

BILLING PARISH COUNCIL BULLETIN

SERVING BELLINGE, ECTON BROOK,
GREAT BILLING and LITTLE BILLING



Newsletter No. 32

Winter 2018

Chairman's annual report

SEVERAL years ago the Parish Council sat down and devised a Parish Objective, which read as follows:

"To maintain and develop Billing Parish as a safe, thriving and sustainable community which is an attractive place to live and work".

I feel that now would be a good time to reflect on what has been achieved by members of this council and others towards achieving this objective during the past 12 months.

All of the parish-owned street lighting has been updated, making it more effective, safe, user-friendly and environmentally efficient. The organising and time spent on this project was considerable. It was not an easy task to even find a contractor to fulfil our many and varied requirements.

After nearly two years of negotiations Bellinge Field is now safely under our ownership; this brings the green space owned and maintained by the Parish Council to just over 30 acres. This land is now guaranteed to remain open green space, not only for the present, but for future generations to enjoy.

A special thank you for this latest acquisition must go to Cllr. Andy Kilbride who, on our behalf, negotiated his way through the corridors of power at the Town Hall.

While on the subject of green space, during this year, following the retirement of Chris Campling to whom we owe a great deal, it was necessary to go through the procedure of recruiting a new Green Space Manager. The calibre of applicants was very high and the vacant post was filled by Paul Marks, a resident of Ecton Brook. Paul has only been with us for six months but has already made his presence felt throughout the whole Parish with his enthusiasm and will to succeed.

Bellinge Ward, believe it or not, is recorded as a deprived area. It is for this reason that the council has supported, not only financially but in any way possible, the team at Bellinge Community House under

In the bleak mid-winter...



After the spectacular summer we enjoyed this year, this photograph of a snow scene from last winter is a reminder of what may be in store for us in the coming months. Let's hope the weather causes minimum disruption this winter.

Michelle Aveyard. The work done by the team, and in particular by Cllr. Dennis Nash and Jon Porter, is primarily to enhance the area for the benefit of people who live there.

Activities, to mention a few, include classes in education, knitting, sewing, languages, debt management and keep fit, as well as organising breakfast, youth and walking clubs. I doubt anyone would have believed it to be a deprived area after the marvellous flower display of Bellinge in Bloom. The judges certainly didn't think so when awarding them Best Community Garden and Best Community Group awards.

Ecton Brook, under the guidance of Cllr. Patrick Henesey, has seen the setting up of Ecton Brook Community Group who, with the council's support will, hopefully, soon be able to identify their specific problems and requirements and subsequently make recommendations.

At the present time, as unfortunately common with a lot of areas, drugs, anti-social behaviour and litter are major

problems. The lack of police presence does not offer a feeling of confidence. However, at the time of writing, the Parish Council is in negotiations with Northampton Borough Council in an attempt to have a Neighbourhood Warden who not only specifically covers our parish (which is not the case at present) but who has a permanent base within the parish, so that she can relate first hand with the community concerns.

During the past 12 months the Bernard Weston Pavilion, situated alongside the playing fields, has undergone a refurbishment which included complete modernisation of the toilet areas. The pavilion and the playing fields are in use nearly every day of the year and have become very popular with members of the community who need somewhere to celebrate a special event, especially children's birthday parties.

The need for a local defibrillator was identified recently and steps are in progress

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A Happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year to you all

Chairman's annual report

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to reinstate the old red telephone box in High Street, Great Billing complete with a defibrillator. A special thank you to Steve Marsh and his charity team at the Elwes Arms who are hoping to be able to assist with the cost of the defibrillator.

The 2017 Summer Fayre held in June was once again a great success (if only the weather could have been kinder), and Cllr. Steve Rockall, once again, arranged this year's event on 30th June. There were donkey rides, magicians and bouncy castles for the benefit of the younger members of our community.

This year marks the 100 year anniversary of the end of World War I. Over 60 members of the Parish paid the ultimate price and many of their descendants still reside here. To mark this occasion arrangements have been made to give the War Memorial in Great Billing a much-needed facelift. It is also intended to display large poppies on the lampposts near both our memorials during November.

Overall, during the past 12 months, in addition to the everyday tasks, i.e. planning, litter, advice etc., I am sure you will agree that the Parish Council has been kept busy. I would like to thank everyone involved but, in particular, I would like to thank Sue Harris, our Parish Clerk. Sue's workload is extensive but year on year she still manages to produce everything on time and in her usual professional manner. Sue - thank you.

Special thanks must also go to our local Borough and County Councillor, Andy Kilbride. Andy really does put himself about and nothing is too much trouble for him - we are very lucky to have him.

In conclusion, various objectives have already been set for the forthcoming 12 months and on behalf of the Parish Council I send out an open invitation to any member of the community who feels they could assist to make contact and to either become a Councillor, or assist wherever as a volunteer.

John Marlow
Chairman

THE volunteers have continued to strive to keep the Pocket Park in Little Billing both enjoyable to be in, and to walk through, over the unusually hot summer months.

The weather, creating drought-like conditions has helped to curb the growth of the grass which has been helpful. On the other hand it has clearly increased the thirsts of some park users, judging from the amount of discarded beer and lager cans which have been removed from the undergrowth. There are now two litter bins in the park, and it would be very helpful if these were used more, particularly by the younger generation!

Efforts have been made to trim the area north of the Orchard, and this has helped to

HELLO from all at Belling Community House. We would like to take this opportunity to update you on our summer success in the community.

Some of you may have noticed the colour in Fieldmill Square and enjoyed a stroll around the flower beds and community garden.

The volunteers have done an amazing job of supporting the 'Belling Gets Better' project and with their skills and energy, along with the young people from Belling Youth Group, there has been a flurry of awards coming our way - Northampton Partnership Homes - Gold for the Under 16s support with the project; Northampton in Bloom 2018 - Gold for the Community Garden and the Fieldmill Road site.

In addition to this they were awarded Northampton in Bloom Champions of Champions 2018, East Midlands in Bloom, Level 5 Outstanding for 'Its Your

Belling Community House

Neighbourhood'.

If you would like to join in - please come along to the #lovewhereyoulive Community Garden Session.

Along with our range of activities we hope to support many elements of what the Community asks for. This year we have had great success with our community learning offering of functional skills in Maths and English.

Sessions are held on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Please contact us for more information.

These are great learning opportunities for anyone in the Parish to come along and join in.

In our ever-increasing opportunities we have added this year - Tai Chi on Thursday mornings costing £3 per session; Knit and Natter Thursday mornings 9.30am-11.30am £1 per week; on Tuesday mornings we have 'Open Door Community Coffee

Little Billing Pocket Park

open-up this area for increased recreation.

A few weeks ago, 500 native bluebell bulbs were planted, and it is hoped that these will develop into an attractive feature next May.

One of the picnic bench and table sets was sprayed with white paint by vandals, and this was cleaned by the Green Space Manager, and is now suitable for use by the public once again.

The volunteering sessions will continue once a month over the winter period, when it is planned to clear a lot of the dead wood from the area between the main footpath and the stream.

Morning' 9.30am- 11.30am £1; Spud Club is open to the Community Mondays 12.30pm-1.30pm - jacket potato, choice of filling and refreshments £2 per week.

Community Law services to help with fuel, benefits, debt are here the first Thursday of the month - booking essential.

NPH housing officer is here on the first Tuesday of the month; Tuesday 1.30pm-2.30pm, 'Move It or Lose It' mixed ability exercise session, £2.50.

The Living Nativity will take place on Monday, 17th December at 5.30pm in Fieldmill Square, Belling, with the Salvation Army Band, carols, hot chocolate and mince pies - we hope you can join us.

If you would like any further information, please get in touch or have a look at the website.

Like us on Facebook - Belling Community House. Follow us on Twitter @BellingBCH1

Community Clean-ups

WE have increased the number of Community Clean-Ups of litter and fly-tipped rubbish this coming year so there are five new dates to put in your diary.

The 2019 schedule is Saturdays 9th February, 13th April, 8th June, 10th August and 12th October between 10am and 12 noon.

Volunteers meet outside the Co-op in Fieldmill Square (for Belling); outside the Newsagents/Post Office in Ecton Brook Road (for Ecton Brook); outside the Elwes Arms in the High Street (for Great Billing), and on the bridge over the stream by Little Billing pocket park (for Little Billing).

High-viz jackets, bags, gloves and litter pickers will be provided. We look forward to seeing as many volunteers as possible - these sessions really do make a difference to the parish.

Further information may be obtained from our Green Space Manager.

Great Billing W. I.

WE meet in the Bernard Weston Pavilion at 7.30pm. Refreshments and a warm welcome are always served at our meetings!

Our forthcoming programme of meetings are:

12th December 2018 - this is our Christmas Party with entertainment by 'Raw Material' -Mike and Mandy Haines.

9th January 2019 - we have a craft evening with Maddy and the Committee 'Searing Sheers' (bring sewing kit and specs!) Subscriptions due at this meeting for the new year ahead.

13th February 2019 - there will be a talk by Biff Raven-Hill entitled 'A Wartime Housewife'. 13th March 2019 - we have an evening of Tai Chi with Roger Irwin.

For any further information please contact our President Mrs Maddy Harrison on 414749.

Local Governance Review

THERE is a very interesting and extremely busy time ahead with the proposed formation of two Unitary Authorities to cover the whole of Northamptonshire, which has been forced on us by Government due to the financial collapse of Northamptonshire County Council.

Under the plans, one unitary (West Northamptonshire - 402,000 population) will run all services in Daventry, Northampton and South Northants, with a second (North Northamptonshire - 343,000 population) covering the remainder of the county. With a population well in excess of 200,000, Northampton will form over half of the population of West Northamptonshire.

George Chandler, the new Chief Executive at Northampton Borough Council, was strategic lead for town and parish councils in Shropshire some eight/nine years ago, so is experienced in the formation of unitary authorities.

It is envisaged that the use of Parish Councils will be maximised as this is the way for individual areas to have their own voice. Ideas from current Parish Councils regarding expansion, merging etc., will be considered, and it is hoped that new Parish Councils may be formed within the current borough. Any changes to the current borough boundary will be subject to the Boundary Commission and cannot be made until April 2020.

It is believed it is imperative that assets of the current Northampton Borough Council are protected, including its history and ancient mayorality.

Parish Councils within the borough boundary have been invited to register an interest in taking over ownership of any assets and open spaces situated within their area (which Billing Parish Council has already done).

It is envisaged that the current Northampton Borough Council will apply to become a Town Council. A Town Council is basically a large Parish Council with exactly the same powers.

Elections due in May 2019 have been postponed until 2020 and it is believed this will also apply to Parish Councils, but this is still to be confirmed.

LITTLE Billing W.I meets at 7.30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at All Saints Church in Little Billing. We have a membership of 30+ ladies from all walks of life who are a happy friendly group, always ready for a laugh. We have visiting speakers most months.

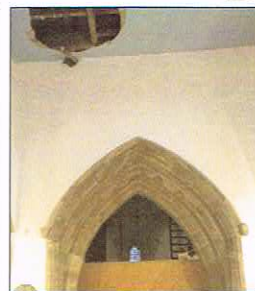
In December we welcome Victoria Molnar with her accordion, so after Christmas party food, a good sing song will be in order together with Secret Santa and

St. Andrew's Church, Great Billing

ST. ANDREW'S Church in Great Billing was targeted by lead thieves on three separate occasions in August and September.

The thieves decimated the roof, parts of which date from the 1700s, with the theft leading to significant internal damage following a partial ceiling collapse in heavy rains.

The Grade I listed building was forced to close for temporary repairs. Although it is now open for essential services, it is not yet clear when the church will be fully functioning again as it is facing a repair bill running to many tens of



Left: Rev. Richard Burbidge surveys the damage; right: the gaping hole in the ceiling after its partial collapse.

thousands of pounds.

The church is calling for donations to help with the task of raising the funds to restore and preserve this church building for future generations.

Information on how to

donate can be found on the church website www.billing.church

For more information contact Rev. Richard Burbidge on 01604 555186 email: richburbidge@gmail.com

AS you will be aware the Parish Council finally took over ownership of Belling Field in the Spring of this year and, hopefully, you will see a vast improvement in the area already.

Unfortunately, due to neglect of the land over past years a lot of trees were dead or dying - many choked by ivy - and these have had to be removed. Please be assured that no healthy trees will be removed and should it be deemed necessary new trees will be planted in the future.

As you will appreciate this has resulted in vast quantities of green waste and the only feasible, and economic, way for the



Work in progress in Belling Field.

Belling Field

Parish Council to dispose of this has been by burning. We sincerely apologise to anyone who may have been adversely affected by this.

The first job was to open up the gateway between the orchard and the field; a new fence and gate not only provided secure access for the parish vehicle and large equipment needed to carry out future work on the field, but also created a visual unity between the Old Orchard and Belling Field. Work on the field started with the removal of fallen branches and dead trees that had built up over many years. The paths were opened up and widened to make the area less intimidating and some patches of brambles that had taken over large areas of land have been removed to help make it a more useable functional space. It is encouraging to note that far more people are using the pathways since this has been done. A bench has been made from the trunk

of a tree that had fallen and there are plans to make many more over the coming years.

With the help from an RSPB conservation officer our Green Space Manager will be doing his best to protect the wildlife in the area and he will also be fitting a number of bird boxes around the woodland.

This is a large scale project that will take many years to complete.

However, with the much-appreciated help from the volunteers that meet on a Wednesday morning, and the contractors involved, we have already made a huge difference to the area.



A bench made from the trunk of a fallen tree.

Little Billing W. I.

a Christmas raffle - and more giggles and laughter.

We start the New Year with a meal out, venue TBA. We are arranging a full diary of events, including a trip to the local donkey sanctuary and a Chinese cookery demonstration.

If any ladies reading this are thinking it sounds like a good group to join, come

along on the first Thursday of the month as a guest and join in our fun - that's the 1st Thursday of the month at All Saints Church, Little Billing at 7.30pm (we do exceedingly good cakes and tea!). We also have cream teas and afternoon teas out arranged for next year. If anyone would like more information our President is Linda Brett, but if you would like to phone me on 01604 517391 I would love to take you and introduce you.

- Ruth Gable

BILLING PARISH COUNCIL

Established 1894

Website: www.billingparish.co.uk

THE Billing Parish Councillors are as follows:

Ecton Brook Ward

Rev. Richard BURBIDGE (Tel: 555186)

Steve ROCKALL (Tel: 530640)

Stephen WARD (Tel: 410548)

Great Billing Ward

John MARLOW (Tel: 404678)

Michael PEARSON (Tel: 407118)

Cheryl WORTHINGTON (Tel: 408613)

Little Billing Ward

David BREDE (Tel: 07930 960241)

John CLEMENTS (Tel: 07764 158516)

Middle Ward (Bellinge)

Dennis NASH (Tel: 403702)

Gurcharan Kaur CHAGGAR (Tel: 07986 905963)

Green Space Manager

Paul Marks (Tel: 785447)

Email: greenspacemanager@billingparish.co.uk

Clerk to the Council

Mrs Sue Harris (Tel: 402756)

23 Elwes Way, Great Billing,

Northampton, NN3 9EA

Email: clerk@billingparish.co.uk

Parish Highway Warden

Damian Lang

Email:

highwaywarden@billingparish.co.uk

Forthcoming Council Meetings

PARISH Council Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month (with the exception of August) at 7.30pm at the Bernard Weston Pavilion on the Playing Fields at Great Billing.

Members of the public are always welcome.

Agendas and approved Minutes may be found on the website.

Forthcoming meetings will be held on:

Monday, 14th January 2019

Monday, 11th February 2019

Monday, 11th March 2019

Monday, 15th April 2019

Monday, 13th May 2019

Monday, 10th June 2019

Christmas Church Services

Sun 9 Dec – 6.30pm – Advent Carol Service – All Saints

Sat 15 Dec – 10.30am-12 noon – Coffee & Carols with Wollaston
Salvation Army Band –
Methodist Chapel

Sat 15 Dec – 4.30pm – Messy Church Christingle Service – All Saints

Sun 16 Dec – 6pm – 'The Living Light' Christmas Musical –
Methodist Chapel

Mon 17 Dec – 5.30pm-6.30pm – Living Nativity – Fieldmill Square

Sun 23 Dec – 10.30am – Family Carol Service – St. Andrews

Sun 23 Dec – 5pm – Traditional Carol Service led by Rev. Phil Snelson –
Methodist Chapel

Sun 23 Dec – 6.30pm – Carols by Candlelight – St. Andrews

Mon 24 Dec- 4.30pm – Christmas Eve Service – All Saints

Mon 24 Dec – 11.15pm – Midnight Lord's Supper – All Saints/St. Andrews

Tue 25 Dec – 9am – Christmas Day Service – All Saints

Tue 25 Dec – 10.30am – Christmas Day Service – St. Andrews

Ecton Brook Residents Group

ECTON Brook Residents Group entered Northampton in Bloom for the first time this year and was delighted to be awarded a silver award - next year we will be going for gold!

Liz, the Neighbourhood Warden, and Sally have organised a couple of litter picks with the most recent one having 10 people participating.

We hosted our first ever coffee morning in October when 27 people attended, which we were really pleased about.

Hopefully, in the New Year, we will make this a regular event. Our thanks go to Bipin for allowing us to use Bipin Brook.

Our next residents meeting will be on Thursday, December 6th starting at 7.30pm at Bipin Brook and all are welcome.

On Friday, December 14th from 5pm until 7pm we will be lighting our Christmas tree at Bipin Brook; coffee and mince pies will be available.

Find us on Facebook - Ecton Brook Residents Group - where all events and more are published.



Above: The Ecton Brook litter pickers about to set out on their picks. Below: The collection from the latest pick.

