

Bayford Parish Council

Ch's Report March 2024.

The Council. At the start of the Parish Council year, Jane Honeyman informed the Council that she was not seeking re-election. We would like to thank Jane for the huge amount of work she carried out for the Council, particularly on the subject of Road Safety/Improvement. Jane continues to be involved in this, as she has such a large experience of the various hurdles and the history of the project. Just this month we have been informed that plans for the refurbishment of the rose triangle have finally been drawn up. We look forward to receiving these and finding out what the cost this Council will be. In respect of the general traffic calming./road safety project, we paid for a second frequency and speed survey. The results of this show that a proportion of vehicles do speed through the village and that the frequency of all traffic is greatest during the 'rush hours'.

We were very fortunate that two new parishioners stepped forward and were duly co-opted to the Council as full Councillors, Oliver Riley and Chris Orme. Both have made a substantial contribution to the Council in their first year.

We have continued to carry all the usual tasks; cutting the grass, litter picking, producing a set of accounts, governance checks and accurate minutes. We now maintain the two ponds in the village, special thanks to George and Bob.

Fly Tipping has become a problem this year. Like speeding and general littering, there appears to be no effective solution. Perhaps a change in policy by EHDC would go some way to remedying the situation. After all, in the end, they have to clear up the rubbish!

The Baker Arms. A major concern this year has been the closure of the Baker Arms. The situation was precipitated by the tenants, Martin and Beverley having to resign their positions and move away from the village. Oliver and a number of other concerned parishioners immediately began to look into ways to save pub. Thus, The Friends of the Baker Arms was formed. Since then much progress has been made. A number of meetings and emails have been exchanged between FOBA and Tom McMullen. There is much common ground and McMs seem to be committed to retaining a public house in Bayford. There are still issues to sort out, not least the division of the building and car park between possible development and pub.

Our COF (Community Ownership Fund) EOI (Expression of Interest,) has been accepted. The COF will allow us to obtain government funding both for capital and revenue. We have also completed the forms to set up a Community Benefit Society, provisionally entitled 'The Bayford Community Benefit Society Limited' (A catchy title you will agree), including the form specifying the rules under which the CBS will operate. We also need to join the Plunkett Foundation as this will (already has) provided us with guidance and save us money on fees. We now need to complete the COF application. This is a much more involved process, and a number of decisions will have to be made beforehand.

The Right of Way Issue. In September (a few months after the closure of the pub), large planters were placed across the entry/exit to the car park to prevent vehicle access. Although a gap was left so walkers could still pass through, large signs were fixed to the planters stating 'No Public Right of Way'. The route via the car park provides the only safe way between Ashdene Road and Brickendon Lane because it avoids the very dangerous bend in the road where there is no footpath

Gavin Nelson, of Bonnel Homes, has continued to update on progress on the building of a house on the old playground site next door to the Old Rectory. Work has now started on the house after a number of delays in the planning process.

Also of much concern is the continued development in Bell's Wood, Buck's Alley. The situation is exacerbated by the inability of EHDC to produce the original documentation, which is pre-internet and dating from the sixties. As I write Chris and Bob inform me that a lot of ground work and tree felling has taken place, a grand entrance constructed and two of the new 'mobile homes' have been delivered to the site. Until the exact nature of the permission is resolved it appears no progress can be made. The developer obviously believes he has planning permission and license.

A mobile home appeared on the Bayforbury land opposite Bayfordbury Park Farm. This was subsequently removed but the truck and other rubbish is still present.

We were asked by the cricket club, (BHNCC) to draw up a new lease. This has been done, with negotiation with the cricket club and we are waiting to sign the final document. This will be a 25 year term, which is the period recommended by ECB to enable clubs to obtain funding. Like many cricket clubs, they are having difficulties but have succeeded in maintaining a strong presence for which we are grateful.

Finally I would like to thank most sincerely all member of this Council for the all the work they have put in this year. Maggie Broomer has continued to act as clerk. Her diligence and attention to detail has played an important role in ensuring the success of the Council. She has also been responsible for preparing the annual audit. David Sitwell has again acted as auditor for which we are very grateful. After a number of years, Linda Haysey stepped down from East Herts Council and has moved away from the area. We wish her every happiness. Over the years she has given us much valuable advice. Bob Deering has taken over this role and has already been 'thrown in at the deep end' in respect of Bells Wood. Ken Crofton has been able to advise and support us on a wide range of issues and for this we thank him. We are also grateful to all the members of the Friends of the Baker Arms for their important central role in this project.

This year has seen, after the COVID years, a revival of the sense of community in the Parish. We acknowledge and thank all parishioners who have contributed to the community spirit.

Michael Wainwright (Dr)
Chairman, Bayford Parish Council