



## **Burton Latimer Town Council** **Annual Report 2017/2018**

### **Civic Centre:**

The Civic Centre has become much busier with many more groups and residents using it, including Adult Learning (Northamptonshire County Council), a theatre/dance group, tots and baby play and massage sessions, training, flower arranging and much more. It is also great to see more birthday parties (for all ages) being held there. The Centre has certainly now become a hub of the community. and .continues to be the Council's principal asset.. There are currently a few offices to rent. This year the roof has been re-felted and skylights replaced, funded from Section 106 Monies and a Wind Farm Grant. Additionally, fire safety regulations have been met. We continue to carry out improvements and are currently seeking quotes for new chairs and to refurbish the tea/coffee making facility.

### **Website ([www.burtonlatimer.org](http://www.burtonlatimer.org)), Facebook and Twitter Accounts:**

Anecdotal feedback consistently shows that the website – which was launched in 2008 – is seen as a useful resource for local residents, and for people planning to visit or move to Burton Latimer. The number of visitors to the website has grown steadily over the years, and currently stands at around 500-550 unique (i.e. different) visitors every day.

The website holds a large amount of valuable information about Burton Latimer Town Council and the local community – for which it won a countywide award in 2013. Recent additions include a 2017 edition of the *Burton Latimer Directory* (which is a regularly updated catalogue of businesses, sporting activities and social clubs in the town) and the facility to listen to audio recordings of the monthly town council meetings.

In 2014, Burton Latimer's online presence was boosted by the addition of Twitter and Facebook accounts, linked to the website. The two social media sites help to engage a broader cross-section of the local community, draw additional visitors to the website, and promote local causes, activities and events. They also act as additional points of contact for local residents to raise questions or concerns with the Town Council and receive a timely response. To date, the Facebook page has received almost 600 'likes', and the Twitter feed has just under 200 regular 'followers'.

Following a comprehensive review in 2016, a group is currently working on redeveloping the website to take account of recent developments in technology and website design. We hope to launch this July/August time. The new website will be more user friendly and much easier to update and maintain.

### **Business Links:**

The Council has been actively working with businesses within Burton Latimer and will hold another cheese and wine evening shortly where Burton Latimer businesses can meet and share their thoughts and vision for the future.

The local businesses fully supported and were involved in the Christmas Light Switch On this year with many staying open and a local firm sponsored the stage. This year we will add to the Christmas display by putting small Christmas trees complete with lights on brackets along part of the High Street and Churchill Way.

The Business and Social Directory commissioned by the Town Council in 2012 is regularly updated and continues to be a very useful source of information for local residents.

### **Parish Plan:**

The Burton Latimer Parish Plan – which was first published in 2011 is available on the website. The original plan sets out the vision, aims and targets for Burton Latimer for the next few years, as identified by local residents in a household survey. The latest updated version records the progress that has been made with implementing the Plan so far, and highlights areas where further action is still needed. It would be good to have more local people involved in this. Just let any of your Burton Latimer Councillors know if you are interested.

### **Planning :**

Your local councillors continue to put forward local views regarding local planning applications, and oppose those which we believe to be inappropriate for the development of the town.

We have strongly opposed the application to build 80+ houses on land in the Ise Valley with access off Gardner Road. The application to develop land adjacent to Junction 9 of the A14 has been rejected – it is considered unsuitable until the Isham bypass is built. To date there has been no applications for the Roxhill development site off Junction 10.

Work has now started on the site on Finedon Road for about 22 houses which were approved many years ago. Two other approved sites have lain untouched for many years but we are hoping to get work started soon.

We are working very closely with KBC on the question of the adoption of various open spaces through the town.

### **Wind Farm Monies:**

Your Town Council has been successful in getting the monies due to Burton Latimer paid directly to Northamptonshire Community Foundation who have ring-fenced it solely for projects within the Parish, Currently we are trying to ensure that the communities monies from the new southern extension are dealt with in the same way. Long term we hope to get the original wind farm monies transferred from KBC to the Foundation. A number of local organisations have already benefitted from this arrangement. Should you wish to apply for a grant please contact the Northamptonshire Community Foundation.

### **Section 106 monies**

A small working group of town councillors has been established to ensure that any community benefits potentially available from Section 106 monies from new developments are optimised. Significant progress has been made this year in the Town Council having an influence in Section 106 matters and the Town Council has built up a good working relationship with Northamptonshire County Council over highway matters. This has led to the removal of the chicane and the installation of a crossing adjacent to Piggott's Lane in the High Street and also to the provision of traffic calming measures in Church Street. It is pleasing that a good relationship has been made in the last year to build a similar strong link with Kettering Borough Council.

We are pleased to report that excellent initial progress has been made on the first part of the Urban Design Framework. This will involve an extension to the Car park off Churchill Way and improvements to the Paddocks play area. This scheme will go for public consultation in the summer. At the same time discussions are taking place on phase two of the car park area which will take into account the area where the old toilets are as well as the space adjacent to them.

### **Highways and footpaths:**

Whilst BLTC is not responsible for the upkeep of the roads our Highways Rep has worked hard to establish a very good working relationship with the Highways Department. There are regular inspections and, whilst we acknowledge it is not ideal, we have succeeded in getting them to fill in many potholes as they appear and

also to completely resurface parts of Findon Road and Cranford Road. Hot off the press we have just heard that, thanks to a great deal of perseverance, Bridle Road will eventually be resurfaced!

Many of the roads in Burton are very narrow and really not ideal for the number of cars now using them. There are many parking problems and this is not helped by there not being a proper Parking Warden Scheme.

All the respective lights have the correct RCDs (Residual Current Detectors) and timers fitted for the Christmas Lights. A design feasibility has been undertaken to improve Calcotts Corner so as to remove HGVs from Finedon and Higham Roads but any implementation is on hold pending the commencement of the Isham bypass and the necessary funding for the work, however both NCC and BLTC consider that it is a priority.

The Community Payback Team have done a really good job this year in keeping our footpaths free of litter. However it is very distressing to see the huge amount of litter they pick up each time. There seems to be very little pride these days in keeping things tidy and litter free regardless of the law and the number of litter bins we have around. A comprehensive survey of dropped kerbs throughout the town has established 47 sets are missing presently, various funding options are being examined.

Your Town Council is strongly in support of the creation of a footpath from Diana Way past Hogs Hollow to join the path that enters from Finedon Road through the Ise Valley to the Pocket Park. We are also about to finalise the registration of the land given by Taylor Wimpey at the rear of their Cranford Road development. We hope to use this as a useable open space and also a wild life habitat. We will also create a footpath from the football area in the Cranford Road development to join up with path UA6 which starts in Woodcock Street. KBC will shortly undertake work to finalise the small football pitch area.

A new litter bin has been installed on Wold Road and

Alumasc have agreed to fund one on Polwell Lane.

### **Farmer's Market:**

The Farmer's Market is continuing to operate on the first Saturday of each month, and has now been running for 12 years. We continue to strive for an increase in stands/stalls and we would urge all residents to support this venture and to take advantage of being able to meet with your town councillors on a monthly basis. There is also the opportunity for local groups and charities from within Burton Latimer to promote their organisations on a regular basis free of charge.

A group has recently been set up to look at ways of improving the Farmers Market and attracting more people to it. If anyone would like to join the group or let us have ideas we would be pleased to hear from you. KBC are also going to help us with fresh ideas. Sadly, over the years many local Markets have disappeared due to people not using them so please support ours.

### **Pocket Park:**

The Pocket Park continues to be a source of much enjoyment to the residents of Burton Latimer and is popular with many dog walkers. This has meant that some of the paths have started to deteriorate, not helped by visits from Mr Mole who has turned some areas into slimy mud! We have, hopefully, dealt with this with a humane solution which in true conservation fashion will not kill the moles but hopefully will persuade them to relocate somewhere else! We will use any proceeds from the Annual Duck Race and Fete this year (we are all volunteers so everything gets reinvested in the Pocket Park) to start to improve the paths in the Pocket Park. This will be a two year programme because of the expense involved. We would also like to create another picnic area.

It is important to remember that the upkeep of the Pocket Park is done by a very small band of volunteers who are ably assisted by the Community Pay Back Team.

The Annual Duck Race and Fete will take place on Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> July this year and it is hoped that, as in previous years, it will be an outstanding success. If anyone wishes to volunteer to help with the Duck Race or the maintenance of this fantastic natural facility, would they please ensure that they contact one of the BLT councillors. The Pocket Park Management Board is working hard to seek ways of further improving this very popular amenity. The Community Pay Back team continue to provide invaluable help to maintain the Pocket Park.

The Council continues to be very appreciative of the work done by the Pocket Park volunteers. Linden Homes have now completed their work and this has enabled us to add two extra access points to the Pocket Park. All of the Pocket Park land is now owned by Burton Latimer Town Council thus protecting it for the future enjoyment of all.

We have recently produced a four year business and management development plan for the Pocket Park to ensure it continues to be a lovely and peaceful place for residents to use. The plan includes a new picnic area, sensory garden and a new portacabin.

### **Christmas Lights:**

The Town Council endeavours to ensure there is a suitable display of festive lights each year. Last year we reinstated the Christmas tree with lights in the Millennium Gardens. The new display was generally well received by the community. The new light columns posed a few problems around compatibility with the Christmas Lights but luckily these were overcome in time for the switch on! Last year's Christmas Lights Switch On event was very successful, again with a stage sponsored by Alpro, Connect FM hosted the event and a full range of entertainment and stalls were enjoyed by all. It was very pleasing that many local businesses joined in the celebrations and opened their shops and gave away free drinks and mince pies, etc on the evening.

### **Police:**

We continue to work closely with the Police in respect of anti-social behaviour, patrolling of the no-alcohol zone and dangerous/illegal parking in the town. BLTC organised a public Crime Prevention meeting at the end of last year. This was very interesting and led to a number of new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes being set up, visits to the CTV Centre and the new Police Centre and the possibility of Street Patrols being set up in Burton Latimer. The biggest thing it highlighted is that we all need to move away from traditional ways of thinking because with all the cut backs the police are having to work in different ways and everyone needs to take a little responsibility for improving things. This is quite a 'hard pill to swallow' when most of us pay our taxes for services.

We are still waiting for an agreement to be reached between NCC and KBC on the use of Parking Wardens. Until this is implemented we rely on the police. They cover a very wide area but have been active where parking has been a problem such as near the local schools and shops. We have also, recently, been receiving improved reporting by the police of crime within Burton Latimer.

### **Community Payback Team:**

The Town Council continues to be grateful for the work done by the Community Pay Back Team and, apart from that mentioned elsewhere in this report, the CPT has played a leading role in ensuring that the garden in front of the Civic Centre looks attractive.

They continue to weed and keep tidy the footpaths and redecorate the Civic Centre and street furniture. They have also done extensive work in the Pocket Park, for the Burton Latimer Scouts and Guides, the Cricket Club and the Allotment Association.

The Community Pay Back Team (CPT) have done a large amount of work in keeping Burton Latimer tidy. They have also carried out extensive litter picking in targeted areas. If there are any areas which local residents feel need attention

please let any councillor know. We would stress the importance we place on people not dropping litter and cleaning up after their dogs.

### **Sports and Leisure:**

Exploratory dialogue is underway around getting the long-awaited Sports and Leisure Centre moving.

### **Pride of Burton Latimer Award:**

BLTC are setting up the above award and will very soon be asking for nominations to recognise either talent, voluntary work or anything special which our residents have done during the last year. There will be two awards, one for under 25 years and one for over this. If you would like a nomination form please contact any BLTC councillor.

### **Unitary Authority and Public Library:**

The Town Council is currently watching developments in these areas most carefully, but until such times as the Government makes a decision and the relevant time scales are known, there is little that the Town Council can do beyond developing good relationships with Northamptonshire County Council and Kettering Borough Council. Residents of Burton Latimer will be kept informed of developments as they occur.

The situation at the moment is that the seven Borough and District Councils and NCC have to now come up with a plan by late July on how this will work with going from effectively 8 councils to two and, after widespread consultation, present it to the Government Inspector for approval or otherwise.

### **Appendix 'A'**

*Town Council Annual Accounts 2017/2018 – Payments & Receipts Account (Subject to Audit)*

### **Appendix 'B'**

*Councillors' Attendance 2017/2018 (April – March)*