

Report from the Parish Council for Barby & Onley Annual Parish Meeting
14th April 2025

The Parish Meeting is a meeting of the Parish hosted by the Parish Council.

After the Parish meeting, at 7.30 tonight, we will be holding a Parish Council meeting to which everyone is welcome to attend if they wish to do so

The past year saw the resignation from the Parish Council of our Chair, Paul Reynolds, & Vice Chair, Steve Gee. On behalf of all Councillors and the Parish our grateful thanks go to Paul & Steve for all their hard work & dedication to our communities over many years. The Parish is a much poorer place without their experience and wisdom on the Council.

Over the summer I was elected Chair of the Parish Council & Sarah Withington was elected Vice Chair and we welcomed Councillors Kirsty Towney & Thomas Hallam who were co-opted into the vacant seats left by Paul & Steve.

Thank you to all those who take on the role of Councillor; it is most rewarding working alongside a group of Councillors with a shared vision for improving the Parish for our whole community.

All the work that Councillors undertake is entirely voluntary and we all give up a considerable amount of our spare time to work to improve our communities.

To reiterate, sincere thanks to all Councillors over the past year and our sincere thanks to our Clerk, Katrina, for all of her hard work & support.

Our grateful thanks also go to Christine Dover, editor of the Parish newsletter, without whose time and dedication, the newsletter would not be published every month. Thank you to Dom Fisher for all his work in the Parish to improve our roads and to Gavin Callard for all his help and advice on environmental issues.

We are most fortunate that the list of volunteers who carry out work within the Parish is extensive, so thank you to all our volunteers for your hard work to make our community a better place for us all to live.

In November, the Parish Council set its budget & requested a precept of £73,605 for the financial year starting on 1st April 2025.

Due to prudent financial control we were able to request this level of precept which is just a 2% increase over last year's figure.

This is the lowest percentage increase there has been for many years.

It is projected that we have ended the March 25 financial year with a surplus and well within budget, consequently we are able to commit further funds to reserves for future community projects. Over the past year the Council has consolidated Parish bank accounts and moved Parish funds into further interest bearing accounts.

The new budget & the previous year's expenditure have been published in the newsletter & on our website

Planning decisions are made by West Northants Council although the Parish Council is a consultee. During the past year the Parish Council was consulted on 11 planning applications; 5 of which we raised objections to due their impact upon the Parish.

All of these applications, that have been determined so far, have been approved by West Northants Council despite our objections.

In September the Parish Council took legal advice over the procedural errors and incorrect interpretation of planning policy made by West Northants Council in the determination of the Toft Hill planning application in Barby.

The revision of our Neighbourhood Development plan, that the Parish Council has been formulating over the past 2 years, passed independent external examination in February and will go to Parish referendum on 1st May. If a majority vote YES to our Neighbourhood Plan, it will become part of the statutory Development Plan for West Northants. Any planning decisions on housing and the environment, within the Parish, will then be made with reference to our revised Neighbourhood Plan which has been drawn up from feedback received from Parishioners as to how they wish to see the Parish develop

During the past year the Parish Council organised the community speed watch program and have obtained & placed advisory 20 mph speed signs around the Parish. In addition we are working with West Northants Council to improve traffic signage on Cart Hill, Barby.

Over the past twelve months, the Parish Council has worked very hard to improve and assist our communities; time would not allow me to list all of our achievements tonight so I will mention just a few -

- We arranged for the footpath by the Derry in Barby to be cleared and the trees & shrubs overhanging the footpath to be cut back.
- We have purchased two new litter bins for Onley & are purchasing a new litter bin & a bench for the Ware in Barby
- We arranged for the Barby village sign on the road into Barby from Daventry to be repaired
- We gave grants to Barby Meadow Woods to purchase & install a dog poo bin and a grant to the Cricket Club for grass mowing at the sports field.
- We have also just awarded a grant to Barby village hall to assist with the cost of purchasing new chairs
- We negotiated and entered into a new management agreement with the Cricket Club for their continued use of the Sports field
- We now have a Parish Council representative on the board of Trustees at BTEC, to improve communication between our organisations and to ensure BTEC have representation at the Parish Council.
- We arranged for the footpath from the top of Elkington Lane down to Dunchurch Marina, one of the paths that joins our two communities, to be cleared and for the sty and bridge over the stream to be repaired
- Cllr Phil Wagg spent a considerable amount of his own time cutting back hedges & tidying up the small park in School Close, Barby for the benefit of us all
- The Parish Council are very grateful to the gardening club for agreeing to take care of the wild flower area in Barby and for planting bulbs and shrubs around the bench on the Ware.
- On Remembrance Sunday, I had the honour of placing a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council and all Parishioners at our Parish war memorial

Going forward we have already started to establish our plans for further community improvements, which include -

- Traffic calming measures in Daventry Road, Barby
- Having the water leak issue in Church Walk, resolved
- Looking into a new children's playground facility for Onley & changing the play area surface in Barby
- Updating the Parish website & transitioning to gov.uk email addresses for Councillors in accordance with good practice

As a Parish Council we are aiming to have greater integration within our communities so we can ensure that the decisions we make are in accordance with Parishioners' wishes. One very positive way that we have started doing this is Councillors attending the breakfast club in Barby to obtain feedback from residents

We have utilised this feedback in Council decision making and have resolved many of the problems reported to us and are working to resolve others. We appreciate how important it is to find out first hand from residents how they want the Council to improve the Parish

As a Parish Council we are here to serve our Community

I would like to finish by thanking everyone within our Parish who gives up their time to improve our Communities & to make our Parish such a wonderful place to live.

Thank you to all those involved with the organising & running of clubs, charities, groups, organisations & events. For everyone involved with facilitating Onley Park Residents Association, the breakfast club in Barby, Trustees & management teams of our two village halls & Trustees of our other three Parish charities, to mention just a few – thank you to everyone who gets involved; all of us living in the Parish are most grateful to you.

Faith Gorman

Chair – Barby & Onley Parish Council