

Barrington Parish Council

Chairman: Caroline Stevens Vice Chairman: Marion Lewis

Peter Oakes, Don Bourne, Ian McGarry, Margaret Stone, Janet East

Chairman's Report 2017/18

Introduction

Barrington Parish Council have had another busy year during 2017/18. As I write this report, we are still struggling to get back to normal after the heavy snowfall. The Parish Council met every month except August and discussed many different issues throughout the year. This report will give you a brief overview of some of them.



No planning consent needed for this new house in Barrington!

Highways & Drainage



Drains need regular maintenance to continue to function properly

Barrington has been fortunate in recent years to benefit from new drainage and surfacing in many parts of the parish. This

year has been a quieter one in terms of major works but the position of the village at the bottom of a hill and on the edge of the Levels continues to mean that drainage is an on-going challenge. Unfortunately, one property in the village was flooded on 26th December 2017.

At the March meeting, Councillors agreed to join the SSDC Ranger scheme to allow us to tackle minor maintenance tasks in Barrington, in particular drain maintenance. A Ranger will visit once a month and the Parish Council will prioritise regular and one-off tasks to be done.

Outdoor Fitness Equipment



Over 30 villagers turn out for the the '45 for Fitness' Event in October 2017 and raised £553!

A small Parish Council working group consisting of young people, parents, Parish Councillors & the Clerk have been busy fund-raising this year to get the funds together to implement plans to install some outdoor fitness equipment in the field behind the village hall. These fund-raising events have been extremely successful and the current total stands at..

£9,847.61!



This has been achieved through some brilliant support from the community for our fund-raising events and some successful grant applications from:

- Big Lottery Fund - £5,000
- Police Commissioners Fund - £2,000
- Tesco – Bags of Help – at least £1,000

There are still a couple more applications to be decided but it is hoped that the equipment can be installed later this year. Thank you to everyone who has supported this project and helped it become within a stone's throw of reality!



Planning

There have been 12 planning applications within Barrington Parish during 2017/18 consisting of 9 full applications, 1 outline application and 2 listed building applications. To date, 8 have been permitted, 1 was rejected and 3 are still out-standing. Barrington Parish Council commented on all these applications. Additionally 5 tree work notifications were noted and one was commented on.



Planning notices are always posted by the District Council but if you ever want to see the plans in detail either visit the village website for a link to all Barrington planning applications. Alternatively, the Clerk has a paper copy that you can see by arrangement.

Barrington School



Unfortunately in spring 2017, it became clear that the plans for a generous villager to purchase the school to be able to lease the building back to Hambridge School were falling through. This was due to the results of a survey which highlighted the amount of work that would need to be carried out in order to bring the building back into use combined with cuts in Hambridge School's budget.

The Parish Council continues to closely follow plans for the school building. The current update from the agents is that a purchaser has been found and that 'some form of educational use' will be made of the building.

In the meantime, the school field was put up for sale in autumn 2017. As this had been registered as an 'Asset of Community Value' by the Parish Council it was immediately protected from commercial sale to see if a suitable community use could be found. The National Trust are currently in the process of purchasing the field and their staff have attended Parish Council meetings to open discussions about what it may be used for. In the meantime, in January 2018, the National Trust consulted the community about their plans for the adjacent piece of the field for use as a permanent car park. A planning application will follow soon.

Footpaths & Rights of Way

We are very grateful to our Footpath Warden Jos Wild, assisted by Stuart Thomson, and our 12 footpath volunteers from the village who continue to keep our footpaths and bridleways open and easy to use. Barrington Parish has 8 miles of rights of way and volunteers are assigned a section, to tackle vegetation growth, clear obstacles and carry out minor maintenance and repairs to stiles and gates. This year work included:

- 42 hours of work by volunteers keeping paths clear
- Reporting missing signs and drainage issues to SCC to get them sorted out quickly

The village walk on 3rd September was the wettest one yet but in the words of Stuart who organised it, “Eight intrepid souls braved the appalling conditions”!



Broken stile on the footpath off Bakers Lane

Community Speedwatch

A meeting to introduce the Community Speedwatch scheme took place in February 2018. Although we have a good number of people willing to help, we are still seeking a volunteer co-ordinator – if you would be interested in taking on this role, please contact the Clerk. Without a coordinator, the scheme will not be able to operate in Barrington. Our neighbours in Puckington are hoping to get their scheme underway very soon.



Website

The village website is co-ordinated by volunteer Alison Manuel, who does an excellent job of keeping it up to date and interesting. Alison's report is below:

The number of visitors to the website's home page in the year to February 2018 was 13,138, a 16% increase over the previous 12 months. The Parish Council's page continues to be the busiest on the site with 2,200 hits, slightly down on last year. Interestingly, the next most visited page was Property for Sale with 2,162 hits. The Planning page was also popular with 1,374 visits – has Barrington become a property 'hotspot'? The Local Business page has risen up the top ten narrowly beating both the Bulletin and the Footpath pages in the popularity stakes. Most pages on the website got between 500 – 750 hits this year but an honourable mention should go to the Community Coffee Morning and the Cricket Club's pages, with close to 1000 visits apiece.

The website depends on local people to supply news and updates and this source of information has been noticeably absent this year. As the above figures show, the website is well used and it's worth keeping it updated with items of interest to the village. The website is free to run (thanks to BT) but we are limited in how the look and feel of the site can be changed. Having said that, there will be modifications made in the next couple of months and if anyone has any suggestions, improvements or additions they would like to see please get in touch with Alison Manuel.

If you don't currently use the website – do give it a try – lots of people have and have clearly found it useful. Thank you once again Alison for all the time you put in maintaining the site.

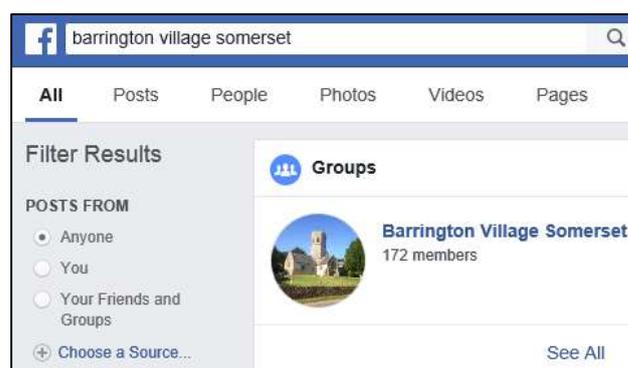


The website has a wealth of information on it from the history of the village to the local weather forecast as well as links to village organisations. You can look at the Parish Council minutes, find out when the next Community Coffee Morning is on, search for planning applications and find out about road closures.

<http://www.barringtonvillage.btck.co.uk/>

Facebook

You may be interested to know that there is now a 'Barrington Village Somerset Facebook' page – this was set up and is administered by Paul Jessop. It's a great way to find out the latest on anything from the state of the roads in the village to whether anyone has found a lost cat! Parish Council news and events are also posted by the Clerk from time to time. Thanks go to Paul for setting this up and keeping an eye on the content.



Finance

The accounts for the financial year have still to be finalised but overall expenditure has been kept within budget. The drainage reserve and footpath reserve continue to have healthy balance and the Parish Council are using the former to fund membership of the Ranger scheme this year. The budget for 2018/19 was approved at the January meeting.

The Future

There are many people in Barrington who get involved and work together to make our village what it is - a happy, vibrant, caring community. Whatever you do, whether you help at the church, serve on a committee, organise a village event or keep an eye on your elderly neighbour – on behalf of the Parish Council, thank you for being part of our community.

I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their work for the village this year – being a Parish Councillor is not an easy role but it is important that we are well represented at this local layer of local government.

I will be stepping down as Chairman and as a Parish Councillor after the April meeting after more than 10 years on the Parish Council. There will be a vacancy for a Councillor which will need to be filled so if you would be interested in considering becoming a Parish Councillor, please contact the Clerk for further details.

Caroline Stevens
Chairman, Barrington Parish Council

27th March 2018

Address for enquiries and correspondence:

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Keep in touch with village news and Parish Council matters including the agendas and minutes on the village website: <http://www.barringtonvillage.btck.co.uk>

Information also available on the village noticeboards (the school, village hall and Sharlands) and in the Web and Bulletin.