



ANNUAL REPORT

2008/09



BISHOP'S ITCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Message from the Chairman of the Parish Council

I hope you will again enjoy reading our Annual Report which summarises the Council's achievements and activities over the last year, its plans for the future, and how we have spent the precept of £60,000 raised from local residents via the council tax.

As always, the last 12 months have been busy ones for the Parish Council, and some of the most significant issues we have dealt with include:

- *Completion of the Chapel and Cemetery refurbishment*
- *Facilities for young people*
- *Yellow Land Natural Heritage Project*
- *An ongoing review of the Parish Plan*
- *Setting up of a Local Biodiversity Group*
- *The setting up of a Parish Council office*
- *Proposals for affordable housing*

We also continue to campaign for a lowering of the speed limit within the village, respond to local planning applications and regularly represent the views of local residents to the police and local authorities.

The Parish Council is also responsible for the provision and maintenance of a number of services and facilities within the village and is continually seeking to provide value for money to local residents.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Parish Council, all of our staff and our various contractors for their hard work over the last year.

Christopher Kettle
Chairman of the Parish Council
June 2009.



Your Parish Council 2007/08

We have 9 Parish Councillors. The Council meets on the first Monday of the month every month of the year, unless it is a bank holiday when the meeting is moved to the following Monday. We usually meet at 7.30pm in St Michael's Church Hall, unless otherwise notified. The Parish Council is supported by a part time Clerk whose job it is to implement the decisions made by the Council.

Councillors who served during 2008/09 were as follows:

Cllr Christopher Kettle, Chairman – 01926 614395
Piper's Hill, Gaydon Road

Cllr Judith Christian-Carter, Vice-Chairman – 01926 614767
25, Fisher Road

Cllr Damien Harries – 01926 612219
28, Chapel Street

Cllr Peter Maddison – 01926 611954
1, Mandale Close

Cllr Raj Kanwar – 01926 612104
3, High Street

Cllr Bev Mann – 01926 614006
39, Gaydon Road

Cllr Stuart Macaulay – 01926 613380
32, Starbold Road

Cllr Simon Tagg-Wilkinson 01926 614482
Fern House, 3 Fisher Road

Cllr Carol Maddison – 01926 611954
1, Mandale Close

Cllr Gerald Whittaker – 01926 811394
21, Fisher Road

Cllr David Howatson – retired May 2008

Not all of the above mentioned councillors served throughout the whole 12 months. Cllr Mann was elected to Stratford District Council in May 2008 and decided to stand down from the Parish Council in December 2008 to avoid any conflict of interests. Cllr Peter Maddison and Cllr Carol Maddison also decided to stand down at this time, although Cllr Carol Maddison later rejoined the Council in April 2009. Cllr Harries only joined the Council in March 2009, and was co-opted to fill one of the vacancies.

Parish Council Officers and Staff

Clerk to the Council – Alison Biddle – 01926 811394
6 Bridge End, Southam, CV47 1PD or email alisonbiddle@btinternet.com

Registrar of Burials – Eileen Dronfield – 01926 612530

Litter Warden – Christian Cosgriff – contact the Clerk

Pavilion Cleaner – Wendy Handy – contact the Clerk

Please also visit our website at www.bishopsitchington-pc.gov.uk



What We Have Achieved

Cemetery: We completed the refurbishment of the cemetery with the re-landscaping of the reflective area. A new lawn has been laid and a beech hedge planted along the back. A new gravel path has been installed and a circular bench will be placed around the walnut tree later this summer.

Website and IT Project: We have continued to develop the website which is now regularly visited by 50 to 70 people per week. It is an easy way to keep up to date with important local issues and also contains full details of local planning applications, as well as lots of other useful information about the Parish Council and the village. Please visit us at www.bishopsitchington-pc.gov.uk .

Parish Plan: The Parish Plan has now been formally adopted by Stratford District Council as a supplementary planning document. This means that it will be taken into account along with the Harbury Cement Works Masterplan when considering any development proposals for the village and surrounding area. Although the document is now complete, the Parish Council is continuing to implement and review issues which were raised during the preparation of the plan. As part of this process, the Council held a public meeting in January 2009 which was well attended by all ages and sections of the community. Areas of concern which were discussed included road safety, public parking and facilities for young people. The Council is continuing to work on these issues.

Speeding Traffic: The Council is well aware that a major concern for local residents is the speed at which traffic travels through the village, particularly along some of the more minor roads. We have continued to campaign for a reduction in the speed limit at every opportunity. In April 2009 we were successful in our request for a Speed Aware exercise to be carried out on a number of village roads.

Affordable Housing: During the last 6 years, the Parish Council, in partnership with Warwickshire Rural Community Council, has conducted 2 housing needs surveys which have both identified a need for a small number of affordable homes. In May 2008 we held an Open Day for local residents to identify those areas of the villages which they felt would be most suitable as a location for these new homes, and also any areas where they did not want to see any further development. Two sites were identified: one off Station Road, just south of the Lodge Bungalow and the other on the corner of Gaydon Road and Plough Lane. A preliminary discussion with WCC Highways and SDC Planning Officers indicated that while neither had any objections to the Gaydon Road site, WCC Highways had concerns about access on Station Road. In view of WCC Highways' comments on the Station Road site, Warwickshire Rural Housing Association is exploring the potential of the Gaydon Road/Plough Lane site and is currently preparing more detailed plans. When they are available, another public consultation will be held.

The Parish Council is very aware that some residents are opposed to any further expansion of the village. These views will be taken into account before any decisions are made. However, we also recognise that there are a small number of people who need affordable housing. It should also be noted that one of the conditions of occupancy would be that there is a strong local connection with the village.



Partnership Working: We have maintained good working relationships with our local police officers and other local authorities. This is essential if we are to continue to represent the views of our local residents to these other organisations. We have also developed close ties with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust who have guided us through the process of applying for Heritage Lottery Funding for the Yellow Land Project and continue to provide invaluable advice and support.

Facilities for Young People: Despite a lot of hard work, our initial attempts over the past few years to help set up a youth club proved unsuccessful, mainly owing to a lack of adult volunteers. As a result, many young people were left feeling very let down and frustrated. This may, or may not, have contributed to some of the problems with anti-social behaviour in the village during the second half of 2008. This reached its lowest point with the introduction of a Dispersal Order in the centre of the village. The reaction to this was significant and resulted in a positive outcome.

A number of parents and young people attended the March 2009 Parish Council meeting to raise their concerns. It was at this meeting, that several people volunteered to form a committee to discuss providing facilities and activities for young people, and out of this, the Bishop's Itchington Community Project was born. The Council is pleased to be involved in this project which it fully supports.

We are currently negotiating with the Royal British Legion for the use of its former clubhouse in Ladbrooke Road, which would make an excellent base for the Community Project. Furthermore, it would retain a facility which many local members of the Royal British Legion worked so hard to set up in the first place.

Parish Office: With the expansion of Parish Council business and a growing number of filing cabinets and office equipment, it is no longer feasible for the Clerk to work from home as has been the case in the past. We explored various possible office spaces in the village, but none of them were suitable. For this reason, the Council decided to rent a small office in Southam as a temporary measure, although we recognise that this is not an ideal location. The Council will continue to explore alternative options within the village including the possibility of building a new office. In the meantime, we have a very pleasant, fully functional working space for our staff, which is also open to members of the public.

Local Biodiversity Group: The Parish Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. We see this as an opportunity to protect and enhance the wildlife assets within our local community, and it was with this in mind that we set up the Local Biodiversity Group. Current members of the group include a couple of parish councillors and several local residents. They have already carried out some practical tasks on the Yellow Land and have a number of ideas for other small projects within the village. They were recently successful in obtaining a grant from WCC which has helped to buy some much needed tools. Anyone, of any age, is welcome to join the group. It is a great way to enjoy some fresh air and exercise while making new friends and improving the local environment.

Yellow Land Natural Heritage Project: We were delighted to be successful in our bid for £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund which will enable us to improve public access and amenity value of the Yellow Land as well as enhancing the natural habitat which supports two species of rare butterflies. We are in the process of recruiting a Project Officer whose task it will be to work with various groups within our local community and engage them in a number of activities which will include recording the history of the site as well as carrying out practical tasks.



The Future - What We Hope to Achieve

Campaign for Safer Roads: We realise that we still have a long way to go in achieving lower speed limits for our village roads, but there have recently been some encouraging signs from central government which seem to suggest that there may be support for such schemes. We will continue to work on this throughout the coming year.

Bishop's Itchington Community Project: The Parish Council is fully committed to supporting this project which is being led by local residents and young people. The Project has prioritised young people as being the group with the most urgent need at the current time. We are currently working with members of the Project to find a suitable venue for a youth club, hopefully in time for the school summer holidays. The long term aim of the Project is to provide a meeting place or drop in for all local residents, of all ages. We will continue to work with the members towards this end.

Parish Office: Our ultimate aim is to open an office in the centre of the village which will be open to the public and provide public internet access. We are building a reserve of funds for this purpose and the matter will be further discussed as part of next year's budgeting process.

Affordable Housing: We will be organising a further public consultation as soon as we have more detailed information about the feasibility of a development at the corner of Gaydon Road and Plough Lane. Local residents are encouraged to contact the Parish Council with any comments they wish to make. If and when a decision is made to apply for planning permission, there will be a further public consultation period which will be run by SDC.

Yellow Land Natural Heritage Project: This project will run for 18 months and is an exciting opportunity for the whole community to learn more about our natural heritage and get involved with some practical environmental tasks on site. At the end of the project we hope to have installed paths, fencing, interpretive boards and signs as well as bird boxes and seating. In addition we will have improved the natural habitat to encourage greater biodiversity.

Quality Status: One of our aims for the coming year is to achieve accreditation as a Quality Council. This is a benchmark minimum standard that confirms that the Council is

- representative of and actively involves all parts of the community
- is effectively and properly managed, with members and officers upholding a high standard of conduct
- works closely with voluntary and community sector groups
- works in partnership with other local authorities and agencies to deliver local services which give the best deal for the community

We feel that we already meet most of the criteria and are working on those areas which need further improvement.

How We Spent Your Money

The Parish Council holds its budget meeting in mid-November. At this meeting decisions are made on projects to take forward in the next financial year, the provision of services and facilities and the amount of funding required. The level of precept is set at this meeting, after careful



consideration of all the Council's outgoings, its reserves and the small amount of income it receives from other sources. The precept for 2008/09 was set at £60,000 which equates to approximately 0.72p per week per elector. All of this money is spent within the parish for the benefit of local residents. A copy of the financial statement, subject to audit, for the year ended 31 March 2009 is attached as an appendix to this report and an extract is summarised below:

| EXPENDITURE | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| | £'s |
| Salaries, expenses & administration | 32,399 |
| Grounds maintenance & tree work | 25,917 |
| Grants | 500 |
| Yellow Land | 653 |
| Other expenditure | 117 |
| Section 137 Payments | 2,468 |
| VAT | 1,453 |
| Total expenditure | 63,507 |

Staff salaries and administration is the largest item of expenditure: We have a part time Clerk, contracted to work 18 hours per week, a Registrar of Burials, who manages the cemetery, a part time litter warden and a part time cleaner, who looks after the pavilion. Administration charges include stationery, office equipment, subscriptions, fees for professional services, telephone and broadband services, meeting room hire, training and insurance. This year they also include the one off cost of new computers and peripheral equipment along with initial website charges and related training all of which were actually paid for with the Awards for All grant of £5,000 we had received the previous year.

Grounds maintenance is the second largest item of expenditure: We are responsible for the maintenance of the playing field, the play area and play equipment, the cemetery and churchyard, and most of the greens and verges in the village including, from 1 January 2009, those located at Knightcote Grange. This year also saw the implementation of the second half of the tree work programme.

Grants: The Council has continued to support Bishop's Itchington Carnival with a grant of £500 and also the Crafty Cuppa by paying for the room hire.

Yellow Land: Further improvements were made to the gates and fencing.

Please Note

The financial statements contained in this report are still subject to audit at the date of publication.

Published by Bishop's Itchington Parish Council in June 2009.

www.bishopsitchington-pc.gov.uk



BISHOPS ITCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Statements (subject to audit)
For the Year ended 31 March 2009

Receipts & Payments Account

| <i>Year Ended</i> <i>31st March 2008</i> | | <i>Year Ended</i> <i>31st March 2009</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| | RECEIPTS | |
| 57,500.00 | Precept | 60,000.00 |
| 1,566.55 | District Council Reimbursements (Sec 136) | 1,566.55 |
| 3,206.92 | Interest on Investments | 2,350.26 |
| 1,851.00 | Burial Ground Fees | 1,975.00 |
| 29.70 | Pavilion/Playing Field | 30.38 |
| 2,354.00 | VAT Refund | 1,716.81 |
| - | Grants | - |
| - | Misc | 21.45 |
| - | Transfers from reserves | - |
| 66,508.17 | TOTAL RECEIPTS | 67,660.45 |
| | PAYMENTS | |
| 7,638.99 | General Administration | 12,348.23 |
| 18,985.14 | Salaries and Expenses | 20,050.38 |
| 5,543.31 | Pavilion/Playing Field | 6,277.01 |
| - | Agency Services | - |
| - | Section 137 Payments | 2,468.00 |
| 6,479.02 | Burial Ground | 5,909.73 |
| 7,639.00 | Grasscutting and Trees | 13,690.70 |
| 4,000.00 | Memorial Hall | 40.00 |
| - | Subsidised Travel (A&M Group) | - |
| - | Footpaths | - |
| - | Village Design Statement | - |
| 1,134.36 | VAT | 1,452.75 |
| 155.60 | Other Expenditure (Information) | 117.00 |
| - | Provision for Doubtful Debts | - |
| - | Interest on long term loans | - |
| - | Jubilee Committee Grants | - |
| 650.00 | Grants | 500.00 |
| 2,538.79 | Yellow Land | 653.00 |
| 13,000.00 | Transfers to reserves | - |
| 67,764.21 | TOTAL PAYMENTS | 63,506.80 |

BISHOPS ITCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Statements (subject to audit)
For the Year ended 31 March 2009

Funds reconciliation at 31 March 2009

| 31st March 2008 Brought Forward | | 31st March 2009 Balance |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 34,000.00 | National Income Bond b/f | 47,000.00 |
| <u>13,000.00</u> | Transfer to NS Income Bonds | <u> </u> |
| <u>47,000.00</u> | National Income Bond c/f | <u>47,000.00</u> |
| <u>31,121.60</u> | Current Account b/f | <u>29,865.56</u> |
| 66,508.17 | Receipts | 67,660.45 |
| <u>(67,764.21)</u> | Payments | <u>(63,506.80)</u> |
| <u>(1,256.04)</u> | Net movement in year | <u>4,153.65</u> |
| | | 34,019.21 |
| | Reconciling Items: | |
| | Bank error | - |
| <u>29,865.56</u> | Current Account c/f | <u>34,019.21</u> |
| <u>76,865.56</u> | Net funds c/f | <u>81,019.21</u> |

| Balance Carried Forward | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 47,000.00 | National Income Bond | 47,000.00 |
| 29,865.56 | Yorkshire Bank - Current Account | 34,019.21 |
| <u>76,865.56</u> | | <u>81,019.21</u> |

Reserves Analysis

Reserves in National Income Bonds

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 13,000.00 | Abbots Meadow Maintenance Fund († held in N.S. Income Bonds) | 13,000.00 |
| 13,000.00 | Cross Green Farm Maintenance Fund (held in N.S. Income Bonds) | 13,000.00 |
| <u>21,000.00</u> | General Reserve (held in N.S. Income Bonds) | <u>21,000.00</u> |
| <u>47,000.00</u> | | <u>47,000.00</u> |

Reserves held in current account

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Memorial Hall | 3,000.00 |
| | Capital Works Fund | |
| 4,653.43 | Parish Website/IT Fund (Awards for All Grant) | |
| <u>13,000.00</u> | Parish office | <u>23,000.00</u> |
| <u>17,653.43</u> | Total | <u>26,000.00</u> |

Accumulated surplus

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9,821.60 | Balance b/f | 12,212.13 |
| <u>(1,256.04)</u> | Surplus in year | 4,153.65 |
| <u>(9,353.43)</u> | Transfer to reserves | <u>(13,000.00)</u> |
| <u>13,000.00</u> | Transfer from reserves | <u>4,653.43</u> |
| <u>12,212.13</u> | Balance c/f | <u>8,019.21</u> |
| <u>76,865.56</u> | | <u>81,019.21</u> |