

Little Bardfield Parish Council Annual Report



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

Subject: Parish Council Report 2022-2023

This is the activity report from your Parish Council for the period April 2022 – March 2023. I hope that you will find it to be of interest and to share it with your family.

Current Parish Council Membership (LBPC)

Cllr Andrew Davies, Little Bardfield, (Chairman); Cllr Jan Warren, Little Bardfield
Cllr Terry Cutmore, Hawkspur Green
Cllr Colin Simpson, Oxen End, (Vice Chairman); Cllr. Juliet O'Brien Oxen End

Supported by:

Parish Clerk: Ms Liz Williamson April-June 2022. Mrs Kate Rixson July 2022-March 2023.
Uttlesford District Council, (UDC) Cllr George Smith
Essex County Council, (ECC) Cllr Martin Foley.
Essex Association of Local Councils.

There is frequent contact between Parish, District and County Councillors. Information is circulated to residents via three Notice Boards, your Parish Website and local area Email Contact Groups.

Your Parish Website www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk has information on:

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

With kind regards

Councillor Andrew Davies
Chairman, Little Bardfield Parish Council
31 March 2023

Little Bardfield Parish Council – 2022-2023 Report

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 collectively and individually, as required, to achieve these objectives.

Composition of the Parish Council

Uttlesford District Council assigns five positions as Councillors to form the volunteer (unpaid) Little Bardfield Parish Council (LBPC). Formal elections are held every four years, the next one being in May 2023.

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 Parish Council representation.

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 in the Little Bardfield cricket pavilion.

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

This year's Meetings were held:

2022	May 11	Parish Council & Annual Parish Meeting
	June 22	Parish Council
	November 2	Parish Council
2023	February 8	Parish Council

Email Contact Groups

Information is regularly shared by your Parish Councillor including reports from the County, District, Highways including road closures, Police, and Parish Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes. Other information as provided by residents.

If you are not already included in an Email Contact Group, then please email your request for inclusion to your area Parish Councillor:

Little Bardfield:	Cllr. Andrew Davies	davies@farmline.com
	Cllr. Jan Warren	fallowcorner2@gmail.com
Hawkspur Green:	Cllr. Terry Cutmore	tcutmore@btinternet.com
Oxen End:	Cllr. Colin Simpson	colinormondsimpson@gmail.com
	Cllr. Juliet O'Brien	Juliet.loftus@live.co.uk

Finance

Our finances operate in two separate accounts with Lloyds Bank:

A Treasurer's Account which is funded from the "Precept" local tax which is part of the Council Tax.

A Community Fund Account which is funded by donations and cannot be used to offset either the Precept or any shortfall in the Treasurer's Account.

1. Treasurer's Account:

This is used to carry out the routine responsibilities of the Parish Council.

The current status of the account is published in the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings.

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 2023-2024 was agreed at the February 2023 meeting.

2. Precept: This term describes the amount of money the Parish Council needs to carry out its routine business. There are 122 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 in two instalments.

Whilst the Treasurer's account is currently well financed, because of increasing costs the Parish Council decided to increase the Parish Precept by £150 to £3150 for the Financial Year 2023/2024 - Just over £1 from each property for the year.

There are 57 Parishes within Uttlesford District. In descending order from the highest Parish Precept to the lowest, Little Bardfield ranks at number 49. Future increased costs may well change this favourable position.

3. Community Fund: This is available to fund any project or activity which benefits residents in the Parish. Although arising from the Solar Farm activity in Hawkspur Green, the Fund is made available for distribution throughout the whole Parish.

The current status of the account is published in the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings.

This year Community Fund grants were made to:

Queen's Jubilee Celebrations

Finchingfield and Thaxted Doctors Practices for treatment equipment.

Almshouses Stop Stansted Expansion

Essex Air Ambulance Thaxted Charity Minibus

Hundred Parishes Flood groundwork

Parish website Defibrillator spares

Defibrillators

We currently have two defibrillators. One at the entrance to the Little Bardfield cricket field, next to Rose Cottage, and the other near the entrance to the Hawkspur Green bridle way, on the outside of Mill House's barn. Both required replacement of time expired batteries and pads, the cost of which was met by the Community Fund

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

Uttlesford District Council (UDC)

Little Bardfield Parish is part of "The Sampfords Ward" for electoral and representation purposes.

We are strongly supported by our UDC Councillor, George Smith.

His periodic reports are published on the website.

Little Bardfield Planning Applications 2022-2023 (all areas)

UDC are legally obliged to inform and invite comments from the Parish Council on all Planning Applications submitted regarding any property or land within the Parish.

The Parish Council are invited to submit comments and opinions on Planning Applications, but it has no authority to Approve or Refuse them. On occasions, our District Councillor may make additional

representations on our behalf. Uttlesford District Council's Planning Department makes all decisions, and your Parish Council has no appeal against any such outcome. Applicant Appeals against refusals by UDC are decided by a Government Inspector.

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. We are often mystified by some such decisions and apparent ineffectiveness of their Enforcement Officers. UDC have had a tendency 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.

The UDC Planning Department is currently under a "Designation Notice" from Central Government which effectively means that they have been placed in "special measures" for larger developments. Such larger developments can now be approved by a higher authority than UDC, possibly to the detriment of both the District and the Parish.

A new Director of Planning, Dean Hermitage, was appointed during the year.

Planning Applications, prefixed UTT/, reviewed by the Parish Council during 2022-2023

(LB = Little Bardfield, HG = Hawkspur Green, OE = Oxen End)

21/3127	LB	Land East of Gridiron Villas, 4 new houses.	Refused by UDC and Appeal refused by Government Inspectorate.	
22/0923	LB	Fallow Corner	Solar Panels	Approved
22/1209	HG	Damions	Alterations	Approved
22/1333	HG	Mill House	Barn conversion to holiday lets	Approved
22/1408	LB	The White House	Convert garage to accommodation	Approved
22/1593	LB	Furthermoor House	One dwelling	Approved
22/2007	LB	The Old Rectory	Heat pump & solar panels	Approved
22/2008	LB	The Old Rectory	Heat pump & solar panels	Approved
22/2009	LB	The Old Rectory	Heat pump & solar panels	Approved
22/2010	LB	The Old Rectory	Heat pump & solar panels	Approved
22/2019	LB	Wainsford Farm	Change garage to annexe	Withdrawn
22/2039	HG	Damions	Extension and alterations	Approved
22/2044	OE	Frenches Farm	Retrospective change of use	Undecided
22/2090	LB	Wainsford Farm	Convert garage to playroom	Approved
22/2287	HG	Hill Hall	Barn conversion to accommodation	Approved
22/2543	LB	The Bungalow	Replacement dwelling	Approved
22/2962	LB	3 Styles	Two storey side extension	Approved
22/3142	LB	Wainsford Farm	Single storey extension	Refused
22/3143	LB	Wainsford Farm	Porch removal and landscaping	Refused
22/3297	LB	Lucas Hill Cottage	Convert garage to accommodation	Approved
22/3468	LB	Pauls Farm	Light commercial buildings	Withdrawn

The waste processing operation by Pauls Farm next to the River Pant has involved Essex County Council, the Environment Agency, Uttlesford District Council, and the Health & Safety Executive. A qualified resident has been most helpful in dealing with these authorities, but this situation has yet to be resolved.

The expansion of the original small riding school at Frenches Farm into a large Equestrian centre, with a projected touring caravan site to the detriment of the narrow lane and properties of the other residents in Oxen End continues to be of concern.

Essex County Council (ECC)

We are strongly supported by ECC Cllr Martin Foley.

Martin was our District Councillor for many years until Little Bardfield Parish was re-aligned by UDC from “The Thaxted Ward” to “The Sampfords Ward”.

Essex Highways Monthly Reports are published on our website.

Potholes and road defects Issues reported:

1. **Potholes:** Unfortunately, these are on the increase again. Anyone can easily report any pothole to Essex Highways via their website. It does not have to be a Parish Councillor.
2. **Oxen End Lane:** Since the large scale development of Frenches Farm into an equestrian centre, the increase in heavy traffic has ruined this lane. ECC Highways are aware but have yet to act.
3. **Blocked drains and flooding:** There are three situations in Hawkspur Green which continually flood in wet weather and have been reported several times to ECC Highways.

By Hill Hall – Highways Engineers visited the location, carried out some culvert jetting and commenced some excavation. The Head of Highways, Cllr Lee Scott, also visited in May 2022, and despite a succession of promises the flooding issue remains unresolved. The latest news is that it work is planned for March 2023. Meanwhile, Mr James Moody tries to keep the drain clear.

By Small Farm – Blocked drain causing large puddles. Highways could not find the drain. Mr Keith Coburn found it and tries to keep it clear.

Opposite the Hawkspur Green bridleway - Since the installation of the Solar Farm on higher ground excess run-off water flows downhill to overwhelm the under lane culvert, causing flooding to the property opposite. The Parish Council arranged for some groundwork to alleviate this problem.

Rural Crime (all areas) Crime Stoppers 0800 555 111

Hare coursing infrequently taking place.

Acting upon information received, the Police raided and closed an illegal cannabis “farm”.

Parish Website www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk

This is your Parish website to share and see information. The website main menu options are:

Home

Overview

Parish Council/Uttlesford DC/Essex CC - Parish Council meeting dates are published here.

Finance – Treasurer and Community Fund Accounts

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

News & Events Calendar & Notices and Information:

Organisations – this includes the Parish Emergency Response Plan.

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

Items for publication on the website can be notified to the Parish Clerk at

littlebardfieldparishclerk@gmail.com

Parish Councillors: Volunteer Councillors to represent Little Bardfield Village and Hawkspur Green are urgently needed. If you would be prepared to represent your area, then please contact the Parish Clerk. Failure to fill these two vacancies might result in your Parish Council being dissolved and combined with The Sampfords.

Report compiled by Cllr Terry Cutmore and authorised by Little Bardfield Parish Council, 31 March 2023.

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