



ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

Published May 2018

PARISH COUNCIL FACTFILE

Members of the Council 2017/2018

Chairman: Mr D. Gunter
Vice Chairman: Mr L. Davison-Williams

Mrs. G. Gardner
Mr J. Selley
Mrs B. Thomas
Mr J. Paxton
Mr M. McNulty
Mr A. Channon
Mr A. Watson (*Co-opted July 2016*)
Mr J. Roberts (*Co-opted April 2017*)
Mr M Wright (*Resigned April 2017*)
Mr R Everson (*Resigned October 2017*)

Staff

| | |
|--|--|
| Mrs Ann Merryweather | Clerk to the Council |
| Mrs S. Cowie(<i>Joined Nov 2017</i>) | Assistant Clerk to the Council |
| Mrs K. Kilby(<i>Left October 2017</i>) | Assistant Clerk to the Council |
| Mr D. Procter(<i>Joined Nov 2017</i>) | Full-Time Groundsman |
| Mr I. Swales(<i>Left July 2017</i>) | Full-Time Groundsman |
| Mr I. Nicholls | Part-Time Groundsman |
| Mrs E. Rhodes | Norman Road Playground Keyholder/Office Cleaner |

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Barton-le-Clay
Bedford
MK45 4NA

Tel: (01582) 883990

E-mail: theparishclerk@bartonleclay.co.uk
Website: www.bartonleclay.co.uk
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1563405067289955>
Blog: <https://seekingcouncil.wordpress.com>

2017/2018 Precept: £159,666

REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN 2017/2018

I find myself sitting down to prepare the annual Chairman's report for my first time and thinking hmmm what to say, so without further ado

I must firstly give a warm welcome to our new Assistant Clerk Suzanne Cowie and Grounds / Facilities Maintenance Person, Dan Proctor.

Parish Council Membership

In line with local government legislation, the parish council continues to advertise for residents to be co-opted as Parish Councillors. We currently have two vacancies to fill and if you have the time and desire to join the Council, contact our Clerk at theparishclerk@bartonleclay.co.uk. Alternatively call into the Parish Office on Windsor Parade.

Public Participation and Communications

We welcome members of the public to our monthly meetings. It is important that we encourage public participation in matters that affect you the parishioners of Barton-le-Clay. A strong Parish Council and a more integrated community can only be accomplished if the community have a desire to participate in debate and question the role of your Parish Council.

All communications with the Parish Council should be addressed to the Parish Clerk and sent to the Parish Office at Windsor Parade or alternatively emailed to: theparishclerk@bartonleclay.co.uk. Remember we also now have our own Facebook page, Website and blog where council matters and information may be found.

What have we done - What do we intend to do?

The reports contained within the body of this report hopefully provide a good overview of what the Parish Council has achieved during the last financial year. It is not my intention to précis these reports but simply to ask you to read further and gather a better understanding of how the Parish Council operates.

Central Bedfordshire Local Development Plan

You may be aware that Central Bedfordshire Council are currently producing a Local Plan that will identify the level and location of both household and commercial development up to 2035. This plan will include a strategic review of all Green Belt including the land that surrounds our village. The Parish Council are strongly objecting to the development proposals outlined within the pre-submission (regulation 19) consultation. Keep an eye on our web site and newsletter for further information regarding the Local Plan.

I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors and our employees for their valuable support of me in my first year as Parish Council Chairman.

In bringing this report to a close, I must place on record my thanks to all fellow Parish Councillors for all the time and effort they devote to their duties. I would like to remind you that they do this on a completely voluntary basis. I do believe that every councillor is concerned for the well-being of the parish and has the best interests of the village at heart.

David Gunter

Chairman of Barton-le-Clay Parish Council

April 2018

BURIAL GROUND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - 2017/2018

This year continued in much the same way as last year, ensuring the continuing and improving management of the Burial Grounds, War Memorial and St Nicholas Churchyard.

I took over the Chairmans role from Cllr Richard Everson following his unfortunate decision to resign due to increasing home and work commitments leaving him unable to devote his time to the role. In my relative short time of knowing Richard I found him to be a very friendly and courteous person leaving very big shoes to fill. I feel and hope I can continue the role, especially with the invaluable support of Vice Chair Cllr Thomas and the other committee members.

This year we reviewed the Burial Ground Regulations making several amendments, all of which can be found contained within the current issue.

Changes were also made to the Burial Ground Fees including the addition of a Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial fee and the removal of the interment fee relating to the body of a person whose age at the time of death was one year and over but did not exceed twelve years.

The hard work and commitment of the groundsmen and Parish staff has continued and is clearly evident, including the praise from several parishioners supporting this.

We again ask that visitors to both the Burial Ground and War Memorial are mindful of the current regulations, with copies available from both the Parish Council website and the Parish office.

Cllr Alun Watson

Chairperson – Burial Grounds Committee

HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

Highways Issues

2017-18 has seen excellent progress on the ongoing traffic calming project throughout Barton-le-Clay. Phase one (Luton Road) has been completed with a raised table and chicane installed in the summer of 2017. This has had the desired effect of reducing speed on the road and, despite some initial negative comments on social media platforms, there is a general feeling in the village that it has been successful. The Parish office received a card from a family from Luton Road who had initially raised their concerns about traffic speed, thanking the council for putting the scheme in place.

The Parish Council has approved phase two (Hexton Road) to go ahead in 2018. The Parish Clerk and the Highways & Environment Committee have provided Central Beds Council (CBC) with the appropriate information and have chased the relevant people, but we await detailed plans and sketches back from CBC before work can go ahead. Once these have been received, work can continue in the summer of 2018 and we can continue to ensure that Barton-le-Clay is a safe place for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.

As committee chair, work commitments have meant that I have not been able to put as much time into the project as I would have liked. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Councillor Michael McNulty and thank him for his efforts in ensuring that funding was met for the scheme and work carried out.

Priorities for the coming years:

In 2018-19, I would like to investigate ways to improve parking and access to shops in the centre of the village. I have identified Considerate Parking Initiatives across the country and would like to develop a similar scheme locally to reduce illegal and dangerous parking in the village whilst allowing traffic passing through the village to park safely and visit local businesses. Another priority for the forthcoming year is an audit and evaluation of the current hedge cutting arrangements to make sure that all Parish Council hedges are attended to regularly and also that we continue to get the best possible value for the work.

Cllr Jonathan Paxton
Chairperson of Highways & Environment Committee

LEISURE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

The Play Areas and the Outdoor Fitness Equipment Safety Inspection Report undertaken by RoSPA took place in May 2017. The report recommends maintenance and undertakes a risks assessment evaluation of all equipment, surfaces and ancillary items. All low risk items noted at Arnold Recreation Ground were followed up quickly by the Council. At Norman Road Area it was noted that there was a slight wear in the swing chains. These are being monitored by the Council's Groundsman in his weekly checks. The Council believes that it is essential to have an Independent Inspection every year to help ensure the safety of all users. In addition, a weekly check is undertaken by the Council's Groundsman, who provides a written report on all items of play equipment, Outdoor Fitness Equipment and the grounds to ensure safety is maintained. Litter picking is also carried out on a regular basis. Both recreation areas are widely used and are popular with residents and visitors.

Unfortunately there have been two cases of vandalism this year that has caused unexpected costs, although claimed on our insurance the Council is required to pay a mandatory excess. One leg of the ski machine was ripped off and had to be replaced, and the pod swing was so badly damaged that it also needed to be replaced. This meant that both pieces of equipment were temporarily out of action during the year. The surface under the pod swing was also replaced due to wear and tear.

At the Norman Road Play Area, the safety surface needed to be partially repaired. This was successfully completed with only a one day closure. The three-year cycle of pollarding the large willows at the back of the Norman Road Play Area was completed this year.

The Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Council's Groundsman Mr. Dan Proctor who undertakes the weekly inspections. Our thanks also go to Mrs. Elizabeth Rhodes who continues to lock and unlock the Norman Road Play Area.

Allotments

The Council now has 84 allotments of various sizes, the majority of which are rented to parishioners. There are a few vacant plots at the moment. There is a regular inspection of the allotments to encourage good practice, and to promote this, the Council holds an Annual Allotment Competition with a Newcomers section.

We gratefully acknowledge the work of the Barton Conservation Group who have been working on the reclamation of the wild area. This is to assist the Council in maintaining its boundaries.

Due to lack of take up it has been decided to withdraw allotments 56-60 to allow the Council to make a Barton Heritage Garden for all to use. We hope to complete this in 3 years.

Priorities for the coming years:

- To replace the swings and safety surface of the Aero-skate in Arnold Recreation Ground
- To make repairs to the main roadway in the allotments
- To progress with the Barton Heritage Garden
- To raise money (grants) for a second phase of Outdoor Fitness Equipment for disabled residents.

Cllr Barbara Thomas
Chairperson of Leisure Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

The Committee have been busy this year, as have the enforcement department at Central Bedfordshire Council. We have commented on various breaches of the planning regulations. In some cases little can be done when a property has been demolished or a garden stripped of trees without our knowledge. However we are grateful to our Parishioners when they bring these to our attention. On some occasions we are successful as the Random issue appears to be coming to a close. Currently we are keeping a watch on a property in Gravenhurst Road which although this is outside our Parish we are concerned that this site currently housing illegal caravans will grow in size. Enforcement notices have been issued and the appeal is being held on 23rd May.

The pre-submission Local Plan has now been issued and our objections, which were prepared for us by a consultant, have been forward to Central Bedfordshire Council. A copy of these is available on our Web Site and at the Library. We also sent a copy to the residents of Gale Court.

The Committee view and discuss all new planning applications commenting where we see fit.

Cllr Gill Gardner
Chairperson of Planning Committee

HORTICULTURAL SHOW SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

Horticultural Show

Our sixth Horticultural Show held on Saturday 9th September 2017 was not so successful as the previous year. We had less entries, especially in the WI section who have given us great support in the past. However, it was a great opportunity for the Councillors to meet the Public, who rarely are able to put a name to a face.

We have agreed to continue for another year, renewing our efforts with advertising the event to increase the entries and the footfall on the day.

We are grateful to our judges who work hard; of course not everyone comes away happy !

Why not **come along on Saturday 8th September**, view the entries and meet old friends, we serve lovely cakes.

Even better make this the year you enter an exhibit and maybe win a prize.

Cllr Gill Gardner
Chairperson of Horticultural Show Sub-Committee

SPORTS FIELD COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

The season got off to a good start in the autumn, but the winter has brought particularly adverse weather conditions and has made cancellations much more common than usual. It is hoped that the spring will be kinder to the teams that have fixtures still outstanding.

In addition to routine maintenance, weed spraying and grass re-seeding has been carried out and the whole field has been fertilised. The planned laser marking of pitches has also been carried out. This has improved the accuracy of pitch marking and released time for the grounds maintenance team to address other matters arising.

The condition of the field emergency gate has been deteriorating for some time, particularly following a past incident of criminal damage. This has now been replaced by a metal gate. Spectator litter dropping remains a problem both on the sports field itself and in the car park within the Barton Rovers complex.

Informal interest has been expressed for netball facilities to be introduced on the site but currently there has been no funding source identified. Therefore, football remains the sole organised activity using the sportsfield.

During the year our Groundsman Ian Swales resigned. I would like to record my thanks to him for his hard work and diligence. We have since welcomed Dan Procter to the team and he has settled in to the role with great success.

Cllr John Selley
Chairperson of Sports Field Committee

POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

Structure

The Policy & Resources Committee membership is comprised of the Council Chairman, Vice-Chairman plus the individual Committee Chairmen. The Committee is primarily responsible for the administration of the Council, budget allocation, asset management and oversees all HR aspects through the Pay & Personnel Sub-Committee. The Committee meets approximately eight to ten times per year, dependent upon the level of business to be transacted.

Parish Precept 2017/2018

The Parish Council has resolved a precept for the next financial year of £164,322. This represents a Band D equivalent increase of 2.4% above the previous year's precept. This increase is predominantly due to:

- The implementation of the 5-year traffic-calming plan
- Inflationary increases from some of our suppliers and contractors
- Provision towards Playground Equipment replacement
- Employer obligations – an increase in the National Living Wage

This year we had Suzanne Cowie join the Council Staff as our new Assistant Clerk, bringing with her much valued experience in the role. We also welcomed Dan Procter as our new Grounds / Facility Maintenance Person

Small Grants

Our precept includes provision for small grants to non-profit organisations that directly benefit our community. Applications are invited in September each year, details of which can be obtained from the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council awarded grants totaling £2,500.91 this year to the following good causes:-

| | | | |
|--|----------------|--|----------------|
| Barton-le-Clay Village Hall Annual hall roof inspection | £240.00 | Barton Players Purchase of new speakers & amplifier | £250.00 |
| Barton Pre-School Purchase laptop for on-line Care Diary | £200.00 | Barton Helping Hands Public Liability Insurance | £185.91 |
| Barton-le-Clay Carpet Bowls Club Replacement of carpet mat. | £300.00 | Arnold Academy Prizes for annual awards Yr. 8 leavers | £50.00 |
| Noah's Ark Toys for story props & for Church children's corner | £100.00 | Royal British Legion Poppy Wreath for Remembrance service | £100.00 |
| Ramsey Manor Football Club Contribution to purchase goals and shed | £100.00 | Gale Court Residents Tea & entertainment event | £200.00 |
| Harlington Upper School Annual awards evening prizes | £125.00 | Chilterns Conservation Board Beacons of the past – Hillforts Project | £150.00 |
| Barton Lights Fund Contribution to purchase /install Christmas lights. | £500.00 | | |

Annual Accounts

The Parish Councils' financial year ends on the 31st March each year. Parish Council year-end accounts are checked annually via three levels of audit procedure. Firstly each Parish Councillor is required to review the prepared year-end accounts. Secondly, the Parish Council secures the services of an independent Internal Auditor to review and report on finances, policies, procedures and accountability. The final stage requires the council to submit a statement of financial fact to a nationally appointed "External Auditor" - chosen by central government.

The Parish Council publishes a set of accounts each year, which can be viewed at both the Parish Office and Library. The annual accounts will be available to read/download from the parish website by end-June.

Cllr David Gunter

Chairperson of Policies & Resources Committee

PAY & PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2017/2018

It was a busy year on the staffing front. Ian Swales, our long-serving Groundsman, decided to “cultivate new pastures” and soon after Kerri Kilby, our Assistant Clerk for some 8 years, also decided she wanted to spend more time in the fields ...with horses.

We were very sorry to see them go and we thank them for their service to the Council and to Barton le Clay. We wish them every future happiness and success.

Sad though it is to lose valued colleagues, it does provide the opportunity to discover and bring onboard new talent. Of course the process of doing that inevitably meant short term staffing challenges. Our thanks go to all our remaining employees and to those people who agreed to join us on a short term basis to plug the gaps. Together they kept the show on the road whilst we recruited the substantive replacements.

Following a thorough recruitment process we were fortunate to secure Dan Procter as our new Full Time Groundsman, and Suzanne Cowie as our new Assistant Clerk. Both Dan and Suzanne have excellent experience in their respective roles. They have quickly settled in and are proving to be great additions to the team.

During the year the training needs of employees have continued to be addressed, annual appraisals of established staff were held plus 6 month probationary reviews as appropriate. Pay awards were implemented in line with National Agreements.

I would like to thank all staff members for their efforts. I also express my thanks to my colleague Councillors for their support and guidance during my first year as Chair of this Sub Committee.

Priorities for the coming Year

Ongoing review of employment policies/practices,
The continued development of Council employees.

Cllr John Roberts

Chairperson of Pay and Personnel Sub-Committee

**ANNUAL REPORTS
OF
REPRESENTATIVES
OF
OUTSIDE BODIES**

2017/2018

BARTON-LE-CLAY EDUCATIONAL TRUST REPORT 2017/2018

Board of Trustees: Mr. P. Parrish (Chairman), Mr. D. Cope, Mrs. B. Thomas, Mr. I. Shingler, Mrs. L. Gordon, Revd. A. Johnson.

Clerk to the Trust: Mrs. J. Daye

A meeting was held in November 2017 to reconcile the accounts to ensure less time would be required at the Annual General Meeting, and to confirm that all cheques had been cashed. A discussion was held on accounting, investments, insurance and the updating of policies. GDPR was discussed and decisions made.

The Annual General meeting of the Trust was held on 6th December, 2017. The accounts were adopted, and it was noted that there was a good return from the Trust’s investments now that the CCLA were handling them. 28 applicants applied for grants. All were granted and it was agreed that students living at home should receive £185 and those on residential courses £285.

At the meeting on 7th March, 2018, student replies were read. A requirement of the Trust is for recipients to acknowledge receipt of the cheque and state what the money had been used for. Anyone who failed to acknowledge the cheque or failed to cash it, including Youth Organisations and schools would not be allocated a grant in the following year. Some schools were allocated £500, and some Youth Organisations £300.

Cllr Barbara Thomas

BARTON VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2017/2018

Following the void caused by the sad loss of Mark Howe as Chairman, Tom Chinnery stepped forward and has quickly become established in the role. He is supported by a dedicated and energetic Village Hall Management Committee and on-site staff.

During the year the joint project between the Village Hall, the Doctors Surgery and Parish Council to improve lighting, resurface and re-line the access road and car park came to full fruition. The result is a huge improvement for all users of both the hall and the surgery.

Barton is very fortunate to have the Village Hall, providing as it does an excellent local venue for a variety of sports, social, music and theatrical events. The hall, a registered Charity (308187) depends solely on hiring out the facilities and various fund raising events. The Parish Council is very pleased to have again been able to provide some Grant funding to support the Village Hall. We were equally delighted that the Village Hall received a significant grant from the Coop Local Community fund which has enabled new drainage and other projects to proceed to the benefit of all users

As a “not for profit” charitable organisation whatever financial surplus the Village Hall is able to achieve is retained to fund future improvements or contribute to reserves for future vital and significant maintenance. One such major maintenance concern is the roof. The British weather challenged the roof on more than one occasion during the year and found its weaknesses. Short term remedial action has been taken but the time is fast approaching when a more comprehensive remedy will be necessary. This will likely be a very major call on accumulated reserves.

The Christmas Lights project demonstrated what a tremendous community spirit there is in Barton and as a village community we need to pull together to support our Village Hall, .. it is a really valuable community asset. So, I encourage everyone to find out what’s going on at the Hall. Join one of the regular activities, let your hair down at one of the music/dance events, or enjoy the Barton Players latest theatrical production. Maybe you are looking for a party venue or somewhere to start a new sport, hobby-related or other activity? The Village Hall could be your answer.

Cllr John Roberts

LOCAL SCHOOLS LIAISON REPORT 2017/2018

The Parish Council made two grants through the S137 scheme to schools during this year, both were to help recognise and celebrate the success of local students at watershed moments in their education. £50 was awarded to Arnold Academy in Barton-le-Clay for their Year 8 annual leavers' award while £125 was awarded to Harlington Upper School to fund prizes for their Annual Awards ceremony.

In addition Barton Pre-school were given funds to purchase a laptop computer for an on-line Care Diary.

Cllr Anthony Channon

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2017/2018

April 2018

BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL
BALANCE SHEET 2017/2018

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2018

31st March 2017

31^s March 2018

| Current Assets | | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| 444 | Debtors | 945 | |
| 1,298 | VAT | 1,122 | |
| 1,250 | Prepayments | 3,433 | |
| 18,232 | Current Bank A/C | 25,461 | |
| 1,632 | Savings A/C | 1,632 | |
| 131,564 | Public Sector Deposit Fund | 100,000 | |
| 3,758 | Tennis Club Account | 3,771 | |
| 50,000 | Hampshire Trust | 82,378 | |
| 70 | Petty Cash – Office | 70 | |
| 100 | Petty Cash - Handyman | 100 | |
| 208,347 | | 218,912 | |
| | Total Assets | | 218,912 |
| | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| 5,852 | Creditors | 160 | |
| 1,727 | Wages | 1,507 | |
| 611 | Pensions | 734 | |
| 3,250 | Receipts in Advance | 3,250 | |
| 11,439 | | 5,651 | |
| | Total Assets Less Current Liabilities | | 213,261 |
| | | | |
| Represented By | | | |
| 91,585 | General Reserves | 93,100 | |
| 4,414 | EMR – P & R Legal Fees | 4,414 | |
| 911 | EMR – P & R Training | 666 | |
| 6,580 | EMR – P & R Doc/Village Hall Access Rd | 8,013 | |
| 1,943 | EMR – P & R Equipment Replacement | 2,443 | |
| 2,695 | EMR – P & R Election Costs | 2,695 | |
| 1,911 | EMR – P & R Community Fund | 1,911 | |
| 500 | EMR – P & R Health & Safety | 1,000 | |
| 3,156 | EMR – War Memorial Refurbishment | 3,156 | |
| 6,724 | EMR – Burial Grounds Roadway | 6,724 | |
| 9,353 | EMR – B/Grd St Nicholas Churchyard | 9,353 | |
| 20,132 | EMR – New B/Grd Project | 20,132 | |
| 1,050 | EMR – Env Trees & Shrubs | 1,050 | |
| 13,500 | EMR – GP Road Calming | 23,500 | |
| 854 | EMR – GP Bus Shelters | 954 | |
| 750 | EMR – New Bins/Fixing | 750 | |
| 3,752 | EMR – Leisure Tennis A/C | 5,302 | |
| 770 | EMR – Leisure Tree Lopping | 520 | |
| 6,004 | EMR – Leisure Play Equip Replace | 6,004 | |
| 3,748 | EMR – Planning Consultant | 1,998 | |
| 9,258 | EMR – Plan – Neighbourhood Plan | 9,258 | |
| 671 | EMR – Sports Access Rd Maintainance | 671 | |
| 6,647 | EMR – Sports Field Drainage | 9,647 | |
| 196,908 | | 231,261 | |

ALL FIGURES ARE DRAFT AND SUBJECT TO AUDIT

ALL FIGURES ARE ROUNDED TO NEAREST £1, WHICH WILL RESULT IN SUMMING DISCREPANCIES.