



# BIDFORD-ON-AVON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15



**BIDFORD-ON-AVON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Message from Cllr. Fleming, Chairman of Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council**

*It has been a great honour for me to have chaired the Parish Council for a second year and continue to represent the local community.*

*As in 2013/14, this year has seen some changes in the Parish Council: we said goodbye to Cllrs Ms Ford and Mrs Randell, due to work commitments, and welcomed Cllr. Harry Knight, from Barton, and Cllr. Ms Deacon.*

*The Council ended the year one councillor short, but confident that the forthcoming elections on 7<sup>th</sup> May will return a full strength Parish Council, ready to continue working for your benefit.*

*The main project for this year has been the **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)** – probably the most important, community led project the Parish Council has undertaken since the Parish Plan back in 2002. The NDP is led by the Steering Group made up of Councillors as well as local residents and a business representative, very ably chaired by Cllr Harvey, Chairman of the Consultative Planning Committee. To ensure the final document is considered sound by the Planning Inspector, the Parish Council is employing the services of an independent Planning Consultant.*

*An initial questionnaire was sent out during the Christmas/New Year period and NDP is grateful to the many who took the time to complete this – the replies received will form the basis of the NDP document and will assist the Parish Council prepare its 5 year Strategic Plan.*

*This work is still going on and is still relying on the support of the local community – after all it is a local community led document, and it is my hope that it will protect us against future, speculative planning.*

*I should like to congratulate our Clerk who finalised her studies at the University of Gloucestershire this year and gained a BA (Hons) Second Class Honours (1<sup>st</sup> Division) in Community Engagement and Governance.*

*And I should like to thank Vaughan Hully, who for many years was the Responsible Financial Officer to this Council and is retiring at the end of this financial year. The Parish Council wish him all the best.*

*There have been other projects during the year and details of these can be found in this Annual Report, which I trust you will find informative and enjoyable.*

*Cllr. W Fleming  
Chairman of Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council*



**BIDFORD-ON-AVON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**2013/14**

Parish Council Office, Bramley Way, Bidford-on-von B50 4QG  
Clerk – Mrs Elisabeth Uggerløse  
Tel. No. 01789 778653/07718 628925  
Email [info@bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:info@bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk](http://www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk)

Opening hours (to the public) Daily from 10.00 am – 3.00 pm except Thursdays, when the hours are 1.30 -4.30 pm. Please note this is subject to the Clerk's availability as she may be attending other meetings.

The Parish Council meets on the second Monday of the month (Consultative Planning Committee Meeting) and the fourth Monday of the month (Parish Council Meeting) at the Parish Council Meeting Rooms, Bramley Way, B50 4QG  
ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND WELL PUBLICISED

**WHAT IS A PARISH COUNCIL AND WHAT DOES IT DO?**

An oft asked question!

Parish and Town Councils, also know as local councils, are incorporated bodies, established by legislation in 1894 and are, believe it or not, the oldest type of local authority in England!

Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council, which includes the village of Broom and the hamlets of Barton and Marlcliff, was quick to establish itself: it has been in existence since 1895.

Like all local authorities, local councils can only do what is either required of them, or have the power to do.

Local Councils do have some statutory duties which include:

- It must hold at least three meetings a year, one of which must be the Annual Meeting of the council; Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
- It must also have a Code of Conduct. That confirms the obligations and responsibilities of councillors – a copy of this can be found at <http://www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk/pdfs/documents/proc-codeconduct.pdf>
- It must employ an officer to discharge its duties and is responsible for the administration of the council's financial affairs
- It must prepare annual accounts that are externally audited
- It cannot publish, or support the publishing of, any material which may affect public support of a political party

- It has a duty to do whatever it can to prevent crime and disorder, and must take this aspect into account whenever it exercises its powers
- It is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 200. A copy of the Model Publication Scheme can be found at <http://www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk/pdfs/documents/proc-publicationscheme08.pdf>

Until the Localism Act of 2011, local councils had limited powers, all set out by statute. In the event it wanted to do something it did not have the power to do, it could invoke Section 137, which allowed it to spend money on things it did not have the specific power to carry out, but would benefit the community. However, as is often the case, there was a drawback; an annual limit on how much could be spent under S137.

Then came the Localism Act 2011 which gave the General Power of Competence (GPC), which could be adopted by all councils that fulfilled the required criteria: namely have a qualified clerk and 75% elected council. The GPC allows local councils do anything an individual can do, as long as it is legal. Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council fulfilled the criteria and adopted the GPC in 2012 giving it more flexibility in how it manages its work.

Over the years, in an effort to involve the local community, legislation, including the Localism Act 2011, has been passed giving local councils more powers and more responsibilities, as well as making them more transparent, open and answerable to the community they represent.

This has allowed Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council to take over the maintenance of the grass verges to ensure the village always looks its best. This was extended this year to include the maintenance of the many footpaths within the village, which are frequently used by residents. It is also always keen to adopt Public Open Spaces, and maintain to a good standard.

The main source of income for local councils is the precept, which is collected through the council tax. A precept is a tax charged on each property in the parish to fund all the activities undertaken by the parish council for the benefit of the community. It is important to note two things: local councils do not receive government grants and ALL the funds raised by the precept are spent locally.

The precept raised in 2014/15 was for £195,300 and this was supplemented by Stratford-on-Avon DC, which gave a Council Tax Reduction Grant of £20,720.00. Other sources of income include:

- Allotments
- Burial Ground
- Car parking and events on the Big Meadow
- Lease of land to sports associations and youth club



## **THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council was awarded the Foundation Award under the new Local Council Award Scheme (which replaces the Parish and Town Quality Status, which the Council had obtained in 2008) demonstrating that the Council meets the minimum requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice –it is the first level of the scheme (there are two more levels to strive for)

As with any local government body, Bidford Councillors are elected by its electorate. The last election was in May 2012, and there have been some changes since then with Councillors resigning due to work or ill health. The following councillors served during this year:

- Michael Atkins
- Ms Angela Deacon (October 2014)
- Bill Fleming
- Carol Ford (resigned in July 2014)
- Joe Harvey – Broom Ward
- Fred Hiscocks
- Mrs Joy Keeley
- Cllr Harry Knight
- Mrs Charlotte Randell (resigned in January 2015)
- Lee Pound
- Frank Spiers

Sadly, during the year we lost Cllrs Ms Ford and Mrs Randell, due to work commitments – and welcomed Cllr Harry Knight from Barton, and Cllr Ms Deacon, who has returned to the Council after an absence of a few years.

Parish Council matters are considered by Councillors at either the Consultative Planning Committee meetings, which deal with all planning issues, or the full Parish Council meeting. Both take place every month and are open to the public, which is welcome to attend. There is a Public Forum item at both meetings, which allows attending members of the public to raise their concerns to Council.

Councillor attendance to the meetings is excellent – between 80 – 100%, demonstrating the dedication of the Council to its local community. The Council is also always represented at the Planning Committee (West) meetings at Elizabeth House, when planning applications are considered and permission granted or refused.

Councillors, and the Clerk, also attend regular training events to ensure they are up to date with new legislation. The Council is also a member of the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC), which regularly updates the Council on relevant new laws and guidelines. The Council is represented at the WALC County Committee by the Clerk, Mrs E. Uggerløse, who attends the quarterly meetings at Leamington Spa as well as the branch meetings at Elizabeth House, Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC)



The Council is also well aware of the importance of the new Local Development Core Strategy and has been involved with the process right from the starts which was, believe it or not, 2008!! The absence of an adopted Core Strategy has created a planning vacuum which is being well exploited by developers, and a large number of applications for large developments are continually being submitted. As a response to this, the Parish Council approved, and supported, the development of a **Neighbourhood Plan**.

## **PROJECTS**

### **1. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

Another product of the Localism Act 2011, a NDP empowers the local community to decide, within the scope of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Development Plan (LDP) how it wishes its designated area to develop in the next 20 years.

The Designation of the Area was submitted to Stratford on Avon DC last year, and was approved. This paved the way for the NDP Steering to get to work.

The Steering Group is made up of:

- 5 Parish Councillors
- 6 residents
- 1 member of the business community
- Clerk
- Independent planning advisor – who has no voting rights.

And is ably chaired by Cllr Harvey, Chairman of the Consultative Planning Committee.

The Steering Group has been given powers to make decisions regarding the NDP, although it will have to be approved by the Parish Council before it is finally released for approval.

A Survey was sent to all households during the Christmas/New Year period, and was made available online. It was a great success with over 25% responses received and analysed. This information will be used to draw up the Pre-Submission document to go out for a statutory 6 week consultation later in the year.

A similar survey, addressed to businesses, was also carried out.

In the meantime, and in the absence of an approved Core Strategy and of a 5 year land supply, planning developers continue to submit plans for large scale development, which the Parish Council continues to object to. This year 3 applications for developments were received:

- 200 dwellings on Land West of Waterloo Road (just north of Friday Furlong)
- 45 dwellings on Land South of Jacksons Meadow
- 75 dwellings on Marriage Hill

All three were considered by Stratford on Avon DC Planning Committee (West) and all were refused.

However, permission was granted by the same Planning Committee for the development of 150 dwellings on Land to the North of 18 Salford Road.



## 2. War Memorial

To commemorate the start of WWI, the Parish Council undertook to renew and repair the War Memorial, which included replacing the old bronze plaques, with new concrete ones with gold lettering and making the cross safe.

## 3. Street Lighting

The “replacement programme” continued this year, with a further 7 street light columns being replaced at

- Glebe Close
- Grafton Lane
- Icknield Close x 2
- Jubilee Close
- Wessons Road
- Westholme Road

## 4. CCTV

The monthly reports received by the Parish council show that the cameras have been an effective, crime reduction tool.

In view of this, when District Council advised that, due to financial savings, it would not be able to continue offering night time surveillance, the Parish Council agreed, together with some other local councils, to finance night time surveillance to ensure Bidford-on-Avon gets 24 hour CCTV coverage.

## 5. Communication

It is acknowledged that this is one of the hardest things for local government: **getting the message across!**

The Parish Council uses the traditional methods of posting notices on the Notice Boards, and this is important in a village with a large proportion of elderly residents who still prefer this.

However, in common with other local government departments, the website is becoming more and more the “go to place” to find information. For obvious reasons, it is a much more efficient way of having ALL the information, both from the Parish Council and local associations, in one place and is a requirement under current legislation as a way of operating an open and transparent council. The website address is [www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk](http://www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk)

The Council offers a Weekly Information E-mail service: all those who subscribe (free of charge) to it, receive notification of any news, events etc every week, with the assurance that their personal details are not disclosed. In an effort not to clog up the recipients computers, there are no attachments; the email simply gives the link for each to access when and if they are interested in that particular news.

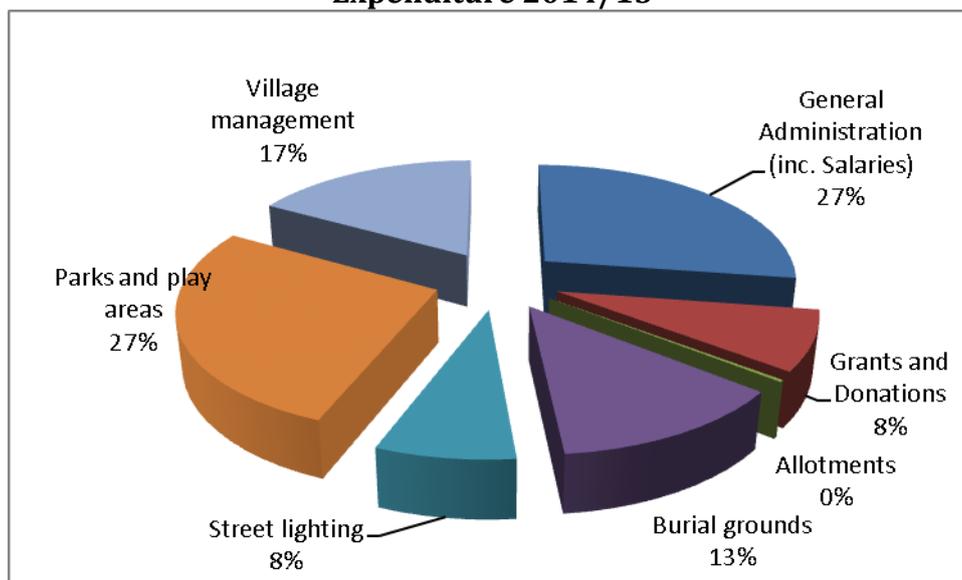
The Council are also on **Facebook** (Bidford-on-Avon) and **Twitter** @Bidford\_PC and it publishes a regular **Newsletter** in The Connection Magazine.



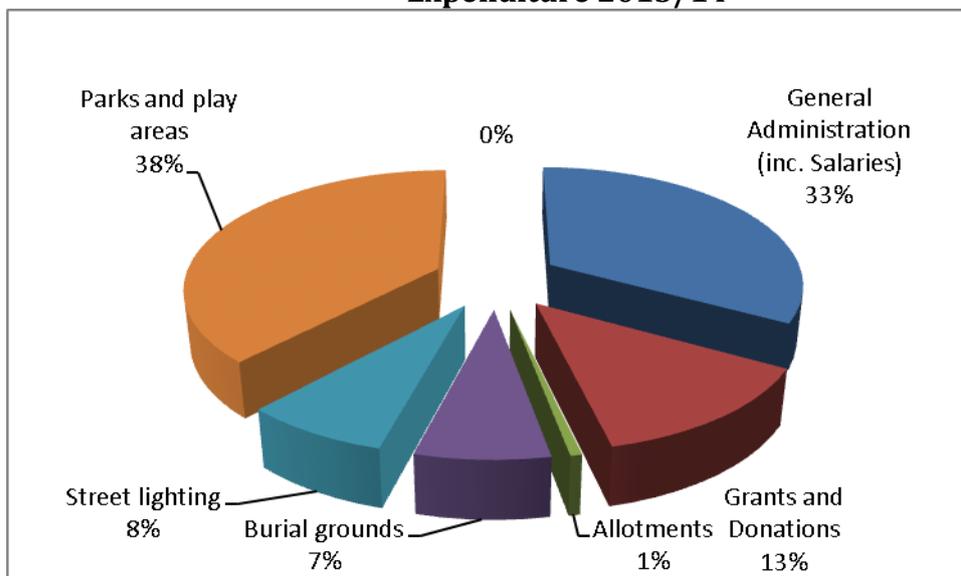
## THE PRECEPT - HOW IS IT SPENT

These charts give an idea of the breakdown of the various items paid for by the Precept, as well as a comparison with last years expenditure.

### Expenditure 2014/15



### Expenditure 2013/14



Copy of the Annual Accounts are available online at <http://www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk/pdfs/finance/accounts-150331.pdf>



- **Parks and play areas**

This represents the largest expense of the Council, which has a number of Open Spaces areas to maintain, namely:

- **The Big Meadow/Monie Meadow** – this, popular, 26 acre recreational area by the rivers is **leased** by the Council from the Alice, Duchess Dudley Charity Trust.

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of the area including:

- Gate keeper
- Grass cutting
- Tree maintenance
- Play equipment
- Waste collection
- **Jubilee Close**
  - Grass cutting
  - Play equipment
- **Kings Lane, Broom**
  - Grass cutting
  - Play area
  - Play equipment
- **Marleigh Park**
  - Grass cutting
  - Play equipment
  - Fence
- **Millers Bank, Broom**
  - Grass cutting
  - Tree maintenance
- **Sports field at Dugdale Avenue**
  - Grass cutting
- **The Leys**
  - Grass cutting

The Parish Council also carries out the grass cutting and verge maintenance in the village as well as of smaller open space areas; and it carries out weekly inspection of the play equipment.

- **General Administration**

This is the second largest expenditure and includes:

- Staff salaries
- Councillor/Clerk training
- Communication
- Insurance
- Professional fees
- Subscriptions
- Office administration costs



- **Grants**

The Parish Council is keen to assist the local community and, each year, allocates funds for this purpose.

**Local associations/groups** who feel they are in need of extra funding to help them run a better service, or offer new ones, are encouraged to apply for grants on a quarterly basis. The Parish Council considers each application very carefully before deciding if and how much to grant. In 2013/14, it awarded the following grants:

○ Bidford-on-Avon Bowling Club	£1,500
○ Bidford & District History Society	500
○ Bidford- on- Avon Primary School	350
○ Bidford-on-Avon Community Choir	300
○ Bidford Pantomime Group	350
○ Barton Village	1,995
○ Broom Village Hall	1,995
○ Bidford-on-Avon Cricket Club	1,191.60
○ Citizens Advice Bureau	1,970.60
○ Murray House	550
○ Bidford Youth Club	1,100
○ Bidford Christmas Lights	1,000
○ Goslings Toddler Group	800
○ Mark Smith – Vintage Gathering	300
○ VASA	700

- **Street Lighting**

This covers the cost of street light replacement; annual maintenance and the electricity. It also covers the cost of repairs due to adverse weather conditions, vandalism etc.

- **Cemetery**

This covers the cost of maintaining all three cemeteries:

- **Grange Road**
- **Salford Road**
- **St. Laurence, closed churchyard**

- **Allotments**

Costs cover rates, water and some maintenance



## **INCOME**

During the year, the Parish Council has received some grant funds:

- **Sport England**  
towards the out door table tennis tables  
**£8,944**
- **Stratford DC**  
towards the Grass Cutting contract  
**£3,039**
- **Stratford DC**  
towards flood alleviation work  
**£485**
- **Stratford DC**  
towards the maintenance of St. Laurence Churchyard

**Elisabeth Uggerløse**  
**Clerk to the Parish Council**  
**2015**

