

Annual Report

2012-13



A Warm Welcome from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Dear Residents,

It has been another busy year for the parish council. There are 9 councillors in total, all of whom are volunteers and work hard on behalf of their local community to preserve and improve the amenity of our village.

- **Community Forum.** Our members regularly attend the community forum which is held quarterly at different venues around the Southam area. This provides an opportunity to engage with our local police officers as well as members and officers from Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council. Members of the public are welcome too and there is plenty of opportunity to raise your concerns about anything in our locality that you feel needs attention.
- **Starbold Windfarm.** As you now know, the parish council objected to this application. We were supported unanimously by Stratford District Council but Broadview Energy immediately appealed the decision even before the reasons had been published. The appeal will be heard at a public inquiry to be held over the course of two weeks in September 2013. The parish council has obtained "Rule 6" status which means that it will play a full part in the inquiry alongside Stratford District Council and the local action group, FRAWT.
- **Scowcroft Drive Field Path.** It has taken several years to obtain the necessary permissions, but finally in April 2013, we were able to begin work on upgrading the surface of this path. We are aware that some work is still required to make it suitable for use by wheelchairs and we are looking into this at the moment. New gates are also to be installed soon to provide access for larger mobility vehicles.
- **New Bench** Last summer, we installed a new 'bespoke' bench in the churchyard to commemorate the Royal Wedding. The bench was handmade by local woodsman and carver, Dan Britton, from the old ash tree which had to be removed from the churchyard hedge on safety grounds.
- **The New Core Strategy.** SDC does not yet have a new Core Strategy to replace the old Local Plan. This is deeply disturbing. The parish faces 4 large scale planning applications for new estates on land off Station Road, Gaydon Road and Knightcote Road as well as land at the former cement works site. These 4 proposals could increase the housing stock by 32, 81 and 50 and 150 units respectively, making a total of 313 new dwellings. Without a core strategy SDC has very little planning policy to assess these plans other than the National Planning Policy Framework which is in favour of sustainable development. The parish council, with the help of local residents, is working on Neighbourhood Development Plan which will help SDC ensure that any development in the parish is, so far as is possible, in line with residents' wishes.

I would like to thank our clerk, Alison Biddle, without whom we would not have been able to achieve nearly as much as we do, and our other staff and various contractors who you will see working around the village. Jenny Pickering, our cemetery manager, also continues to work hard to keep the cemetery looking smart. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the parish council for their hard work over the last year.

Christopher Kettle
Chairman of Bishop's Itchington Parish Council

Your Parish Council 2012-2013

Councillors who served during 2012/13 are as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Attendance Record (out of max of 21)</u>
Cllr Christopher Kettle, Chairman	21
Cllr Simon Tagg-Wilkinson, Vice –Chairman	14
Cllr John Beer	17
Cllr Pete Brady	17
Cllr Judith Christian-Carter	12
Cllr Alan Heatley	21
Cllr Carol Maddison	8
Cllr Gregg Sheen	14
Cllr Melanie Wheeler	9

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 the parish clerk whose job it is to implement the decisions made by the council.

Parish Council Officers and Staff

Clerk to the Council – Alison Biddle – 01926 811394
Parish Council Office, Brewster's Corner, Pendicke Street, Southam CV47 1PN
Email: bishopsitchingtonpc@btconnect.com

Cemetery Manager – Jenny Pickering – 0779 241 8642
Email: bishopsitchingtoncemetery@btconnect.com

Litter Warden – Christian Cosgriff – contact the Clerk

Pavilion Cleaner – Wendy Handy – contact the Clerk

Play Area Inspector – Martin Cosgriff – contact the Clerk

Grounds Maintenance Contractors:

Thomas Fox Landscaping – contact the Clerk
MFM Services – contact the Clerk

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

Grants to Village Organisations

During the year the parish council has supported various local clubs and organisations as follows:

Bishop's Bowling Club (B.B.C)

The short mat bowling club continues to go from strength to strength. We have 24 members which is more than enough for two mats if we all attend. In fact, we could utilise a third mat if the floor was level enough, not that we would turn anyone away, more are welcome.

We all seem to enjoy each others' company and we are reliably informed (by other members of the league that we joined) that we have all improved greatly. We now meet twice a week and regularly have enough members attending each session to cover the cost of the hall and refreshments. We have joined the local league for the second year running and have managed to win a few matches.

We would like to put on record our thanks for the donation from the parish council to help us buy storage frames for the mats. This was gratefully received and put to good use.

Cyril Gurden
Treasurer, BBC

Bishops Itchington Wheelchair Fund

This organisation was originally set up in the 1970`s to help villagers who needed help with mobility and over the years was able to supply wheelchairs and stair lifts. In latter years the fund has been revitalized. New wheelchairs have been purchased and these have been widely used throughout the village for those with broken limbs, illnesses, hospital visits, to take elderly or infirm relatives on holidays, shopping trips, day trips, or around the carnival.

It is all financed by voluntary donations from users for which we are grateful. We presently have seven wheelchairs from lightweight and medium pushers, to two self-propelling. The chairs are available for use by anyone in the village, and may be hired by contacting Derek Key or Ann Murphy.

Derek Key
BI Wheelchair Fund

Community Centre & Blue Butterfly Cafe

The Community Centre has seen some big changes and some steady growth over the last twelve months. We have summarised the key points under our main operating areas below:

- The Cafe has continued to be a popular attraction in the village and is now under new management as our previous manager moved away from the village with her family. The rest of the staff are volunteers and we rely very much on their hard work and good will.
- The hall itself is regularly hired out for Slimming World, Cake Craft, family gatherings, meal nights and the occasional conference.

- The youth club is open every Friday evening during term time and accommodates two groups spanning 10 to 14 year olds. We continue to struggle for volunteers to support this and there may need to be some changes to the groupings as volunteers come and go.
- The youth football training on a Thursday evening is still very popular. We have received external funding for this to keep equipment and coaching standards up to date.
- The allotments at the centre continue to be fully utilised and provide an easily accessible and well equipped site for our enthusiastic growers of all ages.
- The team undertakes regular fundraising activities including a Spring and Christmas fair, providing refreshments at the school fairs and running stalls and refreshments on carnival day. In addition we received £500 from the Parish Council this year for refurbishments and this was spent on replacing the vinyl flooring in the cafe and the hallway.

Sam Farrall
B I Community Project

Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall has been busy during the past year. The committee has regular meetings to discuss all aspects involving the use and maintenance of the hall and cottage.

The hall is used regularly by groups within the village including:

- Scouts,
- Cubs,
- Brownies,
- Beavers,
- Rainbows,
- Mothers and Toddlers,
- W.I ,
- Darby and Joan,
- Line dancing
- Short mat bowling
- Crafty Cuppa coffee mornings.

It is also used for childrens` parties, weddings, and senior residents` parties, spring fair, carnival functions, and as a polling station.

Maintenance and improvements have included:

- Cottage: New front door. New front Gate.
- Hall: Repairs to outside stonework. New heating programmer. New emergency lighting. Fire safety checks. New Flag. Spring Cleaning.

The repairs to the external stone work have cost £7,500, partly funded by a grant of £3,000 we received from the parish council. We have also installed a new heating programmer which will help to cut the cost of our gas bill by providing a more efficient control and new emergency lighting.

Derek Key, Chairman
Memorial Hall Committee

Bishops Itchington Primary School

In the summer term 2012 the whole school embarked on a project about pirates. We launched the pirate theme at the start of the term with all the children and staff dressing up for a pirate workshop. The children found out about famous pirates and what life was like aboard a pirate ship.

We celebrated the Diamond Jubilee on Friday 1 June with a party on the playground. After wards, children had the opportunity to try out a range of fun activities which were kindly provided by Fobips. Then the children all took home a commemorative mug.

We had a very productive 'Ground Force' day on Sunday 20 May. Pam Reason supervised many parents and children in clearing the raised beds, potting up the hanging baskets and tidying up the willow dome. Our children took part in the Southam Area Athletics on June 19. The children competed in running, throwing and jumping events and were a credit to the school. We had many first places and those children went on to represent the Southam Area at the Central Area Championships on Thursday 28 June. Our sports' teams have been in action this term with our tennis team competing in a tournament at the fabulous indoor courts of Warwick University. They also had the opportunity to take part in an afternoon's coaching session at Leamington Tennis Club. Our cricket team played 3 matches and lost narrowly to Shrubland St. They then had a fantastic match against Our Ladies and St Theresa's – losing by 1 run in the final over. History repeated itself when we played Southam Primary. Needing 6 off the last over Southam won by 1 run.

Despite the poor weather we had our most successful Summer Fair ever with over £1500 being raised by Fobips for the school. Many people commented positively on the exciting range of activities and the friendly atmosphere. The fund raising of Fobips makes a huge difference to the school and we recently purchased a new stage system with money provided by them. At the end of the term the juniors staged their own version of 'Treasure Island'.

In the autumn term we welcomed Mrs Ball as the new teacher of 1/2 and Mrs Hackland in year 4/5 for 2 days a week. They've both settled in well and have rapidly become an integral part of the school. More recently the governors and Miss Eden have worked hard to produce our new school prospectus which is available via our website or from school.

Richard Hawkins, Head Teacher
Bishop's Itchington Primary School

Busy Bees Bishops Itchington Ltd

Busy Bees Pre-school is located in a private building on the school site. We are a sessional pre-school and take children aged 2-4 mainly from the village, but a few children travel from further afield.

We currently have 36 children on our register who attend a range of sessions throughout the week. From the term after their 3rd birthday children are eligible for 15 hours per week Nursery Education Funding and we try to deliver this flexibly thus giving parents /carers as much choice as possible. We are currently open 9-12 on a Monday and Friday and 9-2 on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

We have 5 members of staff who are all part time and very committed to the setting. Three members of staff have been with us for over 10 years. We have 6 directors, 2 of whom work at the setting and 4 of whom are voluntary, assisting as required.

We are very proud of our highly qualified staff, we have 3 staff with degrees, one of whom is a qualified teacher and one has a degree in Early Years education. Three members of staff are

EYP's (Early Years Professionals) which far exceeds the national requirements for pre-school staff. We have organised a Level 1 safeguarding course for our staff and have invited other local settings to join us as well as opening this up to parents. With changes to the LA, less training is being organised by WCC and this falls to settings to arrange for themselves. By combining with other groups, in –house training becomes more financially viable.

We have a close working relationship with Bishops Itchington Primary School and visit the reception class weekly with our older children to ease their transition to school. We greatly enjoyed visiting school recently to watch a production of Pinocchio from an external theatre company and we appreciate Mr Hawkins inviting us to join school in this. We enjoy being a part of the local community and recently had a third outing for the children to the Blue Butterfly Cafe! We enjoy visits from Miss Eden, Mr Hawkins, Mr Green and Mrs Tufty and several parents who come in to read to the children. We have also had numerous parents and guests in to chat to us about different countries they have lived in and they have spent time talking to the children about the different languages they know.

We have been very busy fund raising and applying for grants for new astro turf in our outdoor area. The parish council have very kindly given us £500 towards this, and we have booked the astro turf fitting for Tuesday 28th May.

We have currently been looking at Spring and growth and have welcomed the warmer weather finally arriving.

Our contact details are in the Scene magazine, we are always happy to show prospective families around.

Claudia Potter
Busy Bees

Bishop's Itchington Nature Group (BING!)

BING is made up of a group of local residents who care about local environment and its biodiversity. They have been involved with a range of projects over the last few years. In particular, they have planted and maintain the small community orchard at the far end of the playing field and have provided the planters at the entrances to the village and on the various greens and verges. The parish council supports them by covering the cost of any materials and tools they need.



Services We Provide

Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance

The parish council owns and maintains almost all the public open spaces in the village. In addition, we also mow all the verges and greens within the village boundary with just one or two exceptions where the land is owned and maintained by the housing association.

Public Open Space and Leisure

The largest area of public open space is the playing field in Chapel Street. This extensive area provides two football pitches, a community orchard and a children's play area. The football club regularly uses the pitches for local league games. The tennis courts are maintained by Bishop's

Itchington Sports Association. The pavilion is owned by the parish council and is mostly used by the football club as it provides changing rooms and showers. The playing field has recently been dedicated as a Queen Elizabeth II Field as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. This will ensure it remains a public open space and recreation ground for future generations.

Litter Picking

We employ our own litter warden who concentrates on the area around the shops, pub and club. If you find a litter black spot in another part of the village, please let the clerk know and we will arrange for the litter warden to pay a visit.

The Yellow Land

The Yellow Land is a small nature reserve and conservation area just off Works Lane in Ladbroke Road. It received a makeover courtesy of the Heritage Lottery Fund a couple of years ago and now provides a quiet and pleasant place to walk or just sit and try to spot the elusive Small Blue butterflies. The Friends of the Yellow Land is a group of local residents who hold work parties and other events throughout the year. These have included building a bug hotel, mini-beast hunts and photography. The area is also used by local moth and butterfly enthusiasts. If you would like to take part in any of these, please contact the group's co-ordinator, Pam Reason, on 01926 613300.

The Cemetery & Churchyard

The parish council has owned and maintained the cemetery for over 100 years. It is a place which is well visited by many residents who have loved ones buried there. Grass cutting in the cemetery can be problematic, especially when there are lots of flowers and ornaments to negotiate. We do ask people to place flowers and any other tributes as close to the headstone as possible to make it easier (and safer) for the contractors to mow the grass.

Like the cemetery itself, the railings at the front are also 100 years old and are becoming more fragile. In the last few years we have had two incidents where vehicles have reversed into the gate post and it has broken. We have therefore installed a couple of bollards in the layby to protect the post from any further accidents. It is quite likely that if it breaks again, we will not be able to repair it and it will have to be replaced.

During the winter, one of the large conifers on the right hand edge of the burial ground nearest the spinney, was blown down in a gale. We were pleased to offer the wood for use by local residents who have open fires and wood burning stoves.

We also care for the churchyard although it does actually belong to the church. When a churchyard is closed for burials its maintenance is often passed over to the parish council as in this case. Over the last few months we have looked into the possibility of improving the access from Manor Road, in particular for wheelchairs. Sadly, this has proved to be a very difficult task because of the lie of the land and underground services and other obstacles. We have therefore failed to make any actual progress with this at the moment but we will keep it under review.

Future Plans

Wind Farm Appeal

The appeal will be heard at a public inquiry in September 2013. The parish council, which has objected to the planning application, will be playing a full part in this and over the next few months we will be very busy preparing our case.

Housing Development

At the moment we have a totally unprecedented situation where we are besieged by 4 different developers on all fronts. We will be spending a lot of time talking to residents, developers and neighbouring parish councils over the next few months as we try to obtain the best possible outcome for this community.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

A steering group was set up some months ago which comprises local residents and parish councillors. The group's first task will be to decide on the area to be included within the NDP. This is usually, but not always, the whole parish. However, as the cement works site straddles the boundary with Harbury, we need to confer with our colleagues at Harbury Parish Council too before arriving at a firm decision. Following on from this, the NDP Group will be organising focus groups amongst village clubs and organisations before conducting a comprehensive survey of all local residents. The process will be a lengthy one but on completion, we will have a sound document which will be used as a material planning consideration by the local planning authority when it considers any future development in the village.

Parish Office

We are still looking for a suitable premises in the village. We feel that there would be many benefits to the local community by making the parish council so much more accessible to all. We are currently considering the possibility of using the former sorting office at the rear of the post office.