

BRILL PARISH COUNCIL

WINDMILL TIMES



Welcome to the Winter 2019 edition of the Windmill Times, your newsletter from the Parish Council in which we give you an update on some of the activities we have been involved in since the summer. These range from trying to understand the implications of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway proposal to improving the quality and efficiency of the street lighting.

As we conduct our business, one of my biggest concerns is to make sure we are faithfully representing the views of those that live here. Many of you have approached me with your views on various matters (okay – mostly the Expressway!) and I am keen to make sure the feedback we get as a council is as broad and inclusive as possible. So please talk to me or my fellow councillors if there is anything on your mind. If you have an issue you want to raise, drop a quick email to Lesley, the Clerk, or attend the Parish Council meetings, even if only for the first 10 minutes in order to make your point.

Cllr Mark Dickinson
Chairman Brill PC

Appointment of New Chairman

I've enjoyed the past two years I have spent as Chairman of our Parish Council; during which I believe we've resolved a few challenges and achieved some positive innovations for our community. I've recently accepted the role of President of my Trade Organisation which will be very time consuming. For this reason, I have chosen to step down as Chairman of our PC at the annual parish meeting in May. I am staying on as a Councillor, so will still be involved.

Cllr Mark Dickinson has generously agreed to stand as Chairman and was elected in May. Mark brings with him a wealth of experience gained from a successful commercial career. I wish him every success for the future.

Cllr Jules Newman

Brill Parish Council website – www.brillparishcouncil.co.uk

The council has this year created a website which may be found at the above address. It contains basic information about the council and the councillors, links to services provided by BCC and or AVDC, pictures and notices. We suggest you visit the site. It contains everything you would expect to find on a noticeboard but of course has much more room and is more up to date.

If you think that the site could be improved please contact us by email; brillparish@btconnect.com (parish clerk) or andyfisherbrillpc@hotmail.com (the responsible councillor.)

Temple St/Tram Hill resurfacing work

A ditch has been created to redirect the surface water from the spring on Tram Hill in preparation for the resurfacing work that has taken place there. We can all now enjoy the newly surfaced road, remembering of course to WATCH YOUR SPEED!

Litter Pick

Thank you to everyone who took part in the litter pick, particularly the children who came along too. I'm sure you'll appreciate the fruits of their labour – Making our village a nicer place to be. Many hands would have made lighter work, so please look out for the next one in March 2020 and come along to help.

Streetlights

The Parish Council have planned for the streetlights to be updated to LED'S. The initial cost to do so will be allocated from the savings achieved and is thought to take a period of approximately 4 years. The Parish Council will then go on to realise subsequent savings of 1.5k - 2 k per annum on the street lighting account and provide a valuable contribution to reducing the carbon footprint. The design and illumination are sympathetic to the village environment. The work is scheduled to take place at the beginning of 2020.

The Walks

The Walks continues to improve due to the sheep grazing regime, maintenance by volunteers, and help from the PC. The nettles are reducing, and larger areas are accessible for all to walk through. Despite the pond being dry for the summer the banks are now less full of brambles and many have greened up. Do smell the mint in the spring. There seems to be no solution to keeping the pond full of water, all the springs dried up over the summer, Even after the rain we have had they are not returning to their previous levels and so do not provide the volume of water required to match the evaporation from the pond. Global warming seems to be winning on this. There will be a lot of tree maintenance work this year, probably done by the time you read this, and we are aiming to start planting trees to replace the ones that have been lost to disease or old age. Some of the smaller willows near to the pond have been coppiced and we will aim to do this on a 2/3-year cycle.

We hope that you see the differences being achieved and would like to thank all the volunteers who help, including the grazier, Chris Lewis. On a point of volunteering.....20 volunteers working for 2 hours for whichever group on the Common or Walks equates to a 40 hour week – do translate this into what it would cost the PC to maintain to the levels that are achieved by these volunteers. Without them you would not enjoy Brill in the same format.

MUGA

There has been renewed interest in starting a project to provide an all-weather games area in Brill. Please do get in contact with us if you are interested in helping to set this up. It could be very exciting.

Local Elections

Local elections are coming up in May next year when we will have our first opportunity to vote for councillors for the new unitary "Buckinghamshire Council". This will also be the next opportunity for you to vote for your Parish Councillors. Several of our current long-serving Parish Councillors will be standing down, so this is an excellent time to consider whether you would like to help the local community as a Parish Councillor. Feel free to contact the Parish Clerk if you would like to know more about what this entails.

Windmill

During the summer many of you will have seen our Windmill cloaked in scaffolding. This was to facilitate the complete redecoration of the outside, painting of the sails and the application of protective wood stain to the buck. This work has now been completed and we think the result is lovely – the Windmill is certainly looking its best! It won't need to be done again for another 10 years. The downside to this work was a much-restricted opening season which has reduced our revenue for this year. We would like to take the opportunity to give a very big thanks to all the volunteers who helped. Call to new villagers! (And older ones too) - we're always looking for new volunteers to help with manning the Windmill on Sundays during the summer to find out more email volunteer@brillwindmill.org or phone Jules on 237517.

War Memorial

The Clerk has obtained quotes from bespoke stone masons to carry out repairs to the war memorial. This is a specialised repair requiring limestone sections of the plinth to be replaced. We hoping to carry out the work through the preferred contractor as soon as possible.

Village Maintenance Work

We would like to thank Rob Timms and Gordon Govier for the maintenance work they have carried out around the village, namely repairs to the playground equipment, the interpretation sign by Hartwells Barn, placing a lid on the bin by the windmill preventing wildlife helping themselves to the litter, installing steps by the entrance to the Walks and repairing/replacing gates and fences at various locations around the village.

Their diligence in carrying out the work is very much appreciated.

Parking

The village roads are having to accommodate an increasing number of parked cars, a situation which is made worse at certain times of the day around the school, shops and pubs. The Parish Council is continually exploring ways to alleviate these parking issues and once again would remind drivers to think carefully before leaving a vehicle on or near any junction or pavement. Parking on Common Land is at the discretion of the Parish Council and residents and visitors should be wary of causing damage when parking on any of our grassed areas, particularly during the winter months. To avoid lasting damage, the Council would like to remind drivers not to park on The Green during spells of wet weather.

The Common

The Common is a regular agenda item at parish council meetings. Issues discussed often relate to the work being carried out by the various groups that voluntarily keep the Common accessible either by grazing or clearing scrub, making hay or clearing harmful weeds and litter picking.

Problems occasionally arise regarding encroachment and access and are normally dealt with by the sending of a letter or a visit by councillors. The PC are currently trying to resolve an access issue with a landowner. This has unfortunately incurred costs as the PC has had to engage a solicitor to defend and protect the lawful use of the Common. The PC is determined not to waste public funds on such issues but is always mindful of its role in protecting the integrity of the Common. It is hoped that the case will be resolved soon with an amicable outcome.

In the meantime, the PC would like to thank all those involved in looking after our Common and keeping it in a condition that everyone can enjoy. We think most people will agree it is presently looking fabulous and is a credit to all those helpers.

If there are any problems or comments you would like the PC to discuss regarding the Common, then please contact the clerk and they will be added to the agenda.

Oxford-Cambridge Expressway

We have worked hard to try and understand the rationale for Expressway and its implications. In June, at an extremely well attended public meeting in the Memorial Hall, we heard from our district and county councillors about the Expressway. It was very clear from that meeting as well as informal feedback given to councillors, that the overwhelming view from the Parish was that the Expressway posed a threat to the environment and had no purpose that cannot be better served by the East West Rail Link. The Parish Council has therefore expressed its opposition to the Expressway. It also good to note that both AVDC, BCC and OCC have also voted in opposition. A public consultation was expected by now but is probably delayed by the recent turmoil in government. As stakeholders we will make sure we keep you up to date with any developments especially those to which you may be able to contribute. If you wish to join the fight against it then please contact the No Expressway Group – Brill who would appreciate your support. More information can be found at www.noexpressway.org or contact them at noexpresswaybrill@gmail.com

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

The consultation period is currently open for the latest modifications to the VALP. The consultation period closes on the 17th December 2019 and should you wish to view the modifications and take part in the consultation full details can be obtained from the Parish Clerk during office opening hours or you can view online via the following link www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-valp-2013-2033

Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS)

The MVAS is the flashing 30 mph sign you see on your way into the village if you are speeding (if you are, we hope you will stop doing so.) Over the last few months the council has decided that the MVAS should be kept at the same position, outside the surgery. We are aware that this predictability reduces its impact but because of the characteristics of the roads entering the village there are very few people who speed significantly (say over 45 mph) at any other entry point, and therefore collecting those data will not generate anything to interest the police in mounting a speed trap exercise.

It is interesting to note that there are a handful (recently between 1 and 3) people doing 60 mph in each of the periods we have analysed. 60mph is truly excessive and anyone caught at 200% of the speed limit should expect a driving ban. If we ask the police to mount a speed trap there is a probability that about half of the offenders who are prosecuted as a result will be local residents. We invite your opinion as to whether you feel that that is a price worth paying.

The data is collected every three weeks as that is how long the batteries last, and two excellent standard summary reports are published on the BPC website www.brillparishcouncil.co.uk under the TRAFFIC page. If any parishioner would like these data in full please email andyfisherbrillpc@hotmail.com (the responsible councillor.)

Donations

Brill Parish Council have made the following donations this year to local groups:

- £250 Football club
- £250 Cricket club
- £250 Brill Sports and Social club – Basketball
- £250 Pre- School
- £600 Church (upkeep of burial grounds)

If you are part of a local group requiring financial assistance and you've not requested funds before, we would like to hear from you. Donations are considered at our April and October meetings only.

Enforcement Issues

Land off Oakley Road – AVDC have served an injunction order against unauthorised work. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

Land off Thame Road – The land is being prepared for sale and several items have been cleared from site. The Parish Council hope the new owners will respect the location and will continue to monitor the situation.

The Clerk's contact details are: 01844 238662 or brillparish@btconnect.com and there is an answerphone when the office is closed. Normal opening hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.15am until 12.45 pm in the Old Library Room.