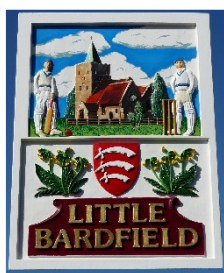


Little Bardfield Parish Council



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To: **All Residents of Little Bardfield Parish**

Subject: Parish Council Report 2020-2021

This is the activity report from your Parish Council for the period April 2020 – March 2021. I hope that you will find it to be of interest and to share it with all members of your family.

We circulate information via three Notice Boards, your Parish Website and local area Email Contact Groups. If you are not already included in an Email Contact Group, then please email your request to your area Parish Councillor:

Little Bardfield:	Cllr. Andrew Davies	davies@farmline.com
Hawkspur Green:	Cllr. Terry Cutmore	tcutmore@btinternet.com
Oxen End:	Cllr. Colin Simpson	colinormondsimpson@gmail.com

Please visit your Parish Website for information on:

- News & Events Calendar, Notices, and Information
- Agendas & Minutes of Parish Council Meetings
- Highways, County and District Councillor's Reports
- The early history of our Parish.

With kind regards

Councillor Andrew Davies
Chairman
Little Bardfield Parish Council
31 March 2021

Little Bardfield Parish Council – 2020-2021 Report

This report summarises the activities of your Parish Council for the 12 months from April 2020 to March 2021.

Purpose

Little Bardfield Parish Council represents the interests of its residents, mainly to Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council. It also endeavours to preserve the rural nature of our area. The Councillors act jointly and individually, as required, to achieve these objectives.

Composition of the Parish Council

Little Bardfield Parish comprises three separate areas: Little Bardfield village (LB), Hawkspur Green (HG) to the north and Oxen End (OE) to the south, all within Uttlesford District Council (UDC) and Essex County Council (ECC). Ideally each of the three areas needs representation.

Uttlesford District Council assigns five positions as Councillors to form the volunteer (unpaid) Little Bardfield Parish Council (PC). Formal elections are held every four years.

During the year William Gardiner and Clare Beeston resigned as Parish Councillors for personal reasons. Paul Eastall initially volunteered to be co-opted but later resigned for business reasons.

Two vacancies exist, one of which would ideally be filled by a representative from the main resident's group in Little Bardfield Village. Anyone interested should contact the Parish Clerk or the Chairman.

Current Parish Council Membership (PC)

Cllr Andrew Davies (Chairman), (LB). Cllr Terry Cutmore (Vice Chairman), (HG)
Cllr Colin Simpson, (OE).

Supported by:

Parish Clerk: Ms Liz Williamson.

Uttlesford District Council, (UDC) Cllr Alan Storah and Cllr Sandi Merifield.

Very sadly Alan Storah died suddenly in October 2020.

Cllr Sandi Merifield, who represents the Stebbing area, very kindly offered to represent Little Bardfield Parish until the next period of District Council Elections in May 2021

Essex County Council, (ECC) Cllr Simon Walsh.

Essex Association of Local Councils.

There is frequent contact between Parish, District and County Councillors.

Parish Council Meetings

The Agendas and Minutes of meetings are published on the three Notice Boards and on the Parish website: www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk

Council Meetings are normally held four times per year.

Additional meetings are held, as required, to review Planning Applications.

Due to the Covid restrictions, all meetings this year have been held online via the Zoom facility.

This year's Meetings were held:

2020	June 30	Parish Council & Annual Parish Meeting
	September 10	Parish Council
	November 9	Parish Council
2021	January 18	Planning Applications
	February 9	Parish Council

Finance

Our finances operate in two separate accounts with Lloyds Bank.

A Treasurers Account which is funded from the “Precept” local tax and is part of the Council Tax.

A Community Account which is funded by donations.

1. **Treasurers Account:**

- This is used to carry out the routine responsibilities of the Parish Council.
- Essex County Council make an annual grant to the Parish Council to arrange for verge cutting to be carried out throughout the Parish.
- The Budget for 2021-2022 was agreed at the February 2021 meeting.

2. **Precept:** This term describes the amount of money the Parish Council needs to carry out its business. There are 118 properties in the Parish with varying levels of occupation, tax band and the occupier’s personal circumstances. These factors are used by UDC to calculate each individual property’s Council Tax. The Parish Precept is the total for all the individual properties. It is collected in the Annual Council Tax Bill by Uttlesford District Council and remitted to the Parish Council.

As the Treasurer’s account is currently adequately financed, the Parish Council decided to decrease the Parish Precept for 2021/2022 by £250 to £3000.

There are 57 Parishes within Uttlesford District. In descending order from the highest Parish Precept to the lowest, Little Bardfield ranks at number 49.

3. **Community Fund:** This is currently funded by an annual compensatory “benefit payment” to the Parish by the operators of the Hawkspur Green Solar Farm. Although arising from the activity in Hawkspur Green, the Fund is made available for distribution throughout the whole Parish.

This year Community Fund grants were made for:

- Purchase of a Defibrillator
- University Course books
- Uttlesford Food Bank
- Almshouses
- Stop Stansted Expansion
- Essex Air Ambulance
- Thaxted Charity Minibus
- Hundred Parishes

Defibrillators

One has been installed in Little Bardfield beside the entrance to the cricket field, next to Rose Cottage, courtesy of Bradley & Abigail Hickman.

One has been installed near the entrance to the Hawkspur Green bridle way, on the outside of Mill House’s barn, courtesy of Rob and Debbie Candler.

One will be purchased for Oxen End once a suitable location has been identified.

Planning Applications 2019-2020 (all areas)

Uttlesford District Council are legally obliged to invite comments from the Parish Council on all Planning Applications submitted regarding any property within the Parish.

Whilst we diligently study all Planning Applications and submit timely constructive comments, UDC Planning Department frequently appear to take little notice of our input when decisions are made.

This can be a frustrating futile time-wasting exercise for the Parish Councillors.

Planning Applications, prefixed UTT, reviewed during this period were:

19/1674/CLE (LB)	Pauls Farm. Retrospective Application. 5 Residential caravans. Refused. Appeal dismissed by the Planning Inspector. A further application made. Outcome unresolved.
20/0218/FUL (HG)	New build dwelling. Approved
20/0883/FUL (LB)	The Hydes. Livestock unit. Approved
ENF/20/0025/C (LB)	Waste storage & processing site next to the River Pant. Subject to numerous correspondence with Environment Agency, ECC and UDC. Outcome unresolved.
20/1559/FUL (LB)	The Bungalow. Replacing original with a new build. Refused. Appeal dismissed.
20/1792/HFF (LB)	Glebe Barn. Replacement porch. Refused. Appeal lodged.
20/1717/LB (LB)	Glebe Barn. Refers to Listed Building. Refused. Appeal lodged.
20/2064/HFF (OE)	Mallards. Demolish garage. Replace with cart lodge. Approved
20/2446/FUL (OE)	Old Cottage. Convert a cart lodge to residential annexe. Awaiting decision
20/2511/AG (LB)	3 large barns for storage. Refused. Appeal lodged. Subject of numerous correspondence. Outcome unresolved.
21/0011/FUL (OE)	Ambrose Cottage. Refurbish stable & menage. Awaiting decision.
21/0599/HFF (LB)	Squirrels. Replacement garage variation. Awaiting decision.
21/0720/LB (OE)	Coft Hall. Retrospective change to garage window. Awaiting decision.
21/0953/HFF (LB)	Eagle House. Rear extensions. Awaiting decision.

Decisions to approve or refuse are made by UDC Planning Department and not by your Parish Council.

An incredible amount of time and communication has been involved over three main subjects.

1. Retrospective approval for residential caravans at Pauls Farm.
2. A waste processing operation by Pauls Farm next to the River Pant. This has involved Essex County Council, the Environment Agency, Uttlesford District Council, and the Health & Safety Executive.
3. A Planning Application by Pauls Farm to erect three large barns on the field on the south side of the Bardfield road, opposite Grade 2 Listed Wainsford Farm, next to Gridiron Villas.

None of these three issues had been satisfactorily resolved by the end of March.

Uttlesford District Council tend not to challenge retrospective Planning Applications or non-compliance of certain conditions appended to an approved Planning Application, probably as a cost saving policy. This “policy” can lead to deliberate avoidance of submitting a Planning Application before work is carried out. It undermines the concept of Planning Applications and further frustrates the efforts of the Parish Council to preserve the traditional character of the Parish for the benefit of the majority.

Essex County Council (ECC)

We are strongly supported by ECC Cllr Simon Walsh. His reports are published on the website as are periodic Highways Reports.

Potholes and road defects Issues reported:

9 reports on 4 potholes, mostly in Little Sampford Road, with some potholes reopening soon after being filled mainly due to the frequent passage of HGV's.

Most potholes have been filled and some areas widely patched.

6 reports on 2 blocked drains. The blocked drain in the dip beside Hill Hall has been reported numerous times to Highways who respond that other flooding problems have a higher priority. The other blocked drain is outside the entrance to Small Farm.

In Little Bardfield, the breakup of tarmac around a drain has been reported.

1 blocked/undersized culvert at the end of the Hawkspur Green bridleway. The greatly increased flow of water since the installation of the Solar Farm on higher ground consistently overwhelms the under lane culvert, threatening to flood the property opposite. Highways currently have no plan to solve this problem which most probably requires a much larger bore culvert to be installed under the lane – at significant expense.

Field drainage onto the Little Sampford Road/Hawkspur Green Lane, near to Small Farm, HG:
The surface water draining from a farm field ditch onto the lane causes a large puddle to form opposite the entrance to Small Farm. Despite representations to ECC Highways, no action has been taken to resolve this.

Uttlesford District Council (UDC)

We are strongly supported by our UDC Councillor. Their reports are published on the website. Alan Storah was regularly active on our behalf until his tragic and untimely death in October 2020. Sandi Merifield who represents Stebbing, took over our Parish on a temporary basis. She immediately became involved and active on our behalf with UDC. A new District Councillor is standing for election in the May. However, the Parish Council are generally disillusioned with the strange decisions that UDC Planning Officers sometimes make and the ineffectiveness of the UDC Enforcement Officers.

Broadband (all areas)

GigaClear broadband has been successfully installed in most areas and taken up by many residents. The available speeds are multiples of the BT line speed at an equivalent price to the previous BT service.

Rural Crime (all areas) Crime Stoppers 0800 555 111

Hare coursing infrequently taking place.

Parish Website www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk

The website main menu options are:

Home

Overview

Parish Council/Uttlesford DC/Essex CC

Finance

History - the history of the Parish is reviewed from 1046.

News & Events Calendar/Notices and Information - this is dependent upon items for publication being notified to the Parish Clerk at littlebardfieldparishclerk@gmail.com

Organisations – this includes the Parish Emergency Response Plan.

Commercial - mainly refers to services available in Great Bardfield and Thaxted.

Is your Parish Council like “The Vicar of Dibley” or the “Handforth Parish Council”?
You could find out and form your own opinion by joining us at our next meeting.

Another busy year for a bunch of Volunteers!!

Report compiled by Cllr Terry Cutmore and authorised by Little Bardfield Parish Council, March 2021.