



NEWSLETTER

April 2016

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

We must begin this newsletter with an update on the plan to build almost 3,000 houses in the Parish. The beginning of the year has been dominated by the Redditch Housing Growth which remains the priority for the Parish Council. It is a highly detailed, often very frustrating, task which takes a huge amount of time and effort. The Parish Council continues to work with BAAG to challenge the soundness of the Council's justification for building such a large number of houses on high quality agricultural Green Belt in our Parish.

Of course, the Redditch Housing Growth isn't the only thing the Parish Council have been working on. The Parish Council is a consultee on all planning applications in the Parish; so each one has to be carefully considered. Superfast Broadband is also very important to many of us and there is a further update in this newsletter together with a report from the Village Hall Team.

2,800 HOUSES IN BENTLEY PAUNCEFOOT

The battle to challenge Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils' decision to build 2,800 houses in the Parish continues. It is difficult to imagine just how big a development this would be so it really put it into perspective when someone, at the BAAG meeting in January, pointed out that the Dickens Heath development near Solihull is only around 1,700 houses.

Chairman John Manley and Councillor Janet Winslow, alongside BAAG and their excellent consultant, have dedicated many long hours since the New Year working to a very tight timescale in order to respond to the latest documents submitted to the Examination of the Redditch Housing Growth Plan by the Councils.

All of the documents submitted on behalf of the Parish Council are on our web page under the 'Consultation Papers' button. It is easy to see the time and effort involved to produce such comprehensive documents.

Following the latest Hearing that took place on the 23rd and 24th March we are now waiting to see the Inspector's note. He will decide whether or not the Plans are sound or not and the next steps. The Councils have made it clear that they are not prepared to withdraw their plans.

Meanwhile the developer has submitted a planning application for the development at Foxlydiate. All 197 documents can be seen on both Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils' web sites. The reference number is 16/0263 for Bromsgrove and 2016/077/OUT for Redditch.

We encourage everyone who is concerned about this to register their objection with the planning department either by letter or email. We are told that the number of objections received does have an impact. You should give a reason (or reasons) for your objection; this could be that the development is on high grade agricultural Green Belt, the impact on the roads and lanes, the high cost of dealing with sewage, concern about flooding or lack of sustainability due to the sites distance from town centres and employment areas.

SUPERFAST BROADBAND

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey for Superfast Broadband. Although Superfast Worcestershire have not yet made their decision where to spend the latest funding they have told us that Bentley Pouncefoot had one of the highest percentage of respondents in the County.

The Parish Council wrote to our MP and both County and District Councillors requesting their support for some of the funding to be allocated to improving our internet access speed. We also submitted a document directly to Superfast Worcestershire stating why we feel very strongly that as a small Parish, with some of the lowest internet access speeds in the county, we should receive help improving the speed.

We were pleased to receive a response from Sajid Javid advising us that he has written to Clare Marchant, Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Council, on our behalf. A copy of his letter is included below.

Harry Gibbs has started an online campaign to raise awareness. Many of you are already aware but just in case the details are:

<http://www.bentleybroadband.org/>

<http://www.bentleybroadband.org/speed-map.html>

<https://twitter.com/bentleybroadbnd>

https://www.facebook.com/bentleybroadband?_rdr=p

Superfast Worcestershire is among those 'following' us on Twitter so we know that the message is getting through to them.

Although, unfortunately, all this is no guarantee that we will be allocated some of the funds they can be in no doubt that we want the service.

We should hear in the next month or so and will, of course, let you know straight away.

In the meantime the upgrade of the roadside cabinets continues. The latest one that affects our Parish is cabinet Bromsgrove 49. This means that potentially those in postcodes B60 3BA, B60 3BB, B60 3BD, B60 3EY, B60 4EY join B97 5SR in possibly being able to benefit from faster internet access. Not every property in these postcodes will be close enough to the cabinet to benefit so please check the Superfast Worcestershire web site (or Harry's speed map) to get an idea of the speed you could achieve.

We continue to consider options that may be available to us as a Parish. Many of you will have seen the press reports of OFCOM's thoughts on removing BT Openreach's monopoly. Whether this will prove a benefit to us remains to be seen.

Councillor Jon Harris, who did so much work for the first survey that Superfast Worcestershire launched, has requested a quotation for BT Openreach to provide fibre to his home. We feel that this will be a very good indication of the likely costs involved as Jon's home is one of the furthest from a roadside cabinet.

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mrs Anne Dyson
Clerk, Bentley Paucefoot Parish Council
The Old Timber Barn
Manor Road
Upper Bentley
Redditch, B97 5TB

26th February 2016

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your email about internet access in Bentley Paucefoot Parish. I would of course be happy to assist with the survey and have written to the Chief Executive of Worcestershire County Council, Clare Marchant, to ask that Superfast Broadband Worcestershire give strong consideration to your proposal.

As I'm sure you will appreciate, simply out of fairness and as a matter of jurisdiction I cannot determine the outcome of the decision they make, but I will do all that I can to highlight your case. I know that broadband access and internet access speed is a real problem for rural communities around the District so very much want to be of help.

Nationally, you may be interested to know that £1.7 billion is being invested in extending superfast broadband provision across the UK, and by 2017, 95 per cent of the UK will be connected. Two million businesses and homes are connected and the nationwide roll-out is on track. There is further to go and the Government's ambition is that ultrafast broadband of at least 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) should be available to nearly all UK premises.

Of course, whilst this is very encouraging as a national picture, I know that access to this service is essential for parishioners. If there is anything further I can do to be of support in this respect, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

BROMSGROVE

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VILLAGE HALL REPORT

The Village Hall Team continues to provide events for us all to enjoy. We always put the events on the Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council web page. They can be found by clicking on the '*Events*' tab on the left hand side of the page.

Liz Every has kindly provided us with the following update on behalf of the Village Hall Team starting with a report on the Litter Pick by Mike Sansom.

Litter Pick

Litter, litter everywhere but not a bit to be seen on Monday morning.

Bentley held its annual Litter Pick on Sunday 31st January. It was not a particularly nice morning with drizzle in the air but the enthusiasm of the village was unsurpassed with over thirty people offering their services from 10.00am till lunchtime.

Lanes were allocated to people who cleared their lane or road and the bags were then collected and brought back to the skip at the Village Hall. With the support every road and lane was covered – a big thank you to everyone.

The litter found, as usual was immense, bicycle bits, flower pots, enough beer cans and bottles to set up a brewery, gin bottles numerous, I hope this is read by the culprit and they refrain from disposing of them always in the same lane and keep in their car or even return to Gordons...the list is endless.

It really is amazing what we can pick up in a morning virtually filling a skip in the relatively small Parish of Bentley. A big thank you to Bromsgrove DC for providing the skip, in fact they are very helpful providing also litter pickers, visi vest, gloves and bags for the rubbish – thank you.

It is only sad that within days rubbish will start accumulating again. I would sincerely suggest that if anyone sees litter being thrown from cars they are reported. Keep Britain tidy should be our motto.

As a big thank you to all those helpers and others a usual excellent lunch was provided at the Village Hall thanks again to June and Lyn and their helpers for their wonderful efforts.

Report by Mike Sansom – Chairman Village Hall

Arabian Nights and Days

Arabian Nights and Days was brought to us by Shifting Sands Theatre Company on March 19th at the Village Hall. With a packed house we were entertained with an evening of Magical Mayhem. Many of the Arabian Nights Tales unfolding before our eyes, with costume changes galore. At one point there was so much laughter that the performers found it difficult to continue. The tales even included a Genie and a talking parrot with several members of the audience unwittingly becoming involved in the stories!

Food was served in the interval, and then the stories continued at a mad gallop. The evening finished with an energetic dance from the cast. A fun filled evening enjoyed by everyone.

Decking

Due to the deterioration of the wooden decking at the back of Bentley Village Hall it was decided that it all needed replacing. Work started on March 21st after some funding became available and the decking has now been replaced by a solid base with slabbing on top. It is all looking very nice.

User Groups

The user groups continue to be well attended with Tai Chi on a Monday morning, Art and Design on a Wednesday morning and Water colour Painting on a Friday morning. A Table Tennis group also uses the Village Hall on a weekday evening.

First Aid Training

The First Aid training held at Bentley Village Hall on Friday 1st April was well attended, with the maximum number of 20 people taking advantage of the training funded by the Bentley Village Hall Committee. The training was run by St. Johns Ambulance and covered Unconscious person and what to do, Recovery position and CPR. The participants were able to join in and practice the techniques should they want to. The evening was informative and interesting.

[Editor's note] I'd like to thank the Village Hall Team for organising the training. I found that it was pitched at just the right length and level for me. It was just an hour long and wasn't filled with overwhelming technical detail. I now feel more confident that I could do something to help if needed.

The Parish Council has agreed to fund a second training course as there are already a number of people who wish to attend. Please email bentleyvillagehall@gmail.com if you are interested.

Dates for the Diary

Bluebell Walk and Lunch - Sunday 24th April
Quiz Night and Supper - Saturday 2nd July

WEB PAGE

We are pleased to see that the number of hits on our web page has been steadily increasing every month, which means more people are viewing it. We hope you are finding it useful.

We continue to look at ways to add more items of interest to it and would be very pleased to hear any suggestions of things you would like to see. Recently we've added a document entitled 'The History of the Farms & Farmers of the Bentley Estate over the years'. It is an article that was written by the late Diana Gibbs for an earlier version of our web page. Anne has typed it up and it can be found under the 'Publications' tab on the left hand side of the page.

We are continuing to press Worcestershire County Council to update the accuracy of the information on the 'My Nearest' and 'Getting Around' links but they are very slow to respond to our requests.

NEW LETTERHEAD FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL?

Is it time for a new letterhead/logo? The current letterhead was created by Jon Harris and is based on the weathervane on the Village Hall. Unfortunately we seem to have lost the original template so we thought we would ask for your views on whether it is time to update it. We can, of course, continue with the existing letterhead or you might have an idea for an alternative. Below are a few ideas I've come up with just to start the process off. We could simply change the font on the existing logo and/or turn the horse and plough around so it is looking forward to the future or perhaps add some colour. Alternatively we could move to a new look. Please email our Parish Clerk, Anne Dyson if you have any comments.



AND FINALLY....

If you have anything that you would like the Parish Council to address please let us know. You can contact us via email, letter or telephone. Our Parish Clerk's details are as follows:

Clerk to the Parish Council
Mrs Anne Dyson
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Manor Road
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01527 404269

Roz Bewsher
Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council