

# Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)

## July 2020 Newsletter

### 1. Minutes of last meeting – Tuesday 10 March 2020

There were a few errors in the Minutes so revised Minutes have been forwarded to BRAG members. **If no further errors are identified by BRAG members then the revised Minutes will be taken as a true record.** There were some Matters Arising, but these have not been actioned due to the coronavirus lockdown.

### 2. BRAG AGM

The BRAG AGM was cancelled. The Chairman's report and Treasurer's report will be available shortly.

### 3. Parish Council report – By David Pafford

Melksham Without Parish Council has been holding virtual meetings via Zoom since lockdown was introduced on 23rd March. Public participation has continued for those people who have the technology.

In addition to the routine Council business, the Officers have worked with the Town Council to establish and run Melksham Community Response. The resulting workload has been immense and we all owe a lot to the Officers and volunteers who have been involved in keeping people safe and meeting their needs.

MWPC intended to develop wildflower areas and unmown parts in Hornchurch Road public open space, as well as in the open area behind Wellington Drive. These plans were postponed to 2021 so open space was not restricted during lockdown/social distancing.

Children's play areas have been re-opened along with those of Melksham Town and Wiltshire Councils. There are notices displayed about safety and cleanliness.

There is a lot going on in Shaw, Whitley, Beanacre and Berryfield to keep the Council busy, but Bowerhill seems to be going through a quiet period.

### 4. Wiltshire Council report – By Nick Holder

From a Wiltshire Council perspective, I have 3 items to provide a brief update on:

1. **To remind everyone the consultation on the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan ends 27th July.** Important this moves to the next stage quickly as this should prevent any more speculative development being brought forward. Bowerhill has had enough development.
2. The Community Governance review is continuing, with a decision due on 8th Sept. The recommendation from the committee is for the merger to be rejected. Cabinet will meet to consider the recommendation of the committee on the morning of the 8th Sept and there is an extraordinary meeting of full council in the afternoon of the

8th Sept when the decision will be formally made. It is unlikely cabinet will overturn the recommendation of the committee. I am planning to speak at full council on the 8th of September, which will be my maiden speech at full council.

3. Councillors Phil Alford, Ben Anderson and I will shortly be meeting with Councillor Bridget Wayman, who has Cabinet responsibility for highways, to understand when detailed plans for the proposed Melksham bypass will be brought forward. I will keep BRAG etc updated when I have news.

## 5. Treasurer's Report – By Jenny Butcher

(Jenny is shielding Graham from the virus due to his health issues. When BRAG meetings do start up they will not be attending so Jenny will do the Treasury duties from home but if this is not acceptable perhaps someone else can take on the Treasurer role.)

### BRAG Bank account as of July 2020

AGM BALANCE APRIL 2020 £361.68

#### INCOME

MWPC GRANT 01/06/2020                      £400

Benevity giving platform 18/06/2020      £350

TOTAL    £750

Add AGM 2020 balance £361.68

= £1111.68

#### LESS EXPENDITURE

000315 25/05/2020 two containers fuel & Grommet £41.68

000316 10/07/2020 two containers fuel    £39.98

£81.66

Bank balance July 2020    £1111.68

Less expenditure                              £81.66

=    £1030.02 BRAG balance 22/07/2020

#### BRAG Accounts

Due to lockdown the £400 grant from MWPC was not banked (by post in the end) as we were in complete lockdown, so I posted to NAT WEST Devizes late May so is not showing on AGM 2019/2020 Accounts. So now shows on 2020/2021 figures.

Dave Sutton one of our Picnic Area volunteers applied to his firm for another £350 grant for volunteering for the group which was approved within a week and now showing in our accounts which was a wonderful surprise.

### Outstanding Bills to pay this year is

Public liability Insurance which normally is paid in July but they have given us three months free with cover so now due in October 2020 estimated at £251.77 ?? (last years figure).

Melksham Shed are or should I say were in the process of making the round seat to go around the "Old Oak Tree" Picnic Site. The cost for the materials was approximately £350 and BRAG will need to buy cement etc to bed it in so extra costs there, plus I would like to ask if the BRAG committee would like to consider offering Melksham Shed another £100 for their funds for all the hours put in making this seat for us. **Do BRAG members agree to this?** So, costings on this would come to approximately £450. I saw one of the Melksham Shed volunteers down on the picnic Site a week ago who was involved with the making of the seat so like us all work stopped when the lockdown started in March so because of the social distancing problem in their premises our seat may be a while yet.

Other usual expenses - Rent when we do meet up, running costs on the strimmers etc, Picnic Area expenses i.e. paint, gloves, future vandalism.??

### Future Grants

Tesco blue token scheme has been put on hold, but BRAG will get some money from this whether its 1st 2nd or 3rd. I was hoping they would just split the money between us three but that is "common sense" but we will see.

Taylor Wimpey - I did send an email seeing if they would grant us some money but that's gone AWOL so when I find another window of opportunity will write a letter to Samantha Roff and see what happens??

## **6. Report on the picnic area – By Jenny Butcher**

We are meeting regularly Tuesday mornings on the Picnic Site which works well with working in the fresh air and social distancing when its coffee time. But any contact inside with other people is a no no now.

Roy and Dave have been busy keeping the grass down, clearing the ditches along the bridle path plus Graham has been trimming hedges trees where necessary plus we have part of a willow large branch come down in the ditch at the back of the site. We have reported it to Colin who will clear for us in the future as he is licenced etc to do this safely.

I have been planting, weeding like mad as soon as the weather looks as though it will rain as before it was like concrete.

Sheila May at the moment has not been joining us but I have just recruited another volunteer Brenda Chandler who used to run the Villager newspaper and I knew her through Dorothy House when I worked as a volunteer with her for 13 years so when she came along for a walk last Tuesday I managed to persuade her to try us this week which she did and enjoyed weeding the picnic site so if she can still stand up this morning we will see her next week, I hope.

## **7. Litter Picking – By Pauline Helps**

At the start of the lockdown there were some cases of fly-tipping that Wilts Council dealt with promptly. After that there was very little litter, probably because the fast food outlets

were closed. However, there were tissues and some PPE discarded, but litter pickers were soon out clearing up.

The postponed Great British Spring Clean was postponed and is now called the Great British September Clean. I will be organising a BRAG litter pick for Saturday 12 September, meeting on the green opposite Tesco at 2pm. This is something we can do safely distancing. I will advertise this in the Melksham Independent, ask the Parish Council if we can borrow litter pickers and have bags, and ask Wiltshire Council if they can collect the rubbish. I will also make a poster and circulate it so BRAG members can put it on various noticeboards, etc. I hope to see you there!

### **8. Any other business**

The Parish Steward is regularly available to do work on Bowerhill. If there is any work you know about that he can do – pothole repairing, cutting back shrubs and undergrowth, anything that a man with hand tools could do – please let us know.

If there are any issues or other business that you would like raised, please let us know on Facebook or via our group email using “reply all”.

If there are issues that are more relevant to Wiltshire Council you can report problems via <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywiltshire-online-reporting> or their app.

**We aim to produce these Newsletters bi-monthly – our next one is planned for September.**