

BINLEY WOODS PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER No 22

March 2011



Welcome to the latest edition of the Binley Woods Parish Council Newsletter. Ken Short has taken over as editor and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Ken on 02476 540422 or by e-mail to editor.bwpc@btinternet.com.

Parish Council Elections

Due to a lack of parishioners willing to put themselves forward, there has not been a Parish Council election in Binley Woods since May 1983. For those of you old enough to remember, that's when Maggie was on the verge of winning her second general election and True by Spandau Ballet was number one in the charts. Not only have we not had an election for 28 years, but for several years the Parish Council has been functioning with only nine councillors (our full compliment is ten) and with one of our number retiring, we could well be two councillors short come May.

The Parish Council is therefore keen to get some new blood on to the Council. If you are interested and wish to obtain a nomination form, please contact the Clerk of the Council, John Cook. Completed nomination papers must be sent to the Returning Officer at Rugby Borough Council by no later than noon on 4th April 2011.

Doug Hodkinson

Councillor Hodkinson is standing down after 28 years service on Binley Woods Parish Council. Doug was first elected to the Parish Council in May 1983; indeed he is the only current member of the Council to have ever actually been 'elected'.

Councillor Hodkinson has worked relentlessly for the village and has always given his all in whatever he has done. Everyone on the Council will miss him. His knowledge in local councils is second to none - if Doug doesn't know a contact, there isn't one! Thank you, Doug, from the Chairman and all the Councillors.

Parish Plan

Once again, we are asking for volunteers from residents to form a Steering Group to produce a Parish Plan. The plan would form a framework to structure what we would like to be available in our village over the next few years. It could help stop large developments; prevent the loss of existing facilities in the village; be used to put pressure on getting better facilities for the elderly and youngsters; and create a better environment within Binley Woods. If you have any spare time and are willing to join such a group, please contact us for more details.

Chairman's Report for 2010/2011

Local Policing

Our local boys in blue, particularly our own PCSO Matthew Havelock supported by neighbouring PCSO Ken Wyer, are doing a great job in keeping down crime and anti-social behaviour within the village. They provide a reassuring presence when pounding our streets and are well placed to react should a crime be committed. If you wish to speak to our local PCSO, Matt can be contacted on 01788 853851. Or keep an eye out for the Mobile Police Station which regularly visits the village.

The Warwickshire Police Force is going through a testing time with reductions in finances - let's hope that we can keep our PCSOs.

A46 'TGI Fridays' Roundabout

The scheme to develop shops and housing on the land behind TGI Fridays and Morrisons incorporates proposals to upgrade the roundabout on the A46 near TGI Fridays and the roundabout on the A428 near B&Q. The plans include the installation of traffic lights on the A46 roundabout. Any improvement to the flow of traffic at the western end of our village will surely be warmly welcomed by residents.

The development seems to be gaining more interest, and once the financial climate improves Coventry City Council and the developer (whoever it is) will no doubt be looking to move it forward.

Village Green

The Village Green has become a great asset to the village and is a lovely area to visit. The benches and play equipment make it a great place for parents with younger children.

To improve access, the Parish Council is looking to put a path around the Memorial Stone. We also want to introduce some minor drainage channels which will hopefully dry out the green area a little, whilst still allowing sufficient moisture for the trees to thrive.

Allotments

The Allotment Committee continues to do a sterling job managing and maintaining the area. All the plots are full and there is a waiting list from would-be gardeners. The Committee has now introduced a scheme whereby newcomers are allocated a smaller plot until they have proven they are able to look after their allotment satisfactorily.

Should you wish to join the waiting list, please contact the Secretary, Hugh Sweeney, on 02476 544473.

Tree Planting

The first phase of tree planting around the village is now complete. Sadly, we lost a number of trees during the long dry spell early last year, but we have now replaced those trees that died. This replacement was achieved at a fraction of the original cost as it was not necessary to resurvey the sites for buried cables and pipes.

Highway Verges

We would ask residents to keep the verges clear of parked vehicles, especially when the owners are not from Binley Woods. Not only does it churn the grass up and make the verges unsightly, but it causes problems for our contractor when cutting the verges. In addition, by parking on a highway verge and/or pavement you may be committing an offence, for example if the vehicle is causing an obstruction or is a commercial vehicle. Please park considerately.

Street Lighting

With the installation of the last lamp in Monks Road, the scheme to upgrade the street lighting in the village is now complete. All the lamps within the village are now low energy and, in the main, shine downwards rather than upwards and outwards. Upgrading the village lighting has been a long, arduous task, ably accomplished by Doug Hodgkinson. Our thanks go to Councillor Hodgkinson for an excellent job.

Recreation Ground

The improvements to the pavilion are now finished save for the removal of the unsightly garage, which is in hand. The Pavilion floor has been tiled by Amtico at no cost to the Parish Council. This is now a great venue for children's parties and has been used on a number of occasions. If anybody is interested in hiring the pavilion, please contact Paul Salisbury for details.

We have installed a wheelchair / pushchair gate at the Birchwood Road entrance to the recreation ground, but so far have only had enquiries from three people for keys. Should you need a key for access at this gate, please contact Paul Salisbury.

Garden of Remembrance

With our high water table, it is not feasible to have a burial ground in Binley Woods. However, a number of residents asked if we can provide a garden of remembrance and the Parish Council has been trying to secure a suitable plot of land. We have approached local landowners about strips of land within Binley Woods but without success. This is one item which would benefit from being part of a Parish Plan and we hope it would be included by the Steering Group when it is formed.

Finances

Having been frugal with Parish funds over the past years, we have accomplished a reserve of half the precept, as recommended by the external auditors. Given this position, we decided under the present climate not to increase the precept this year.

We are, however, now hoping to put money aside each year as a reserve to allow for future items requiring significant expenditure. For example, purchasing a plot of land for a remembrance garden should one become available, or the replacement of the play equipment on the recreation ground or village green. These would be large projects which would not be affordable from the normal annual precept.

Annual Parish Assembly

The 2011 Parish Assembly will take place on Thursday, 28th April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All residents are welcome to attend.

Kath Howes

After some 30 years loyal service to the Village Hall, former caretaker, cleaner, booking clerk, key-holder and Hall Committee member Kath Howes has decided to retire. The Parish Council, on behalf of the entire village, would like to thank Kath for all her hard work and dedication and we wish her a long and happy retirement.

A Message from the Chairman

In the previous newsletter a statement in the introduction could have been read as meaning that the Chairman and the Parish Council had been stressed by a request for information, whereas the stress was brought about by an accumulation of issues throughout the term. The Parish Council is always willing to provide any information to residents providing it is not of a personal nature. As Chairman, I found it frustrating that the MPs expenses scandal had caused people to think that Parish Councillors may be similarly taking advantage of expenses. Coupled with this was the withdrawal of funding for almost 8 months and the situation that we were down in numbers of Councillors. This meant projects within the village had to be put on hold. If this ambiguity caused offence to residents, then we apologise. The newsletter is merely a means of communication and we would not like to see it ceased.

Binley Woods Parish Council Information

The Parish Council meets in the Morrison Room of the Binley Woods Village Hall at 7.30pm. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month, but this may vary at Christmas and during the summer holiday period.

Members of the public are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings. There is a standing agenda item at the start of each meeting where members of the public can raise concerns and ask questions.

Meetings are advertised on the Parish Council noticeboards around the village. Minutes of previous meetings are available from the library and our website.

Chairman	Paul Salisbury	02476 542340
Vice Chairman	Dave Jones	02476 540101
Councillors	Norman Brinton	02476 542178
	Peter Claisse	02476 543932
	Joan Feetenby	02476 543111
	Linda Harbour	07958 244784
	Doug Hodgkinson	02476 542893
	Paul Howells	02476 542611
	Ken Short	02476 540422

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