

Great Bentley Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2010

Since our last meeting, as your Parish Council, we have been consistently trying to achieve efficiencies and looking for ways to improve our environment and surroundings as well as looking after the Parishes interests.

Sadly we have lost one councillor Yee Cheung who has worked well during her time with us but has had to retire due to other commitments. However during the year we have essentially maintained our stable platform of Councillors on which we can rely and therefore continue to work as a good team and pull in the right direction. As said previously, there will be natural changes in the future as peoples' commitments and responsibilities alter.

Our District Councillor, Linda McWilliams, continues with her good work in supporting us and the people of Great Bentley at District level and our County Councillor, Derek Robinson, works tirelessly on our behalf concerning matters between the local and county arenas, especially Highways.

Our Clerk, Kate Mayhew, continues to show willingness and enthusiasm for this challenging role and has proved to be a worthy asset to the Parish Council.

1. Street Lighting

Through Robert Taylor's continued vigilance, repairs to our street lights have been carried out quickly and efficiently. This year however we are consulting to withdraw certain street lighting after a certain hour during the night. Until recently there had been a poor response to our request for replies. However some people have now taken the opportunity to enter into the discussion and have opposed the proposal. The tone of the letter was perhaps unfortunate. But this is exactly the type of response we wanted and have requested. We want people to come to our meetings; we want people to engage in the community, we want people to write to us to give us their opinions. It's what democracy is all about.

Far too often we put things forward in the Parish magazine, which is a very useful conduit and we hear nothing.

Here, a group has taken a great deal of trouble to go around and canvass others and have asked their opinion and then record it. In the vacuum of a poor response we now have another side to consider. It is not for me to decide the outcome of whether we turn the lights off or leave them on, it is for all of the council to decide but because of these people we now have a balance of opinion and therefore are able to explore things further. As a council we are working for the good of the people as a whole.

As I said last year, if parishioners have further requests for street lighting we would ask you to write in to the Parish Clerk so we can take the appropriate action.

2. Affordable Housing

I am happy to report that we have finally been able to deliver the affordable housing that we have worked so hard to provide over so many years. We are looking forward to having a look around the properties in the near future and welcome the opportunity that these dwellings will provide. All should be thanked who were involved with the bringing forward this scheme, including the current members of the council and the past. Particularly the landowners and the provider RSL. We hope that the properties are treated and maintained with the respect they are due in light of the tremendous efforts that have gone towards them being delivered

3. The Parish Community Resource Centre

I still believe people like the idea of having a centre where they can liaise with the Parish Council, maybe only occasionally, and view planning application drawings although it is now perhaps easier than previously, to view these on line through the Planning Portal. The centre is under constant review but the criticism of it is much less than it was, as people start to appreciate the positive benefit that it brings. It is also still used as a base by the PCSO.

4. Young People and Activities

The Parish Council continues to encourage young people to participate in all forms of sport and outdoor activity thus reducing the amount of troublesome behaviour within the village. The Parish Council also supports the Football and Cricket Club, appreciating both their promotion of sport and social responsibility and team building. However, I would once again ask both of the Clubs to be mindful of the protection of the green to ensure that it is treated with respect on days when damage could occur.

I would also remind members of particularly the football club about the bad language that we have witnessed. This needs to be stamped out.

We are still searching for an area for the possible construction for a skate board park but in reality it will be down to a philanthropic land owner and available funding.

5. Bikers on the Green

The Parish Council's position remains unchanged with regard to not giving permission for bikers to come on to the green. However, we still need to manage the situation as best we can and at the same time remain vigilant to ensure that the rules and regulations of the council are upheld.

6. PCSO

We have had a change of PCSO this year and things are working again smoothly. Following discussions we now receive log reports on where the PCSO is at any one time in the village. The Parish Council we will continue to support the work of our PCSO and thank her for her valued services this year

7. Parking

Parking is still a problem within the village but could be easily improved greatly if just a little more consideration was given to others and people stopped parking of the double yellow lines.

The additional yellow lines have made things safer as have the railings at Tesco's that we did last year. Negotiations are on-going with Network Rail with regard to car parking for the longer term and we hope to have things in place in the near future.

8. The Pond

The pond continues to look healthy and the ecology thrives.

9. Surgery Parking

With the continual support and help from the Surgery itself, the number of people parking on the green has reduced.

10. Fly Tipping

This problem has got worse.

It is very sad that litter continues to be dumped out of cars along our roadsides and verges, together with rubbish being left in lay-bys in and around the village. Its lazy and it just makes everywhere look awful.

The mentality of people eating food and then dumping the packaging out of the window I am afraid it quite beyond me. The Parish Council are aware that some individuals are collecting this up at their own expense and for this we would like to thank you. Once again, I urge you if you see anyone littering our village, please report it to Tendring District Council or even us and we will do it on your behalf. We have got to do all we can to stop this.

11. Highways Verges

The Parish Council continues to cut the highways verges and other areas of land for the County Council. Therefore, this work is carried out more often and at more appropriate times of the year.

12. License for use of green for entertainment

Anyone wishing to use the green for organised functions must have written permission and sign up to the conditions that the Council has to apply. Once again, I would like to remind members of the public that if you would like to erect signage on the green for a limited amount of time for any reason, you must have written permission.

Finally I would like to thank once again the other members of the Parish Council and its helpers, our wardens, caretakers and contractors.

As I say every year.....Councillors.....you work on behalf of all members of the community without reward and sometimes with criticism. I wish to thank you for your efforts this year, not as your Chairman but as a member of the community of Great Bentley.

Members of the public. Please engage with us. Its no good saying you are too busy. Look around this table we are all busy people and yet we all try to make a positive contribution to our community. At our meetings sometimes there are too few people here, and generally it's the same faces. Encourage your friends to become part of the community it can be sometimes dull but its more often fun, and you get a sense of achievement in that you have helped someone for no reward.

I would also like to remind you that there is a spare seat on the Council.

I will now ask the public if they have anything they would like to discuss within the report. I shall keep the timing of this brief as we have a long evening ahead.