



Great Bardfield Annual Parish Report

April 24th 2015



Report design, layout and sub-editing: Jenny Rooney.

Many thanks to all those who contributed photographs to illustrate the report, especially Ian Fox, Doug Joyce, Paul Boon, Chris Morrell, and Alison Kerrell.

Cover: Whole school visit to London – off to see the dinosaurs.



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Great Bardfield Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 2015

To be held Friday 24th April at 8.00pm in the Town Hall

Agenda

- 1 Chairman's Introduction
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the Meeting held 16th May 2014
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 Parish Plan Refresh – update by Janet Dyson including presentation of Village Map and plans for new playground equipment.
- 6 Parish Council Report and Accounts
- 7 District Council Report
- 8 County Council Report
- 9 School Report
- 10 Charities Report and Accounts
- 11 Town Hall Report and Accounts
- 12 Bardfield Times Report and Accounts
- 13 Items of Report
- 14 Closing remarks

The Annual Parish Report containing the above reports, and those of other village organisations, is available on the evening to all those attending and additional copies will be available from the Community Information Point.



Chairman's Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce the Annual Report on the work of Great Bardfield Parish Council and the many organisations in the village. As always the report shows the amazing range of activities and organisations that exist in this lively, thriving community.

The Parish Plan Refresh project has been completed this year. We would like to thank the group of volunteers, chaired by Paul Boon, who put so much work into this project. The responses to the questionnaires which they designed and distributed have been analysed and the responses have formed the basis for the new Parish Plan. Everyone in the village had an opportunity to have a say about how local services could be improved, whether they would like to see more housing in the village, whether they would be prepared to pay more for improved sports and leisure facilities and how they would like to see Great Bardfield develop in the future. The key issues raised are:

- development of sports and leisure facilities
- identifying and meeting future housing needs
- improved Broadband
- village information map
- traffic and parking issues
- improvement of public transport

Progress has already been made on several of these issues, including the new village information map which is on display at the Parish Assembly and the imminent installation of a speed indicator in the Dunmow Road.



Although we have moved forward on several major projects this year sources of funding for specific schemes such as the new Pavilion are getting harder to access. We are frustrated by the diminishing and deteriorating services, policing and highways, for example. Although we have argued very strongly for improving or extending services such as public transport, the decision by Essex County Council to cut the bus service to Saffron Walden has disappointed the people who used this service regularly. These experiences have prompted us to ensure that wherever possible we take on responsibility for procuring and delivering our own services – if only that could extend to repair of potholes and replacement of road signs!

This month the Parish Council has reached the end of its four year term of office. Five of the existing councillors have been nominated to stand for election. Two members have retired from the council and will be very much missed. Cllr. Alicia Holmes has served two four-year terms and made a strong contribution, particularly on planning issues. Cllr. Tony Hayward

*Janet
Dyson:
Parish
Council
Chairman*



is retiring after 45 years of service on the Parish Council, 15 years as its Chair. He also served as representative on the Executive Committee of the Essex Association of Local Councils and the Braintree Association of Local Councils. He became Chair of the National Association of Local Councils and had the honour of being awarded an OBE for his services to local government. We will miss the major contribution he has made to the village as a Councillor; his extensive knowledge and expertise have been invaluable.

It is also important to recognise the contribution of the many volunteers who run and support the activities and

organisations in the village as school governors, youth club leaders, Town Hall committee members, football team managers, museum volunteers and Horticultural Show organisers to name but a few! I would particularly like to thank Mick and Sue Gell for their care of the War Memorial Green, Village Handyman, Ian Ruffle, Ian Fox for IT and communication support and Jenny Rooney for her work in staffing the CIP and the production of this report. Thanks also to Parish Clerk, Kate Fox, for her excellent work in supporting the council.

**Janet Dyson, Chairman,
Great Bardfield Parish Council**

Great Bardfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on Friday 16th May 2014

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman opened her introduction by stating that her report is far more than just an account of the work of the Parish Council, rather a celebration of a year in the life of the community that is Great Bardfield; much of which is reflected in the many photographs contained in the report. These highlight many of the activities that take place during the year for all ages – such as the creative pursuits of singing, acting and playing in bands; the growing of vegetables and plants; the enjoyment of sports, such as boules and carpet bowls. The annual report contains the reports from many village organisations, only some of which were included in the agenda, and she urged those present to

take the opportunity to read the others when time permitted.

The Chairman reflected on those villagers who had passed away during the year and had contributed much to the community. They included, Geoff Potter, Phyllis Cornell, Pam Jealous, Michael McDonald and Maureen Williams. Thankfully, as shown by the picture of the toddler group on the front cover of the annual report, life goes on.

The primary school has just celebrated its 150th anniversary and received yet another good and well deserved Ofsted report.

An appeal was made to those who had some spare time or a skill to share. The Youth Club relies on hard-working



volunteers, the Carpet Bowls welcomes new members, likewise the Bardfield Players, and additional names on the Museum duty rota are always welcome.

Changes are also taking place, with a small development in Bendlowes Road being undertaken by Greenfield Community Housing.

The High Barn has sadly closed and new ownership is expected at the Vine. Sadly Mrs Barney will be leaving the school after 15 years as Headteacher. She has made an invaluable contribution to the life of the school and the community. A new head will take up her role in September 2014.

The Chairman concluded her report by stating that last year the Parish Council was awarded the Communications Award presented by the Essex Association of Local Councils for the 2013 report and the *BT*. She wished to record her appreciation to everyone involved, particularly Jenny Rooney for compiling and editing the document.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Slemmings, Pat Coles, Paul Boon and Brooks Newmark MP.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 26th April 2013

These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting. Proposed: Ian Fox. Seconded: Jackie Newton – unanimously agreed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising, and the Chairman said most items of interest should be covered by the agenda, but would be happy to discuss any points on anything that related to the work of the Parish Council at the end of the meeting.

5. Parish Plan Refresh

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council works to an action plan which runs roughly for four years of the life of the Council. In order to get information from the electorate a questionnaire was sent out and Paul Boon, although unable to attend this evening, had prepared an interim report.

All households in Great Bardfield received a copy of the questionnaire. Fifty-five questions were asked on a range of topics, to gather the opinions and views of residents and to give everyone the opportunity to make suggestions about future village developments. The answers would provide the Parish Council with guidance on what residents feel are important to them and to Great Bardfield as a community. Around 160 completed questionnaires were received by the closing date and some hot topics were very quickly identified. The key areas which seemed to provoke strong opinions were, in no particular order;

- parking and traffic levels;
- availability of public transport;
- levels of housing development;
- sports and leisure facilities.

Almost 40% of those completing the questionnaire were in the age range 60–74 and 30% were in the 45–59 age group. (This would be taken into account when analysing the data). Forty-four per cent of respondents are retired and quite an amazing 45% are self-employed. Eighty-one per cent have a car or van to use as regular means of transport. Half those replying to the survey want an ATM machine in the village, the other half do not. Some



192 people (78% of respondents) would like a village map in a central location detailing local amenities.

The final report will be available on completion of the analysis of the written comments and in the meantime the Chairman wished to record the Parish Council's thanks to Paul Boon, Sarah Warwick, Tony and Penny Battye, Mick and Sue Gell and Tony Hayward together with all the distributors and collectors of the questionnaires and Jan Cole from RCCE for her support and guidance.

6. Parish Council Report and Accounts

The full report was presented on the evening by Cllr Ruffle, the Vice Chairman – the key points are detailed here.

There have been eleven full Parish Council meetings plus additional meetings from May 2013 to April 2014. During that period 20 planning applications have been considered – an increase on 2012/13 and around 10 applications in respect of tree works within the conservation area. There have been two more contentious applications – one to build a home in close proximity to one of the most historic houses in the village, the other for the development of five new homes on land off Bendlowes Road. The former was rejected by Planning Officers thanks to some excellent representation; the latter is going ahead. The tenants of Castle Shot have now completed a year in their new homes and members of the Parish Council attended the official opening in September 2014.

The work on the new pavilion continues but unfortunately it remains difficult to obtain sufficient funding to

progress this in the short term. Works have started in preparing for the new building, such as trimming hedges and tidying the boundaries of the playing field. Work will soon start on removing, replacing and re-siting the children's play equipment.

Expenses during the year, in addition to the usual ongoing costs, included the replacement of two notice boards, installation of bike racks, replacement of the Memorial bench on the School Green as the existing one was beyond repair and additional dog bins. The Community Information Point continues to provide a unique service – not only a source of information for existing and new residents but also a collection point for recycling bags and dog-poo bags.

The Council continues to work with its various partners at district and county level and with our rural policing team. Unfortunately the rural policing team are spread rather thinly and this was taken up with the Police and Crime Commissioner whilst pointing out the good relationship the Council have with them and congratulating them for their work in the community. There are strong links with the village school and liaison continues with the school council.

The Emergency Plan has been reviewed following loss of power last October and the Town Hall will be used as the base for any outages in excess of 24 hours.

The Council will take forward its work taking into account the responses from the Parish Plan questionnaire and will continue to report on a regular basis in the *Bardfield Times*.

Questions: (i) Ros Gourgey asked a question about the Oak Tree which



Cllr Walsh was able to deal with.

(ii) Carole Maddock, who is a member of the Speedwatch Team, raised the issue of speeding on the Dunmow Road. Cllr Walters suggested that exact details of where highest speeds are experienced be passed to the Clerk who will submit an application to the Local Highway Panel when, if funding is approved, speed check equipment could be put in place and, if appropriate, funding for a Vehicular Activated Sign could be considered. Cllr Walsh said he would be happy to support this request.

Accounts

The Clerk ran through the main details of the financial report, highlighting the principal areas of income and expenditure. She said she was happy to discuss any figures in detail at the end of the meeting and, following submission for external audit, the accounts could be inspected by appointment for two weeks from 9th June 2014. There were no questions from the floor.

7. District Council Report

Cllr John Finbow delivered the report for Braintree District Council and opened by stating that the past year had seen significant challenges for the District Council. Despite the financial pressures faced, with reduced funding from central Government, delivery of services is performing well. They have recovered funds invested in Icelandic banks totalling £4.5m and are hopeful of recovering a remaining £250,000 in the near future. In addition to reducing Council Tax for the second year in succession, and not having implemented an increase for four years the Council has delivered the following achievements:

Places

- More than doubled the number of businesses that receive a trade waste recycling service, with 172 businesses signed up so far.
- Improved the cleanliness of town centres through a targeted campaign.
- Reduced litter by 55% across the District through an education campaign supported by proactive enforcement.
- Completed a door-step campaign to raise awareness of recycling and food waste collection services which resulted in a 4% increase in participation.

People

- Constructed over 0.3km of new footway/cycle paths in the district.
- Supported the development of 10 Community Led Plans.
- Invested £124,234 in 11 community projects through the Mi Community Scheme.

Prosperity

- Launched the 2013/2026 District Economic Development Prospectus setting out key priorities to create the conditions for economic growth.
- Held a successful evening especially for rural businesses, hosted by the chairman of BDC.

Performance

- Increased satisfaction and reduced cost of the refuse and recycling service.
- Reviewed off-street parking and produced a strategy to implement a three-year action plan.
- Achieved high customer satisfaction levels for a number of key services.



- Delivered a balanced budget for 2014/15 with no cuts in services, despite reduced funding from central Government.

For 2014/15:

- The opening of the £9.5m new leisure centre in Witham
- Building of 100 new affordable homes district wide
- The launch of the new Local Authority Mortgage scheme to help first time buyers
- Support for new business start-ups and apprenticeships for young people
- Investment in waste and recycling services to householders and businesses.
- The purchase of new community transport buses to ensure this service remains reliable for our most vulnerable residents.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Finbow for his work on behalf of the Parish Council over many years and wished him good luck for the future when he stands down in May 2015.

8. County Council Report

Cllr Roger Walters, the elected member for the Three Fields, reported on behalf of Essex County Council. He confirmed that the Council had frozen council tax for the fourth year running, despite increasing budget pressures and a reduced settlement from the Government. The Council has already made savings of £364 million in the preceding years and have a further £107m of savings identified this year, of a total of £235m by 2017. There are also other pressures such as the impact of the Care Bill which could add a further £40m to our budget costs.

Despite this, additional funding has been made available for the following:

- An extra £17m will be spent on making good roads damaged by the prolonged bad weather.
- £2m has been set aside to deal with flood management, and a further £1m for highways flooding problems, with 60 schemes identified by the Districts across the county.
- Having listened to young people in our Youth Services consultation, an extra £1m has been earmarked for better equipment and facilities for young people. There will be some reconfiguring of the service, but no centres will close.
- For those young people looking for work, an extra £500,000 is provided to help them do that, by, for example, creating 260 apprenticeships, which takes the total for this year to 515 places.
- In education, the number of primary schools rated as outstanding has increased to 70% (up from 62%). And in secondary schools 83% of our pupils achieved three or more A Levels. We want to continue this trend, so an extra £1m is being allocated to the Schools' Improvement Fund which will help raise standards further in primary schools.
- School buildings too are to have £96m invested in them over the next three years.
- Having children in care is always a challenge for any local authority, but with early intervention we have reduced those numbers by a quarter. Reflecting the amount of work that has gone into this



area, Ofsted has recently inspected children's services and rated them as Good. Just a few years ago, we were in Special Measures.

- High-speed Broadband has had a £6m investment and will be rolled out across the county over the next three years. We set up the Essex Energy Switch, and had just over 4200 residents sign up to get their energy bills reduced.
- Locally, the Tour de France cycle race will take place on July 7th and officers have been encouraged to identify routes that would showcase the best of Essex; unfortunately there will be some disruption on the day, with roads on the route in Braintree being closed from 7.30 to 4.00. The Community Initiatives Fund was now open for applications, details at www.essex.gov.uk/cif.
- As Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling, Cllr Walters has been involved in achieving increased efficiency. The waste portfolio budget once again has to rise largely because of an increase in Landfill tax of £8 per ton. Therefore our revenue budget for waste together with Trading Standards will rise by £3.6m to £67.7m.
- Additionally there is continued pressure from the volatility of waste arisings – materials forming the secondary or waste products of industrial operations. The current rate of increase has been 1% thought to have been brought about by poor weather resulting in wet materials. A 1% rise in waste costs us £600 so it is critical that we encourage as much recycling as possible.
- Also, this year the Council will award a contract for the disposal of food waste by either anaerobic digestion or In-Vessel Composting, this together with our MBT plant will lead to the long term stabilization of treatment and disposal costs for the County.
- The challenge this year is a savings target of £2.6m. To make this target we will have to work with our District partners to reduce the money we pay to them under the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to help cover the cost of collecting recycling. We are also reviewing customer safety and suitability of our Recycling Centres for the longer term and looking at how we rationalise non-household waste.
- Cllr Walters has continued support for Trading Standards because they not only work to protect us all from unscrupulous traders, but they save lives by, for example, protecting us from drugs, dangerous alcohol, stopping knives getting into the wrong hands, to mention but a few dangers. For him, the most important thing they do, is preventing vulnerable and aged people being scammed by unscrupulous door-step traders who can destroy the health and wellbeing of people living alone.

Questions:- These concerned pot holes and the urgency in which they were repaired and how priority was decided.

9. School Report

The Chairman presented an overview of the full report on behalf of the Headteacher and reported on another exciting year, perhaps the most memorable event being the School's



150th anniversary in June 2013. The children experienced what it was like in a Victorian classroom, various education trips took place and visitors were welcomed to the school – including one who had been a pupil 78 years ago. A detailed report of all the activities to celebrate the anniversary is included in the Annual Report.

Great Bardfield Primary School is a good school. The school was visited by an OFSTED Inspector in May, and was delighted with her findings. The inspector judged Great Bardfield School to be a good school and one that is effective in delivering outcomes, that provides well for all its pupils' needs and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Also well done to the Year 6 pupils for their continued hard work, determination, and achievement in their end of Key Stage 2 SATs and teacher assessments.

Friday Celebration Assemblies:

These continue to be a great success with children and parents celebrating the successes of the children, whether it is reading, writing, maths or swimming, a child has the opportunity to be proud of what they have achieved.

Speedwatch:

Equipped with a speed gun and ready to assist the police, the Year 5/6 class were given the opportunity to help the local community. The children assisted police officers with speed checks outside school. This project came about after Olivia Grinstead wrote a piece in the *Bardfield Times*.

Staff: Mrs Sharman was welcomed as the new French teacher as Mrs Loader left to take up a post as a class teacher in another school. Mrs Loader had worked at the school for 11 years,

initially as Deputy Head and latterly as PPA cover teacher.

Mrs S Naylor, who taught Year 3 one day a week also took up a full-time teaching post in a local school. Mrs Stowe, who taught our mixed Year 1/2 class three days a week, left to take up a full-time class teacher position.

Two Learning Support Assistants staff joined the school, Mrs Rust and Miss Tether, and then left to take up full-time positions in other schools. We also welcomed Miss Burt and Mrs Foster as Special Needs LSAs

Governors: Mr Bryan Chapman took over as Chair of Governors in September, Mr Iain Geddes stepped down as Governor, whilst Mrs Brand joined the Governing Board.

The PTA: The school is very fortunate to have such an active PTA which organises many events to raise funds for the school. The fete was a success, as usual, thanks to the school and community support. The Inflatable Day was a very wet event, but children nevertheless still bounced away! Firework night was as good as ever and the weather was kind to us. At the Christmas Festive Fun event a magical grotto was created on the front playground for Father Christmas. And for our Pamper Day the hall was miraculously transformed into an oasis of calm for the many relaxing treatments on offer.

Sadly this is Mrs Barney's last term as Headteacher at Great Bardfield Primary School and she wished to thank the local community for their support during her time at the school, and was sure that Mrs A Kerrell, the new Headteacher, would wish to continue and build on the strong



links the school has with the local community.

10. Charities Report and Accounts

This was presented by Cllr Hayward, Treasurer of the Bardfield Charities. For the benefit of residents who may not be aware, it was explained that the Charities was established over 100 years ago when a philanthropic resident bequeathed money in his will and, since that time, many other residents have left bequests, thus enabling the work to continue. During the financial year 2013-14 total income was £18,543 and total expenditure was £17,080. Grants included help towards youth projects, help with fuel costs, educational equipment and books, medical equipment, village groups and personal assistance. All applications to the Charity are considered carefully, confidentially and without prejudice by the Trustees.

11. Town Hall Report

The Town Hall is well used by the community and during the year the usual events have taken place with the Bardfield Players' two productions, various quiz nights, Cinema Club, Community Choir, the Boules Tournament, and the Youth Club who moved to the hall during the winter months. The two big 'fund raisers' are important: the Art and Crafts two-day show at the end of May and the popular annual Christmas Carol and Town Hall draw which saw standing-room only.

On the house-keeping side, the exterior of the Hall was repainted and arrangements are being made for the interior to be repainted during 2014. Financially the committee has managed funds well and is in a healthy

position. Mr Jim Bray, the Chairman, highlighted in his report how fortunate they are in having a dedicated committee who all work hard to help the hall run smoothly to be enjoyed by all.

12. Bardfield Times Report and Accounts

The report was given by joint Editor David Yates who began by thanking Kate and Ian Fox, who had taken over the advertising just over 12 months ago. The increased revenue from advertising contributed to the healthy balance shown in the accounts. During the year they received 37 letters, and heard from 31 different contributors – many for the first time. Thanks is due in no small part to his co-editor Jenny Rooney for putting it all together. Also the Cinema Club had continued to attract good attendance and produced an increase in revenue. He thanked the unsung heroes who provide technical and physical help on the night. David said they were not only grateful to the advertisers for choosing the *BT* but to readers and contributors for their support.

Each month a steady stream of letters, ideas for features, photographs as well as regular articles is received. The *BT* works with an excellent local printer who, having held the printing cost for several years has recently asked for a small price increase. Thanks went to the entire *BT* team – advertising, editorial, distribution, Jackie Newton for looking after the finances and Janet Dyson in her role as Consultant Editor. He said they were very proud to be winners of the EALC Communications Award and it was immensely gratifying to know they are producing a quality magazine.



13. Items of Report

There were no items of report and no further questions from the floor.

14. Closing Remarks

The Chairman closed the proceedings by thanking the residents and the District and County Councillors for attending and emphasised the importance of the Annual Report as a reflection of life in the community.

She also wished to thank her fellow Councillors and Clerk for the support and work during the year.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

Kate Fox
Parish Clerk

Parish Council Review 2014–2015



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle – Vice Chair

As Vice-Chair of the Great Bardfield Parish Council I am pleased to present the Parish Council Review for the last 12 months, May 2014 to April 2015.

During this period we held 11 Parish Council meetings and several sub-committee meetings on items such as planning, finance and playing fields' improvements.

The Parish Plan results were submitted to the Parish Council and

the issues that were raised by residents' responses to the questionnaire formed the basis of an Action Plan for the Council. This will be presented and discussed during this meeting. The current Council have already made some progress with some of the issues raised.

Perennial issues for this village, and I suspect most parishes, are speeding, parking and irresponsible dog owners. Speed assessments by our own Speedwatch group and the police have confirmed that speeding does occur regularly along Dunmow Road, both by cars entering and leaving the village. We will soon see the installation of a permanent variable speed sign, partly funded by this council, erected at the entrance to the village.

We review and comment on all planning applications pertinent to the parish. This year we considered over 20 planning applications plus several for tree works. We have seen an increase in applications over the last couple of years. Many are small additions or changes to properties, others involve proposals to build a new property on



private land. We have not had any applications for multiple units this year.

We have also reviewed a few proposed developments in neighbouring parishes such as solar farms proposed for Saling and Little Bardfield parishes or others where our own infrastructure and community may be impacted.

In the last year Braintree District Council (BDC) had to withdraw their proposed Development Plan and start work on a new Local Plan. This is due to the increases in housing required by central government. For BDC, this requirement is estimated to be for between 750 and 950 homes per year between 2014 and 2033. It would be naive of us to expect all this development to be restricted to the major towns in our District and it will have an impact on villages such as ours. Any significant additional development will require improvements in infrastructure, services and employment opportunities. So far, the District Council has published their Issues and Scoping document to which this Council has responded, and two local landowners have submitted proposed development sites following BDC's Call for Sites. We were aware in advance of these proposed locations and submitted our comments on them to BDC. Any such proposals will have to go through further consultation and approval processes.

We are in frequent contact with Essex Highways department as it has proved very difficult to get them to attend to a range of highways issues in a timely manner. Potholes continue to be an issue and even when mended often deteriorate again shortly after. We have had similar problems with a broken drain cover in Bridge Street, and it

took four months for the bollards to be replaced on the build-out in Braintree Road, despite repeated reminders and concern about safety. The signpost on the Memorial Green has been hit twice by lorries trying to turn right at the top of Brook Street and we will, again, have to wait for some time for it to be attended to.

We continue to make progress on the playing fields and pavilion project, albeit slowly. Funding is now very hard to obtain. However, with some money due to the parish as part of the 106 agreement to build new housing off Bendlowes Road, the council is in the process of obtaining quotes and designs for the new playground area (on display at this meeting). We intend this to be installed in the next few months, together with landscaping and improvements to the access roads and car parking.

The current pavilion accommodates the youth club (in summer months) and local football clubs. It looks very sorry for itself. We have recently had some work undertaken internally to make it more usable, particularly by the youth club.

Thanks to the Creamer Fund we have been able to have a Defibrillator installed in the telephone box in the High Street and have a second to install once we have permission to use the other telephone box, situated in Braintree Road. We have to wait for this box to be decommissioned once BT can confirm it has not been used for 12 months. The awareness talk held for residents was very well attended and appreciated.

We have been disappointed that communications with our local



policing team have deteriorated. New policies mean they are no longer encouraged to attend parish council meetings or provide tailored reports on local crime/policing. We have written to senior police officers and the District Commissioner with our concerns but priorities are now elsewhere and information is 'available on their website' should we seek to find it.

We continue to fund the Community Information Point, supplying refuse sacks and dog bags, local information and access to district and county council literature, bus timetables, photocopying and internet searches for residents. The CIP is open twice a week and we thank Jenny Rooney for providing an excellent service to residents.

Following requests by residents for Christmas Lights for the village we investigated the provision of lighting on the School Green, hoping to light the oak tree. However, to provide an electricity supply and sufficient lights

to make a satisfactory display, proved to be much more costly than expected. An alternative solution was to have lights fitted to the façade of the school, and to supply and light a tree in the playground that could be enjoyed by the whole community. These lights remain in place and will be reused each year, with electricity supplied by the school.

We ask you to continue to support your Parish Council over the coming twelve months.

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

*Happy
bargain
hunters on
Bardfield
Garage
Sale day*





Parish Council Financial Report

For the year ended 31st March 2015

This is a brief report to highlight items of income and expenditure. Full accounts will, of course, be available to view when these are prepared for annual audit.

Precept: The Parish Council has, despite increasing costs, tried to minimise any increase in the parish element of the Council Tax. Although the District Council is able to announce there will be no increase in their element of the tax, it is partly due to a reduction in the funding given to parish councils. This year the decrease was 15.5% – the highest yet. Facing increased costs in many areas of its work and the difficulty in getting external funding for projects, the Parish Council reluctantly had to increase the Precept by 6.9% which seems significant but equates to £0.28 per eligible household per month.

Grants, donations, fund-raising achieved towards the Council's work:

As mentioned above, external funds are not as readily available as in previous years but the following income was achieved:

- £1,396 from BDC towards street cleaning/village handyman and related works
- £378 profit from the Firework Display
- £1,790 from the photographic event and sale of cards and calendars for the Pavilion Project
- £200 individual donation to existing Pavilion building

Electricity Supply: Continuing from last year we have now achieved a reduction in monthly charges in the order of £60 due to more cost efficient lamps.

In addition to general ongoing expenditure, maintenance and repairs the following expenditure was approved:

- Donation to St Mary's churchyard maintenance
- Donation to Essex Air Ambulance
- Expenditure for the design and purchase of a Village Information Map – which will come from the 2015–16 budget
- Christmas lights and tree at the village school.

Pipers Meadow: A comprehensive 10 year programme has been agreed with funding spread over the duration of the work.

Playground Project: It was agreed, that despite the disappointment of reduced funding opportunities for the new Pavilion building, the work to improve and upgrade the playground area would go ahead. Site meetings were carried out with three contractors and the plans will be presented at the Parish Assembly.

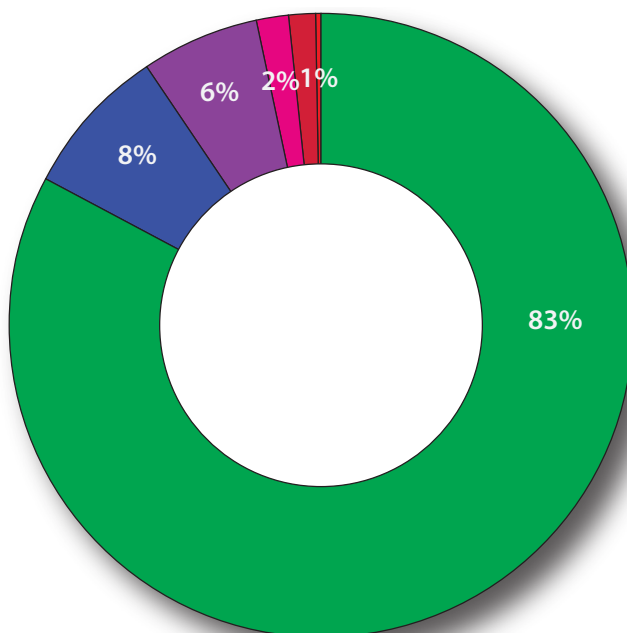
Kate Fox
Parish Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Parish Income

For the financial year ended 31st March 2015

- Precept + Parish Support Grant
- VAT Refund
- Verge Cutting/Village Cleaning
- Sundries & Substation Rental
- Pavilion/Playingfield Hire
- Bank Interest

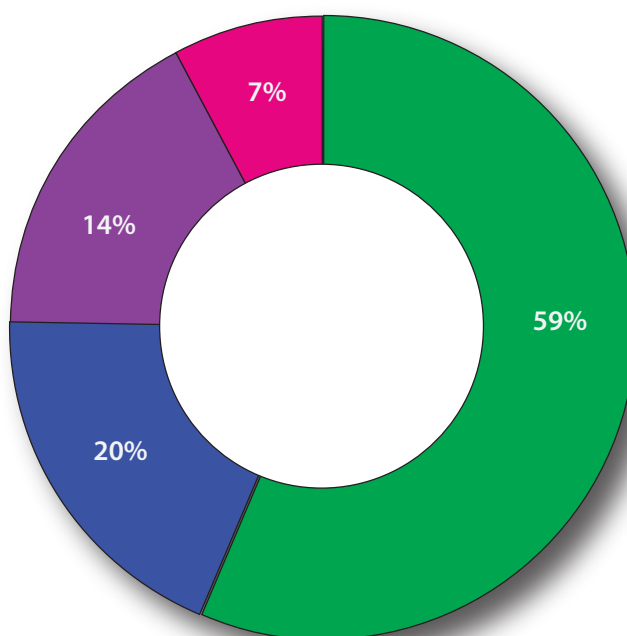


Precept and Parish Support Grant	£31,351.00
VAT refund	£3,030.00
Verge cutting/village cleaning (agency arrangements)	£2,233.00
Sundries and substation rental	£671.00
Pavilion/playing field hire	£541.00
Bank interest	£28.00
Total	£37,854.00
Pavilion Project fund stands at:	£52,156.00
Reserves and special projects account:	£57,500.00



Parish Expenditure

For the financial year ended 31st March 2015



Village amenities/Capital schemes	
CIP: Town Hall rent/IT and BT rental/staff	£4,751.00
Grass cutting/Pipers/memorial/churchyard/open spaces	£3,973.00
Public lighting – supply and maintenance	£2,380.00
Pavilion/Playingfield Project	£5,644.00
Agency Services	£1,594.00
Christmas lights/installation	£1,400.00
Subscriptions and donations	£894.00
Staff/expenses	
Salary/postage/copying/misc office exp/sundries	£6,223.00
Admin	
Gen admin/telephone/audit/stationery/insurance	£6,830.00
VAT	
VAT	£2,794.00
Total	£36,483.00



Essex County Council Report



Cllr Roger Walters

At Full Council on February 10th, Essex County Council passed the budget for 2015/16. The budget saw council tax frozen for the fifth year in a row, meaning that the average resident will have saved £335 during this time. Residents continue to pay the lowest council tax charge in the whole of the Eastern Region.

Outlined in the budget was a record level of investment in our capital programme.

- In 2015/16, the council is investing over £270 million pounds into key infrastructure such as schools, roads, flood defences and superfast broadband. The budget also sets out plans to invest £1 billion over the next five years in a capital programme to deliver the infrastructure that will see the county remains strong and prosperous well into the future.
- This includes over £200 million

into schools, to increase the number of schools places we have and drive up standards – 20,000 school places over five years – 3,000 primary school places in 2015/16.

- February 27th was national offer day for children starting secondary school from September 2015. Some 15,000 Essex parents have been informed about their offer, and 19 out of 20 parents – 95% – were allocated a place for their child in one of their first three preferred schools. Of these, more than 17 out of 20 (over 85%) were offered their first preference, and well over nine out of 10 were allocated one of their two top preferences (92%).
- Essex County Council recently received confirmation from the Department of Education of a grant of £41.4m in respect of increasing school places, bringing the total amount of funding to support the creation of new school places over a four-year period up to 2017/18 to £137.7m. The funding reflects the growing pressures on school places in the county. The grant is to support the expansion of existing maintained schools, free schools or academies and to establish new schools. Over the last four years we have been allocated the highest amount of funding of all local authorities. This really highlights the significant growth we have in Essex and the pressure on school places and how dedicated we are to improving education provision in the county and ensuring all



children have access to a school place at a good or outstanding school.

- The budget also saw significant investment in the county's roads, footpaths, bridges and public rights of ways – with £130 million going into our highways network to help drive economic growth, reduce traffic congestion and improve the conditions of our roads further.
- A major initiative aimed at making country lanes safer and calmer by turning them into 'Quiet Lanes' is being adopted by Essex County Council. 'Quiet Lanes' would continue to receive a basic level of maintenance but the route's status change would help calm the traffic, HGVs would be banned and a 20mph limit would be implemented as standard practice. ECC will initially ask each of the county's 12 Local Highways Panels to identify two roads to be considered as 'Quiet Lanes'.
- We have chosen to invest £23 million into an ambitious flood defence programme – from large coastal defences to local schemes – to keep Essex residents and their homes safe from flooding. This includes £4 million of investment into the Clacton Holland Sea Defence scheme in Tendring to protect our coastal communities as well as money for small local schemes and improvements that will help keep homes and communities safe from flooding. Significant progress has been made over the first few months on the scheme to improve the coastal defences between Holland on Sea and Clacton. Phase 1 from Holland Haven to Cliff Road is completed and the beaches there are now open for all to enjoy. Phase 2 is programmed to start at the beginning of March 2015 from just below Fernwood Avenue all the way to Clacton Pier.
- The Superfast Essex programme has already enabled over 20,000 new Superfast connections across Essex and during 2015 and early 2016 we plan to enable a further 45,000 across the county, reaching 87% of premises across Essex. We aim to expand Superfast connectivity to 95% of Essex premises by 2017/18. As part of the programme, Essex County Council held a Parish engagement event on Wednesday 18th March at Essex Record Office. The aim was to offer Parish councils the opportunity to join our team of local broadband champions to help us share information, spread word of events, and reach your local community the way you know best.
- Devolution. Discussions with Leaders and Chief Executives from all 15 local authorities in Essex have been taking place to develop a proposal for a devolution deal for Greater Essex.
- The Courtauld Road waste facility is now open and this is the key pillar of the council's long-term waste strategy that will lead to a more efficient system, reducing our landfill, our impact on the environment, and the cost to taxpayers.
- Social Care Numbers continue to



be a pressure. However, Children in Care numbers, now below 1,100 having fallen by 28% in the last two years.

- New figures show the number of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) is at an all-time low in the county. The current percentage of young people in Essex who are NEET stands at 4.4% meaning that out of the 50,000 young people Essex County Council has responsibility for supporting, 2,146 are NEET, demonstrating Essex County Council's commitment to jobs and careers for young people and economic growth across the county. Essex County Council has a team of dedicated Employability and Skills Advisers who work with 16 – 19 year-olds to support them into education, employment, volunteering and training.
- The team has a responsibility to maintain contact and ensure relevant opportunities are available for all young people aged 16 – 19 years old, with the main aim being to encourage and help these young people into education, employment (including volunteering) and training. This has become more important as young people in year 11 and above are now required to remain in learning i.e. school, college, apprenticeships, volunteering or a job with training, until their 18th birthday. Young people in Essex can choose from a range of exciting options including courses, apprenticeships and traineeships. If you are unemployed and between the ages of 16 – 19 and want to find out more about the opportunities available contact the Employability and Skills Intervention Team on 0800 707 6384 or email participation.trackingteam@essex.gov.uk. For more information about remaining in learning until your 18th birthday go to www.essex.gov.uk/futurelearning.
- We announced the continuing support for the Essential Living Fund and the new Essex Innovation Challenge Prize as part of the budget speech at Full Council. The Council is now setting up a £1 million Essex Innovation Challenge Prize to encourage communities and council employees help develop solutions to some of the most difficult challenges facing councils, health services and other public sector organisations across the county. Full details of the Essex Innovation Challenge Prize will be announced in the near future.
- A new Park and Ride facility is to be launched in Colchester in April 2015. The new Park and Ride will increase the number of people able to access Colchester town centre from the north and help ease congestion on the surrounding roads. The Park and Ride will operate Monday to Saturday between the hours of 07.00 – 19.00. With services coming every fifteen minutes; ten minutes during the morning peak times (07:30 – 09:00) and every twelve minutes during the afternoon peak (16:30 – 19:00).
- In total, nearly 9,000 Essex households have signed up to the



Essex Energy Switch over the past 12 months following two separate events, with registrants saving on average £262 in the latest auction. Following the second successful phase of the Essex Energy Switch, letters and emails with market-leading energy rates were sent to 4,500 Essex residents, more than all other community switch programmes in the country.

- These competitive energy rates join the first phase of Essex Energy Switching that took place in early

2014, and saw 30% of the 4,300 residents registered accept the new rate being offered. To date, this second auction has generated the most competitive rate offered yet, and partaking residents now need to accept or decline the rate being offered as a result of the collective auction.

Cllr Roger Walters
Essex County Council



Thousands fill the greens of Finchingfield for the 2014 Tour de France.



District Council Report



Cllr John Finbow

The past year was challenging for the District Council but despite the financial pressure faced caused by reduced funding from Central Government, key areas and their priorities were identified and detailed below is a brief overview of what we achieved:-

Place

- Reduced litter by 68% through delivery of a targeted anti-litter campaign.
- Invested in technology and introduced new refuse and recycling routes.
- Installed solar panels on our leisure centres to reduce carbon footprint and cost of electricity on each site.

People

- Supported vulnerable people in the community.
- Opened leisure centre in Witham and improve existing centres.
- Refurbished four play areas across the District.

Prosperity

- Supported the setup of 75 business start-ups across the District in conjunction with Ignite.
- Invested £1m in a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme operated by Lloyds Bank to help first-time buyers.
- Enabled the delivery of 173 affordable homes in the District
- Introduced a discretionary rate relief scheme for 536 retail businesses.

Performance

- Provided value for money – reviewed investment strategy to maximise income from assets resulting in an anticipated extra income of over £1m.
- Improved operational efficiency of waste services and reduced costs by £200k pa.
- Reviewed democratic representation resulting in reduction from 60 to 49 Councillors from May 2015.
- Purchased investment properties to generate income to support delivery of key council services
- Introduced “My Location” on the website enabling residents to easily access information about the area in which they live.

Partnership

- Engaged with Strategic Business, through the District Business Leaders Board, to support key economic infrastructure improvements, including business sign up to the A120 improvement campaign.
- Established a District Employment and Skills Board and conducted an employer skills review to inform actions to address employer skill needs.
- Set up a Health and Wellbeing panel with partners to reduce the health inequalities in the District.

Cllr John Finbow
Three Fields Ward



Great Bardfield Charities

The first of the Great Bardfield Charities was established over 100 years ago, when a philanthropic resident bequeathed funds in his will for the benefit of other residents. Since that time other Bardfield residents have left money in their wills to the Charity for the benefit of others.

The Charity operates under a Scheme which clearly defines the purpose and terms under which the funds are allocated. The Scheme is overseen by the Charities Commission, which invests the capital funds for us and we receive interest from the capital, quarterly.

Under the Scheme, the Charity is able to assist with the social, health and educational needs of the residents of the parish of Great Bardfield. The Trustees meet four times a year to consider applications, and meeting dates are notified in the *Bardfield Times* and on the Community and Charity website. In extraordinary situations, Trustees will consider applications between meetings.

The total Charity Expenditures over the Year April 2014 – March 2015 are outlined as follows:

Income (inc interest)	£19,279.00
Expenditure	£18,521.00

(NB these figures are unaudited at the time of writing this report).

Examples of grants made in the last year include:

- Contributions for fuel payments for pensioners and others in need.
- Provision of medical and disability equipment.

- Village groups, club and societies.
- School uniforms.
- Personal assistance including hospital travel.

The Charities Committee is accountable to the Great Bardfield Parish Council, and the administering Officers for the Year 2014 – 2015 are:

Pat Coles – Chair

Dell Cottage, Dunmow Road, Great Bardfield
01371 810780

Brenda Poston – Secretary

Buck House, Vine Street, Great Bardfield
01371 810519

Tony Hayward – Treasurer

Little's Farm, Beslyns Road, Great Bardfield
01371 810320

Debbie Rogers – Minutes Secretary

Dixons, Bridge End, Great Bardfield
01371 811083

Alan Bray - Advisory Trustee

Claypits Farm, Mill Road, Great Bardfield
01371 810489

The Charity Accounts are audited yearly by Bill Mules, and we thank him for his on-going professional support.

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

This report, together with the audited accounts are deposited with the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Pat Coles

Chair of the Bardfield Charities





*Top row: Tour de France hits
Finchingfield, BHS Summer Show,
Grayson Perry at St Mary's, Family Fun
Run. Next row: Bardfield Folk Club,
Tuesday Club Christmas lunch, Garage
Sale Day. Next row: Finchingfield and
Great Bardfield Parish Clerk, Kate Fox,
Hall Field, farewell to Mrs Barney, Fr
Beaken and Linda Richardson at St
Katherine's Art Show, Boules Final,
Bottom row: Garage Sale, Town Hall
Quiz, Cast of "Fitting the Bill".*





Town Hall Report

The Town Hall has had regular use by village clubs and societies throughout the year and we have also hired it out for private parties, fundraising events, weddings and funerals. Thanks go to our Caretaker, Sarah Hymas for looking after the hall and both Sarah and Denise Reid for managing the bookings and invoicing.

Last year, Jim Bray stood down as Chairman after over nine years in post and many more on the Committee. We owe Jim many thanks for his hard work, not just in running meetings and co-ordinating fundraising and maintenance tasks but for being a very hands-on Chairman (including hands down drains). Jim's notes in the *Bardfield Times* were always very entertaining and a very hard act to follow. Current Chairperson is Jenny Rooney, though she has been out of action for the last few months due to illness. Carolynne Ruffle took on the Vice-Chair position and is currently Acting Chair. Thanks go to all the committee for their hard work and support this year despite some trying times.

We particularly thank Katie Parker for carrying on regardless of her own health issues and new member of the committee, Patricia Walsh, for getting straight down to it in seeking grant funding for necessary and very expensive repairs and improvements.

The Town Hall is an old building and the roof is in need of an overhaul after over a hundred years in situ. This will be a very expensive job, but essential to ensure the hall remains weather-tight, usable and safe. Much of

our fund-raising in the next few years will be focused on the cost of replacing the roof. We have to raise a proportion of the money needed ourselves, as a condition of applying for, and getting, grant funding. We hope that residents of Great Bardfield recognise the importance of this building to the community and support our fund-raising actions.

Our fund-raising this year included the annual Art and Crafts Fair in May, organised by Brenda Postern and Lesley Graves, which was a very successful event. Thankfully, Brenda and Lesley have agreed to organise the artists' displays for us again this year and in 2016, but we are looking for someone to help them and learn the ropes with a view to taking on this long-standing event into the future.

Other regular events included the Christmas Carols Evening and Grand Draw in December, and the Quiz Night, held in March. Both were a success thanks to community support, but we need to be doing more if we are to raise anything like the money required to repair that roof, let alone the other improvement projects we have scheduled, such as adding a disabled access toilet. Please look out for our forthcoming events in May including a joint murder mystery evening with the Players, and our annual Art and Crafts Show in May. Thanks again for your support

**Carolynne Ruffle, Acting Chair
Town Hall Committee**



The Bardfield Times

Thanks to the diligence of Jackie Newton, Kate and Ian Fox, the magazine has maintained its strong financial position, so much so that, as well as making some charitable contributions to local causes, we have been able to treat our trusty army of deliverers plus regular contributors to a beano to say a well-deserved thank you. Funds also come from the cinema club, and we must thank the tireless techies, Ian Fox and Paul Boon, the organisers, Ray and Paddy Coles, plus all the other regulars who help get the hall and equipment ready for the show then stay to store it away.

The *BT*'s cover redesign was undertaken by Jenny, with help from Ian Fox (our staff photographer), last November and has proved very popular. The advertising section, too, is much improved; Kate and Ian have included new advertisers and tidied up or redesigned many of the other ads. The magazine is an excellent marketing tool that yields many new customers for the businesses that invest in the *BT*.

The magazine itself offers an interesting and varied diet of local features in addition to the pages of regular contributions. The Village People series continues to flourish, with nine additions over the last ten editions. These include a chart-topping rocker, a nineteenth-century farmer, a round-the-world sailor and a marathon-running postman, the subjects ranging in age from twelve to ninety. It continues to amaze the editors that a population of 1200 can furnish so many engaging characters. Other features have ranged from sparkling wine to the general election via the Melbourne Cricket Ground, all written by people

of this parish, twenty-one of them in total last year. The regular contributors continue to give us the bulk of the copy. Mac Beanland's new series of Nature Notes is a fascinating addition to the *BT*, for which we thank him. Tony Hayward's remarkable series of Countryfile articles, which arrive regularly (handwritten) each month, has prompted a letter to say that it forms a major and valuable source of knowledge, and we can only agree. The writer urges us to look after the archive with care. We promise!

David Yates and Jenny Rooney (Joint Editors)

The Bardfield Times			
Statement of Account for Year Ending 31 st March 2015			
	2015	2014	
Opening Balance	£2,879.77	(£86.30)	
Income			
Advertising	7,978.00	11,065.00	
Subs/Sales	230.12	241.94	
Donations	50.00	–	
Fundraising/Cinema	2,843.85	2,175.13	
	£11,101.97	£13,395.77	
Expenditure			
Printing	7,740.00	8,227.00	
Stationery	108.20	13.98	
Postage	168.47	129.24	
Cinema	1,562.47	1,311.06	
Donations*	550.00	500.00	
Other		334.72	
	£10,129.14	£10,516.00	
Closing Balance	£972.83	£2,879.77	
Current A/c – £3,476.08			
Savings A/c – £3,000.91			
Cash in hand – £27.50			

*Donations

Sports Relief	£ 50	Messy Church materials	£ 50
Youth Club	£100	Pancreatic Cancer	£100
After School Club	£ 50	GBHS Blue Plaques	£200

Jackie Newton – Hon Treasurer



Great Bardfield Historical Society

*Visitors
outside
Marianne
Straub's
house,
Trinity
Cottage,
during
1958
Bardfield
Artists'
exhibition*

*Photo:
John Gay*



This has been another successful year for the Historical Society. A varied, interesting and well attended programme of talks and visits included an illustrated talk on the history of photography by committee member Will Edwards and an account of the Tower of London and its Prisoners, by ex-Yeoman Warder, Brian D'Arcy. Rakesh Pathak discussed the question of whether Oliver Cromwell was a hero or a villain, and Essex farmer Ashley Cooper drew a large audience to hear about 250 years of Farming History. There was also a visit to Alderford Mill, Sible Hedingham.

In March the Annual Ariel Crittall Lecture was given by Mary Shoesser who gave a fascinating account of the life and work of textile designer Marianne Straub and her connections with the Bardfield artists. Mary brought some rarely seen examples of Marianne Straub's designs and textiles

to illustrate her talk.

The number of visitors to the Cottage Museum shows signs of increasing as a result of the re-showing of the BBC programme, *Flog It* which featured our collection of straw plaits and corn dollies. The Cage has also enjoyed some unexpected publicity this year, featuring twice on BBC Essex, once as a clue in their *Easter Treasure Hunt* and the second time in a feature on binge-drinking! The recent return of the original key to the Cage, which had been taken away for safe-keeping at the start of World War II and had not been seen since, is very exciting.

The Cottage Museum and the Cage are open from Easter until the end of September. The time given by the Committee and volunteers who staff the Museum during the season is much appreciated. Our publications on aspects of the history of the village continue to sell well and new



Nicholas Jones with newly re-discovered Cage key.

groups, providing a much needed boost to our income. The majority of the Society's income goes into running and maintaining the Cottage Museum.

We are pleased that planning permission has been granted for Blue Plaques to be installed on two of the most significant historic houses in the village. These are Place House, home of William Bendlowes, Sergeant at Law to Queen Elizabeth I and, later, of artist John Aldridge, and Brick House, home of artist Edward Bawden. A celebration is planned for later in the year when the plaques will be unveiled.

The Historical Society is always pleased to welcome new members and volunteers to help in the Museum – a short training course is given! For more information contact Gill Morrell (810919) or Janet Dyson (810838).

publications are planned.

The Society monitors all planning applications for alterations to listed buildings in the village, raising issues whenever this is relevant. The Society has continued to host visits and give talks to other historical societies and

Janet Dyson – Chair

Programme of Talks and Visits for 2015–16

Wed 6 th May	<i>A Railway Saga</i> – Dick Langstaff
Wed 17 th June	<i>The Story of Stow Maries Aerodrome</i> – Roger Smith
Wed 1 st July	<i>Influx and Uprising in Essex</i> – Peter Aylmer
Wed 10 th October	<i>The Secrets and Lives of Christine Glanville, the first Special Agent of WWII</i> – Claire Mulley
Wed 7 th November	<i>Essex Wind and Water Mills</i> – David Morgans
Sat 8 th March (2016)	<i>AGM and Social Evening</i>
Sat 4 th July	<i>Visit to Ashley Cooper's Farm Museum, Gestingthorpe</i>
Sun 6 th September	<i>Visit to Stow Maries Aerodrome</i>

Unless stated otherwise, all meetings are in the Friends Meeting House at 8pm.
Look out for posters giving further details of talks and visits.



Bardfield Horticultural Society

In February, over 70 members and friends attended our talk by Tom Hart Dyke entitled *The World Garden of Plants*. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. He was a very entertaining speaker recounting his kidnapping in the Columbian jungle on a plant-hunting expedition in search of orchids that went seriously wrong. The idea for the world garden was born during his nine months in captivity. Tom drew a map of the garden he envisaged, creating it within the confines of the two-acre walled garden at Lullingstone Castle. The garden was started in 2005 and it now flourishes year on year with new rare and important botanical plants added to its collection. The garden now contains some 8000 plant species, cultivars and hybrids planted in their respective countries of origin. It pays homage to the amazing achievements of the Victorian and Edwardian plant hunters who risked life and limb in pursuit of the plants we now cherish in our gardens in the UK – almost 80% of the plants we currently grow are not native to this country.

Our Spring Show in April was a great success – an increase in entries in most classes – the flowers were wonderful – a real breath of Spring – a plethora of daffodils. The entries from the children from Bardfield School were excellent.

The Spring Supper was well supported with over 70 people attending. This year to help with the seating arrangements a new “meet and greet” idea was adopted and hopefully appreciated by our guests.

In June, members and friends met at the Town Hall car park for our annual visit to a local garden. In 2014 this was held at Wayhours at Lindsell. We shared cars and arrived to a very warm welcome on a wonderful sunny day.

Wendy and Mervyn have a superb garden which contains two small lakes filled with wild life and a selection of water lilies. As we strolled through the wild flower garden we were surrounded by butterflies, bees, dragonflies and beautiful wild flowers and grasses: a fantastic fruit and vegetable plot which was a joy to behold; and a corner feature planted with young silver birch trees which in a few years will look amazing.

Closer to the house the garden is more formal but nevertheless contains many interesting plants and mature trees. What a perfect way to spend an afternoon surrounded by the chatter of friends and the hum of birds, bees and bugs.

Photographs from this visit formed part of a display by the Horticultural Society in the garden of Linda and Roger Prior at Holly House during Bardfield Open Gardens Day on July 13th (in aid of Prostate Cancer). At this event the Committee worked hard promoting the Society with a display of growing vegetables in various containers, showing how to take cuttings and a demonstration of themed floral art – *A Walk on the Wildside* proved very popular, depicted by flowers in a walking boot. Recipes for the Summer Show were available together with the cakes and biscuits



themselves to sample! We recruited several new members.

Our annual Summer Show was at the beginning of August. We attracted a large number of entries which included wonderful displays of flowers, vegetables and cakes, especially the marble cakes! Once again thanks to Bardfield School for their entries. In addition the visitor numbers increased which was very encouraging for all concerned.

Great Bardfield won the Intervillage Cup this year which was staged at the Gosfield Show. Peter Morris grew and prepared the vegetables for our village exhibit.

The Harvest Supper held in October was well attended by about 70 members, guests and friends. We saw many new faces along with our regulars. All were treated to a truly magnificent spread with a choice of so many

“puds”. Entertainment was provided by the Moulton Community Choir who performed most memorably.

Our AGM was held in October. After the main business, wine and nibbles were served to members. The formalities complete, a talk given by Neil and Linda Holdaway, entitled *The History and Development of the National Garden Scheme* rounded off the evening. The talk described the development of the NGS over the last 87 years and gave us some ideas for local gardens to visit in the future.

During the year we were pleased to erect a new plaque in the memorial garden for George and Phyllis Cornell who were dedicated supporters of the Society throughout their lives.

Lynne Joyce



*The
Summer
Show*



Bardfield Oxlip Recovery Programme

The Bardfield Oxlip recovery programmes in both Piper's meadow and on the Ash Ground have reached the stage whereby viable populations of plants have been successfully established, and now programmes of sustained management at each site are needed to ensure that the sites prosper and that stable populations of oxlips are maintained.

To this end the re-erection of the deer and rabbit fencing at Purple's Spinney has ensured that viable oxlip seed is now being 'naturally' produced in quantity and is being dispersed within the wood and adjoining meadow (previously flowers were being eaten long before maturity). Ditches alongside the spinney have also been cleared, albeit deliberately blocked at strategic locations to ensure that the natural springs continue to flow through the spinney rather than drain it. Plans are now being drawn up by the land-owners to carry out some coppicing and clearing work within the fenced-off area: this will help improve accessibility to the site and open the tree canopy bringing more light to the woodland floor. Oxlips are known to be very tolerant of low light, and whilst they may persist for many years under such conditions, they will not prosper and will fail to flower in very dense shade.

Within the village, the management regime on Piper's Meadow has needed a rather different approach. Here the competition which the oxlips face is not one arising from deer and rabbit grazing, and low ambient light, but competition for moisture and nutrients from



other meadow species and most notably the grasses. Unlike the coppice, the meadow is a relatively 'closed community' and offers little opportunity for oxlips to prosper from seedling colonisation. Sustainability is more assured in the form of maintaining robust mature plants which are tolerant of competition. This means discouraging rank growth overall (particularly from the grasses and other coarse weeds) by annual cutting and removal of the herbage. Long term this strategy has the effect of reducing the overall nutrient status of the meadow, discouraging vigorous species and allowing a more 'open community'. I currently estimate the oxlips in the meadow to number between 400–500 individuals of which more than half could be described as 'robust'.

Subject to weather, the meadow currently receives one or two full cuts annually: the first a "topping" in early March to allow the oxlips to break through and flower above the canopy of grasses; the second the **essential main "hay cut" during late-August** at which time the grass is removed. To allow for "comfortable" access across the site at all times, a figure-of-eight pathway is regularly mown by the contractor. When the Oxlips are not in flower there is plenty of other wildlife to view, particularly in the summer when butterflies are abundant.

D. W. Joyce



Plantings at Long Green

Despite the rather poor initial rates of growth of the native trees and shrubs planted at Long Green in the spring of 2010, the various species are at last beginning to thrive. Already the native spindle trees are sufficiently mature to flower and fruit, and the field maples have put on significant amounts of seasonal growth. This trial period was not unexpected, bearing in mind the nature of the ground at the time of planting and the two dry years that followed. However, we can now look forward to a more productive future, allowing for such uncertainties as grazing damage and vandalism. Beneath the trees and shrubs wild cowslips derived from seed collected from very close to the site have been successfully established and now form

part of a rich wild flower community, which in time will help to further stabilize and enrich the soil.

At the southern end of the lane the annual sowings of seed of our native bluebell have continued. This seed is harvested annually from bluebells long-established in an ancient wood a few miles to the east of Great Bardfield. The species sown is free from contamination from non-native Spanish introductions. Bluebells take several years to flower when grown from seed, particularly so when conditions have been less than ideal. Despite this germination has always been successful following broadcast sowing into bare ground – further sowings will continue for the foreseeable future, advancing along the lane as suitable sites are identified. Patience is a virtue and whilst no flowers graced us with their presence in 2014 a dividend is expected soon.

D. W. Joyce

Great Bardfield Allotments

Going into our fifth year, after a warm dry summer we had another good year with amazing results from our plots. There will always be some failures and its surprising to see that some plots can grow a particular vegetable and some plots in another area try to grow the same vegetable but not with such good results, this could be the position of the plot or the better gardener, who knows!

As in previous years, a variety of vegetables and fruit were grown and due to the good weather, some even managed to grow aubergines outside which were plentiful. That is a first.

Raspberries were amazing – a real bumper crop – and some raspberry gin and vodka was made from the glut. Also elderberry wine from our own elderberry tree!

The “bug and bee-hive” hanging from our tree was buzzing in the summer which is fantastic and we still grow a variety of flowers to encourage insects and bees to help us be organic.

Our allotment spot is truly magical any time of day; early in the morning is so special and in the evening seeing the sunset whilst you water is amazing. We appreciate how lucky we are to be given this land to use from the Lowe family.

Tansey Bolsom



Freshwell Health Centre

The Freshwell Health Centre continues to provide as many services as possible to our patients within the significant constraints on NHS resources and the demands of the NHS rules and regulations. Our team strives hard to provide the best care to our increasing list and we are fortunate to have access to good local hospitals and clinical teams. We remain unique in primary care services with our x-ray, ultrasound, echocardiography and many additional diagnostic 'gadgets,' so valuable in this age of technology. We continue with specialist clinics in gynaecology, cardiology, diabetes, minor surgery, and welcome visiting professionals covering Pain Control, Farleigh Hospice, Age UK toe nail cutting services, Hearing Help Essex, Dieticians, Health Visitors, District Nurses and Midwives.

Staff News

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of medical and administrative staff. We have invested resources in the dispensary department and appointed a new Dispensary Manager, Lianne Turner, additional Dispensary staff and new computer systems with pleasing results over the past few months.

Dr Andrews returned from maternity leave in September 2014. We were sorry to see Mary Joy of our nursing team leave in March. Mary was known and respected by all our patients and staff over many years and we wish her well in her retirement.

CREAMER Fund Support

The Creamer Fund, their unrelenting team of volunteers and the bequests

so considerate to receive for the local community have, as always, been used for the provision of medical facilities. Working with Community Heart Beat and local Parish Councils, Automatic External Defibrillators have been placed in nearly all areas of our practice. These machines significantly increase the survival chances of a person who has suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and in particular rural areas. From the initiative led by Kelly Bishop from the Horse and Groom and support from The Creamer Fund and Community Heart Beat, machines are now in place in Great Bardfield, Finchingfield, Shalford, Great Saling, Cornish Hall End, Stambourne, Wethersfield, Blackmore End and with further requests currently in planning for Stebbing, Toppesfield, Gainsford End, Jaspers Green. This has been an outstanding achievement for the area. This year we are also grateful to have been provided with additional 24hr blood pressure monitoring equipment, on-going support costs for our x-ray, bone density and ultrasound scanners, new emergency bag and a specialist dermatology camera.

Patient Feedback

Thank you to all our patients who completed the random Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire circulated by the Government. Our results remain high and we are continually and closely monitored. We value your response and it helps us to know what your concerns are. We now ask you to complete the Government monitoring initiative iWantGreatCare, a feedback



and review of GPs, specialists and hospitals. Details are available at the surgery and on our website www.freshwell.co.uk. Thank you.

Future Plans

With our premises now 22 years old and our list size increased by 3,000 we find ourselves in need of more space. Our plans are on display at the surgery and we will soon start creating more clinical space by moving administration upstairs and creating a larger dispensary/reception area. This will inevitably cause disruption but with careful planning and your support and understanding during building work, we know we will



achieve better facilities for you. As always, we welcome your ideas and feedback, either by telephone 01371 810328, post or in person.

Linda Cutts
Practice Manager

CREAMER Fund Report

As always, I would like to thank all the Trustees for their continued support and hard work. I would particularly like to mention Sylvia Gould and Kay Painter who work so well together for the benefit of the CREAMER Fund.

This year we have concentrated on purchasing defibrillation equipment. Statistics show that early defibrillation can significantly increase the survival chances of a person, who has suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. In collaboration with the Community Heartbeat Trust, the fundraising efforts of Kelly Bishop of The Horse and Groom in Cornish Hall End, and local villagers we have purchased ten defibrillation units so far. These have been installed in villages in the surrounding area. Four more defibrillators have been requested for when the sites are ready. The response from the community has

been fantastic, with the maintenance and monitoring of each unit being carried out locally. If, however, in the future this does not continue, the Trustees have decided that they will take over the responsibility to ensure the units are maintained in perfect working order.

At our last meeting, the CREAMER Trustees agreed to purchase a further £6395 of medical equipment. We also agreed to explore the possibility of funding a service to deliver repeat medication to those patients who are unable to collect it themselves from the surgery.

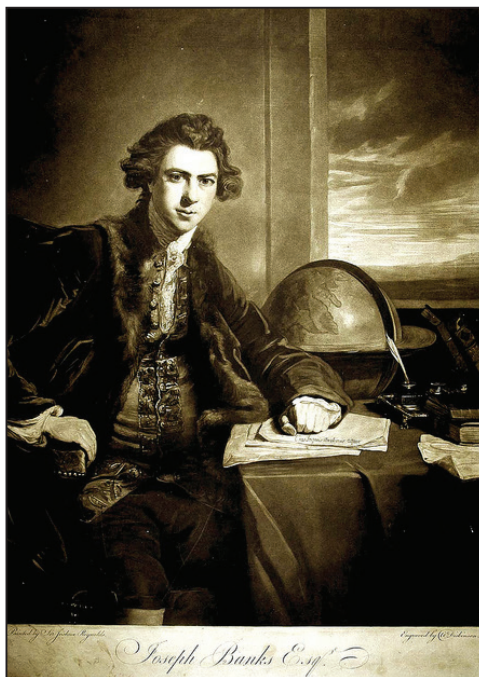
The CREAMER Fund continues to be able to provide very valuable medical resources to the community, thanks to all those who contribute so generously.

Christopher Blewett



Great Bardfield WEA

*Joseph Banks,
famous
plant
hunter*



Great Bardfield WEA has been offering courses in the village for many decades. We usually run two courses a year, one in the Autumn Term and one in the Spring Term, meeting at the Friends' Meeting House on a Monday evening. Each course consists of a series of ten lectures and the audience is usually encouraged to participate with their own views and experiences, as well as ask additional questions, if they wish.

We are a friendly group, always welcoming life-long as well as new members. Over the years the subjects have ranged

from art history to world discovery, poetry to philosophy and music to literature. Depending upon the chosen subject or tutor, our audience can vary in number from ten to thirty. In addition to the series of lectures we also try to include a day outing to further explore a relevant topic further afield. Even those villagers who might not have been able to attend the course are welcome to join these outings.

Our two most recent courses were *Wildlife and Conservation in East Anglia* and *The Plant Hunters*. The wildlife and conservation course, presented by Fred Boot, formerly Chairman and Trustee of the Essex Wildlife Trust covered a huge span of local natural history.

Our spring course this year was presented by Andrew Sankey, a local tutor from Cambridge, who presented in-depth biographies of British plant hunters including Joseph Banks (see photo) and "Chinese" Wilson.

The WEA and our branch welcome adults of all ages. For more information please contact Annette Joyce (01371 811233) or Ros Gourgey (01371 810832) and visit the WEA website on www.wea.org.uk

Annette Joyce

**A better world –
equal, democratic
and just; through
adult education
the WEA challenges
and inspires
individuals,
communities and
society.**

WEA vision statement



The Bardfield Players

It has been an interesting year for the Bardfield Players having presented no less than two world premières to Bardfield's paying public!

The first was a lovely play called *After Alice* by Jill Woods, an amateur playwright from Romford. The action revolved around the life of a recently widowed man. The highlight of the play for me was Jean Warwick, who spent the entire first act asleep in an arm chair (she was acting!), with nothing to say apart from the occasional scripted snort or moan, finishing the act with a decisive "Bugger Off" before dropping off to sleep again!

After Alice won the North Essex Theatre Guild's award for Best Set of the year from over sixty other productions. The whole of the Town Hall stage was transformed into a fully operational modern kitchen, skilfully put together by Ian Fox, Chris Couldridge and a few other keen but less able helpers.

Our second production *Fitting the Bill*, coming in late November, was specially written for us with specific cast members in mind and was based in, but not about, Great Bardfield! The author is the current co-editor of the esteemed *Bardfield Times*, David Yates. It was based in the not-too-distant future when times are hard in Barders and greed and self-interest raise their ugly heads. This show was much anticipated,



Iain
Graham
(l) and
Steve
Hudspeth
in "After
Alice"

and was seen, with great pleasure and enthusiasm by a combined audience of 300 people.

Financially we are sound and good numbers of people still come to see us do what we do. We still have

not addressed the problem of the dangerous stage extension to the Town Hall stage. However I am hoping to make some progress with this in the near future. As I said in last year's contribution, we are still very keen to welcome any new acting or technical personnel.

Ian Ruffle – Chairman



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hoping to make some progress with this in the near future.

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Primary School Report

*Alison
Kerrell
with some
of her
pupils*

I was delighted to be appointed as the new Headteacher of the village school back in March last year. When school governor, Janet Dyson, took the time to show me around the school, prior to my interview, it was so clear to me the important role that the school must have as part of the strong village community. This has been a priority for me as the new Headteacher. It has only been two terms but I do feel that the links between the school and the local community have been strengthened and we want to continue to galvanise this important relationship.

Since taking on the role in September we have been moving at a pace! I really listened to the children when I was interviewed by the School Council, and the children were quite clear on two things. Firstly, that their new Headteacher should be fun and secondly that they wanted to take part in more sport. They tell me that they really enjoy coming to school in the village and that our school is quite unique. Sport is now an important part of our curriculum at Great Bardfield Primary School as we provide lots of



opportunities both in the school day and as extra curricular activities.

As for the 'fun Headteacher' element of their brief-let me tell you about some of the highlights of the last two terms.

Appointment of Year Six Prefects

Our Year 6 prefects are the pinnacle of our pupil body. They are encouraged to set a shining example to the rest of the school. In making our Year Six pupils prefects, we set aspirations for our younger students. Being a prefect is a position that is earned and it comes with responsibilities and special kudos. For example our Year 6 pupils show visitors around the school, help to host refreshments at our assemblies and events and help us to support the younger children at lunchtimes. Our Year 5 pupils are prefects in waiting and are play-leaders; encouraging good quality play at break time and lunchtime.

Harvest Festival

At the end of the first half term back

*Year 6
School
Prefects*





in the Autumn, we were delighted to be invited to St Mary's Parish Church in the village to celebrate our Harvest Festival. It was a beautiful sunny day and a real opportunity for the village to come together with the children to give thanks for the good things that we have. This celebration is important for us as a school as we live in a rural community and many of our parents are farmers. Therefore celebrating Harvest time is a tradition that we want the children to take part in and one which we intend to continue to celebrate.

Remembrance Day

In November we had a very special assembly to remember those men and women who gave up their lives in conflict to protect our country. We raised the children's awareness of the gratitude that we should feel for the sacrifice these brave people have made for us. Colonel Ian Patterson came to assembly to tell us about the work of The Royal British Legion and it was a very moving experience. Two of our Year 6 children went along to the War



Memorial in the centre of the village to lay a wreath as a mark of our respect.

Whole School Panto visit

We have an active PTA, who work very hard to raise funds for the school. Over £4,000 pounds was raised last year through events such as, Festive Friday, Pamper Day and the Summer Fete. We were able to use some of these funds to take the whole school to see the pantomime *Peter Pan* back in December. This whole school trip was great fun and hugely enjoyed by everyone who went.

Christmas Celebrations

We had two celebrations for Christmas; our younger children performed a lively and enthusiastic Nativity Play in school. Our older children presented a more traditional evening Carol Service in the church which was very beautiful. All the children really relished the opportunity to perform in both of these and again it was an opportunity to bring the community together. We also had a special visit from Santa who stopped with us a while to allow his reindeer to rest up on their long journey.

Open Lesson Mornings and Class Assemblies. We were very pleased

Harvest festival celebrations at St Mary's



Laying a poppy wreath at the War memorial



*Key Stage
2 head
to the
Science
Museum*

to invite our parents into some of our lessons at the beginning of the Spring Term so that they could see what happens in lessons and how the children learn. Parents commented that they found the experience very insightful and that it helped them to understand better how their children learn. We also asked parents along to attend Class Assemblies. These assemblies were an opportunity for the children to share some of the highlights of their learning with their parents.

World Book Day

In March this was a fantastic opportunity for our children to dress up as their favourite book character. We had lots of fun activities on the day including a visit from the local librarians to encourage the children to visit the libraries in the area. We also had a class book swap between our oldest and youngest children and story times with a different class teacher. We will be opening our brand new library early in the summer term which has been created thanks to the hard work of our parents and the PTA. We are trying to instil in our children a love of books and of reading as we believe



*World
Book Day*



this is the cornerstone of their learning.

Whole School Trip to London

At the end of the Spring Term we decided to take the whole school to London for the day. Our younger children went off to visit The Natural History Museum and our oldest children went to The Science Museum. This was such a successful visit.

The children had so much fun and learnt lots about different scientists and of course saw the amazing dinosaur skeletons. They also enjoyed seeing some of the important landmarks of our capital city on the way into London including The Tower of London, Big Ben and The Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and The London Eye.

Bring Your Pet to School Day

The children had been asking for this



day from the beginning of the year so it was fantastic to see finally the vast array of pets on the day. We had quite a menagerie including a pony, a chicken, some dogs, a cat, some rabbits and several guinea pigs. It was a very exciting experience, especially for our children who don't have a pet of their own. It also allowed the pet owners to proudly explain how to look after their pet and to tell other children about their pet's personality.

Sport and the Healthy Schools Award

Acting on the children's request I have been very keen to increase the amount of sport that we provide in school. We now have three free early morning

sports clubs and three after school clubs. These are really helping the children to get active and are helping to raise the children's awareness of the importance of being fit and healthy. We have joined the Dunmow Schools Sports Partnership and this allows us to have specialist teacher support with our in school sport and to take part in competitions and tournaments with other schools.

We worked hard with the support of our parents at the beginning of the year to change our snack choices and to encourage the children to drink more water. Our PTA provided the children with water bottles so that they have constant access to fresh water allowing them to stay hydrated throughout the day. This helps to maintain concentration. We are very lucky to have Teresa and her team, in the kitchen, who lovingly prepare high quality, nutritious and balanced meals for the children. Our youngest children have been enjoying a daily hot dinner as part of the national free school meals programme. On average ninety percent of our children have a school meal everyday! This is a reflection of the excellent quality of the meals

*Pets in school!
A pony, chicken and guinea pigs amongst other animals in the school hall.*

Team sports are very popular at Great Bardfield School





*Loading
up Smile
Boxes*



that we provide both to our school and Wethersfield and Finchingfield Schools.

We were delighted to be presented with The Healthy Schools Award this term. This is given to schools where all stakeholders work hard towards achieving a healthy environment for all of the pupils and staff.

Charity and fundraising

What generous parents we have! We have organised lots of different fundraising opportunities over the last two terms. The children have taken part in these, supported by their parents, with so much zeal and enthusiasm. Back in September we had the Great Bardfield Bake-off which raised a

brilliant £200 for MacMillan Cancer. Then in October we welcomed back George Mills, who came to assembly to remind us about the wonderful work that he does to help the orphans in Chernobyl at the Chernigov Centre. We collected 126 Smile Boxes, which exceeded our target of 100, to send to the orphans. This was something to be really proud of. Following our Harvest Celebrations we donated 45kg of food to the Braintree Foodbank.

In November we all came to school in our pyjamas and onesies and raised an amazing £146 for Children in Need. In the Spring term we had a wear Red Day in support of the British Heart Foundation and raised £120.

*Red Nose
Day fun*





Most recently we had Comic Relief Day which was a fun packed and rather silly day. The theme was 'do something funny with your face' and in keeping with this Unicorn Class gave me a makeover with spectacular results! We raised a fantastic £175.

Red Nose day Fun

Our parents also support our Friday Cake Sales to raise extra funds for classroom equipment. We have used this money to buy art resources, class reading books and some science equipment. Teaching the children about helping others is a fundamental part of their social and moral development. It is also a key element of the learning that we do when we teach the children about traditional British values.

Things to look forward to in the Summer Term

The Summer Term is always a fun packed term with lots of outdoor learning opportunities. We are planning to be out and about in the village exploring our local community and environment. We hope to invite some of our older residents to a special lunch which will be hosted by our Year 6 children.

Our Year 6 children are working incredibly hard for their SATs and even gave up some of their Easter holiday to do extra preparation. They will be visiting The Isle Of Wight for their week long residential trip in June. Some children will be taking part in the Mayday celebrations in Great Saling and we will also be supporting the village Garage Sale in May. We will of course be holding our annual Summer Fete in June. Also we will welcome our new Unicorns when they have a taster afternoon after the May half term. The end of the term will

see a school production and a special Leavers Assembly.

Moving the school forwards

Great Bardfield Primary School is a school that is at the heart of the community and the children who attend the school represent the future of our lively and thriving village. Therefore we are not resting on our laurels! We have a supportive Governing Body made up of parents and members of the community who play an active role in how and what the children are being taught and how the school is moulding our children to be good citizens.

We have undergone some staff changes over the last two terms. Most notably the school has a new leadership team in the form of myself and Mrs Susan Aldred, who was appointed as the New Deputy Headteacher last term. We are a dedicated, small but visionary team of teachers who work wholly together to create excellent learning opportunities for the children in our care. Being part of a small village school allows us as teachers to know each child individually and therefore ensure the best outcomes for our children.

I feel very lucky to have come to my role at this time in the school's life. This is an exciting time for our school and along with my team I want to build on the firm foundations that have been created over the last 150 years of the school's history. Most of all I want to nurture our children to have a pride in their school, in their community and to know that they are the village community of the future.

Mrs Alison Kerrell – Headteacher



Tuesday Club

The group has been in existence for 23 years. We meet at 2.30pm at the Town Hall on the second Tuesday of the month to enjoy talks and demonstrations covering diverse and interesting subjects. Membership is open to both ladies and gentlemen at £16 per annum. Visitors pay £3.00 per meeting. After the talks we enjoy tea or coffee and biscuits for 50p. We also hold a raffle and the proceeds go to our chosen charity.

In 2014 we raised £160 for the Essex Herts Air Ambulance Trust. This was presented to our January 2015 speaker Roger Smith of EHAAT. The charity of choice for 2015 is Farleigh Hospice. We were also joined at our January meeting by the Chairman of Braintree District Council, Sue Wilson, who was visiting clubs in her district to see what they had to offer. Following that visit, I was invited to a Civic Reception at Braintree Town Hall, along with

Wendy Nickling, our Treasurer, a most interesting and enjoyable evening.

February 2015 our theatre outing was to *Guys and Dolls* an excellent production by Chelmsford Amateur Operatic Dramatic Society; this will be followed by another trip to Chelmsford in September 2015 to see them perform *Sister Act*. The summer outing was to Finchingfield Guildhall where we learned about its history and recent restoration. Following this we took afternoon tea at Bosworths. This year we plan to visit Bardfield Vineyard for a tour, wine-tasting and tea. Twenty-eight of us enjoyed Christmas lunch at the Vine Inn a delicious and very happy occasion. For further information please contact me on 01371 811401 or email adriennepoulson@btinternet.com.

Adrienne Poulson

2015 Programme

We have enjoyed:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 13 th January | <i>Essex Herts Air Ambulance Trust</i> – Roger Smith |
| 10 th February | <i>Gardening with Bees in Mind</i> – Penny Learmonth |
| 10 th March | <i>Magistrates in the Community</i> – Dawn Roche |

Still to come:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 14 th April | <i>A Woman's Life in the Army</i> – Lucy Lewis |
| 12 th May | <i>The Joys and Hazards of Accompanying</i> – Rosemary Wheeler |
| 9 th June | <i>Tobago my Island Paradise</i> – Lyn Croot |
| 14 th July | <i>Summer Outing to Bardfield Vineyard</i> |
| 11 th August | <i>Your Handwriting Analysed</i> – Barbara Weaver |
| 8 th September | <i>Essex Coastline</i> – Dudley Chignall |
| 13 th October | <i>Secret Lives of Garden Birds</i> – Mike Logan Wood (RSPB) |
| 10 th November | <i>Soil, Sweat and Tears</i> – Brian Carline |
| 8 th December | <i>Christmas meal</i> |



Bardfield Community Choir

*Right:
Summer
concert at
St Mary's
and below:
Bardfield
Community
choir at the
Town Hall
Christmas
concert*

The Community Choir has been running for nearly five years now and has had another enjoyable and successful year. The choir has sung at several local events, including a summer concert in St Mary's Church and leading the carol singing at the Town Hall Grand Christmas Draw evening, with plenty of audience participation.

Some members of the choir sang at an evening of Christmas music in Shalford Church which also featured the Bardfield Community Orchestra who played a selection of seasonal music and accompanied the choir in the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah.

The choir has around 50 members of all ages whose aim is to sing for pleasure. Our broad repertoire ranges from pop, folk and jazz to classical – something for all musical tastes. This year our programme has included music by Handel, Vivaldi, Karl Jenkins



and the Beatles, and we are enjoying singing a lively selection of songs from Oklahoma. Most of our music is arranged for three or four parts; sopranos, altos, tenors and basses. New singers are always welcome so if you enjoy singing come and give it a try. You don't need to be able to read music and no previous singing experience is necessary. We meet on Tuesday evenings at 8pm, usually in the Town Hall and are very fortunate to have Avril Nelson as our excellent accompanist. We each pay £2 per rehearsal which covers costs of hiring the hall and buying or hiring music.

Without doubt singing makes you feel good so if you would like to join the choir phone me on 810838 or visit 'Choir' on the Parish Council website.

**Janet Dyson,
Musical Director**





Great Bardfield Youth Club

It's fair to say Great Bardfield Youth Club has had a difficult time in recent months although we hold ambitious plans for the immediate future. As always, we have struggled to get enough volunteers to help run the club. This has led to the Youth Club being currently unable to open every Friday and at the moment only runs alternate Fridays. Added to this, we have noticed a sharp decline in membership numbers over the winter period. We are not entirely sure why, but suspect that it is due to a combination of factors.

So in an attempt to recapture the members' enthusiasm we are making some improvements to the old Pavilion to make better use of the space. This

should allow us to have some more games and to give members a larger area for chilling out with friends. If we can finance it, we may even develop a small café area where the members can enjoy milk shakes and hot snacks.

Another big step at GBYC is our decision to make entrance to the club free which should make it more accessible and appealing to all.

Once back to the pavilion after the Easter Holidays, Essex Boys and Girls Clubs are going to bring a selection of sports activities for us to take part in. We also hope to go to the Activity Weekend at Stubbers in June as it was a great success last summer. This time we would love to camp for the whole

Stubbers activities including climbing, kayaking, paint-balling and generally having a lot of fun





weekend rather than just visit for the Saturday. So there is a lot to look forward to over the summer period if we have enthusiastic members and willing volunteers.

Volunteers are essential to the Youth Club. The more we have the easier and more enjoyable it becomes for everyone. I am often asked why I volunteer at the Youth Club as my children are all too young to attend and will be for some time yet. My answer is always the same: because I want there to be a youth club for my children to enjoy when their time comes and if I don't help out now that might not be the case.

Volunteering is a wonderful thing to do whatever your reason. There is nothing quite like packing up after a really great night where the members have all really enjoyed themselves and leave the club with shouts of 'thank you' and 'see you

next time'. We sometimes talk about 'feeling the glow' – that warm feeling of having been able to offer the young people of our community something that they will probably treasure for years to come. I still have very fond memories of my youth club when I was growing up and the experiences I gained there with my friends and the lessons we learned will stay with me forever.

If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions about what is involved, please do not hesitate to contact me at kmralston@gmail.co.uk.

**Katrina Ralston,
Youth Club Leader**





Great Bardfield Carpet Bowls

It was a very mixed year for our Club. On a positive note we won the 2014 Essex Singles League for this area – hooray! We also maintained our membership level and continued to participate in the Essex County League.

The season started very well and we were at the top of the league up until our very last game where we had a complete meltdown! From early December until the last match at the end of March we were unbeaten and then, as Craig Revel Horwood would say, *Disaster darling!* The top three teams all had the same points but our shot difference was the lowest.

We arranged some friendly fixtures with other clubs and villages in the area and again attended various Charity events and all of the Essex County competitions which are held at Braintree. All the individuals who represented our club did us proud.

The Club has been in existence in Great Bardfield since 1990 and I am glad to report it is still going strong. As I said before we do still need a few more members to bolster our numbers and rejuvenate our club. The current set of players have heard all my jokes and I need a new audience!

For those new to the parish; not only is it an ideal way of meeting new friends locally but also of finding out about other villages in the area. Is there anyone new to the area that would like to try their hand? We would really welcome some new faces into the club so if you think it might be worth a look; please do not be shy in coming

forward. The Club meets all year round on a Wednesday at the Town Hall from about 7.45 pm. I would like to dispel a couple of myths which might prevent you from thinking of joining our Club. Firstly, bowls is not a sport for old fuddy duddies, just look at the competitors in the world bowls championships you see on TV, it is a sport for all. Secondly, despite the name ‘carpet’ it is not the toy game that you play in your lounge. The bowls are 10cm (4 inches) in diameter and the carpet is 10 metres by 2 metres. Carpet Bowls is a proper skilful sport open to all, the young and not so young, the able and less able bodied, we even let males and females compete together! Finally; it is cheap as the club provides the bowls etc; it prides itself on its friendly nature and is as competitive as you wish to make it. If you would like more information about carpet bowls call me, Cliff, or Lynda on 810782.

Unfortunately Bardfield does not have an outdoor lawn bowls green now but there are many clubs around that would welcome any interest you may have in the full size game. There are clubs at Dunmow, Thaxted, and Stebbing to mention just a few. Lynda and I play at Quendon. The outdoor season is now upon us so if you are new to the area and would like contact details we should be able to help you out here too.

Clifford Richardson

Great Bardfield Parish Council



Cllr Janet Dyson
Chairman
01371 810838



Cllr Carolynne Ruffle
Vice Chairman
01371 810986



Cllr Simon Walsh
01371 810451



Cllr Tony Hayward
01371 810320



Cllr Darren Hockley
01371 810898



Cllr Steve Slemmings
01371 810098



Cllr Alicia Holmes
01371 810563



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 Wednesday and Saturday 10.00am to 12 noon for information and advice. Dog-poo bags and clear recycling bags are available to residents of the parish free of charge.

