

Great Burstead and South Green Village Council - Annual Report 2010/2011

Great Burstead and South Green Village Council is the first tier of local government, representing 8,000 residents and 2,700 households. During the past year it has continued to work on residents' behalf to improve our Village.

South Green Improvements: To improve South Green shopping area we obtained community initiative funding of £12,000. Wooden bollards have been installed along the green to stop inconsiderate parking and metal bollards installed outside the shops to safeguard pedestrians and encourage responsible parking. The pavement and kerbs have been upgraded. More work is booked to move the disabled bay to outside the GP's surgery, making it safer for the disabled while providing them with easier access to the shops. We are also working to install bell bollards on the pavement opposite the shops to protect pedestrians.

Bus Shelters and Bins: The Village Council has also worked on residents' behalf, in collaboration with Essex County Council, to upgrade existing bus shelters at Grange Parade, the Memorial Hall, and the King's Head stops. Conservation area approved bus shelters will be installed in Church Street in the near future. We requested new litter bins which Basildon Borough Council has provided in and around the shopping parade at South Green.

South Green Shops Forecourt Improvements: We have negotiated on residents' behalf with the freeholders of the forecourts at South Green shops to replace the missing steps and broken brickwork; this work has been carried out, improving safety and appearance.

Planning Applications: The Village Council considers all planning applications in our Parish. Of particular interest is the School Farm site; developers recently applied to alter the existing planning approval for 51 dwellings by altering the appearance of 19 of them. We objected strongly and this was refused by Basildon Borough Council. The developers appealed against the refusal and the Village Council has lodged objections to the appeal.

Community Speed Watch and Traffic Calming: Residents have raised concerns about speeding in Coxes Farm Road, Church Street and Noak Hill Road. We are arranging for a group of residents to undertake Community Speed Watch Police training to monitor speeding in these roads and to remind drivers we welcome safe driving in our village. The Village Council will consider installing traffic calming measures, with the advice of Essex County Council, in Coxes Farm Road later this year.

Police – NAP – Neighbourhood Action Panel: Some of our Councillors are members of the Police Neighbourhood Action Panel; they attend NAP meetings representing residents' concerns and report back to the Village Council.

Allotments: We are enthusiastically responding to residents' requests for allotments by investigating local land possibilities in the village; tonight we have a speaker to give us information to further this project.

Local Community Tax – The Precept: Prudent management of our finances has ensured that the local tax residents pay to the Village Council - known as the precept – has not increased for three years.

Langham Hall: We have successfully campaigned against Langham Hall's threatened demolition and the land being sold for development. A steering group has been formed which will eventually be managed by trustees with the aim of refurbishing the hall, bringing it back into community use. Providing a vital venue for health, recreational, educational and community activities. We fully support this initiative. The Chair of the Steering Group will provide more information later.

Litter Picking: An untidy environment affects our residents so several Councillors took part in Love Where You Live Week last summer. This involved litter picking throughout the Village. We hope to continue this initiative and form groups of local residents and Councillors to keep our village tidy.

Communicating with and for our Residents: As a Village Council we communicate with our residents at our public monthly meetings, on our improved website, notice board, flyers, our newsletter and through our Clerk. Our Councillors attend other Councils' meetings, such as the Association of Basildon Local Council (ABLC) and at Borough level to represent our residents and report back to our Council.

Hanging Baskets and Christmas Lights: As usual we have provided hanging baskets and Christmas lights - giving the shops a cheery and pleasant look - and residents have been complimentary about their installation.

Our Councillors and Councillor Vacancy: Our Councillors work entirely voluntarily on residents' behalf and thanks are due for their services to the community. We have a vacancy for a new councillor. If you are interested please let our Clerk know.

New Clerk: Finally, Karen Hawkes has joined our Council as our new Clerk. Karen is committed to providing a quality service to residents and the Council. I am sure all residents welcome her to our Village and thank her for her excellent work.

Marie Dear – Chair