



NEWSLETTER

October 2017

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. The summer period is often a fairly quiet period with many people away on holiday yet we still have plenty to tell you about. There are two new people involved with the Parish Council; Barry Spence is our new Parish Councillor and John Miles has taken on the challenge of Footpath Warden. They are introduced more fully later in the newsletter and you will see that they have already been busy. We would like to thank them for joining us. Sadly, we have to report that thieves are still busy in the area and, despite the Smartwater campaign, some of our residents have suffered burglaries over the past weeks. Please remain vigilant and report anything you think suspicious. There is quite a lot about the safety of our lanes in this issue. It is already a concern to many of us and the current and planned housing developments could result in a further increase in traffic exacerbating the problem. The Parish council is working on several initiatives as you will see. We would be delighted to hear from anyone with any further ideas.

New Parish Councillor

We are very pleased to announce that Barry Spence agreed to take on the role of Parish Councillor, replacing John Manley. Barry was co-opted onto the Council in May.

Barry moved to Lower Bentley with his wife Helena in July 2012 in order live nearer to their family who are based at Webheath. Since then Helena has become an active member of the local Women's Institute and Barry has increasingly taken an active interest in local community issues.

Barry has an Honours Degree in Economics and over 40 years' experience in Human Resource Management. He successfully built an International Human Resource Consultancy with whom he remains Non-Executive Chairman.

As a Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development and a company director Barry's combination of people orientation and commercial expertise will be very helpful to the Parish Council during a period in which our community faces significant development.

Barry commented "I am very proud indeed to join Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council and intend to work very hard with my colleagues to ensure that our voice is increasingly heard and taken note of by the District and County Councils".

New Footpath Warden

John Miles has kindly agreed to become our Footpath Warden. John moved to the Parish with his family in 2016. As a keen walker he volunteered to take up the role of reporting problems on any of our many footpaths ensuring that they remain open for everyone to enjoy.

Mike Sampson kindly took John around the footpaths initially and John has subsequently been busy cutting back overgrowth himself and reporting back on other problems that he finds so that they can be made good.

Defibrillator

Following discussions between the Parish Council and the Village Hall team a well attended meeting was organised to consider the provision of a defibrillator within the Parish. The meeting covered whether it was a good idea to provide a defibrillator, where it might be located and how it would be maintained.

After two excellent presentations attendees were able to ask questions and voice their opinions. A vote at the end of the session showed that there was overwhelming support for having a defibrillator located near to the Village Hall.

A unit has now been purchased funded by the Parish Council with the help of a very generous donation by The Trustees of the Tardebigge Charities. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

The defibrillator is installed on the side of the Village Hall nearest to the play area. This makes it accessible to as many people as possible.

Road Safety

We have some very pretty lanes in our Parish making them popular with ramblers, dog walkers, cyclists (National Cycle Route 5 runs through the Parish) and horse riders. They are also very narrow with few passing places and many blind bends and junctions. Unfortunately, they are no longer as quiet as they once were. Speeding vehicles on our lanes not only puts lives at risk but it can also harm people's quality of life by preventing them from enjoying the countryside on foot, bike or horseback for fear of being hurt.

Development that has taken place in both Bromsgrove and Redditch is one of the main reasons for the increase in traffic speeding through the lanes, particularly at the beginning and end of the working day. We are concerned that when the Church Road development is completed and if the planned developments at Foxlydiate and other areas in Webheath go ahead, traffic will increase even more.

To address the growing concern of the safety of our lanes the Parish Council is exploring several different options:

Safety Assessment of Cur, Copyholt and Pumphouse Lanes

Councillors had a meeting with Worcestershire County Council Highways to discuss our concerns and it was clear that an independent safety assessment of some of the lanes we feel most affected would be extremely valuable in making our case for action to be taken by the Highways department. Councillor Spence has spoken to several independent consultants who can complete this work for us and established the costs involved. As we only have a very small precept we feel it appropriate to seek help in meeting the cost of this work if at all possible.

One option we thought could be open to us was the New Homes Bonus fund:

The New Homes Bonus is an incentive scheme by central government. It pays a grant by central government to local councils for increasing the number of homes occupied. It is paid each year for 5 years and is based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised.

Local councils can decide how to spend the New Homes Bonus. However, the Government expects local councils to consult communities about how they will spend the money, particularly those affected by development.

We feel that developments that have already been built in both Bromsgrove and Webheath (irrespective of the potential future development at Foxlydiate and other sites in Webheath) have generated an increase in traffic along our lanes causing real risk to anyone using them.

We decided to submit a bid for a very small amount of this fund (£2,800). With the balance of the cost met by the Parish Council this would enable us to

conduct the independent safety assessment of Cur, Copyholt and Pumphouse Lanes.

Councillor Barry Spence took on the challenge of putting together a comprehensive bid for the Parish and garnered support for it from our District Councillor, Peter Whittaker.

Unfortunately our bid has been rejected by Bromsgrove District Council's Community Grants Panel as being "out of scope". It seems that as the Parish has not benefited from any new development *within* the Parish it did not qualify.

This is very disappointing, however, we have not given up and are actively pursuing support from Bromsgrove District and Worcestershire County Councils to enable the independent safety assessment to be carried out. We believe it will provide invaluable guidance on appropriate traffic calming or other safety measures to try to reduce the risks to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, farm traffic and other road users.

#Rural Roads Not Race Tracks

Did you know that more than half (59%) of fatal crashes in Britain occur on country roads? Statistics released by the road safety charity 'Brake' tell us that per mile travelled, country roads are the most dangerous roads for all kinds of road user:

- Car occupants are twice as likely to be killed on a country road than an urban road.
- Motorcyclists are more than twice as likely to be killed on a country road than an urban road.
- Cyclists are almost three times more likely to be killed on a country road than an urban road



Speed is a major factor in country road crashes. The most common crash types on country roads are collisions at intersections, head-on collisions and running off the road – all related to excessive speed.

While country roads can initially appear empty, they are shared spaces used by vulnerable road users including pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, as well as large and slow moving farm vehicles, livestock, and wild animals.

Brake is urging all drivers to stay well under current limits – bearing in mind 60mph is generally far too fast for safety on these roads – and slow right down for villages, bends, browns and bad weather, and avoid overtaking.

Drivers should always assume that someone, or something, could be around any corner.

The Parish Council plans to raise awareness of the dangers on our lanes, especially of speeding. Councillor Jon Harris has agreed to lead a road safety campaign within the Parish. You will see and hear more about this over the coming months.

Crime and Crime Prevention in the Parish

We had an amazingly successful afternoon delivering Smartwater property marking kits on March 30th with almost 100% of all properties signing up to the scheme. Although, sadly, there have been some further burglaries in recent weeks we must take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who made the afternoon possible.

When the Smartwater kit delivery afternoon was scheduled we said we hoped to visit as many households as possible. The 'We Don't Buy Crime' team told us that their record was delivery of 50 kits but that that had only been possible with an exceptional effort.

Well, thanks to the stunning efforts of a team of volunteers and police, over 100 kits were delivered to households throughout the Parish on the afternoon of March 30th! Even more impressive is that within the week following March 30th only 10 kits hadn't been delivered.

Thank you to all the volunteers for their hard work especially all those who went out with the police to deliver the kits to everyone.

Special thanks must go to June and Mike Brazier. June organised the lists of properties, found all the volunteers and even baked the cakes that went down so well throughout the afternoon.

Mike Brazier must be singled out as he had a huge list of over 30 households to deliver kits to. He and Greg (our local policeman) took up the challenge and were still at it long after the rest of us had gone home at 6.30pm!

The Police also offered to visibly mark items for residents during the afternoon and set up their van in the Village Hall car park.



Grenville Hampshire checking the marking of his tractor

Andy Boss, our Parish Council Chairman, has put signs up across the Parish warning would-be thieves that they are entering a SmartWater area.



Parish Council Chairman, Andy Boss erecting the first sign

Being such a rural Parish it is not possible to put signs in every location that we would like. Many properties are set back from the road so that the small window signs supplied with the kits aren't always visible. However, we

believe that the signage does send a message to would-be thieves that we are alert to criminal activity.

We still have a quantity of A4 Smartwater signs available if anyone would like one for their gate or outbuilding. Please contact Anne, our Parish Clerk, if you would like one (or more).

Free advice on securing your property is still available. Please contact David Rischmiller from the Community Safety Partnership, he will be very happy to visit you and offer help and advice. His contact details are:

David Rischmiller

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership
Bromsgrove Community Safety Projects Officer
01527 64252 Ext 3733
07774 692095
david.rischmiller@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Planning

As a statutory consultee the Parish Council is asked to comment on all planning applications submitted to Bromsgrove District Council from within the Parish.

Over the last few months there have been several applications for larger developments. In addition to the outstanding planning application for 2,800 houses at Foxlydiate there is an application for 68 houses off Foxlydiate Lane. The application for 5 houses at Bartles Wood has recently been approved. Any application can be viewed online on Bromsgrove District Council's web site (the link is shown below) or you can view them at the council offices.

To view applications paste this link into your browser:

<https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications/>

2,800 houses at Foxlydiate

The hybrid application for this site is still being considered by the Planners. The Parish Council has had meetings with both the Case Officer responsible for the application and WCC Highways (who have yet to submit their comments on the application) to ensure that we are kept up to date with developments and have the opportunity to reiterate our concerns.

Earlier in the summer we submitted further questions to the case officer on the Transport Assessment that had been submitted as part of the application. The validity of the modelling tool used to calculate the impact of the site on various road junctions has been questioned by a consultant brought in by BDC Planners. We also felt that there was very little consideration of the impact on the residents of our Parish both from the additional traffic likely to

use the lanes and for those of us who use Cur Lane and would have to negotiate the development to reach their destinations.

We are told that a new transport assessment is being submitted by the applicant this autumn which we understand will be put out for consultation. We will let you know when this happens so that everyone has the opportunity to comment.

Superfast Broadband

A small number of properties around the edge of our Parish are already enjoying increased broadband speeds. We are assured by Superfast Worcestershire that further properties (unfortunately not all) will be upgraded by the end of 2018 through the latest round of funding.

They are still finalising the planning for the upgrades so we should be able to send out more information in about a month. We will let you know.

We continue to make the case for those properties that won't be included in this next round of funding. The Superfast Worcestershire team assure us that they continue to look at alternative options for them.

Worcestershire County Council is also seeking to improve mobile connectivity in the county. In May we were invited to attend a meeting organised by the Broadband and Connectivity Team with MBNL. MBNL is a company owned by EE and Three that manages their mobile network.

Harry Gibbs kindly agreed to attend with me (Cllr Roz Bewsher). We explained how patchy we found the service across the Parish and that improving coverage would help provide an alternative method of internet access for residents who cannot get superfast broadband. Harry raised some key points about the frequencies they use on their current masts which could make a difference to our coverage.

Yet again, frustratingly, there are no plans to definitely improve 4G coverage for our Parish but we were able to reiterate the strong demand that exists across the Parish for fast, reliable, internet access.

Time To Get The Chimney Swept?

As the nights draw in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are asking homeowners to get their chimneys swept by an approved sweep.

They state that chimneys must be kept clean to prevent chimney fires and structural damage to your property. Clean chimneys also help the

environment by assisting the complete combustion of the fuel, reducing emissions in the atmosphere.

Soot and smoke from a small chimney fire can cause extensive damage to personal property while larger fires can damage the roof, or be a threat to life by destroying a home completely.

Regular cleaning of chimneys or flues eliminates the build-up of soot and clears obstructions such as bird and animal nests, leaves and debris. Using a vacuum cleaner alone is not sufficient to clean the chimney properly. Ensure your chimney flue is inspected at regular intervals to prevent fire breaking out of the chimney.

AND FINALLY....

The Parish Council meet every other month. The date of the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 21st November, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. You are very welcome to attend.

If you wish to contact us, here are our Clerk's contact details:

Clerk to the Parish Council
Mrs Anne Dyson
The Old Timber Barn
Manor Road
Redditch B97 5TB
bentleypauncefoot@gmail.com
01527 404269

Anne also keeps our web page up to date with all of our meeting dates, the agendas and subsequent minutes together with other documents such as the Parish Council's submissions to consultations.

The link to our web page is:

<http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/Welcome.aspx?ParishID=204&PostCode=B975SU&Prop=162874&partner=bdc&MarriedTo=0>

Cllr Roz Bewsher
Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council