

Brixworth Parish Council Annual Report

2009-2010



Chairman's Overview – by Cllr Ian Barratt

Once again it has been an extremely busy year for your Parish Council with some disappointments but many successes.

Your Parish Council has recently gained the Power of Well Being. This allows us to use and get involved in areas where previously our powers wouldn't reach, for example, many issues connected with the environment. It is a very recently acquired Power so we will now need to judge which areas can be covered by it. We are also seeking recognition as a Quality Parish Council and our application is to be considered in May. This is a recognition much sought after but only reached by a very few Councils in Northamptonshire.

Parking and motoring is always a controversial issue in our crowded village. We have tackled dangerous and poor parking in the village with some double yellow lines. We thank our County Councillor Chris Millar for using some of his financial allowance for this purpose. Continuing the issue of motoring comes speeding – a real perennial worry to many people. Our Local police have put up a number of covert speed detectors in speeding "hotspots". The results have been most interesting. True, there have been a small number of excessive speeders, but the vast majority are in fact adhering to the speed limit.

This year we have awarded grants to the Youth Club, Cricket Club, Junior Football, Neighbourhood Watch, Drama Group and Travel Club. We also have provided financial support to enable Brixworth to continue to have a police office in the village –and we warmly welcome back Sgt Mike Grady.

Our big disappointment of the year must have been the BMX/Skateboard project. We have spent countless hours in gaining legal access to the old A508. This was an ideal spot for the planned young people's area. There would have been a Youth shelter, a professionally built BMX track and skateboard complex. You cannot begin to imagine our disappointment when opposition from local landowners forced its abandonment at a late stage. If the young people feel let down, then who can blame them.

And now, thanks. Thanks to the Parish Councillors, County Councillors and District Councillors. Our members of Staff, Jane our Clerk, Marc and Donald our grounds men, Liz our cleaner and Beryl our litter picker.

Recreation and Amenities Development Committee Report – Cllr Steve Whiffen, Chairman

At the beginning of the year the Parish Council purchased a new replacement Kubota ride on mower, for our Groundsman Marc Sugden, to cut the grass on public open spaces in the village. The County Council's contractor cuts the remainder of the grass verges in the parish. Later on in the year the Groundsman's Pick Up, after many years service, was replaced with a new Combovan, which has proved to be far more economical to run.

The Council's sports facilities continue to be well used; this year we had three senior football teams (Bective Wanderers, AFC Crown First and Reserves) as well as the Junior Football teams using the Ashway Playing Fields. On St David's Recreation Ground we had All Saints Football Teams, Junior Football teams, Brixworth Junior and Senior cricket teams play.

During the school holidays Freestyle Soccer Academy has provided football coaching on St David's and the District Council Play Rangers have provided Go Karts, a climbing wall, plus sports activities on the Ashway to keep the young people entertained.

Dog Fouling continues to be a problem on our playing fields, the Parish Council asks all dog owners to be responsible and clear up after their dog and to use the bins provided.

Sadly the Parish Council had to make the decision not to proceed with the BMX/Skateboard project on the Harborough Road. The site for our proposed BMX/Skateboard development proved not to be suitable as a result of legal advice, as it would interfere with access to neighbouring land, so we are now back to square one on this.

Finally the Parish Council has now had its new Byelaws for Spratton Road Recreation Ground, St David's Recreation Ground and the Ashway Playing Field approved.

Highways & Environment Committee Report – by Cllr Colin Bament Chair

The footbridge across the A508 Bypass to the Country Park has been put on hold, so the County Council has told us. Apparently funding is needed elsewhere to repair the damage to the roads in the County caused by the severe weather this winter. The Parish Council has been told that a pedestrian crossing may be installed instead. During the bad weather the Parish Council kept requesting for Froxhill Crescent to be salted, as this is a bus route, however the Council will try to get it put on the primary salting list for the future.

The yellow lines seem to be easing congestion on Northampton road near Kennel Terrace, it is easier to get out of now, most of the time. The Parish Council would like to set up a Community Speed Watch Project, in which the Parish Council would be loaned a hand held speed camera to undertake its own traffic monitoring with the assistance of volunteers and the police. Those caught speeding will receive a letter from the police explaining the purpose of the project. Repeat offenders could face prosecution. In order to proceed with this project the Parish Council needs to acquire 500 signatures from Brixworth residents. If you would like to add your name to the list, in support of this project, forms are available at Troop's Greengrocers and Lovell's Hardware store in Hunters Way, Spratton Road, Brixworth. In addition, if you are willing to volunteer to undergo training and use the camera please indicate this on the form and provide a telephone number.

If you wish to report a highways problem (i.e. street lights not working, potholes in the road, etc) please contact the County Council's Street Doctor www.northamptonshire.gov.uk, tel. No.0845 6011113 or email streetdoctor@northamptonshire.gov.uk. Alternatively you can contact myself, Colin Bament as the Parish Highways representative or the Parish Clerk.

Finance and Administration Committee Report – by Cllr Richard Monk, Chair

The country bumped along the bottom of a recession and the national debt swelled massively but the Parish Council's finances continue to be healthy and we continued to provide all our services to the village. The Committees delivered all of their plans and stayed within their budgets. This prudence has allowed us reduce the Parish Council's Council tax charge per property for next year, still maintaining our services at the same level. Yet, another unqualified audit of our accounts is a tribute to the professionalism and hard work of our Clerk.

Opening Balance as at 1.04.09	£124,519.56
Plus Income for year	£138,155.61
Less Expenditure for year	£127,613.87
Closing Balance as at 31.03.10	£135,061.30

Health and safety of our staff and the public is as important as control of our financial affairs. For another year there have been no reportable accidents during the year. And finally, it is the staff that enable the Parish Council to provide services for the village. Our staff have shown great commitment to the village again this year and, every day and in all weathers, they have worked hard to ensure that the village services are as good as they are.

Planning Committee Report - by Cllr Bob Chattaway, Chair

The role of the West Northants Planning Unit in the local planning process has been of much concern to the Committee over recent months with the publication of its lists of sites considered suitable for substantial developments in Brixworth and other nearby villages. The sites on the edge of Brixworth could take a further 700 houses. A decision on a proposal to redevelop the old woodyard off Station Road, is expected to be made by the District Council, in the next few weeks. The Technology Park would eventually consist of commercial units employing about 200 people and a small number of houses if approved. The amount of traffic which would be generated and would have to travel through the old part of the village together with doubts about the impact of such a development in a rural setting and the precedents it may set have to be given due consideration however.

As before the Committee continues to meet every three weeks on Mondays at the Library/Community Centre at 7.30pm to examine applications and to formulate the Parish Councils response to the Local Planning Authority. Applicants are invited to attend to present their case and to answer any questions. Members of the public are always welcome and may express their own opinions.

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Richard Monk
Ron Low
Mervyn Ward
Mike Lacey
Liz Wiig

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