

East Bridgford Parish Council (PC)

2023 Annual Parish Meeting – Friday April 28th 2023 at 7.30pm, Village Hall

Chairman's Report

Introduction

It has been a momentous year, with the sad death of our longest-serving monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, in September after the marking of her Platinum Jubilee earlier in the year. Following the accession to the throne of King Charles III, we now look forward to celebrating his coronation which is due to take place on 6th May, with an extra holiday on the 8th. There is a national Big Help Out event planned for the 8th and details of how to get involved if you wish should be available nearer the time.

Parish Council changes and upcoming election

Scott Burton was co-opted onto the Council this year, so there has been a full complement of Councillors. The PC signed a pledge to be a 'Civility & Respect Council' in September.

May 4th 2023 is the date of the local elections when Borough and parish/town councils are involved. The Boundary Commission has redefined RBC wards in our area. With large developments coming on stream in Bingham and Newton, this has necessitated quite extensive changes. There is a new East Bridgford ward, which apart from East Bridgford contains the smaller settlements to the north and east, as far as Flintham, Hawksworth & Sibthorpe. Newton & Shelford are now in a separate ward. These will be contested for the first time in 2023.

Hence, this is the last report of this Council in this 4-year cycle, and the new Parish Council which is elected will hold its own Annual Meeting and first monthly meeting on Monday 15th May (date changed to reflect the extra holiday Monday after the Coronation).

Butt Close and the Pavilion

Sports clubs and other users of the facilities have been able to continue activities as normal. Sadly, neither of the football teams which ceased playing have been able to restart, but the PC supported the Sports Club in offering a pitch to a junior side from Lowdham whose own pitch was being reinstated after flood-prevention works. The PC has a project in conjunction with the cricket club to install an all-weather wicket to support youth activities, and which will be available to the school.

A major project to install solar panels has taken place (details below).

The memorial benches around the field, and in the village, continue to be stained and renovated in a rolling programme. We are grateful to John Perring who is carrying out this work, and a number of other maintenance tasks. John & the Council are also now involved in the Lengthsman scheme, where some tasks around the village are delegated to the Parish Council from the County Council.

The play area needs constant maintenance and the cost of this is increasing each year as the structures age. It had to be closed for a short time when a neighbouring tree was found to be diseased and needed to be felled. We are grateful to Cllr. Bancroft for carrying out a

weekly safety inspection which is supplemented by quarterly and annual safety inspections by qualified contractors. The play area is also covered by a RBC PSPO which prohibits dogs from entering the area. Another new RBC PSPO requires all dog walkers to carry 'poo bags' at all times and to use them to clear mess from all public areas, including public footpaths.

The village show returned this year, which was very welcome. The weather was kind and a great time was had by all. Unfortunately, because of poor weather, the fireworks event had to be cancelled at short notice.

The Council is very grateful to all the volunteers who work so hard to put on events like these, or contribute to other things, like running the village hall, editing or managing the business of the village magazine, the Care Group and all the other group activities which take place in our community, and which make our village such an interesting place to live in.

Highways, Traffic, Parking & footpath/pavement issues

Further amendments have been made to the plans for an improved junction where Kirk Hill joins the A6097, as part of a larger scheme of improvements along the A6097 in general. Some Council-owned land will be compulsorily purchased to widen the exit, and the north-east verge of Kirk Hill will be widened to accommodate an extension to the bridleway. The Council has requested a public meeting to discuss what happens when construction starts. Although disruption is inevitable, the intention will be to try to minimise it.

The yellow lines around the crossroads and bus stop area on Main Street have generally been effective but there are still issues regarding parking, especially on Kneeton Road, where increasing commercial & other traffic is impacting. Main Street & Butt Lane have been subject to many potholes recently and the whole length could do with being resurfaced, a point which the Council has put to VIA on several occasions over the year. VIA will repair deep potholes quickly if they are identified individually on the NCC website 'Report a pothole' page so residents are urged to report any they have concerns about.

The surface of the car park on Main Street is holding up well since it was resurfaced using granite pieces. RBC has renewed the soundproofing on the recycling area, and the overall appearance is now better. Over-grown hedges affecting the car park light and a pavement street light have been cut back. An area of grass and saplings was left to go wild last year as part of the PC's response to the initiatives of the East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group. Unfortunately, some trees had to be removed as result of a specialist surveyor's report. The Garth Powell Memorial notice board has been recently renovated.

Fly-tipping incidents around the village have declined with measures taken to reduce opportunity and a push by RBC to combat incidents. Please use on-line reporting to RBC if you come across any – Streetwise will clear it away and increasingly use investigators to try and find evidence of where it came from. Residents should always check that firms clearing their waste have the relevant paperwork, especially a waste carrier licence or they may also be liable if their waste is subsequently fly-tipped.

Footpath closures continue near the marina and on the cliff top due to an earlier landslip – the upper one will eventually be diverted but any progress on either one is painfully slow.

Councillors are working with other parties to try and find ways to improve cycling routes, especially to Bingham, to try and encourage more cycling. The Council has also installed a cycle rack outside the newsagents & hairdressers.

Scout HQ

The WI Hut was sold at auction, and despite Asset of Community Value status, neither the PC nor any other community organisation could raise the funding required at that time. However, the Scouts have managed to negotiate its purchase from the auction-winner, and henceforth it will be the Scout HQ. The PC has pledged support funding up to £10000 to complement any grant funding for necessary improvements in the coming year or so, and congratulates the Scouts on securing this resource for the young people of the community.

Climate change

The PC like most organisations is investigating how its activities impact on climate change and hence how that impact might be reduced. One example is the pavilion, which is owned by the Council and leased to the Sports Club. This is all-electric so the installation of solar panels has recently been completed to reduce its carbon footprint. This project has been awarded approximately 50% funding of £4760 from the NCC Capital Fund. Both the Clerk and Cllr. Penny Storr are to be heartily congratulated on completing it at a much-reduced cost to parish funds. Encouraging walking and cycling is also considered when discussing other matters (see cycling and Kirk Hill junction in traffic, above).

Support to other organisations

As well as those mentioned elsewhere, a small grant was made to the Parish Magazine, towards printing costs and also the distribution of information materials to all households in December. This, together with the East Bridgford website, continues to provide an invaluable service to residents and visitors. A Donations Policy governs the process if a donation is being requested, details of which are available on the village website.

Precept

Taking into account the pressure on residents from the cost of living, especially energy rates, the Council resolved to hold its precept for 2023-24 at roughly the same level for a Band D property.

Capital projects

The installation of solar panels was the only significant project completed this year but support for other organisations to provide or upgrade facilities, especially for youth activities is being provided or planned (see Scout HQ, cricket all-weather wicket and Community Plan above or below). The Council is reviewing how it allocates funding to aid future decision-making.

Best Kept Village Competition and Open Gardens

The BKV, organised by CPRE, did not run again this year, but there was still an annual 'spring clean' as usual, and the road sign planter boxes were filled with bedding plants to provide a welcoming splash of colour to people entering the village on those two routes.

The Open Gardens event was very successful again, with many visitors from both inside and outside of the village. The Open Gardens team has also been instrumental in providing new planters for the Medical Centre and for improving the landscaping in general there.

Community Plan & Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community Plan continues in its action planning stage. The proposed developments off Butt Lane will continue to present challenges but also will in due course generate some funding through CIL which can form the basis of planning how to respond, which will include consideration of the priorities identified in the Community Plan. However, some elements of the Plan cover aspects where the PC does not have direct responsibility, where it can only try to persuade those bodies which do have it to take measures to improve things.

Planning applications and the Conservation Area

Each month, the PC as a statutory consultee considers planning applications of all kinds from small extensions to redeveloping sites. RBC as the planning authority makes the decisions and a brief report about this process is made monthly in the parish magazine. It is clear from the plans for Butt Lane South that careful scrutiny and challenge are needed for controversial developments to try and ensure that the conditions set out by RBC to the national planning inspectorate for taking the land out of the green belt are not circumvented, for example. The proposals for development at East Bridgford Hill have recently been granted permission.

Much of the village falls within a Conservation Area where special rules for development, alterations and extra protection for trees apply. RBC has been consulting with the PC about the current and future status of this area and its boundaries but there is no indication as yet about any outcomes.

Springdale Wood, Bridgford Street meadow, rewilding & biodiversity

The Council leases the wood from the Woodland Trust, but the CIC group East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group (EBWBG) manages it for the benefit of the community, together with volunteers from the Friends of Springdale Wood. A number of trees sourced by the PC from the RBC free-tree scheme have been planted in the wood by members of the Friends of Springdale Wood.

Bridgford Street meadow is also leased, from the Southwell Diocese, and managed by the EBWBG. This lease has been renewed for 6 years. The end of the bridleway which runs through this area will be affected by the Kirk Hill junction changes, which following representations, is planned to continue on the north-eastern side of Kirk Hill to avoid walkers and horse-riders crossing at the junction.

Allotments

The Council manages these which are situated on Butt Lane. Tenants pay a small rent each year based on the area of land and are subject to terms and conditions based on national procedures. There is a small turnover of tenants each year with a waiting list of people who wish to have one. A challenging period of very hot weather last summer has led to a review of water provision but as yet there is no consensus about how to proceed. Anyone interested in joining the waiting list should write to the Clerk.

Remembrance Day & Feast Sunday

Acts of Remembrance and wreath laying took place again this year, with the parade from the Car Park to the church on Remembrance Day which entails a road closure for the duration.

Conclusion

This section is regularly used to note many of the other varied other demands of Council business which include responding to consultations and changes in legislation, maintaining memorial and other seats, weekly monitoring & safety inspections of the Play Area, arranging for surveys of and works to trees on parish land, reporting fly-tipping, occasional cleaning & maintenance of information boards, the defibrillator and the telephone box 'book swap', managing the allotments on Butt Lane and dealing with concerns raised by residents.

The Council is grateful for the time given by Councillors, the elected County & Borough Councillors who regularly attend its meetings & take an active interest in parish issues, the work of its employee, contractors, and the internal auditor. Last but not least, we continue to be fortunate to have numerous individuals and organisations in our parish who willingly help out in many ways.

Summary of highlights & challenges during the lifespan of this Council, 2019-23

Finally, as the Council completes its 4-year tenure, it is appropriate to briefly headline, in roughly chronological order where possible, the main achievements & challenges during this time. It has tried to discharge its statutory responsibilities and make or support improvements in the lives of residents and those who work here. How successful it has been, or otherwise, is for those people to judge, but as always, it is a privilege to serve this vibrant & supportive community.

In addition to the usual annual commemorations, there were the following special events:

100th anniversary of the dedication of the war memorial;

80th anniversary of the accident at RAF Newton, from which 3 airmen are buried in Commonwealth War Graves in the ST. Peter's cemetery;

75th anniversaries of VE and VJ Days.

Notable achievements:

Butt Close playing fields – the purchase of these from NCC was completed.

Trent Lane – the temporary closure was made permanent after a long campaign; NCC traffic data showed reduced traffic through the village, especially at evening rush-hour.

Garden Centre – a bus stop & pedestrian access were sited near the old Springdale Lane junction following representations about the dangers of people crossing the fuel station, supported by the PC

A46 fly-over byway gated after pressure from the PC about incidents of fly-tipping. Fly-tipping generally down around the village with continued intervention from RBC.

Pandemic – PC meetings continued in the lockdown on Zoom. The Care Group was supported by PC with a £1000 grant towards their excellent work with vulnerable residents. The PC is also supporting the provision of an external defibrillator at the Medical Centre, enabled by a donation from the Care Group.

Yellow lines at the crossroads and new bus stop – this work was finally achieved following intense lobbying after first being requested in 2008.

Car park has been re-surfaced with granite chippings

Notice boards were fitted to the bus shelter opposite the village hall

Numerous interventions with trees on parish-owned or leased land were necessary, plus sourcing of trees for planting

More accessible entrance to Springdale Wood from Springdale Lane created

Solar panels have been installed on the pavilion to reduce the PC's carbon footprint

Continuing challenges:

Occasional flooding on Kneeton Road

Pressures from housing development in the former & existing Green Belt

Traffic, both volume & speed, and parking; yellow lines extension requested & inadequate lighting at the College Street junction with Main Street; poor road surfaces generally

Play area maintenance, refurbishment or replacement as it ages

Local measures necessary as identified by the implications of climate change

Appendix – Financial summary 2022-3

£ rounded	31/03/2022	31/03/2023
1 Balances brought fwd	70886.28	79125.12
2 Annual precept	42144.00	43325.00
3 Total other receipts	11792.21	17086.93
4 Staff Costs	13826.42	15150.90
5 Loan interest/capital repayments	0.00	0.00
6 Total other payments	31870.95	55425.22
7 Balances carried forward	79125.12	68960.93
8 Total Cash and Short Term Invest	79125.12	68960.93
9 Total Fixed Assets	859153.84	867933.84
10 Total Borrowings	0.00	0.00