

Brafield on the Green Parish Council Annual report for 2008/09

(1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009)

The following symbols indicate as follows
*ongoing/project activity
+regular activity

General Council operations and business excluding Finance

Meetings

- + 6 **Public meetings of the Council** - May, July, Sept, Nov, Jan and March
- + 2 **informal strategy meetings** held August and Jan 2009

Personnel

- +**Clerk**. Vivien Hartley
- **Chair/Vice-Chair**. Gill Morgan and Helen Barnell
- **New Councillors**. Dawn Allingham (formerly Aston) co-opted (April 2008)
- **Representative on Church and Poors Land Charity**. Cllr. Ward nominated
- +**Employment** of (amongst others)
 - Albert Rainbow - cleaning of bus shelters etc
 - John Barr – graffiti removal and other works
 - BTCV – see below

Volunteer support

- Police Community Support Officer - Richard Markham (replaced by Charlotte Pearson, March 2009)
- + Parish Paths Warden - Helen Frostwick
- + Tree wardenship – Colin Gautrey
- + Delivery of village newsletters: Sue Gautrey; Alan Harvey Jones; Donna Burge; Chris Pittams; and Cllrs. David Clayson and Helen Barnell

- + Website: Terry Barnell (webmaster and member of FOI Working Party)
- + Farmers – rights of way maintenance and reinstatement after cropping
- * Northamptonshire School for Boys – website (although webmaster taking over full administration of the site)
- * British Trust for Conservation Volunteers – work on village pond
- Bus shelter redecoration project – Andrea Hill
- Play Area maintenance – Rita Clayson, Sue Gautrey and Cllr. Ruth Kentigern-Fox

Other

- +**Subscriptions** to Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils (NALC), ACRE, and Mid Northants Parishes.
- Formal adoption of the model **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**; and creation of a Working Party to oversee the changes required (work in progress) in relation to hard copy/electronic record keeping (information management generally) that were discussed and agreed following the special January 2009 meeting

Village communication

Newsletter

- +Production and distribution of
 - 6 issues of the Parish Council Newsletter to every household (Nos. 35 (June), 36 (July), 37 (Sept.), 38 (Dec), and 39 (Jan 09) and 40 (March 09)).
 - Additional information leaflet re Neighbourhood Watch group – invitation for expressions of interest (20 responses received)
- Newsletters included 46 news items including the promotion of the following:
 - Concessionary bus passes
 - Crime statistics from the Rural Safer Community Team; and messages and advice on many issues relating to Community Safety
 - SNC stock condition survey
 - Dial a wheelchair service
 - promotion of SmartWater forensic property coding scheme
 - Recycling notes
 - Art News South Northamptonshire
 - Bus Service to Denton Surgery

- Northamptonshire on Wheels projects
- Option to publish the Newsletter at larger size to help visually impaired people

Website

- *Continued joint project with Northampton School for Boys (although the webmaster taking over full administration of the site)
- Reports to the Council on the development of the site by the webmaster
- Successful application to Brian Binley's Councillors' Empowerment Scheme for grant aid towards the website development – see below
- Issues progressed in year include:
 - Purchase of Adobe Web Standards (funded by the above application)
 - 3 domain names secured
 - Process agreed for redacting PC minutes to enable their web publication
 - Systematic review of web content for currency
 - Policy for using photographs of children
 - Addition of a feedback form
 - New email address created for people to contact the site
 - Investigation of new hosting arrangements for the site
- Website content development in year (many including photos and images) includes
 - Wide range of photographs of village events and the local landscape in the changing seasons
 - Updating of the Businesses section of the site
 - Promotion of wide range of local events

*Village Information booklet

- Work continued on a comprehensive Village 'Information Booklet' to be produced in a hard copy form but capable of updating and flexible issue to new residents using the website content

Surveys

- **Housing Needs Survey** – 128/304 forms returned
- **Bus shelter survey re installation of new seating** – 41/304 sheets returned; and the response was not to provide new seating in any of the shelters

Financial business - Efficiency/Value for Money

- Total expenditure for the year was £12297 against a budget or **precept of £10,000**. Of the additional spend of £2297, accounted for by work on projects, £1550 (12.6% of expenditure or a sum equivalent to 15.5% of the precept) was raised by successfully bidding for additional monies from Councillor Binley's Empowerment Scheme Fund (see details below) towards the areas indicated+ and the remainder was taken by reserves which are treated to some degree as a contingency and project funding source.
- The expenditure can be summarised as follows:

Subject	% spend
Employment of Clerk to support the volunteer Councillors	18
Other administrative costs – insurance, audit, room hire, fees, subscriptions etc	11
Communication/website+	2
Village infrastructure and environment – maintenance and development*	
54 street lights; 3 bus shelters	18
Greenspace mowing, village green and pond	18
Village Hall project*	12
Play area support	7
Bus shelter art project*	4
Lay by project [with Little Houghton]*+	10

Further detail about any aspect of expenditure can be requested from the Clerk to the Council

- Continued participation in the **NALC internal audit scheme**
- Successful bid (drafted by Cllr. Ward) to Brian Binley's Council Empowerment Scheme fund - £750 for money to support website development (see above)
- Successful bid for £1600 (drafted by Cllr. Ward for both parishes involved – see below) to Brian Binley's Council Empowerment Scheme fund to support the lay-by improvement project (effectively £800 each)
- Cllr. Aston made Internal Control Councillor for Audit purposes
- Setting of precept for 2009/10 at £11,000

Environment

General

- **+Lighting maintenance** (54 streetlights

- **+Bus shelter** maintenance (3 shelters) – continued engagement of Albert Rainbow as cleaner after a short interregnum (see above)
- **+Verge** (and Green) grass cutting contract (Brown and Baden as contractor)
- **+Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act – dog fouling.** Removal of the bin outside the Day Nursery (Church Lane) for hygiene reasons (given its use for dumping dog bags); and mounting of new notices to encourage clearance of dog waste in the interests of the general community.
- +Representation at meetings of the **Northampton International Raceway Parish Council Liaison Meeting** discussing regular monitoring of noise levels, traffic issues etc. [Cllr. Barnell]
- Publishing of detailed recycling guidance in the Newsletter
- Several actions to encourage villagers to deal with overhanging hedges in village
- Replacement of Billing Road bin
- Action on 4 instances of graffiti in the village – see below also
- Environmental Health issues. Involvement in reporting issues relating to noise pollution from bird scarers, and business use of premises

Trees [wardenship]

See also Conservation Area issue under planning

- Removal of 2 dangerous trees in Billing Road and Grove Road

Village green and pond

- **+Village Green** – grass cutting
- +Specialist **maintenance of the pond** by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) – June 2008 visit with 6 volunteers; and September 2008
- Turfing work commissioned from J S Landscapes following the removal of the Himalayan Balsam
- Wooden tubs on the small triangle on the Green – decision not to reinstate following 3 instances of tradesmen’s vehicles hitting and damaging them (2 of which led to successful insurance claims by the Council). Remaining single planter placed in the centre of the triangle

Planning

Strategic

Responses and/or active involvement in:

- *Attendance at 4 of the 5 meetings of the Mid Northants Parishes meeting – [Cllr. Ward]
- **Village confines** consultation
- **Affordable Housing project**
 - Housing Needs Survey
 - Meetings and planning work with Strategic Housing Officer (SNC) and Rural Housing Enabler including a site meeting
 - Consultation with other parishes that have been involved in similar schemes

Planning/licensing [L] applications

+**Planning applications** – consultation and commentary.

2008

S2008/0487P

88a Billing Road

First floor and single storey extensions to rear

S2008/0562TR

public phone box 01604 890409

Removal

S2008/0602P

River View, Station Road Cogenhoe

Alterations to previous conditions s1997/0726P

S2008/0607P

River View, Station Road Cogenhoe

Change of use from barn to bungalow and opening times of Caravan Park

S2008/0695P

2 Cares Orchard

Rear garage extension

S2008/0788P

The Barn, Red Lion PH, Bedford Road

Change of use from training centre (Use Class D1) to office accommodation (Use Class B1) and creation of new car park

PC missed deadline to respond

S2008/0975P and 0976LB

26 Billing Road

Erection of garage – reduced to single bay and change to fenestration; and ridge reorientated through 90 degrees, removal of brick quoins from the corners
Amendment

S2008/1126P

3 Long Acre

First floor extension with spiral staircase

S2008/1150P

58 Billing Road

Erection of 1.8m fence

S2008/1234P

The Old Barn 12a The Green

Garage extension

S2008/1316P

2 Bridle Close

Replacement windows and front door – 3 new rooflights at rear

S2008/1346P

77 Billing Road

Demolish existing outbuilding and replace with detached double garage and garden room

S2008/1356P

77 Billing Road

2 storey rear extension

S2008/1368P

River View Station Road Cogenhoe

6 rooflights to site office/garage building (retrospective) – 3 to the front and 3 to the rear to site office/garage building

S2008/1383P

Mere Barn Farm Denton

Conversion of barn into annexe of existing dwelling

S2008/1591PT

16 The Green

Reduction of limbs by 2.5m and balance the Crown to TPO horse chestnut tree.

S2008/1676P and 1677LB

The Parsonage

Demolition of existing extension and replacement with single storey extension
Alteration to approved plan to provide larger window to study and 2 additional rooflights

2009

S2009/0037P

Mere Barn Farm

Conversion of barn to annexe

S2009/0089P

84 Billing Road

2 storey side extension and porch

S2009/0116P and 0117LB

26 Billing Road

Erection of garage

S2009/0217P

8 Furze Road

Single storey rear extension

S2009/0276P

The Old Chapel

Conversion of Chapel to dwelling – regularising of plan 2007/1287P

Monitoring role

+ Intervention to initiate enforcement action and/or investigation re compliance with permitted development etc, using District Council Planning Enforcement case officers where necessary

- **Home Farm** – work on farm buildings –continued monitoring of the situation
- **16 Old Farm/Oak House** – protection of oak tree and trees with Preservation Orders – alleviation of soil compaction etc (involving SNC Arboricultural Officer)
- **62 Billing Road** – planting of hornbeam hedge

Rights of way

- **+Parish Path warden role** (Helen Frostwick) – attending PC meetings and liaising with the County Council’s Rights of Way Officers over non-reinstatement of paths, missing waymarks etc.
- Further guidance given on horse riding on rights of way (Dec Newsletter)
- Request for villagers to deal with overhanging hedges in village affecting rights of way published in Newsletter
- Clearance work at Dam Slade by Cllr. Clayson

Highways

See also Village Communication: Newsletter; and Village Green above

- + Regular engagement with NCC/Atkins [Cllr. Ager] through
 - Attending Parish Highways representatives’ Annual day (Dec))
 - Continued surveying (detailed annual survey in April 08) and reporting on the state of Roads and Footpaths, and items for actions. The major piece of work undertaken by the County Council was the new footpath and widening of Grove Road, an issue on which the PC had pressed for action.

- *Billing Road. Enforcement of the HGV weight restriction order put in place May 2006
 - Exploration of options with Trading Standards (Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire)
 - Interest declared by application to the Countywide Awareness Campaign relating to 7.5t weight restrictions
- Billing Road – Police speed checks ongoing (supported by PC – see below)
- Action to discourage
 - Villagers not to park on footways and verges – published in Newsletter
 - parking on the open space in front of 62 Billing Road by car salesmen
- Grove Road – pursued rectification of drainage problems following the widening of the road

Social/Youth – community support including Youth matters

Police and Rural Safer Community Team/Community Safety

- Police Community Panel – 2 meetings attended by Cllr. Kentigern-Fox in July and Nov
- Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) – public open meeting organised by the Council with the Western Area NHW Co-ordinator and Police (August)
- Cllr. Kentigern-Fox took on role of Village Co-ordinator for NHW; subsequent promotional work seeking volunteer Street Co-ordinators; registration of the scheme; promotion of SmartWater forensic property coding scheme
- Joint work with the RSCT to urge residents to report all instances of crime to maintain a high Police profile in the village
- Cleaning of graffiti in 4 areas of the parish in line with policy to remove it as soon as possible
- Road safety camera van visits (strongly encouraged by PC e.g. by reporting results in Newsletter)
- Brafield/Little Houghton lay-by project (joint funding with Little Houghton Parish Council working in partnership with Little Houghton Estate and Mark/Roy Arrowsmith) to seek a permanent solution to the activities for which the lay-by has become notorious – clearance of all undergrowth and rubbish, erection of a stock fence inside the existing chain link fence

(which will eventually be removed), extension and seeding of the grazing area behind, and planting of a new thorn hedge. The work involved contact with our MP, and a range of County and District members and officers; and was successful in winning money from the Empowering Councillors Scheme in a joint bid application (led by Brafield) in partnership with Little Houghton Parish Council.

Children and Young People

- *Supportive investment in the **Children's Play Area** administered by Brafield Parish Charity – donation of £800 for maintenance, insurance and safety cover using s. 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act following analysis of the charity's accounts.
- Agreement to take over the ownership, maintenance, insurance and any licensing involved in running the **Children's Play area** following the introduction of the new play equipment by the Brafield Charity supported by grant aid; this will include transfer of the tenancy from BC to the PC from the landowner, the Church and Poors Land Charity; and procurement of all risks insurance
- **Bus shelter redecoration/graffiti project.** This involved Graffiti Art Services of Kettering working (to a brief provided by the PC and using designs by 2 village children) with a wide range of children and young people (supported by their parents). Funded using s.4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953.
- Discussion with Red Lion re possible use of land to provide facilities for young people and other community use projects

Other community issues

- Capital Improvement Grant of £1500 to the Sargeant Memorial Hall Committee to cover decorating and electrical work as part of the refurbishment and improvement of the Village Hall, work totalling about £15000, also funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Empowering Councillors and Communities Scheme
- Donation of £50 to the Royal British Legion for their Remembrance Day wreath using s.137 funding.
- Further contact with Probation Service re deployment of Unpaid Work Units on litter clearance and tidying work in the village including verge clearance