

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

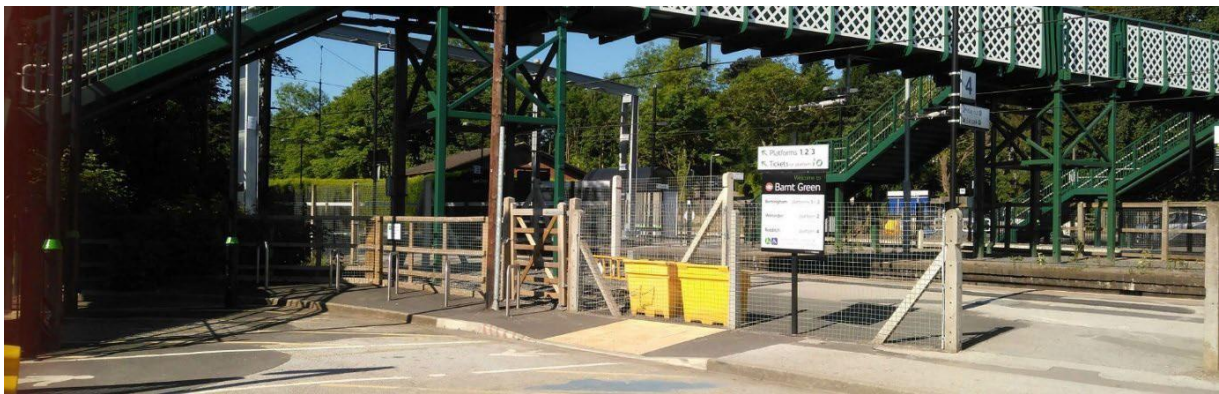
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THREE YEAR FORWARD PLAN



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February 2024

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1. BACKGROUND

All local authorities are established by legislation and work within a statutory framework.

1.1 A Parish Council

A Parish Council is a civil local authority found in England and is the first tier of local government. They are elected corporate bodies, have variable tax raising powers and are responsible for areas known as civil parishes.

1.2 Barnt Green

The Parish is bound on its north-west side by the wooded Lickey Hills and to the east by the Bittell Reservoirs. The main Birmingham to Bristol and Wales railway line, and the Cross-City line from Lichfield to Redditch, runs through the centre of the village. Junction 2 of the M42 motorway is 3 miles to the east and Junction 4 of the M5 motorway is 4 miles to the west. To the south of the village is mixed-farm land.

The railway station which is in the heart of the village provides the residents of the Parish with a frequent train service to Birmingham (12 miles) and Redditch (8 miles) and a limited service to Worcester (20 miles). There is an hourly day-time bus service to Birmingham and Bromsgrove, and a less frequent service to Alvechurch and Redditch.

1.3 The Council

Barnt Green Parish Council has eight elected councillors. The next elections are due in May 2027.

Barnt Green Parish Council serves the Parish of Barnt Green which has a population of around 1,800 people living in 849 residential households.

Council meetings are held at the parish council office, Hewell Road, Barnt Green on the third Monday of each month at 7.00pm except for the months of August and December. There is also an Annual Parish Meeting held between March and May each year. The Council hold committee meetings to discuss matters as and when they arise.

Residents are encouraged to attend Council meetings and are invited to address the Council at the beginning of the meeting on any item on the agenda. Notices of meetings are placed on the Council's website and noticeboards within the village.

Barnt Green Parish Council will continue to maintain the properties and open spaces it owns or has responsibility for.

Mission Statement

'To enhance the quality of life for the community of Barnt Green, maintain the village identity and encourage a community spirit'.

The Parish Council duties and main responsibilities are:

Assets

- 4 public noticeboards at the following sites:
 - Lockable noticeboard on Hewell Road to the right-hand side of the bus shelter
 - Inside the bus shelter on Hewell Road
 - Corner of Station Approach/Hewell Road
 - Lockable noticeboard on Bittell Road Playing Field Car Park
- A number of public benches around the village
- One Brick built Bus Shelter.
- A number of litter bins (Please refer to separate schedule)– emptied by Bromsgrove District Council
- A number of dog foul bins (Please refer to separate schedule) – emptied by Bromsgrove District Council
- The ownership/lease and maintenance of open spaces in the village:
 - Millennium Park, Hewell Road – a grassed area surrounded by trees with half of the park having a children’s play area including a set of swings, a slide, roundabout, infant activity climbing frame, junior swing bridge/climbing frame.
 - Bittell Road Playing Field – to the north of the parish consisting of 9 acres of mainly open fields and a formal circular walk with woodland and stream and an area marked out for a football pitch. There is an older children’s activity play area with climbing wall, balance pole and rope bridge; a basket-ball hoop, eight pieces of adult gym equipment, three picnic tables and several bench seats.
 - A small area of land at the end of Hewell Road outlined as the new village pollinator site.
- The ownership of the Village pathway lighting other than that in Fiery Hill Road
- The ownership of the Commuter Car Park on Fiery Hill Road

1.4 Services

Parish Council Office

- The Parish Council office is located on the ground floor at 80 Hewell Road and is occupied by the Executive Officer four days a week, Monday – Thursday 10am-1pm. The office is the first point of contact by residents and has the following supplies/information:
- Dog foul bags
- Copies of the Lickey Hills Walks for purchase
- Information on local clubs and organisations
- Copies of the Barnt Green footpath map
- The Executive Officer of the council calls meetings of the councillors when necessary (by means of a summons) and publishes notices on the public noticeboards and the Parish Council website
- The Executive Officer of the council processes emails, letters, complaints and reports of any problems in the village and carries out work and monitoring to resolve these.
- The Executive Officer of the council receives consultation requests from outside bodies and responds accordingly following consideration by the council.
- The Parish Council publishes the Parish Council Newsletter – The Bulletin on a bi-annual basis which is hand delivered to all residents and traders.

- The Parish Council maintains the Council's website which has access to Parish Council documents

Open Spaces

The Parish Council maintains several open spaces and much of the work is carried out by contractors or with the use of volunteers who carry out work within the village. The Parish Council assists the group with contributions to the maintenance and supply of tools and other equipment.

Annual Parish Meeting

It is a legal requirement of the Parish Council to provide an Annual Parish Meeting for the electorate of the village. This is usually held between March and May each year at the Friends Meeting House, Sandhills Road. Briefings are provided by the Chairman of the Council along with occasional displays/exhibitions from local groups/associations.

1.5 Other work of the Parish Council

Monitoring and Reporting

- Road and utility works (Worcestershire County Council and Utility companies)
- Public Rights of Way (Worcestershire County Council)
- Footpaths and Verges (Worcestershire County Council)
- Fly tipping on public land (Bromsgrove District Council)
- Potholes and pavement maintenance (Worcestershire County Council)

1.6 Overall Aims and Objectives

To serve the residents of Barnt Green, providing, maintaining and improving facilities through the provision of appropriate services to improve health, fitness, well-being and support inclusivity.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the Forward Plan

The Forward Plan for the period 2023 – 2025 is a statement of the vision for the parish and sets out the Council's purpose, objectives and key priorities for development. This is a key tool for communicating the Council's plans for the next three years to residents of Barnt Green and provides a clear understanding of how the Council works and the aims the Council wishes to achieve during the three-year period.

2.2 Monitoring and Review

The Plan is a statement of the Parish Council's intentions over the next three years and will be subject to at least an annual review in January each year. Elements of the plan will be controlled through the monthly council agenda. This will ensure that the plan is carefully monitored and that it aligns with the aspirations of the Council.

2.3 Resources

The Plan is resourced by the Parish Council staff and external contractors which is financed by the Parish Council from the Precept and Council Reserves. Further resources may be sourced from grants from outside bodies where these are forthcoming.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Council to ensure that the Plan is properly resourced and financed.

It is specifically the responsibility of the Staffing Committee to ensure that the plan and the required human resources within the Parish Council are matched.

It is specifically the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to ensure that the funds required by the agreed plan are matched by the funding sources that are available.

2.4 Communication

The Plan will be widely published via the Council's website, the Bulletin newsletter and other community channels. The Council will promote its availability and seek feedback on the contents from within the community.

2.5 Governance

The Parish Council is responsible for complying with the governance and accountability requirements placed on local councils. Barnt Green Parish Council works within an effective control environment which includes Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and a Code of Conduct along with an appropriate Internal Audit.

Barnt Green Parish Council aims to be a professional and competent council which ensures sound financial management and is open and accountable in all that it does. The annual governance statements show that the Council has met and continues to meet these aims and objectives.

2.6 Working with Bromsgrove District Council

The Parish Council recognises that Bromsgrove District Council has adopted its district plan on 25 January 2017 for 2011 to 2030.

It is recognised that there is limited capacity for development within Barnt Green due to its green belt status and conservation area. The Parish Council remains undecided whether it is appropriate and cost prohibitive to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan and is seeking further advice prior to making a commitment however it will still offer guidance about the character of the village and its surroundings when approached by the planning authority.

Bromsgrove District Council has a statutory requirement to consult the Parish Council on planning matters.

The Parish Council, as a statutory consultee, reviews all planning applications and provides recommendations to Bromsgrove District Council representing local views.

3. COMMITTEES

3.1 Overview

Parish Council meetings are held once a month. In addition, separate committees have been established to deal with specific areas of the Council in more detail. The Committees are:

- Finance and General Purposes
- Environment
- Personnel
- Planning

3.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Finance and General Purposes Committee oversees the Council's finances and is also responsible for:

- Reviewing the Councils' assets
- Managing the Council's grants scheme
- Reviewing and drafting the annual budget
- Recommendation on setting the precept
- Quarterly reviewing of progress against the budget

3.3 Environment Committee

The Environment Committee is concerned with looking after the recreation areas, the Lengthsman scheme, floral displays, footpaths and general appearance of the parish.

3.4 Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee oversees the employees of the Council along with consideration for training and management of all councillors.

Councillors introduced to the Council receive an Induction Pack and training opportunities are offered to give overall knowledge enabling them to undertake their duties and responsibilities.

3.5 Planning Committee

The Planning Committee meets when required, depending on the frequency of applications notified to the Parish Council by the Local Planning Authority (Bromsgrove District Council). The committee makes recommendations to the council on matters relating to neighbourhood planning.

3.6 Outside Bodies

Parish Councillors are nominated each year to sit on several Outside Bodies which include the following:

- Worcestershire CALC
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- St Andrews C of E First School
- Pensions Regulator

3.7 Local Council Award Scheme

The Parish Council has been awarded the Foundation Level in the Local Council Award Scheme.

4. FINANCE

4.1 Overview

The Parish Council meets in January of every year to review and set the budget and precept for the next financial year.

4.2 Current Budget

The 2024/2025 budget was set at the parish council meeting held on 15 January 2024 – full details can be found using the following link:

<https://www.barntgreen.org.uk/parish-council/finance>

4.3 Revenue Streams

The main income for the Parish Council is through the Precept, which is a tax paid by households of Barnt Green to contribute to the running of council facilities. Parish Councils are expected to build up a level of reserves equivalent to between 3- and 12-months precept, in accordance with good practice.

In addition to the Precept the Parish Council receive a small amount of income from the block hire of the football pitch at Bittell Road Playing Field, adhoc hire of the office meeting room to trusted third parties, a wayleave payment and £1000 p.a. from the provision of the electric vehicle charging point in the commuter car park.

5. OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

5.1 Road Safety

Barnt Green Parish Council's objective is to improve road safety for residents on the roads and footpaths.

Road safety is a principal concern of residents and a key objective of the Council.

The main solution to many of these problems is only achievable with the cooperation of Worcestershire County Council, however, in times of severe financial constraint some of the objectives of the Parish Council will be difficult or even impossible to implement.

Working with residents, associations, groups and stakeholders to strive for resolutions to road safety issues, including parking and speeding will continue, with identification and monitoring of areas causing most concern prioritised accordingly.

5.1.1 OBJECTIVE

Improve road safety including speeding and parking.

5.1.2 STRATEGY

5.1.3 Engage with residents, District and County Councillors and West Mercia Police to create and provide

a safer environment within the village.

5.1.4 OUTCOME

- Reduction in the number of accidents
- Ensuring easier access to the roads for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Elimination of antisocial behaviour by road users parking inconsiderately blocking resident access to drives.
- Safer pedestrian crossing on main trading area – Hewell Road.

5.2 Public Transport

5.2.1 OBJECTIVE

Barnt Green Parish Council will encourage the increased use of public transport.

5.2.2 STRATEGY

- Engage with residents.
- Council Chairman appointed to Bromsgrove and Redditch Rail User Partnership.
- Lobby Network Rail and Department for Transport for the installation of elevators to the raised multi-platform footbridge.
- Monitor effectiveness of public transport in Barnt Green.

5.2.3 OUTCOME

- Disability access to station.
- Improved public transport network serving Barnt Green providing improved links to other destinations.

5.3 Environmental Issues

5.3.1 OBJECTIVE

Barnt Green Parish Council will seek to improve the environment of the village.

5.3.2 STRATEGY

- Litter/street cleansing – 1 Outdoor Parish Caretaker employed to service the village. Engage with other agencies, including Bromsgrove District Council and encourage participation in initiatives i.e. Parish Cleansing Days
- Graffiti – monitored by the Outdoor Parish Caretaker and residents.
- Fly tipping – monitored by the Outdoor Parish Caretaker and residents.
- Dog Fouling – monitored by the Outdoor Parish Caretaker, problem areas are reported to Bromsgrove District Council. Dog foul bags are provided at the entrance to Bittell Road Playing Field in addition to the Parish Council office.
- Flyposting – monitored by the Outdoor Parish Caretaker with incidents reported to Bromsgrove District Council.
- Illegal felling of trees – monitored through Councillors inspection of areas and reports from residents.
- Planning – monitored through the planning process. BGPC support protection of the Green Belt.
- Noise – residents' complaints or concerns are passed onto Bromsgrove District Council Public Health department

- Pollinator Sites - In line with Worcestershire County Council's motion in October 2015 regarding making Worcestershire a pollinator friendly county, the parish council has delivered the same within the village by creating a specifically adopted pollinator site with a potential to rollout further pollinator sites on verges and grassed areas in Barnt Green.
- Biodiversity – consider implications on all aspects of council business impacting the environment.

5.3.3 OUTCOME

To maintain a clean, tidy and environmentally friendly village which residents will take pride in living in with an aim to protect the natural environment from future damage.

5.4 Engagement

5.4.1 OBJECTIVE

To constantly strive to improve engagement across the Parish.

5.4.2 STRATEGY

- Communication with residents – continue to communicate with residents via the Parish Council office, website, Facebook page, noticeboards, the Bulletin newsletter, Annual Parish Meeting, Three-year plan and Annual Report.
- Outside Bodies – the Council is a member of the Worcestershire Association of Local Councils (Worcs CALC). The Executive Officer is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and regularly meets with other clerks in the local area. Councillors are appointed as representatives on CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) and St Andrews C of E First School.
- Promote Parish Council events – The council host three annual events; 1 community walk, the Christmas Lights Switch On and a summer event which changes annually. An Annual Parish Meeting (a legal requirement) is also held, and the Chairman hosts an annual thank you buffet for the volunteers and contractors working within the village.

5.4.3 OUTCOME

Continuation and improvement of the current engagement will assist the Council to liaise with groups and residents.

5.5 Local Health and Well-being

5.5.1 OBJECTIVE

To improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of Barnt Green.

5.5.2 STRATEGY

- Urge residents to contact their appropriate health forums with any problems, or their views on proposed changes.
- Encourage visitors to the Lickey Hills by way of sale of promotional merchandise to support the Lickey Hills Society.
- Encourage residents and visitors to attend guided community walk events organised by the parish council.

- Footpaths map.
- Encourage use of the new formal circular walk within Bittell Road Playing Field.

5.5.3 OUTCOME

Local participation to improve health and well-being.

6. Achievements

Barnt Green Parish Council continue to organise and facilitate various services throughout the year for the benefit of the residents. In the last 12 months the following achievements were made:

- Financial support by way of grant funding to Bromsgrove Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Provision of summer bedding to village troughs and tiered planters, supporting the local charity 'Where Next' who provide work for adults with learning difficulties.
- Publication of the Bulletin newsletter.
- Maintenance of speed warning signs on Fiery Hill Road and Blackwell Road.
- Maintenance of a defibrillator located centrally within the village.
- Financial and personnel support of The Environment Group who oversee the new pollinator site.
- Grass maintenance contract provided for Bittell Road Playing Field, Millennium Park and village grass verges.
- Maintenance LED lighting to all village streetlamps.
- Maintenance of a hard surface circular walk around Bittell Road Playing Field.
- Maintenance of outdoor gym equipment in Bittell Road Playing Field.
- Maintenance of 2 x hand sanitiser units on Parish Council land. 1 on Hewell Road Grass verge by the bus shelter, 1 at Bittell Road playing field.
- Drainage works in Bittell Road playing fields to improve accessibility to the play equipment.
- Fruit trees planted in Bittell Road playing fields and the Pollinator Site.

7. Ambitions for the Next Three Years

The Council has developed this three-year strategic plan which both maintains existing services and plans for new ones. It will use the Risk Management Scheme in conjunction with the plan to deliver the aims and objectives as detailed within this document with both being constantly reviewed and developed to meet legal compliance and ensure that the council is protected in all aspects of risk to serve and benefit the community accordingly.

8. Planned Projects

The Parish Council sets a budget to provide funds for projects which can be implemented through a combination of reserves, grants and the annual Precept. These will be scheduled into the plans over the three-year period and will be agreed on an annual basis.

9. ACTION PLAN

See Action Plan 2024/2025 as a separate document.

First Adopted at the Parish Council meeting held on 17 February 2020.

Robert Cholmondeley
Chairman

19 February 2024
Date

Interim Review Date: February 2024
Full three-year review: February 2025

1. Three year forward plan


Final Audit Report

2022-07-11


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1. Three year forward plan 2024.25

Final Audit Report

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