



# Bray Parish Council

## Newsletter

### Autumn/Winter 2020

---

---

#### COVID 19

Covid 19 cases are continuing to rise across the country and especially within RBWM, with Bray having the third worst number of cases. It is understood that locally Covid is being spread through community transmission rather than through known contacts. To prevent a local lockdown, we encourage all residents to:

**HANDS** wash hands frequently or use hand sanitiser

**FACE** wear masks when in close contact with others, such as at school gates

**SPACE** follow social distancing measures, keeping two metres away if not wearing a face mask or one metre with a face mask.

Please also use the NHS track and trace app and log in using the QR code when entering public buildings.

#### Chairman's Message

Bray Parish Council has a new larger office. As of this September the Parish Office has been relocated to the Jubilee Room at the rear of the Braywood War Memorial Hall Fifield, our telephone number and email addresses remain the same.

The work of the Parish was outgrowing our premises in the Holyport Memorial Hall and this fact coupled with the pending redevelopment of the Holyport hall made a move essential. For once Covid-19 was not a factor in the decision but it is true that the new office is much more convenient in these days of "social distancing".

The government Covid-19 restrictions required us to close our parish playgrounds for some time this spring and early summer. We opened them again in August with a few modifications to ensure safe operation. These changes will be reversed as soon as it is safe to do so.

The long awaited A308 Study was commenced in September with a three-week information collecting exercise. It is understood that a more formal official consultation will be held at some time in the future. The A308 is a very important road link between Windsor and Maidenhead and we cannot stress the importance of making certain that this road does not become even more of a bottleneck than it already is.

Bray Parish has two single carriageway A class roads crossing the parish (A308 and A330) both are narrow and prone to congestion. For some time now Bray Parish Council has been concerned with the condition of a number of roads in the parish and in response to this, formed a Traffic and Highways Group to address resident's concerns. This group has suggested modifications to the Bray Parish road network to RBWM with a view to improving matters. If residents have any ideas that, they feel, will add "local knowledge" to this task, please contact the Clerk at [Clerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk).

As I write this piece RBWM has a Climate Change Policy out to consultation. One thing is certain a vehicle with a running internal combustion engine sitting in a traffic jam is no longer transport as it has instantly turned into pollution. The junction of the Holyport Road and the Windsor Road is the

centre of a, so called, Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) by virtue of the high levels of airborne pollution. The Parish Council worked with RBWM to improve the traffic flow at this junction by making the road under the motorway bridge wider thus improving the right turn into the Upper Bray Road. It is yet to be seen if the smart motorway work above the junctions further improves the situation. You can expect to see traffic survey equipment around the parish over the next few months associated with this survey work. The question must be, has Covid-19 distorted the figures in the short term or modified travel habits permanently?

CLlr Ken Elvin

## Traffic Issues

Residents are rightly concerned over safety issues on the Parish roads. BPC share those concerns and have a Transport and Highway Committee comprised of BPC Cllrs and local resident groups. I chair that group and for some time now we have been putting together the main resident concerns with a view to lobbying RBWM to change junction layouts and or speed limits. I say lobby because as a Parish Council we have no powers over highways. The local authority (RBWM) are the highway authority.

How do we get the changes that residents want?

BPC seek to gain the support of our two Borough Cllrs - Leo Walters and David Coppinger as, without their support, we are unlikely to get the changes we believe are needed.

BPC also fill in online forms to request highway changes . Residents are also able to send in these forms which may be found at;

<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/request-highway-improvement>

We are currently pursuing with RBWM and our Borough Cllrs the following;

- A308 Holyport Road Roundabout Improvements
- A308 Reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between Bray roundabout and Monkey Island Lane
- B3024 Improvements to the junction with Fifield Road and Fifield Lane
- B3024 Oakley Green Road, extension of the paths at Oakley Green to improve safety and allow students to walk to school safely
- B3024 Reduction in speed limit to 30mph and repairs to areas that have been damaged by HGVs  
B3024 Improvements to the junction with the A330 Ascot Road
- Fifield Road – reduction in speed limit to from 60mph to 40mph due to the lack of footpaths and lighting and to the ditch along the side of the road.
- Holyport Road between Stroud Farm Road and Moneyrow Green – improvement to signage to indicate dangerous corner
- Drift Road – Reduction in speed limit and improvements to the road which is breaking up due to the weight of HGVs.

To add weight to our arguments regarding the above we are asking residents to complete a very short survey to indicate which of the above are of most importance, the survey may be found at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5CDK3GB>

If you, as residents of Bray Parish, have any concerns on highways issues you can email your Borough Councillors. [cllr.Coppinger@RBWM.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.Coppinger@RBWM.gov.uk) and [Cllr.Walters@RBWM.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Walters@RBWM.gov.uk) . Please copy

me [Brian.Millin@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Brian.Millin@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk) so I can follow up with Cllrs Coppinger and Walters on your concerns.

Speeding is a common concern of residents and with limited police resources we see less and less of the enforcement vans in the Parish. We can counteract this by mounting our own speed watch. Other parts of the borough have been carrying out this with Borough Cllrs working alongside TVP Officers. Again, if you would like to see this sort of activity in the Parish let your Borough Councillors know . Bray Parish Councillors will be pleased to work with their Borough colleagues on such initiatives. We are all aware of the financial issues facing RBWM but that should not stop us making our requests for improvements to the safety of our roads in the Parish .

Cllr Brian Millin

## Holyport Green

Although it may appear that the Parish Council has not moved forward with the works to protect Holyport Green since travellers first arrived in 2018, the Parish Council has faced delays caused firstly by the length of time taken to get planning permission, followed by the requirement to comply with planning conditions imposed and then by Covid 19 lockdown measures.

The Parish Council was able to reset the stones on the Green by Holyport Lodge as these were already in place and so the work could be deemed as maintenance. It was not however able to undertake any further measures as the area is Green Belt, Conservation area and flood zone and planning permission is needed for work to be carried out.

Advice was sought from RBWM on what it could do to protect the area from travellers, we were not allowed to put bollards or stones to prevent access to the vulnerable areas of the Green as it would impact on the openness of the Green.

Planning permission for a bund and ditch as the only alternative was applied for in May 2019. We were then advised by planning officers that the bund would be refused as the environment agency would not approve the bund due to the potential for flooding and so an amended planning application for a ditch only was applied for.

Planning permission was finally approved at the end of January 2020 but was accompanied by a number of planning conditions that need to be approved before works can take place, which includes archaeological works, traffic schemes, planting schemes (we are not allowed to replace with grass but must sow wildflowers) construction management schemes, protections of trees measures and all soil removed to an approved site.

Tender documents were drawn up by Councillors in February 2020 and quotes were sought from 4 separate companies to undertake the work, however as the tender period was during lockdown no replies were received until the end of June. The Council approved work to take place at the remote meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July and the contract was awarded. Conditions paperwork has now been received from the various contractors and has been sent to RBWM for approval by the planning department. Once the conditions have been approved by RBWM then the work will be carried out. The full cost of this work will be in the region of £14,000.

Susan Cook – Clerk

## Thames Valley Police

The following advice has been provided by the Thames Valley Police Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter.

As the evenings start to draw in, make sure you;

- Lock your Cars

- Leave nothing on display, something laid over the back seat of your car may indicate it is there to hide something
- The most common place to hide laptops and handbags is under the passenger seat – The opportunist thieves know this
- Secure houses properly
- Lock all external doors and windows unless you are in that room
- If you are going in and out to the garden, you must always lock the door behind you. Opportunists can sometimes hear if you are working in the garden and will just try the back door in case it has been left unlocked
- Think about a video doorbell, most have the advantage of being able to add additional cameras
- Secure garden sheds/garages. Opportunist thieves cannot carry ‘burglary equipment’. If they are ‘stop checked’ and found in possession of anything that could be used to break into your home, they can be arrested for ‘going equipped’, so may look for tools in sheds and garages, when they select a target.
- Secure garden ornaments, concrete down birdbaths/garden statues and make sure there are no loose rocks/bricks, which could be used to smash rear patio doors
- Always set your alarm for the ground floor when you go to bed. Fully set the alarm, every time you leave the building.

## Holyport Pond

The pond very much proved to be a special part of the parish during lockdown, with many visitors to see the ducks, fish and terrapins. The level of the pond is dependent on local water levels and is also fed by water drain off from the roads. During the past few years, the summer months have seen the level of the pond fall dramatically and so the Parish Council sought advice from the Environment Agency on how best to manage the pond as a natural space.

We were advised that it would be necessary to remove silt from the bottom of the pond that feeds into the pond from drains across Holyport Green and Holyport Road, along with the debris from fallen leaves. This work last took place some 10 years ago and apparently had been undertaken on a similar time scale previously. The work to lift the crowns of the Weeping Willows and remove dead wood was able to be completed and the Parish Council were working towards having the remaining works completed in the early spring, before the nesting season, but due to lockdown it was not possible to obtain quotes and have the work go ahead.

By the time you receive this newsletter work should be near completion, the silt will have been removed, this will have gone to a specialist tip as there were found to be elevated levels of certain heavy metals, the rushes will have been spread further around the inlets for the pond to reduce the spread of silts across the pond and a new duck platform will be on the way to being installed. The Maintenance Schedule now includes regular emptying of the gully’s in the vicinity to reduce the amount of silt emptying into the pond, along with annual removal of the silt from around the rushes so that it does not make its way into the centre of the pond.

Most of the fish were removed earlier in the year following the very hot weather and included; 28 Carp, 18 Goldfish, 12 Tench, 8 Roach, 2 Rudd and 1 Eel with a total weight of 102lb, the terrapins eluded capture. The fish have been rehomed in Environment Agency approved rivers and lakes, which will be more suitable for their long-term health and survival. We ask that residents do not rehome fish in the pond, as it may not be the best environment for them or for the wildlife that may

already be there. We also request that residents do not introduce other wildlife to the area, the ducklings were a special treat to see earlier in the year, but they and their mother had been transferred from another area and their mum was predated by a fox. The welfare of the ducklings was of great concern as ducks will not adopt other ducklings and it was greatly feared the ducklings would also be predated, but they were fortunate to be adopted by the pair of Canada Geese.

Susan Cook – Clerk

## St Michaels Church

In common with churches throughout the land, St Michael's had to close during the lockdown imposed because of the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. That was only the building, of course; under the leadership of the Vicar, the Reverend Ainsley Swift, the people who make up the real church were as active as ever, looking out for each other and for the local community. Like lots of other groups, the church community discovered Zoom, first for meetings, then informal get togethers, and when everyone was used to the medium, virtual services, which were a huge blessing and are continuing even though our 10.00 am Parish Communion has resumed we also live stream the service from Church on Zoom (ask for details).

The building itself, meanwhile, was in the tender care of our Fabric Officer Ian Murray, and at the beginning of July authority was given for the church to open for private prayer only. This is on Wednesday mornings between 10 and 11. To our delight, permission to resume services in church on Sunday came at the beginning of August, and the Church Council made suitable arrangements for this to start on 9 August.

There is currently just the one service each Sunday, Parish Communion at 10am, sadly without any hymns or other singing, and of course with masks worn and social distancing strictly observed. We all pray that by the time you read this, services may be in some way back to 'normal', but much more importantly, that the virus that has ruined so many lives is under control or eradicated.

There does seem to be some good coming out of the sadness of the last few months with people talking about realising how important friendship, family and time together with others is.

All are welcome at St Michael's and even if you have never been before you might consider coming along, you will receive a warm welcome, we would love to see you.

Jim Tucker and The Revd. Ainsley Swift

## Parish Council Meetings

The Coronavirus Act 2020 gave Parish Councils for the first time, the legal ability to hold meetings remotely, the monthly planning meetings and six weekly council meetings are now being held via Zoom. The agendas for these meetings are posted on the website at [www.brayparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.brayparishcouncil.gov.uk) which is currently in the process of being updated to meet Accessibility Compliance requirements. The meeting dates for the Council year until the end of May 2021 are;

Main Council Meetings - 23<sup>rd</sup> November; 18<sup>th</sup> January; 1<sup>st</sup> March; 19<sup>th</sup> April; 17<sup>th</sup> May

Planning Meetings - 2<sup>nd</sup> November; 7<sup>th</sup> December; 11<sup>th</sup> January; 15<sup>th</sup> February; 15<sup>th</sup> March; 12<sup>th</sup> April; 10<sup>th</sup> May

You may be interested to hear the experience of Cllr Pierce regarding earlier Council meetings;

When I joined the Parish Council, (by co-option) there was no Parish Office. The Clerk to the Council at that time had an entirely separate daily occupation and arrived at Council Meetings (held in the evening) by bicycle with handwritten minutes which he read out to members. St Michael's Church Hall in Bray was the venue for meetings, which during the day was used by older Braywick pupils for lessons until the first Oldfield School opened. Despatch of business was brisk, local knowledge

detailed and extensive. Meetings later moved to a portacabin at Braywood School and then to Fifield Victory Hall. The Clerk by this time worked part-time from home.

The most unusual situation for a meeting was when, just once, it was held around a listed chest tomb close by St Michaels Church Hall. The Verger had not unlocked the Hall as expected and no key was available. Members placed their papers on the tomb and business proceeded.

Susan Cook – Clerk

## Parish Allotments

On 6<sup>th</sup> August two Parish Councillors together with the Assistant Clerk visited first Bray and then Holyport allotments to inspect and to judge them. The media have detailed at length the interest people have taken in gardening in these difficult times and this was evident in many of the plots viewed. Flowers, herbs, berries, cucumbers and beans of varied and unusual colours competed for attention with the expected potatoes, carrots, onions, beetroot and the seemingly endless, prolific courgettes.

Judges were looking for a neat, well maintained plot with a variety of crops, managed waste disposal (composting) and evidence of continuing effort. Some newcomers deserved especial praise; this was particularly noticeable at Holyport.

Bray - Winner 10B (Harden), Runner Up 20B (Boycott), Highly Commended 7B (Flanders)

Holyport – Winner 4A (Guilloud), Runner Up 16 (Lawes), Highly Commended 11 (Hancock)

Cllr Margaret Pierce

## Tennis Court and Play Areas

Nobody could have imagined at the start of the year that the world would see the sorts of measures to restrict people's movements that have not been seen since the end of the Second World War.

We did not think for one moment that lockdown would last as long as it did and that restrictions would continue to have such an impact. The risk assessments that had to be put in place in order to allow both the Tennis Court and the Play Areas to open took much time to prepare and put in place and are reviewed as Government advice changes.

The full risk assessment for the three play areas may be found on the website, we remind parents that the play areas are not cleaned, and parents should provide their own wipes and hand sanitisers. One swing has now been removed from each of the bays to maintain social distancing, as it was found that the cable ties to prevent use were being cut through.

Tennis bookings should be made and paid for at least 24 hours before play, through the Assistant Clerk at [assistantclerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:assistantclerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk) between 9:30am and 12:30pm, for further information please see the website.

Susan Cook – Clerk

## Litter Bins

It was extremely disappointing and frustrating for residents in Bray who experienced the failure of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to empty the street litter bins at Bray Village Hall and the Causeway car parks year for over eight weeks during the Pandemic and at the hottest time of the year.

A number of excuses were made to the Parish Council and residents during this time, including the loss of the key to empty the bins, before the contractors advised the Parish Council that they would not empty the bins and that the Parish Council would need to do so; a situation that astounded Parish Councillors.

Despite being advised otherwise the contractors believed the bins to be the responsibility of the Parish Council so the RBWM Contract Manager was invited to meet the Land Management Committee, where he was appraised of the background regarding these bins and he has advised that he will check back through RBWM records with a view to these bins being put back on the collection list, in the meantime the Parish Contractor is emptying the bins.

RBWM has an online function for reporting all sorts of problems including bins, roads, parking and trees and this can be found at; <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/report-it>

Susan Cook – Clerk

### **Allotment Waiting List**

Around the country there has been a huge uptake on the number of people applying for an allotment plot during the Coronavirus pandemic and the same can be said for our allotments at Bray and Holyport.

Since lockdown we have welcomed 8 new tenants at Bray and 7 at Holyport.

With tenants following current Government guidelines and observing social distancing our allotments remained open during lockdown giving people time out in the fresh air, a place of escape in challenging times and a chance to do some low-impact exercise.

Works to improve the allotment garden at Holyport has also continued during lockdown with new standpipes being installed.

Further improvements are currently under consideration and we will update residents in the next newsletter.

Taking on an allotment is a big commitment but with so many plus points it is worth considering. If you are interested and would like to be placed on the waiting list please contact the Assistant Clerk at [assistantclerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:assistantclerk@brayparishcouncil.gov.uk) or call the Parish Office on 01628 777997.

Jennifer Bailey – Assistant Clerk

### **Bray Parish Community Survey**

How often do you feel lonely? Feeling isolated or lonely is a problem that most of us will face at different times during our lives. Living in a thriving and supportive community is one of the best ways of reducing the risk of loneliness and isolation, which is why Berkshire-based charity CCB is supporting people to examine the kinds of activities taking place in our villages. We can help to reduce loneliness by encouraging more people to get involved with existing activities and with setting new ones up.

The threat posed by the Coronavirus puts us all in an unprecedented position and ensures that the issue of social isolation is in the forefront of everyone's minds. Whilst in the short-term we may need to restrict contact with friends and neighbours, particularly those more vulnerable to the virus, it is important to consider how to ensure that we live in well-connected communities in the longer-term.

We have created a simple form to collect people's views that will help us with this project. The form asks how easy it is to find and access activities in Bray Parish and seeks your ideas on what you'd like to see taking place. You don't have to give us any personal details, just your reflections and ideas. Please respond before the end of November 2020.

You can complete the form online here:

<https://ccberks.wufoo.com/forms/bray-parish-community-survey/>

Please get in touch if you have any questions about the project or are interested in getting involved. Thank you.

Tim Parry, CCB. [tim.parry@ccberks.org.uk](mailto:tim.parry@ccberks.org.uk) 0773 888 7611

*CCB (Connecting Communities in Berkshire) is an independent charity with over 46 years' experience in community development work. Our mission is to inspire communities in Berkshire to thrive. We do this by providing information, advice, support and training to individuals, groups and other organisations. We work as enablers; raising money locally and nationally to deliver projects that have positive, long-lasting effects. See [www.ccberks.org.uk](http://www.ccberks.org.uk) for more information on our work.*

Tim Parry, CCB

## **Bray Parish Charities**

Bray Parish Charities and Bray Lich Gate Trust are registered charities established to benefit residents of this Parish. The Lich Gate Trust has one alms-house unit which exists in a fifteenth century Grade II listed Building and is currently occupied. Bray Parish Charities has two funds, one for Education and one for Relief in Need. Applicants to either charity must be resident in the Parish of Bray (which included at the time of each Charity's formation, Cox Green).

The Secretary in each case is one of the Trustees. Any application should be made in writing to M Pierce, Aleyn House, 1 High Street, Bray, SL6 2AA

Mrs M Pierce

## **Website**

The Parish Council is in the process of updating the website to ensure that it complies with Website Accessibility Regulations 2016.

## **Parish Office**

The Parish Office has now moved from its previous home at Holyport War Memorial Hall to; The Jubilee Room, Braywood Memorial Hall, Fifield Road, Fifield, Berkshire, SL6 2NX.

The telephone number and office opening times remain the same. Appointments to visit the office should be made through either the Clerk, Mrs Susan Cook or the Assistant Clerk, Mrs Jennifer Bailey. We remind visitors that they must wear a mask and follow social distancing requirements and there is a QR code for visitors to scan in line with the updated Covid 19 Legislation.

## **Remembrance**

Due to the current Government guidance regarding Covid 19, it will not be possible to hold the Remembrance Day Parade through Bray or Holyport and there will be no road closures. Parish Councillors will be remembering those in the Parish who gave their lives by the laying of wreaths at the War Memorials in Bray, Holyport, Oakley Green and in Braywood Hall in Fifield. If you wish to pay your respects at the War Memorials, we remind you that social distancing should be maintained.

## **Copies of the Newsletter**

We will not be printing this copy of the newsletter for delivery to every household in the Parish as we usually try to achieve as we do not want to risk spreading the virus.

If you are aware of a neighbour or indeed if you would like a printed copy of the newsletter, rather than reading it through the website, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office, providing your name and full address and we will pop a copy in the post to you.

Take Care and Stay Safe.