hunt out in the sunshine which involved map reading, searching for clues and solving anagrams in order to receive a chocolate egg from our Easter Bunny. As we move through the remainder of the school year, we are hoping for the sunny weather to continue so our children can fully enjoy outdoor events; swimming lessons, Sports Days, educational trips, Proms in the Playground and our Year 6 Residential to Norfolk, along with many other activities that depend on a little sunshine. We are also looking forward to meeting our newest reception children who will be coming along for some settling in visits before they join us in September.

Great Bardfield Primary School is a wonderful place where our children not only succeed in their studies but also blossom with the support and encouragement they receive. It's a place where they grow into their best selves, both academically and personally. I feel incredibly lucky to work with such a fantastic team of children, staff, parents, and governors, and I'm excited to continue leading this unique school into the future.

Liz Crow
Headteacher

*Reception
children
exploring
our
OWLS
area*

*Our Easter
Bunny*



Bardfield Boules Competition

After a hard contest the eventual winners were Simon King and Tom Grinstead

The Bardfield Boules Competition has been held annually for over 20 years, providing a village-wide event that spans several months and raises funds for the Town Hall. The competition offers a relaxed atmosphere for some participants, while others engage in keen rivalry. Madame Boules emerges each spring to encourage contenders (it remains uncertain whether she migrates from warmer climates during winter).

In 2024, 45 teams participated, each team playing from four to eight matches over a period from May to September, depending on their progression (or otherwise) through the competition. Contestants, aged from 10 to 80 years+, came from as far as Ongar, Romford and Bury St Edmunds to take part, though most are residents of Great Bardfield.

The 2024 champions were Tom Grinstead and Simon King who triumphed over Iain Graham and Andrew Taylor in an epic final held in September. Notably, an all-female team reached the semi-finals for the



first time consisting of Katrina Ralston and Carolynne Ruffle.

The 2025 competition will have started by the time this report is published, so we are hoping for another good-natured competition where teams enjoy the space in front of the Town Hall, with old and brand-new friends and, possibly, a glass of wine or two. What a pleasant and sociable way of spending a couple of hours or so, with the house martins and swallows swooping overhead. How poetic!

Finals Day is planned for 13th September. All residents are invited to come and watch the final four teams battle for the top spot in 2025.

Madame Boules

Iain Graham and Andrew Taylor in the semi-finals





Bardfield Brass

Good news. You will be delighted to know that Bardfield Brass continues to thrive! The small group of musicians that was started in 2001 by Wendy Brayshaw and Sylvia Benham and a small group of Great Bardfield school children (plus a few parents) is flourishing and well! It doesn't seem possible that we will be looking forward to celebrating our Silver Jubilee next year. How much we've developed, grown and changed.

Many thanks to Great Bardfield Primary School's continued support, and in particular the support of Head Teacher, Mrs Crow for allowing us to practice on a Wednesday evening, much to the pleasure, I'm sure, of the surrounding residents!

We have a very strong link to the school which we very much value. In particular we are grateful for the help of Andrea Metson in bringing on young potential musicians in our junior band; teaching and encouraging them to take up a brass instrument with a view to moving on to join the main band when they are ready. Mrs Metson fully realises that the future of Bardfield Brass relies to a large extent on her efforts to promote music within the school, something that is sadly lacking in many primary schools, and we thank her very much for her efforts. This report would not be complete if I didn't mention our long-suffering conductor and principal cornet player Stuart. Thank you.

Should you want to catch us this year, we are playing at the opening day of the new pavilion on June 1st,



*Last night
of the
Proms
2024*

and following that, we will be having our summer concert at the Baptist Church in Gt. Sampford on June 20th. The last concert of the year, before our busy Christmas programme, will be our annual Last Night of the Proms performance on Friday 24th of October. We look forward to seeing you at one or more of those dates.

If you are, or know of anybody who would be interested in joining our merry band of Bardfield Brass, don't hesitate to contact Sylvia on 07904 196732 or email: Bardfieldbrass@hotmail.co.uk.

Iain Graham
on behalf of Bardfield Brass



Tuesday Club

The Tuesday Club enjoyed another good year in 2024, thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of our committee, but most importantly all the members and visitors who join us each month. We were delighted to welcome several new members this year, who are now part of our group and enjoying the meetings.

We had a variety of speakers during the year, starting with Amanda Sutherland telling us about her Creative Journey, from sorting her granny's button box as a small child to creating costumes for the London Opera House and the Bond films. A return visit from Eve Regelous gave us facts and anecdotes about Everything Strictly. Anyone who is a fan of the TV programme could hear Bruce Forsyth saying "you're my favourite" to contestants, before he was told not to say this again as it could affect voting.

A particularly memorable afternoon was spent listening to Bryan Thurlow, actor and storyteller, who visited in the guise of George Barrington, who joined the staff of a grand Yorkshire house at the age of thirteen as a boot boy (taking out the laces of every pair of boots he polished before ironing the laces and replacing them in the boots). From this lowly beginning he rose through the ranks, finally becoming a butler to the household. Bryan is a brilliant narrator and we are delighted that he will be paying us another visit later in the year.

Graham and Mary Brace returned to talk to us about their travels around Tanzania. They are both passionate wildlife photographers and the photographs they shared with us were truly amazing. Another returning speaker was Lindsey Barrell, who led us through an interactive introduction to British Sign Language. Although our attempts at signing weren't perfect we took away the understanding of how important it can be just to be able to sign a few words to a deaf person, as they can so often feel excluded.

In July we had our summer outing, this year to Baythorne Hall, where we had a nice lunch in Tarka's



Fantastic wild life photos by the Braces

Café, before a good look around the shops (the antiques and retro centre brought back memories) ending the afternoon with more coffee and cake! We don't take time off for summer, and in August our speaker was Malcolm Domb, a volunteer for Hearing Dogs. He and his wife have trained four hearing dogs and he brought along



Lindsey Barrell, sign language expert



the fifth, a lively cocker spaniel called Libby. Malcolm has promised to bring her back for a visit later in the year, so that we can see how she is progressing.

In September Marilyn Edwards gave us a very interesting talk on her journey from attending a bead-making workshop to turning those beads into jewellery. She showed us some of the equipment and techniques she uses, some very intricate, some simple but clever such as the beads made from paper. Marilyn attends craft fairs, usually including one or two in the village. In October Will Edwards gave us an entertaining talk on the history of the Rowntree Fruit Pastille, and having worked as a research chemist for Rowntree for ten years he knew some interesting facts. At the end of the talk we had a blind tasting of Rowntree versus supermarket branded pastilles, and we all agreed that there was no comparison. You may like to take the test, but it comes with a warning that many pastilles will need to be consumed!

In November David Evans spoke to us about the influences on his crime



David Evans, crime novelist

writing. He has had six books published, including two set in North Essex, and his top tip is always to have a notebook and pen to hand, from jotting down a dream first thing on waking, to overhearing a conversation while waiting in a queue, or on a train. It may just sow the seed for the next book.

Our Christmas lunch was held in the Town Hall for the first time in 2023, and again in 2024, so thinking that members might like a change of venue for 2025 we raised the question at the AGM. We had shortlisted some alternative venues, but the overwhelming vote was for the Town Hall again. So that's where it will be.

But before then we have some afternoons to look forward to, including the return of Brian Carline, who will be giving us an amusing account of his life in secondary schools, based on his 35 years of teaching. Bryan Thurlow is also back by popular demand, to relate the story of Borley Rectory, and Sheila Hasler will be talking on "The Volcanoes of Dominica". Will Edwards will be posing the question "What Happened to Harry?" We will have to wait to find out! A summer outing will be arranged in July, and Afternoon Tea in September.

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 if you see a talk which interests you? 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.

Cherry Whitby
Committee Member



The Bardfield Players



It's been a funny old year. Our first production last year was called *In a Hole*, a comedy about neighbours who take great interest in a large hole that suddenly appears in the garden next door, which was well directed by Sheree Reilly. This was a reasonably easy play to put on; there was a cast of six, and a set which was not very well described in the script, but which consisted of a kitchen, dining room and a garden with a fence. It was so poorly described that I found that I had to spend a lot of time thinking about it and finally rewrote part of the script to make it work.

Steve Hudspith and I were the male protagonists, aided and abetted by their wives played by Niki Scripps and Margaret MacCloud. The two men indulged in night-time raids going back and forth over the fence, to find out what the hole was for. It turns out that it was full of money and the rest of the play was mostly spent keeping that fact away from the head of the neighbourhood watch, played by Carolynne Ruffle, and the police, Sally Beanland. It was fun and I very much enjoyed playing the nerdy Benny. Carolynne received a nomination from the North Essex Theatre Guild, for her performance, as did the set design.

Our previous play *Being of Sound Mind* also received two nominations; one for Marcia Bryan as supporting actress and again for the set design. The set for *In a Hole*, won the award.

*Award
winning
set for In a
Hole*

Then came the event of the year! We found ourselves in the unusual position of having a large cast available

(fourteen), including four men (most unusual). Talk of a pantomime rose to the surface, and with some reticence on my part (daunted by the amount of work involved), we began reading panto scripts. The first one that I put forward, just to get things going, was a short one of fewer than 30 pages, that had been given to me some years ago by Steve Mann, the former landlord of The Vine. He had, it turns out, written this script called *Cinderella Part two – the Real Story*, when he was 18! We read it, some people liked it, most seemed to find it too old fashioned and un pc, and too short, so we continued the play readings. One or two others (*Rumpus in Regalia*, for example), were quite good but rejected for various reasons. Those who did like Steve's script, brought it up again. It was still too short, and we didn't like the title, so I offered to work on it for a few weeks, add some characters (Nitsy and Nobby as the comedy duo, and the elegant and slightly pompous Chancellor who





introduced the main characters), put in a lot of jokes, and more scenes and really turn it into a full pantomime. With contributions from others in the group, we produced a script which I am proud of, with the new title of *Cinderella and the Green Goblin*.

With the Bardfield Players, singing is always an issue, (I still haven't got over our rendition of "Money, Money, Money" when we did *Treasure Island*). Janet was great, and put in a lot of work, but it is never easy. We did have Emily Robshaw who has an excellent voice (when she decides to use it), as Cinderella, the ugly sisters had a couple of songs and did very well, and a reluctant Prince Charming in the form of Sheree Reilly who can sing perfectly well, but didn't believe it, and Jo Magro who was really good as the Green Goblin. Fiona, as Fairy Godmother, had what started off as a recitation, and which was not very good. She found a simple backing track which improved it a little, but



*Backstage
Prince
Charming
is helped
into his
armour*

it still wasn't good, so we cut it out. That was until Fiona came up with a brilliant 'Blues' backing track, full of loose-stringed guitars and mouth organs, which fitted her deeper voice perfectly. Her song went straight back into the show, and with the addition of the ugly sisters who danced and cavorted in the background, it became perfect! My favourite part of the show.

I can't say that it was not a difficult experience, because there is an awful lot of work to do, many people to pull together and push in the same direction, and only two rehearsals before the performances in which we had the entire cast.

But, when the hall was full (sold out four performances), the cast were buzzing, the eggs were flying, the duck whistles were quacking, and the glitter cannons were exploding, it was brilliant! Thank you all for coming.

**Ilan Ruffle, Chairman,
Bardfield Players**

*Carolynne
Ruffle
as the
'slightly'
pompous
Chancellor*



St Mary's Bellringers

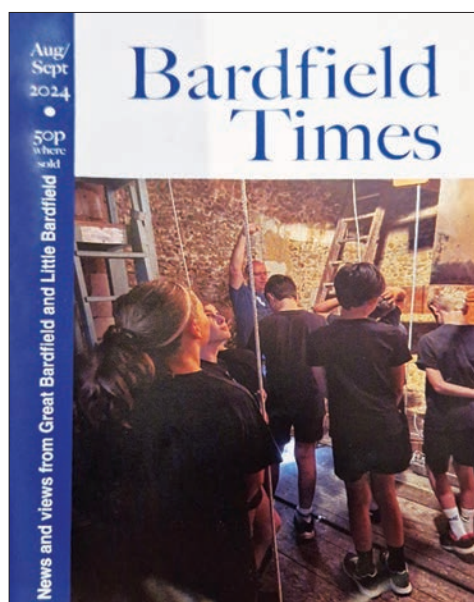
*Nick
talking to
the school
children
up in the
tower*

It's been another enjoyable year for the St Mary's bellringers where we continue to maintain and ring the eight church tower bells and a set of 15 handbells.

Tower bells

Our weekly practices continued on a Thursday evening (19.30 – 21.00) and we introduced an additional learners' practice on a Wednesday evening (18.00 – 19.30) where we use our simulator (more on that later). We continued to ring for services and key dates throughout the year.

In June, Sarah, Nick and Alfie (with help from the Great Bardfield congregation) ran a bellringing morning for the Primary School year 6 children. The class had a talk about bellringing, a trip up the tower to see the bells, an assisted ring on the bells, and did bell-related crafts. Those waiting particularly enjoyed making 'stained glass' bells using tissue paper and the quiz 'How many sheep?' where they searched the church windows



and counted how many sheep they could see (there's a lot more than they thought!). Three students joined the bellringing team in Great Bardfield following this session and we are in negotiation with the Head Teacher to repeat the session this year. Also in June, Great Bardfield hosted the Essex Association of Change Ringers

*People
outside St.
Mary's on
the day of
the Striking
Competition*





*The Pant
Valley
Benefice
bellringers
on our
ringing
outing*

8 bell striking competition, where the best ringers from across Essex come together to be judged on how well they ring. It was a good opportunity to hear some quality bellringing and share tea and cake with friends.

In July the bellringing tower captains Sarah and Nick Holland attended an Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) training course. ART is a national organisation which promotes quality teaching in bellringing. Nick and Sarah gathered evidence of their bellringing teaching and were accredited as ART bell tutors in November.

In October, the Great Bardfield bellringers joined forces with others in our benefice and went on a bellringing day trip where we rang at five different towers on the Herts/Cambs/Essex border (fortified halfway by a pub lunch!). It was a great day out.

On a sadder note, we lost two very experienced and influential ringers this year; Marian Wood died in April, followed by her husband Peter Wood (ex-tower captain at Great Bardfield) in November. We celebrated their lives at services held in Great Bardfield church which were attended by many ringers. Both were commemorated in special pieces of ringing, within the benefice and throughout Essex. In Great Bardfield we rang a peal (around three

hours of ringing without stopping), the first for our (then) youngest ringer Alfie Holland (who was taught to ring by Peter). Marian and Peter will be much missed.

In December, we received a grant from the Essex Association of Change Ringers which enabled us to install a bellringing simulator. This gives us the ability to hear the bells chiming inside the tower but not have them ringing outside. The simulator is now being used in our bell handling sessions every Wednesday evening and in 1:1 teaching sessions. It is a great asset to have in our local tower.

Handbells

The handbell group continued to meet throughout 2024. We were busy during November and December ringing carols at various events: St. Mary's Autumn fair, Great Bardfield Town Hall carol concert, a concert at a care home in Chelmsford, and a performance for the WI in Little Waltham.

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

**Nick and Sarah Holland
Tower Captains, St. Mary's**



News from St Mary's Parish Church

Water-colour of St Mary's by Rev Norman Clift, a previous incumbent of St Mary's in the 1970s. How the landscape has changed!



Over the course of 2024, the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Great Bardfield, has continued to be a place where people from across the parish can come to pray, worship, remember and celebrate, and we take delight in the fact that we are here for the whole community.

It is a great privilege to host the marking of some of the most significant moments in people's lives, and this year included a number of baptisms, weddings and funerals. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all those who live in the parish, or who have formal connections to it, that they have a right protected by ancient law and custom to mark these life events in their parish church, and we welcome all who come to us on those occasions.

In turn, we benefit greatly from the involvement of many parishioners,

and I would like to thank a number of teams which play an important part in the activities which tie church and village together. One of those groups is our ever active and growing team of bell ringers, who not only delight the village with their ringing but are actively involved in the teaching and promotion of ringing across the local area. Another is the fantastic team of volunteers who work hard to keep the churchyard in such tidy condition. And I am most grateful too to the members of our Parochial Church Council who have much to manage with matters connected to the church building, our finances, and our ministry.

New in 2024 was the establishment of a new group for parents and young children, St Mary's Munchkins, which has been meeting on Tuesday mornings (starting at 10am). It has been a real



joy to strengthen our links with local families, and the group continues to be a relaxed and informal environment with singing, playing and a chance for parents and carers to socialise too, with new members always welcome. And with some of our original participants now heading off to pre-school or school, the next step we are exploring is restarting a regular Sunday School provision.

The festivals of the Church's year continue also to provide particular highlights in our church life, and it has good to have our local music groups, the Bardfield Community Choir and Bardfield Brass, enriching our worship on such occasions as Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. We were delighted to have a good crowd join us for a new kind of Harvest celebration (though one inspired by traditions of great vintage!), hosted by Bardfield Vineyard, with a service amongst the vines followed by dancing, wine and cake in Anne of Cleves Barn. It was such a success that we will be reprising the event this year on Sunday 21st September!

We always enjoy hosting Great Bardfield School for their Christmas Carol Service, but this year had the added joy of the younger children coming to participate in Christingle making and other activities connected with the church and Christmas celebrations.

Another village institution with which we established a new link this year has been our wonderful local bookshop, Between the Lines, who are now kindly hosting a monthly book group, 'Faithful Fiction', at which we discuss spiritual and ethical themes in novels of different styles and eras

suggested by members of the group. We continue to meet on the first Monday of each month, and details of the next few months' books can always be found at the bookshop, or by asking the Vicar!

On which note, to finish, I am always happy to hear from people if they have any concerns or pastoral needs – particularly if anyone is in need of a home or hospital visit – or if you have any questions relating to faith or spirituality. The Parish Church and its ministry are here for all parishioners, and information about how to get in touch, as well as details of services and other events, can be found in the *Bardfield Times* or on the church noticeboards.

The Rev'd/Fr Alex Shannon
Vicar



News from the Quaker Meeting House



This year is more about our premises than events. In 2024 secondary glazing was fitted to the two windows in the main meeting room. This provides an element of protection for the original windows but chiefly improves the insulation and therefore heating costs.

The existing curtains and rail had to be removed. However, replacing curtains with blackout blinds means the room is much more suitable for daytime lectures or meetings when a screen is used.

In December we received the obligatory Quinquennial Survey which outlined work to be done over the next five years. It highlighted the essential and urgent work needed to trim the yew trees. This work may have already been completed by the time you read this report. The extensive cutting back of the trees will benefit us all. In autumn we hope the berry drop will not be such an unsightly hazard on the pavement. In our garden, work on the roadside trees as well as the huge yew tree at the bottom of the garden will allow more light in to our garden as well as those of neighbouring gardens. We are very grateful to the Bardfield Charities which have contributed substantially to the cost of this work.

Those of you who have been inside our building will have seen the extensive damp on the exterior kitchen wall. The cause of this, apart from heavy rain, was an inadequate gully not only blocked with debris

but leaking from a faulty overlap in the lead lining. The inside wall must be allowed to dry out thoroughly, and as it begins to do so we will be removing the damaged plaster.

Before any replastering can begin we must be certain that no more damp can enter the building. We have been advised that the gully, which is very narrow and difficult to access, should be altered to prevent a repeat of the problem. Work on replacing the gully with guttering will require some changes to the top of the outside brick wall. As this is in a conservation area we will need expert architectural advice as well as permission from the District Council.

We are looking forward to sunnier and warmer Sundays when we can take our after-service coffee outside on the patio. We are hoping to see signs of new growth from wild flowers. Last autumn we scattered many bee-friendly seeds in memory of Ted Bozman. Ted was an enthusiastic and expert beekeeper and joined us for a few years before illness sadly prevented him attending.

Quakers are known best for silence. Those of us there on a Sunday appreciate the atmospheric surroundings of our Meeting Room where Quakers have worshipped for more than 200 years. We can assure you that once we move to the kitchen for coffee and biscuits (or cake) the noise level rises dramatically!

**Sue Collins,
Correspondent**



News from the Church of the Holy Spirit

We are thankful to the members of our parish and the greater community for the renewed enthusiasm we are enjoying following the difficult times of the global pandemic. Through your efforts and support we have a welcoming environment for those who want to know Christ Jesus more personally through the Catholic faith.

Our little parish continues to grow. Just before the year began, we welcomed five young people to the faith through the Sacrament of Confirmation and two children received the Sacrament of Baptism. On a parish open day we welcomed four new/returning members to our parish.

In many ways, this year was the start of a modest, but exciting, revitalization. Parishioners raised funds to send three of our young men to the blessed shrine of Our Lady in Lourdes, France. These young men came back to us with an inspiring, renewed, commitment. We also enjoyed a visit from a newly ordained priest, Father Bede, on his way to his first posting in Jamaica. Also known as Daniel Mullins, this priest's burgeoning faith was kindled during his early years in our parish, when he served on the altar.

We also began a long-term rejuvenation project for the Great Bardfield church building thanks to the help of our congregation. One important focus thus far, has been a renewal of the front garden with new flowers, hedge trimming and a deep cleaning of the surrounding stonework. Upon cleaning the stones, we were greeted with a wonderful

surprise. A beautiful cross, comprised of pink stones, lovingly laid many years ago, reappeared thanks to the pressure washing. Most of us had no idea the cross was there.

Our church was pleased to participate in the World Day of Prayer and the Remembrance Day services held in Great Bardfield. It was also our privilege to host the Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service along with other local denominations and the Bardfield Community Choir.

We wish to remind everyone of our monthly social charity event after mass (circa 10:30) on the first Sunday of each month. Our talented parishioner/chefs provide cookies, pastries and cakes for all to enjoy with donations going to needy charities. All are welcome to our weekly masses at 5pm in Thaxted and 9.30am each Sunday in Great Bardfield. Mass is at 09.30am on most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following 9.30am mass on Friday. Our new parish sign, posted along the front pavement, provides contact details for those who are interested.

Reverend Father Celestine Onwuekwe
Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit and
the English Martyrs
Great Bardfield and Thaxted Parishes





Great Bardfield Parish Council



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle
Chair

07971 255502



Cllr Janet Dyson
Vice Chair

07957 483207



Cllr Iain Graham

07831 595555



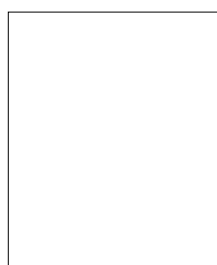
Cllr Paul Kennedy

01371 810540



Cllr Darren Hockley

01371 810836



Vacancy due to the
resignation of Cllr Lynsi
Hayward-Smith



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

