

16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### **Chairman's Report**

The usual activities have continued, including pond maintenance, litter picking, grass cutting and the review of planning applications. Two major items have dominated this year's business.

#### **Bell's Wood.**

An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness was made in May 2025, following significant development on the site, presumably on the basis of the application by the previous owner in December 2022 and the 7 Statutory Declarations and aerial imagery. This also included a license dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017 for 32 caravans. This license was transferred to the present owner, again with 32 caravans specified. The application for a CofL specified up to 40 caravans. This is still awaiting decision. Bayford and Little B. PCs provided EHDC with a legal opinion in July 2025. Subsequently EHDC obtained their own legal opinion, but did not share this with us until December 2025. Since this time we have been requesting a further Teams meeting with Sara Saunders, Head of EHDC Planning. Last week EHC finally suggested several dates in March for this meeting, but this was quickly cancelled and postponed until mid-April. This presumably due to a further letter from the applicant, received on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

#### **Baker Arms.**

Following the closure of the Baker Arms, precipitated by the resignation of the existing tenant, we met with Tom McMullen in October 2023. The initial proposal was for the erection of two houses on the car park and to convert the cottages to the left of the pub into a dwelling. The plan also proposed a footpath down the right-hand-side of the building. This plan was criticised by several agencies including Bayford Community Benefit Society with respect to the "flying freehold" the parking arrangements and the width of the footpath. These objections were addressed in a subsequent application in May 2025. Whilst this does not represent an ideal solution, it must be viewed as a necessary compromise by the parties involved. This application is also 'awaiting decision'.

#### **Track from St Mary's Church to Warren House.**

A What's App message was received this week from the new owners of Warren House, stating that this track would henceforth be closed to the public. The previous owners of Warren House, Neville and Katherine Hudson allowed residents to use this track on foot for many years, enabling residents to avoid the dangerous Well Row. This development is very regrettable. This has, understandably provoked a 'storm' on What's App where many differing opinions have been expressed. However, as a 'permissive path', it is not subject to an application to obtain a Public Right of Way on the basis of usage. We are grateful that the (diverted) church path running from the Church towards Broad Green Wood is still open, although this too is 'permissive'. The footpath from opposite Oliver's house towards Broad Green Wood is a Public Right of Way and thus unaffected.

We would like to thank on behalf of the Parish all those who have contributed to the wellbeing of Bayford residents and sought to improve life in the village. We would thank all members of this Council, members of FOBA CBS, our Council representatives, Ken Crofton and Bob Deering, for their work during this year. Also Paul Curson for litter picking and David Stiwel for auditing the accounts.

And finally we would like to thank Maggie, our clerk who has prepared all the minutes and notices and compiled the accounts and generally kept us on the straight and narrow.