

BILLING PARISH COUNCIL BULLETIN

SERVING BELLINGE, ECTON BROOK,
GREAT BILLING and LITTLE BILLING



Newsletter No. 33

Winter 2019

Chairman's annual report

I HAVE always believed that for anything to succeed you need people who not only believe in what they are doing, but also want to take ownership. In our Parish Council, I am grateful that we have many such individuals who are determined, as promised, to 'make our Parish a great place to live, work and play'.

Bellinge Ward, particularly around the area of the shops and the Deer's Leap Public House, looks a picture and special thanks must go to Dennis Nash, John Porter and Fiona Dymond for all their hard work, not only in the garden area but also within the Community House.

Since coming on board as a Councillor, Sally Jordan has worked tirelessly to improve community involvement and the image of Ecton Brook. The regular Residents Group meetings and coffee mornings ensure that the community's concerns are heard and acted upon.

Little Billing Ward is, as usual, quietly managed by John Clements and David Brede, and Great Billing Ward just seems to manage itself.

Paul Marks, our Green Space Manager, has now been with us for 18 months and his enthusiasm and commitment throughout the whole parish, together with his wood carvings, have been noted and applauded by many.

Dick and Anne Oram are our longstanding contractors responsible for the majority of the grass mowing and heavy duty work. They treat our green spaces as if they were their own, much to the delight of the many visitors from the parish and adjoining areas.

I must thank all the volunteers and outside agencies - in particular our local Neighbourhood Warden, Liz Newbery, who has made vast inroads into problems within the parish; Damian Lang, our Parish Highway Warden, who continually pesters the authorities regarding the state of our roads; Cllr. Andy Kilbride who continues to support our community and is always on hand should the need arise. At the time of writing Andy has been successful in obtaining funds to build a much-needed play area in Ecton Brook field.

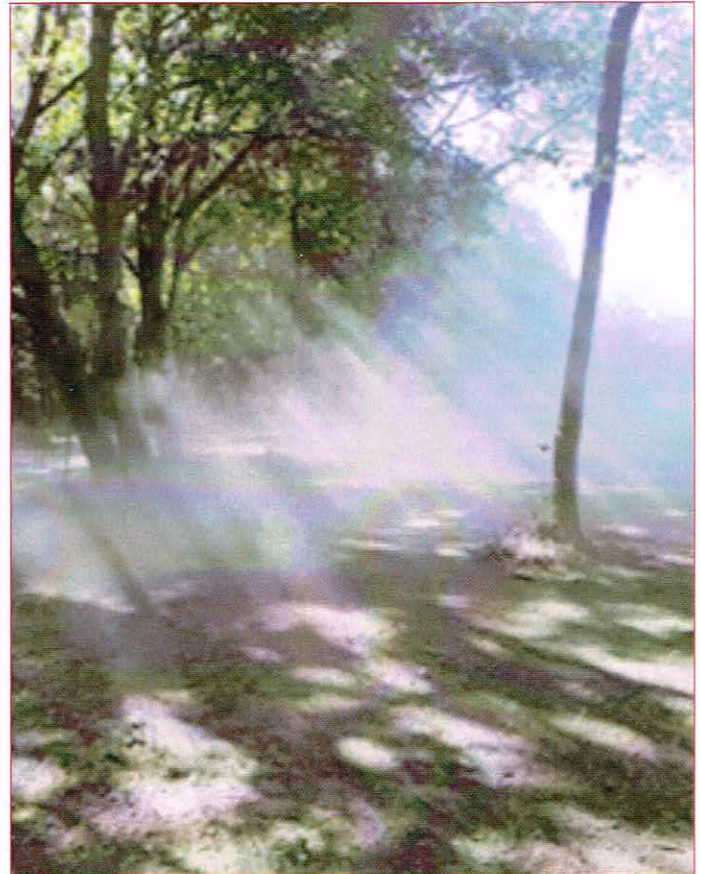
Our grateful thanks must also go to local resident Steve Bishop for his extremely kind offer of a completely new Parish Council website. This is now up and running and although it still requires some additions and 'tweaking' it is looking good and is a vast improvement on the old site. See www.billingparish.co.uk

During the past 12 months we have been in negotiation with Northampton Borough Council regarding assets within the parish, i.e. land in Ecton Brook and Little Billing, and the Community House in Bellinge, being transferred to Parish Council ownership prior to the anticipated introduction of the Unitary Authority.

Initially there was talk of monetary assistance but now it would appear that not only will the Parish Council be expected to pay a nominal fee for each asset but to fund both parties' legal fees and all future maintenance costs. Needless to say deliberations are ongoing.

Work continues on Bellinge Field with the aim of opening up this area and joining it with the Old Orchard and The Leys. Our

Sunbeams at Bellinge



Nature provides some wonderful images like this one in Bellinge Field with the sunbeams forcing their way through the trees and creating dramatic shadows on the ground.

volunteer team meet on site every Wednesday morning from 9am to 12 noon and anyone with free time would be most welcome. Visitor numbers have increased considerably and the general feeling is that people no longer feel threatened. I would recommend everyone to visit and see for themselves.

The return of the old red telephone box in Great Billing village ready to house a defibrillator has pleased many conservationists. I did hear that apparently two youngsters were overheard openly discussing exactly what it was only to conclude that they would ask their grandparents!

In conclusion, special thanks to Sue Harris, our Parish Clerk, whose recent submission of accounts to the auditor was returned with a comment of 'pristine', which I feel says it all. Here's to another good year.

John Marlow
Chairman
Billing Parish Council

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

Bellinge Community House

AT the beginning of the year Bellinge Community House was pleased to welcome Pauline Woodhouse as the new Manager following the retirement of Michelle Aveyard due to ill health.

BCH is a well-used and much-needed community resource with a footfall of over 4,000 visitors and service users over the last eight-month period.

The support service provisions on offer include supporting people back into education, training, employment, dealing with/managing day-to-day life, while also reducing isolation amongst local people.

Residents can join the gardening and litter pick teams on a daily basis, and there are adult educational courses on offer such as IT and Arts and Crafts.

A leaflet detailing all courses on offer can be picked up from the Community House.

BCH continues its partnership work with professionals from other organisations such as Northampton Partnership Homes, Neighbourhood Wardens, Northants Police, Community Law Services, NAB, Veolia, idverde, etc, and the Sarah Agnes Foundation Counselling service regularly meets/holds drop-in surgeries.

For further information visit www.bellinge.org.uk or see the notice board at BCH.

Please feel free to pop into the office at BCH between 9.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday when Pauline or one of the staff will be more than happy to assist. Alternatively telephone 01604 411473 or email bellinge@bellinge.org.uk

Dog Fouling - Be Responsible

WITH the advent of the dark evenings and mornings we experience an increase in dog fouling on our green spaces.

Responsible dog owners carry a torch and many have adopted the practice of placing an illuminated collar onto their pet to help identify when and where the owner needs to clean up.

Please be one of the responsible owners!

Bellinge Field gets better and better

WORK on Bellinge Field has continued throughout the year with the clearing of fallen and dangerous trees being a priority.

Areas of overgrown woodland and hedgerows have been cut back to reveal pathways and make the area a much less intimidating place to be.

A large area has been cleared between the old Orchard and the top of Bellinge Field leaving only the well-established trees. This area will have grass seed laid early in 2020 and 4,250 daffodil and bluebell bulbs have been planted there to create a sea of colour in early spring.

Many wood carvings have been added throughout the woods such as owls, a unicorn, a bear, a mushroom fairy house and a row of Gruffalo footprints, along with the log benches and willow stump armchair.

The football pitch at the bottom of the field has been maintained and is now being used by Billing United Football Club for training as well as by many groups of local children. Plans to



One of the beautiful flower displays' from 'Bellinge in Bloom'

replace the dated goalposts and mark out the white lines are well underway.

The plan for 2020 is to further enhance the work that has already been achieved and to improve on the drainage to help disperse the surface water.

Accessibility further improved at Little Billing Pocket Park

IT'S been a busy year for the volunteers at Little Billing Pocket Park as usual.

Meeting once a month during the Winter, and twice a month in the Spring and Summer, an average of seven volunteers have striven to make sure that the area can be used by all sections of the community - youngsters with their parents; families wishing to use the picnic area; walkers with and without their dogs; the elderly who avail themselves of the benches to rest and enjoy the fresh air, and schoolchildren who use the Park as part of their route to school.

The native bluebells which were planted in the Autumn of 2018, duly bloomed in the late Spring, and it is hoped that they will multiply over the coming years.

Unfortunately, the new replacement Notice Board was wrecked by vandals at the end of May, and as several have now been destroyed it is difficult to source products which are truly

vandal proof.

The majority of the litter cleared by the volunteers consists of beer cans and empty miniature plastic vodka bottles, although other items have included car tyres, cycle tyres, builders' rubble, garden rubbish and a three foot tall Teddy Bear!

The anti-climb paint on the container had to be renewed following complaints from neighbouring properties that youngsters were jumping off the roof and causing a nuisance.

Volunteering sessions are of two hours duration - 10am until 12 noon - on the second Saturday morning of each month, with additional sessions at two-weekly intervals from April to September.

Volunteers are always welcome and meet outside the Green Container on the spare ground diagonally opposite the village shop in Valley Road.

Community Clean-ups

THE 2020 schedule is as follows: Saturdays 1st February, 4th April, 6th June, 1st August, 3rd October and 7th December between 10am and 12 noon.

Volunteers meet outside the Co-op in Fieldmill Square (for Bellinge); 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, Paul Marks (Tel: 07725 856784, email greenspacemanager@billingparish.co.uk

Little Billing W.I. - talks and outings arranged for the coming year

LITTLE Billing W.I. meets on the first Thursday of each month at All Saints Church, Little Billing.

The main body of the church converts into a meeting room adjusted to our requirements, be it a games night, talks and demonstrations, or a party night, with excellent facilities for our refreshments.

October saw our A.G.M. During the last year we have had a Christmas meal, a Pims and Puds evening, a talk on the history of chocolate, another on The Leprosy Mission, the social history of fashion and a Chinese cookery demo. We have also been out for afternoon tea and visiting a cider farm.

Many similar talks and outings have already been arranged for the coming year.

If you are interested in joining, please come along on the first Thursday of the month as a guest for the evening.

If you would like more details please phone our President, Linda Brett, on 01604 403525 or myself, Ruth Gable, on 01604 517391.

WE are delighted to announce the success of both Bellinge and Ecton Brook in this year's Northampton in Bloom. Bellinge were once again awarded Gold (their theme was 'Love where you Live'), and Ecton Brook were awarded a Silver Gilt.

Bellinge were also awarded a Level 5 (Outstanding) in East Midlands in Bloom. These are wonderful achievements and thanks must be extended in particular to Cllr. Dennis Nash, Jon Porter, Fiona, Paul Marks (our Green Space Manager), the Deer's Leap public house and the Pre-School in Bellinge, and to Cllr. Sally Jordan (her energy seems inexhaustible), Annette Straker and Paul Marks in Ecton Brook.

Cllr. Sally Jordan said: "This year we worked hard on tidying the car park by the

Northampton in Bloom successes



Paul Marks, Cllr. Sally Jordan and Annette Straker receive their award.

shops on Ecton Brook as that was where our displays for bloom were situated. Annette and I spent hours clearing the

weeds from round the edge. Paul got busy carving for our displays which were on the theme of pride in our town. We chose the three sports teams - The Saints, The Cobblers and The Steelbacks.

As the judging got closer we had more help from residents including Keri Ann, Margery, Anita, David and Charlotte who helped to litter pick etc on the day before the judging.

"The main flower bed took pride of place with all the plants coming from residents' gardens or from plant donations. The stars of the show were the sunflowers that so many people commented on. We were pleased to be awarded silver gilt - next year we are definitely going for gold!"

IN May, Great Billing WI celebrated its 100th birthday. Committee members met at the new Centenary Tree in the Pocket Park which had been yarn-bombed earlier with colourful pompoms and knitted flowers made at one of the evening meetings.

WI members dressed in posh frocks and hats with many dressed in a style reminiscent of the 1919 period. After a photoshoot members walked to The Studio in Elwes Way, which used to be the venue for the first WI meetings and other community gatherings. On the way we passed The Institute, which also used to be a venue for WI meetings and many members remembered their mothers meeting there.

On arrival at The Studio, which is now a private house belonging to one of our members, the garden looked beautiful with a large gazebo and tables and chairs set out. As members arrived we were offered a glass of bubbly or a cup of tea (I imagine the tea would have been more in keeping with 1919). While we ate a splendid afternoon tea of sandwiches, cream scones and fruit tarts, plus more bubbly, we wondered if those first GB WI members ever thought that what they had started would continue for 100 years. We sincerely hope it will continue for another hundred. A vote of thanks was given to the

WI's Centenary Celebration



Members of Great Billing WI in their finery for the 100th birthday celebration.

committee and Anne Seckington, Regional President, presented Maddy Harrison, Great Billing's President, with a certificate commemorating GB WI's Centenary. Jerusalem was then sung followed by Anne and Maddy cutting the Birthday cake.

While eating and drinking in the sunshine and with background music playing songs from the era, a magician went from table to table doing magic tricks. Although they were done right under our noses we still couldn't see how they were done! We also had a bit of fun doing a quiz based on the Great Billing WI in 1919.

It was a memorable occasion and everyone went home with a commemorative coaster happy and pleased that they belong to Great Billing

Women's Institute.

Future Meetings

11th December - Christmas Party with festive food and a quizmaster.

8th January - Beetle Drive (plus payment of annual subscription).

12th February - Margaret Burgeon with 'It could only happen at a wedding!'

11th March - Chris Ward will be relating stories of 'Wildlife Down Under'.

8th April - Fashion Show, where ladies will be able to try on and buy on the night.

13th May - Our 101st birthday. We will celebrate with a meal at a local restaurant.

For more information please contact our President, Mrs Diana Johnson on 01604 400258.

ON Saturday 29th June, the Parish Council again put on the Annual Fayre at the playing fields in Great Billing.

The long range weather forecast had predicted a hot sunny day and it was correct. The team arrived from 8am to put up the tents, open up the pavilion, put the chairs out on the field, erect the ropes around the arenas and to show the stall holders to their allocated spaces.

The weather was so good and the sun so hot that in the interest of the dogs' wellbeing the 'dog show' had to be cancelled, while the donkey rides were relocated so the donkeys could walk around in the shelter of the trees in Millennium Wood.

There was still plenty of activity on the

Annual Fayre

field and the band played most of the afternoon sheltered from the sun's rays by one of the marquees.

The bouncy castles were as popular as ever. Many of the stalls sold out or sold all their tombola tickets so all their prizes were won. The Green Space Manager was able to show off his new found skills as a chainsaw carver and sell his wares in the middle of the field.

Both the ice cream van and the bar did a roaring trade providing cooling and thirst quenching relief to many.

The best outcome of the afternoon, as always, was that many local groups, clubs, societies and churches were able to add

some money to their funds; in some cases allowing them to continue running for the next year.

Thanks must go to everyone who played a part in the event, however big or small. Without the help of all those people the event would not take place and equal thanks must go to everybody who attended and participated in the afternoon's events and activities.

Fingers crossed for a good afternoon next year, the date has been set for Saturday, 27th June 2020. If you would like a stall or propose an arena event, then please get in touch with the Parish Council. If you just plan to come along for the afternoon, put the date in your diary as soon as you can.

Steve Rockall

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)

Allan JONES (Tel: 07757 889995)

Sally JORDAN (Tel: 07599 370558)

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 or 07725 856784

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, 13th January 2020

Monday, 10th February 2020

Monday, 9th March 2020

Monday, 13th April 2020

Monday, 11th May 2020

Monday, 8th June 2020

Parish of Billing Christmas Services 2019

Sunday, 1st December: 6.30pm - Advent Carols Watling Singers (All Saints)

Sunday, 8th December: 10.30am - School Nativity Service (St. Andrews)

Saturday, 14th December: 4pm - Family Christingle Service (St. Andrews)

Sunday, 22nd December: 10.30am: Family Carol Service (St. Andrews)
6.30pm - Carols by Candlelight (St. Andrews)

Tuesday, 24th December: 4pm: Family Nativity (All Saints)
11.15pm: Midnight Lord's Supper (All Saints)
11.15pm: Midnight Lord's Supper (St. Andrews)

Wednesday, 25th December: 9am: Christmas Day Lord's Supper (All Saints)
10.30am: Christmas Day Lord's Supper (St. Andrews)

GREAT BILLING METHODIST CHAPEL

Saturday 21st December 10.30am - 12 noon

Coffee & Carols with the Wollaston Salvation Army Band.

You are warmly invited to drop in for coffee and mince pies during the morning and to join in with well-loved carols led by the Wollaston Salvation Army Band. There is no charge for refreshments but a collection will be taken for the work of the Salvation Army.

Heritage Open Weekend

ON the weekend of 13th-15th September a wonderful free Open Weekend was held at St Andrews Church, Great Billing as part of fulfilling their requirements with regard to the funding received from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

On Friday evening there was Jazz and Hot Drinks on land at the top of The Leys, with attendees bringing their own picnics.

On Saturday there were tours of the church and village, and a lecture on the history of St. Andrews Church and its links with



Alan Clark delivering his lecture on the history of St. Andrews Church as part of the Heritage Open Weekend.

Great Billing by local historian Alan Clark. In the evening there was a fish and chip supper and a fun quiz. The weekend concluded on Sunday with a celebration service in the church in the morning, followed by a Family Fun afternoon including treasure hunts and village Tours

Two New Unitary Authorities for Northamptonshire

THE Government has agreed to create two new unitary councils in Northamptonshire to provide all local government services in the county. This will come into being on 1 April 2021 and Northamptonshire's current eight councils will cease to exist.

The new West Northamptonshire unitary authority will cover the areas of Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council and South Northamptonshire Council. A new unitary council for North Northamptonshire will cover the areas of Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council and Borough of Wellingborough Council. Services currently provided by Northamptonshire County Council and the districts and boroughs will be delivered by the two new councils.

The Minister for Local Government has written to Northamptonshire councils confirming his decision for the legislation required for the creation of two new unitary authorities. Known as a Structural Change Order, the legislation sets out timings of

elections, duties of shadow authorities (the councils that will be in place prior to the actual North and West Northamptonshire councils) and functions of the joint committees currently in place to manage the process.

The letter confirms that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the May 2020 local elections will be to the shadow unitary authorities with 78 members in the north and 93 in the west. Parish council elections will go ahead at the same time but the district and borough elections will be postponed so current members will serve until the existing councils are abolished.

The joint committees currently in place in the north and west will continue to take responsibility for putting plans in place until the shadow authorities are established with a leader and cabinet in position. Future governance arrangements, including for overview and scrutiny, will be for the new councils to decide once they go live on 1 April 2021.

You can follow developments on <https://futurenorthantswest.org>