

BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Annual Parish Meeting held at Barham Village Hall on Thursday 7 April 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

Welcome: The Chairman welcomed all to the Meeting.

1. Present:

Cllr L. Davies (Chairman), Cllr E. Mullett (Vice Chairman) and Cllrs J. Brown, Mrs H. Pechey, Mrs C. Ridgeway, M. Simpson, Mrs V. Steer, D. Tamsitt and D. Wood and Mrs S. Baker, Clerk in attendance.

2. Apologies:

Canterbury City Councillor Martin Vye and Bill Oakey.

3. Minutes of Last Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 15 April 2010:

Approved at the Parish Council Meeting on 3 February 2011.

4. Provisional Financial Report:

The Clerk presented the Provisional Financial Report, which had been circulated to all members present. No questions raised by Parishioners. Proposed by Cllr D. Tamsitt and seconded by Cllr J. Brown.

5. Chairman's Report:

Members of the PC were introduced and all Councillors were thanked for their continued support during the past year, as well as to the Clerk, Sharon Baker for her hard work, help and guidance.

Planning:

Fewer Planning Applications were received over the last year with only 16 actual Planning Applications and 15 Planning Applications for work to be carried out on trees. Some of the work to be carried out on trees was just to have the height reduced or pollarded and a few for complete removal. It is important to seek advice when planning any tree work, by making a quick telephone call to Christine Warren at Canterbury City Council who will give advice and information regarding any work wishing to be carried out.

Village Green and Play Areas:

A new company was engaged to inspect the play equipment on both the Recreation Ground and the Toddlers Play Area, several minor faults were noted and they are in the process of being rectified. 'No Parking' signs have been made up and erected for the Village Green and the green area outside the Toddlers Play Area which is now a designated Village Green. There is a problem on the Village Green with moles but Keith Groombridge has very kindly offered (free of charge) to have them eradicated at the same time as he is having a couple of areas done. The green is also very uneven and it is going to be rolled very soon by Kevin Goddard, which will hopefully improve it.

Roads, Footpaths and Maintenance:

The Culvert at the bottom of The Street has been replaced. With thanks to former Parish Councillor Jim Callan who kindly undertook to oversee the work, it was carried out with great consideration to the residents of Bridge Cottage, which is actually in very close proximity to the road. There was naturally inconvenience to users of The Street but the project actually finished ahead of time. Every single road and lane in Kent has been affected by potholes and Barham has certainly had their fair share. Some have been repaired, some twice. It never ceases to amaze me how they decide which hole to repair and which holes to leave. Every month the Clerk reports and chases repairs to potholes, which has been a nightmare. The person to contact if a street light is on during the day or not working is Councillor Val Steer. The salt bins throughout the village were not replenished as and when they needed to be. The system was changed whereby we have to apply for a new bin and if approved they will fill it. The Parish Council purchased several bins prior to the new arrangement and they should have been filled. Correspondence has been going back and forth for the whole of the winter, with a map being sent marked with every bin that had been approved at a site meeting with a Highways Representative, still confusion, again another nightmare. Everyone is reminded that if and when the salt bins are filled, it is for use on the roads and footpaths and not people's private driveways.

Social:

The Social Fund remains healthy. Two main events held during the year were the Bonfire Night and the Annual Pensioners Luncheon Party in February 2011. Once again the Bonfire Night was a massive success, with the weather being very kind to us. Special thanks as always were conveyed to the Chairman's husband Arthur and son Mark for all their hard work and for also securing part sponsorship for the lights and a teleporter to push the fire up into place. Also thanks were conveyed to all those who helped during the day to set everything up and those who helped on the night. The Pensioners Party was again very successful and the meal and entertainment were enjoyed by some 76 people. Once again many calls and notes of thanks were received, which is always very nice.

Youth Club:

Sadly the numbers attending the Youth Club have somewhat diminished and it has not been running for some while. Meetings have been had with Alison Williams from Canterbury City Council who is trying to summon interest for volunteering so that it can hopefully start again. A display at the School Parents Evening was held and some interest was taken. Alison is organising an event at the School Fete this summer with Youth Workers who will organise games, etc.

Broadband:

The grant from Kent County Council for £50,000.00 has now been spent. The Chairman, for one has found the service a great improvement and knows of many others who would agree.

Post Office/Shop:

Suzy has settled into the Post Office and Shop very nicely and is very popular. Opening hours have been extended, which has proved worthwhile. Keep up the good work and keep supporting her.

Website:

The Parish Council has a website, which the Clerk, Sharon Baker has set up and runs for us at www.barhampc.kentparishes.gov.uk. If anyone has any forthcoming events or interesting news that you would like to put onto the site, please contact either the Clerk or the Chairman.

The Chairman closed her report and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

6. Guest Speakers:

(a) Michael Northey, Kent County Council Member -

Every year it seems I say what a difficult year it is for Kent County Council and its budgets, but we always manage to provide excellent services. This year for 2011-2012 we have had to take out 10% from the budget, that is £95 million, which is obviously a massive loss, of which £58 million was a cut in Government grants and the rest was rising prices and higher demand. However, there is no loss of services but a streamlining where necessary. We subsidise 220 otherwise uneconomic rural bus routes, which will continue till the end of 2011 and then the local member might be able to help from local funding. Over the next four years we will have to lose 1,500 to 2,000 council jobs, which nobody wants to see. Service improvements carry on though. In the first six months of 2010 100,000 pot holes were repaired and we aim to carry on this programme. There is a carefully planned Transport Strategy and a Rail Strategy. In Canterbury the new A2 slip road is being built as we speak. The good news is that each local County Councillor still has the same or similar funding available for local causes. So where local transport is lost, it still might be possible to make local arrangements.

Last year I was able to put in £6,874.00 for the resurfacing of the Village Hall car park. I keep a keen interest in the shop and Village Hall developments. I am also keeping a keen interest in the proposed pathway between Kingston and Barham and am in constant touch with Kingston and Barham Footpath Committee, having attended a meeting and will do so as available.

Kent County Council is still a massive authority with a budget of £1 billion plus a further billion on schools. We are strong enough to champion Kent at national and government level and sometimes get results.

We were all dismayed at the loss of Pfizer's but Paul Carter is the Chairman of a group including MP's and other influential people who will get the best outcome possible. We do attract new jobs into Kent.

We are very conscious of the effects at local level and we are very keen to promote and help rural life. We are doing all we can to push out broadband and as you know, Barham has received good help on this. More and more is being devolved to the local area and the local members and I welcome information from the Parish Council and residents. For example, I was able to push for and get done various road lines and signs in the Parish, the sort of detail that matters. Thank you very much for your welcome – it is nice to be here.

(b) Martin Vye, Canterbury City Councillor –

A report by Martin Vye was read out. First my apologies. There is a significant family birthday today and the celebration was arranged long before the notification of the Village Meeting.

Second you may know by now that I have decided not to stand for the Barham Downs seat on the City Council this time. This is because my work as a county councillor is increasing in volume and I feel I need to concentrate on that. I have found the 16 years as your City councillor interesting and rewarding and I have made many friends, and I shall miss representing you.

The City Council budget was less dire than had been predicted. The City part of the Council Tax for a Band D property was kept at £178.00 for this next year. However, cuts in services and increases in charges have been made and there were robust debates in the Guildhall in February 2011 about whether £20,000.00 should be spent on the Sandwich Open Golf promotion, or rather on

reinstating grants to voluntary organisations, and increasing the budget for graffiti removal. So far as the rural areas are concerned a 5% cut in City Council contributions to Parishes' expenditure was negotiated with representatives of Parish Councils. However, the Parish Councils' Capital Grant Scheme retained its £39,000.00 and I am glad to say that the Executive accepted the proposal of us rural Councillors to grant Barham Parish Council the £14,000.00 it had bid for, to pay for the Phase 1 design brief to extend the Village Hall. This is a very welcome help in the village's quest to incorporate the Post Office and community shop in a new hall extension. The grant is well in excess of grants made to other parishes, and reflects the value this project is seen to be contributing to village life.

One issue on which public opinion has been successful in changing the decision of the City Council's administration is in the distribution of clear sacks for recyclable waste. However, the quality of the sacks remains a problem - too often filling them makes them split, and the danger is that some people will give up trying to make the system work and that would be a pity as the principle is sound.

There have been no major planning applications this year. The new national government has scrapped the requirement to find land for 5,000 extra houses in Canterbury District, which had been insisted on by the previous government. However, no one believes the pressure will be off for long, and we need to remember that the plan which the City Council was preparing to allocate the land showed Barham as a village which could expand...

The slow speed of Broadband access in Railway Hill hit the national media recently---not much more than a year after an article on the Internet said that Barham was one of the fastest villages in the UK'!. Barham of course did benefit from an earlier grant scheme which paid for Vfast installation, but clearly there are still households suffering from very slow access. It has been recognised nationally and locally that slow access is not acceptable in this day and age, especially for the growing number of people who work from home. I have sought and gained an assurance from the City Council Economic Development Department that they are joining with Kent County Council to apply for further government funding to continue installation of fast access.

Along with your chairman, I continue to be a member of the Little Stour and Nailbourne Management Committee, comprising Parish Councillors and others. The Committee organised a public meeting last year in which the problem of rainwater flooding foul sewers down the Nailbourne valley was debated with Southern Water and the Environment Agency. I believe that Southern Water is now facing up to the problems. They have done an extensive CCTV survey of the sewers down the valley, and have replaced a section of the main sewer in the Bishopsbourne Parish.

The provision of good quality social housing in the villages is something I have always tried to promote. Quite frankly there is not enough of it, but I have tried consistently to fight the cause of local people who need adequate housing---and to make sure the City Council as landlord does its duty in keeping the houses in good condition. Landlord services will from the first of April be provided by an organisation formed by four district councils in East Kent. Local councillors must make sure that they can continue to make these services work promptly for tenants.

Finally I wish the residents of Barham all the very best in the future. I shall continue to take a keen interest in the wellbeing of the village.

(c) PSE Gavin Dodwell –

PSE Gavin Dodwell introduced himself. I am most times at the Coffee Stop and at the School. Have been on the Ward for 9 months and has been trying to help do community pay back to paint the top of the Village Hall and also with the School to paint the bus stop. I have been working closely with Dick Bailey of Neighbourhood Watch, teaching him to use the speed gun. There is a Speed Watch Course where other Parishioners can learn to use the speed gun, for which there are details in the Parish Magazine. Recently did a speed watch in Barham. PSE Gavin Dodwell then took questions from Parishioners.

7. Church & Various Village Organisations Reports:

(a) St. John the Baptist Church & Messy Church:

Revd Stephen Hardy reported that he continues to provide an important focus with the village of Barham. With its imposing green spire and medieval building, it also attracts many visitors to the village to learn more of its heritage. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of many people, the Church is currently in good order and it is hoped that the heating will soon be replaced, making it a more comfortable environment for all who attend or visit.

The Church is used every week for a variety of services and other events and we are pleased when it is able to be a facility for the school, as a meeting place for groups, for performances and for small exhibitions. Barham Church is also home to a small choir, who help lead the worship twice each month and to a loyal group of bell ringers, whose skills are heard across the village each week.

The heart of Church life for the village is the Sunday services and over the course of a month, a variety of styles of worship are offered, catering for those who prefer traditional worship and those who enjoy more contemporary family worship. Each month there is also a service held jointly with the local Methodist congregation.

The most popular opportunity for worship each month goes under the unusual title of 'Messy Church'. This is an afternoon event for the whole family and includes craft work, worship and Sunday tea together. For this, the Church can be very full at times, but it is a happy event and we hope that people enjoy exploring spiritual things and growing in their personal faith. Barham's 'Messy Church' recently appeared in a DVD that was made, featuring a number of 'Messy Churches' that have sprung up across the country. Quite a number of Barham people appeared in the DVD and Revd Lesley Hardy, who is mainly responsible for running the event, is seen explaining why such events attract people who may not attend more conventional worship.

Despite the financial limitations that most charities are facing and the Churches in particular, Barham continues to have a resident Priest, who is shared with the parishes of Kingston, Bishopsbourne and Womenswold. These four Churches work together as a group and often host joint events. A number of things that we do here in Barham, such as 'Messy Church', the study groups and the club for Year 5 & 6 pupils at the school, actually involve people from neighbouring parishes.

During the year we enjoyed having a number of baptisms, several weddings and sadly, also some funerals for residents of the village. Those who have been bereaved were welcomed back into the Church at an All Souls Service on the 2nd November 2010, which was greatly appreciated.

The aim of the Church is to be available to all in the parish, whether or not they actually attend Church services. The Priest is readily available on request, as is Revd Lesley Hardy, who is licensed as Assistant Priest in the Parish. We have also collected a list of 'helping hands' should assistance be required in future times of heavy snow fall, or at any time when a little extra help would be useful.

(b) Bell Ringers:

Mrs Nancy Ball reported that the bells have been ringing at the appropriate times all the year. We still have enough loyal ringers who turn up every Sunday and for practices on Mondays. I have not been able to ring this year but would like to thank Geoff Grabham and the team for keeping the ringing going. We were the hosts for a K.C.A.C.R. Canterbury District ringers' meeting on Saturday the 12th March 2011. They rang from 3.00 till 4.30p.m., then had an evensong with a wonderful tea at the Village Hall afterwards, followed by a meeting. It was all great fun. Thank you to the local band who helped to make it such a success and for all the scrumptious home-made cakes. Hope you all enjoy the bells for the next year.

(c) Art Club:

David Tamsitt reported that the Art Club continues to thrive with 18 to 20 members and have a tutor every week.

(d) Barham Toddlers:

A report by Jacqui Connelly was read out. Barham Toddlers is extremely grateful for the financial assistance of the Parish Council. We have decided the best way to fund raise (as suggested by you) is by retaining the weekly £2 charge to families attending. This will enable us to build up a good reserve this year whilst the hall hire charges are being met by the Parish Council.

Barham Toddlers meets once a week on Monday mornings in the Village Hall for a mixture of play, craft, music and refreshments. All are welcome. The Thursday session was dropped from September 2010 due to poor attendance and the move of the person running this session. The Monday session usually attracts 5-10 families each week, with a core group of regulars.

We were offered funding from the Surestart Rural Centres to purchase outside play equipment. This should be secured later this week in time for the children to enjoy it now the weather is improving.

The grant we received from Kent County Council is still being used to purchase new toys and equipment as necessary.

(e) Barham Public Transport:

Mrs Nancy Ball reported that the bus service is still as good as ever with as yet, no cuts. There has been a technological advance in the form of smart readers for the bus passes so that instead of showing them to the driver, we hold them over the ticket machine, which then usually produces the ticket automatically. However, you could say this was an improvement for the bus driver and the company more than for the passenger. Do use the buses as much as possible, for this may avoid any cutting in the future when you may not always be able to use your car.

(f) Barham Bowls Club:

A report by Dennis Rose was read out. With a membership of 40+, very few from Barham/Kingston, we have a full fixture list. We look forward to the possibility of regular short-mat bowls during the winter months if, or when, the Village Hall is refurbished and the length of the main hall is increased. During the past winter, we have renovated and improved the kitchen in the clubhouse to enable us to cater more adequately, as other clubs do, when we receiving visiting teams. Our 2011 season starts on Saturday the 9th April 2011 and we will have an Open Day to attract new members on Sunday the 17th April 2011.

(g) Friends of Barham School:

A report by Callie Pettman was read out. Our aim is to maintain the high standard of activities at our local School. We, as a team, hold events to raise money, which enables our School to have the luxury of its own swimming pool, leaving every child that leaves Barham School as a swimmer. We fund the coaches for School trips out, educational and recreational, provided over £5,000.00 for 10 more laptops for the

children to use, provided little presents at Christmas, rainy day toys and games, class Christmas presents and the funding for the Djembe drums that the children love using, as well as supporting many other projects. Donations received from a parent and other funding provided by the School this year, paid for a new piano and playground fencing. We also contribute to activities that are costly to multi children families, ensuring that no one misses out.

We organise many events throughout the year in order to raise funds about our main two events are the Summer Fete and the Christmas Bazaar, these are the two events that we would like to advertise more closely to our local community and would love for the residents to come along and support these great events, where there are wonderful home made refreshments to eat on site or to take away, as well as raffles, bric-a-brac, crafts, new goods and of course entertainment provided by the School children who are heavily involved in the activities, as well as outside entertainment and an abundance of stalls.

Other events that are great fun are the wine and wisdom evening, which is open to anyone and is held in the School hall usually on a Friday evening. We provide a hot chilli meal and question master and you bring your own wine.

The Daffodil Tea, which is an Easter gathering, held in the School hall where the tables are laid out nicely and decorated with daffodils and napkins. Our year 6 children wait on the tables, taking orders for refreshments, tea, coffee, juice and a huge selection of homemade cakes, etc. There is also an Easter Egg Raffle.

We would like to look at the possibility of joining together with our local community for advertising and maybe doing a joint fundraising activity, to share the advertising, the cost and the profit. We would love the community to join these events and hope to look forward to working together for local community in its entirety.

(h) Horticultural Society:

Tim Bines reported that the Barham and District Horticultural Society was founded in 1895. We are a friendly society promoting an interest in all aspects of gardening with a view to making it successful, enjoyable and fun. Currently we have 220 members from a wide local area of Wootton, Woolage Green, Womenswold, Kingston, Bridge, Aylesham and many members here in Barham. We try to keep costs down and the subscription low to maintain and attract membership. However, last year we increased our annual subscription to provide better services for members to £4.00 for an individual and £6.00 for a couple/family. In 1895 6d per quarter in advance.

Our annual programme follows a pattern of two winter talks, a Plant Sale, visits to gardens to admire and stimulate ideas, encouragement/inspiration and of course our Summer and Autumn Shows, which transform this hall for a few hours with vegetables, flowers, flower arranging, cookery and photography. Shows are open to members and non-members and are strongly supported and new entries are always welcome. In 1897 300 people paid to see the Show.

In addition we have an annual opportunity to purchase seeds and materials at discounted prices, which is popular with delivery of heavy items such as compost to the door. This year we are extending the Plant Sale – this Saturday – do come – to include a Spring Show. We hope this will be a success.

Our very active large committee is one of the society's strengths and at our AGM each year we look for new ideas from members to try to give them what they feel they need. Each year we produce two Newsletters to communicate with our members, have developed an active website, which has all our latest information (www.barhamhortsoc.co.uk) and are encouraging email use by our members.

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Magazine for its help and the Village Hall committee for their support and you the Parish Council for your continuing interest.

(i) Karate Club:

A report by Adrian Wright was read out. The club was formed in April 2001. It caters mainly for the younger element of the village, ages range from 5 years to 18 years, although we have a couple of members in their 40's and 50's. Membership at present is 42. New members are welcome but may have to wait for a vacancy as we are at our capacity at present. Ten members of the club live in nearby villages the remainder all reside in Barham.

Achievements over the past 12 months. The club held its black belt grading in November, four students took their first black belt examination and passed. Clive Newell took his second dan and also passed

The Club also held its usual Christmas display – this is for the children's parents to appreciate the skills attained and for the yearly awards to be made. The display was held in January due to the December snow. This year it was decided that the club would raise funds for the Village Hall, this was achieved by asking parents to donate £1 a head which after costs raised £52 for the village hall funds.

All instructors of the Club have had their CRB's completed and a new child protection officer, Trudy Pay has been appointed.

Over the next 12 months – 2 junior members will be taking their Black Belt grading and two junior black belts Todd Liebenschutz-Jones and Abby Taylor Baptie will be taking their 2nd Dan black belts.

(j) Kings Club and Sunday Club:

Jody Moseling reported that the King's Club ran another successful summer holiday club in July 2010. Approximately 35 children aged 4-11 years attended the five morning sessions and the family service on the following Sunday. The theme was "I am" sayings of Jesus. The Church was decorated throughout August with samples of the children's craft, which of course showcased some considerable artistic talent. All participants played a part in creating a huge textile wall hanging for the Church showing a child looking through a window, each panel depicting a different "I am" saying of Jesus. The children also enjoyed music and games as well as worship and craft during the week. In our evaluations of the week, we felt that many children were unable to come because the dates conflicted with family holidays. As a consequence, King's Club 2011 will be held at the end of the School summer holidays instead of the beginning. King's Club also ran a holiday club over two days in the February half term holiday. In those two days we covered the entire Bible to mark the 400 year anniversary of the King James translation. The children made panels depicting key points in the Old and New Testaments as well as the usual games and music. Their work will be displayed in the Church during the summer. Group work was undertaken in vertical age groups for the first time at King's Club. This proved very successful and enhanced the family ethos of the group. Many thanks go to the Methodists in the village that undertake this joint venture with us and the numerous helpers, without whom King's Club could not function.

Sunday Club meets on the second and third Sunday of the month during the 9.30a.m. service in the vestry at St. John's Church. Sunday Club members have continued to grow to 16 regular attendees. We now have a break off group, C.U.B.E. This group comprises of year 6 children and meets one Sunday a month in the Rectory during the Sunday service. Participants then join the rest of the congregation along with Sunday Club during the receiving of Communion and blessings. This group will see the children through the transition from Primary to Secondary School and the programme is largely decided by the participants. Sunday Club is very well received by the rest of the congregation who recognise its importance in a vital Church and community. Sunday Club aims to make Church fun and a safe place to question, develop and know God's love in the lives of all.

(k) Kingsbourne Players':

Bill Speed reported that they had a full year with two main productions and an autumn fund raising event for the Village Hall.

The summer play was a farce called "Flying Feathers", which was well received by the audience, although competition with the World Cup meant that audience numbers were not as high as they had hoped. The Pantomime was the traditional Cinderella with an amazing double act of ugly sisters stealing the show. For the first time we used backing track music rather than a live pianist, which gave a good energy to the musical productions (and masked the fact that few of us could remember the words to the songs or master the art of singing and dancing at the same time). We also used the Barham Village Ballet Group to perform in the pantomime. Thanks to Sarah and her team for organising that as it was very successful and something we would like to repeat in coming years. The pantomime was very well attended. The Saturday night performance was possibly the most energised show I have ever seen, with great audience participation. One feature that helped was advertising the show on a banner outside the shop and selling tickets through the shop, so very many thanks to all concerned for allowing that to happen.

In autumn we performed a production of Cluedo to raise funds for the Village Hall and were delighted that over the two nights, we were able to raise over £900.00 in profits, which was presented at the Barham Village Hall AGM. I know that one of the minor frustrations throughout the year has been the location of our new stage extension and we have tried to comply with all the requests of the Village Hall Committee in moving, securing and disguising the extension. I am pleased to report that following the last committee meeting, it was agreed that the extension can be stored in the 'Billiard Room' and this be removed from the stage minimising further inconvenience. This will be done over the forthcoming few weeks.

Finally, I would like to thank Sheila for her help with the bookings as I know I am not the most organised in this regard and all the village organisations that help us each production by allowing us valuable access to the hall for the week of the performances. Without this support, we would not be able to construct our sets, etc, so many thanks to all.

(l) Yoga:

A report by Sue Hodgkins was read out. The Yoga group meets in Barham Village Hall on Friday mornings from 9.30 to 11.00a.m. We are of mixed age and ability, and enjoy varied classes; for instance focusing on different kinds of posture or movements and some weeks we are more energetic, and on others less so - so that hopefully there's something to suit everyone. Postures can be adapted to suit individual needs and abilities.

This group has been going since 2005. In January 2011 we moved from the Barn in Kingston and were welcomed to Barham. The hall is popular with the group, and we have had some new members join. I currently have a list of about a dozen names. We can fit a few more in and new people are always welcome, whether they have practised Yoga before or not.

The class is followed at 11.30a.m. by a group of people with multiple sclerosis. This second class lasts an hour and is specifically tailored only for people with MS, who can contact me via the Canterbury MS Therapy Centre in Merton Lane. Attendance fluctuates with the severity of the individuals' condition, but I have a list of about half a dozen regulars.

Yoga is non-competitive. We practise Hatha Yoga, which incorporates a variety of postures and movements to engage, stretch and strengthen various parts of the body. These can have different effects, such as stimulating or calming. We also integrate

breathing and de-stressing techniques, and end each session with complete relaxation, which is very popular! Why not give it a try to help cope with those Recession blues.

(m) League of Friends of Kent and Canterbury Hospital:

Robyn Kingston reported that the group has had another successful year, although their takings were down on previous years, because we no longer have the takings from Jull Butterfield's garage sale and vintage tractors and no longer hold a Christmas Dance. However, we are happy with the results of our activities, which continue along the usual lines.

Our house to house collection, with the help of volunteers from both Barham and Kingston, raised approximately £567.00. The Chairman wrote letters of thanks to Sue Holmes, Ali Matthews, Alan Wake, Valerie Carter and Pat Steer who had been pressed into service. In June 2010 I took part in the Rose Day Collection, which yielded approximately £39.00. In July 2010 we again hosted the cream teas in the Manor, courtesy of Sarah and Phil Housden. The hospital fair was held in August 2010 and we again managed a book stall, which raised £100.00. Our grand draw tickets raised only £238.00 this year in part because I was not available to sell tickets at supermarkets, which I had done in previous years. On the 1st October 2010, in atrocious weather, travelling friends came to Barham for the second time and unfortunately, it was not as successful as last year, raising only £175.00. Our Christmas Coffee Morning was very successful, helped by Julie lovely foliage decorations and raised over £200.00 and our jumble sale in February 2011 raised £203.00.

Our group has donated £5,000.00 to the East Kent Mammography Appeal and I have had a letter of thanks from the Chairman of the appeal.

(n) Neighbourhood Watch:

A report by Dick Bailey was read out. Occasional incidents happened through the year, fortunately not serious ones, although disturbing to people affected by them. Most involved theft or damaged to parked vehicles. Some vandalism occurred, in particular to the two notices boards on the front boundary of the Village Hall.

As Police Crime Reports, Warnings and Advice Notices from them and Kent Trading Standards, especially about scams and cold callers were received, were sent by e-mail to the members of my Barham Neighbourhood Watch Group and the recipients passed the information onto friends and neighbours. I am always glad to have new people joining the group to spread news wider still. I put copies on the Village Hall Notice Board and the Kentish Gazette publishes selected ones in their Barham Village News section.

Local people contacted me with information and requests for advice. Our new Police Community Support Officer Gavin Dodwell arranged for speed checks in the village and attended meetings, coffee mornings, etc to hear about residents' concerns and give advice.

(o) Royal British Legion:

John Vinnicombe reported that it is the Royal British Legion's 90th anniversary this year and considerable activity will be taking place across the country, including the Elham Valley Branch. The aim is to promote the image of the Royal British Legion at the same time as raising more money for the Poppy Appeal, which is used primarily to support our troops in Afghanistan.

I am afraid representation of the Royal British Legion and the Poppy Appeal in Barham is very weak. We have two longstanding members in the Elham Valley Branch from Barham, namely Brigadier Atherton and Major Dale Green. Neither, to my knowledge, actively supports the Royal British Legion in Barham. Some five years ago I was interested in taking over the Barham Poppy Appeal but unfortunately, after making enquiries at Head Office, I was told all proceeds went to the Canterbury

Branch. However, I now understand that a Mr Michael Holdsworth (01227-832826) is your Poppy Appeal representative, having been caretaker of the Village School for many years. He is looking for more support by way of additional collectors. Anybody interested should contact him. £7,000.00 was raised in our areas from the Poppy Appeal and £43 million raised over the country.

With regards to the Royal British Legion, I would welcome anybody who would like to become a member of the Elham Valley Branch to liaise with me as Chairman. We hold regular committee meetings and a number of special events during the year, including two annual dinners, as well as a special Ghurka evening on Friday the 8th July 2011 in the Elham Village Hall when we anticipate over 130 people will attend. Entrance is by ticket at the cost of £5.00 per person. If I can be of any help in developing our image in Barham, please contact me on 01303-864255.

(p) Tennis Club:

Simon Cavalier reported that the health of the club is at an all-time high, with the refurbishment of the playing facilities now complete and with the subsequent doubling of membership numbers over the last two years. The refurbished courts and practise wall were formally opened during our 'open-day' in June 2010 by Ewart Clough who was the first chairman of the club in the 1960's. He was accompanied by other members of the original committee.

The club is predominately made up of family membership, which it sets out to attract but it has also focussed on the coaching of juniors between the ages of 5 and 16, with over 30 receiving coaching. Adult coaching was again provided by a professional coach for individuals. With the increase in numbers the club has set time aside for club sessions on a Friday evening and Saturday afternoons, which have had a patchy success. It is proposed to continue with these and to establish a ladies morning on Wednesdays, which was requested by playing members.

During the year, contact was made with the River Tennis Club in Dover, which provides five grass courts. These, can only be played on for a limited season, dependent on the weather and they cannot be played on during the winter months. This link has developed so that their members can play over the winter months on our courts when we experience limited activity, bringing in extra income to our club. Links have also been made with other local tennis clubs with a view to having social/friendly matches in the future.

Finally, the development of the courts along with the childrens' play area, which includes the new car-parking area, seems to have substantially reduced the level of vandalism which was experienced in previous years. Long may it continue. We are looking forward to another good season this year.

(q) Barham Village Hall:

Patti Earl, the Chairman reported that the achievements of the last year for the hall are on display for all to see. The car park has been resurfaced...thanks to a grant secured through Michael Northey's office. We have not been quite so successful persuading users to park with consideration for others but are working on it. The positioning of the recycling bins is underway. A new "welcome" sign has been put up and the "IN" and "OUT" signs are in position...even if not all users have noticed. We are now awaiting final details so that the painting of the outside of the building can be undertaken. All these together will go a long way to improve the "kerb appeal" of the hall. We may be planning major improvements but the day-to-day care of the hall and surrounding areas still need to be maintained.

Since the meeting in September 2010 when the initial drawings were presented, there has been major progress concerning the hall. With a fair degree of chivvy, there was an excellent response to the survey of residents' views and many of these ideas have been incorporated into our final plans. We heard this week that we have been

successful in our bid for funding for the development plan. This means that, without draining our resources completely, we can now afford to instruct an architect to draw up the final detailed plans to obtain planning permission. Once we have this permission, the real task of raising the £500,000.00 needed to realise the dream will start in earnest.

The hawk-eyed among you will realise that the signage in the hall has improved considerably. We now comply totally with recent legislation. We applied for Hallmark status and were inspected at the end of November 2010. We were delighted to achieve Hallmark 1 status. The inspection team were very complimentary, both on the documentation we hold and the vision of the committee. They suggested we go straight to a level 2 inspection, which we will do as soon as practicable.

There has been some mindless vandalism and break-ins. As we do not keep valuable equipment in the hall, there is really little to achieve by breaking in. I cannot list all those who deserve the thanks of the whole village, as there are too many. All secretarial tasks, all caretaking, all the day to day running of the hall, all the applications for grants are undertaken by people who give hours and hours of their time with no financial reward at all. Add to these the numerous clubs and individuals who have supported us. They are the real heroes of the village, many of whom are here tonight and I would like to invite you to join me in showing your appreciation by a round of applause.

(r) Barham with Kingston Women's Institute:

Janice Robinson reported that they have had a busy, productive and enjoyable year. At our cream tea in July 2010, we raised £187.00 in funds for Barham Village Hall. We also held a stall at the Village Hall Bootfair in January 2011. In August 2010 we held a strawberry tea raising £103.00 for our own funds. We continue to play an important role in the County Council's Emergency Plans. Our members are at the heart of everything we do and we always try to remember that being kind and thoughtful is really appreciated by many people. Birthdays are never forgotten and we always try to offer support and friendship to our members and to the community where there is a need. This year we have supported the local Women's Aid Refuge in Canterbury, The Demelza Trust and the Footprints children's charity. We have also helped raise funds for overseas charities such as Operation Sunshine and the Associated Country Women of the World. There are a lot of events and activities arranged through our neighbouring Group Women's Institutes and with the wider Kent Federation. A recent event was the Ghurkha Day held at Faversham, which gave members a chance to learn more about Ghurkha culture and lifestyles. We play an active role in national issues that are relevant to us. We supported improved labelling on foodstuffs so that the country of origin is accurately stated. More recently, we are looking to support a motion that seeks reassurances on the worries associated with mega industrial style farms. We are also sending a delegate to the national WI Annual General Meeting.

Monthly meetings are well attended. It is these meetings that members take all the major decisions. We hold competitions, raffles and a bring-and-buy stall. Many of the meetings have interesting speakers, e.g. Lee Ault who captivated the meeting with her fascinating topic of beautiful things and were also enthused and entertained with Revd Hardy's account of his travels in the Holy Land. The snow this year meant that we had to postpone our Christmas Lunch, which was held in March 2011. A new committee was elected in October 2010. Locally the craft group meets regularly and they are making banners and pennants for the 2012 Olympics. There are also gardening, walking and reading groups. We had a super outing to Downe House, Charles Darwin's home in August 2010. This year, in the interests of the environment and in acknowledgement of all the wonderful things we have close by, we are

planning to have a number of outings to more local places of interest. New members are always welcome. We meet at 14h30 on the second Thursday of each month in Barham Village Hall.

(s) Coffee Stop:

Kay Crouch reported that Coffee Stop is in its 7th year. It is not a club and there are no membership fees. It is a meeting place where folk can come and stay for as long as they wish, have a coffee or tea with biscuits for a small donation and enjoy each others company. Friendships are made and we have regular visits from a cycling group from Whitstable and Canterbury.

Hi-Kent, a NHS Hearing Aid Clinic comes quarterly. This free service eradicates taking aids to Kent & Canterbury Hospital or sending by post. This year the Police Community Support Officer Gavin Dodwell has been making regular visits to get to know villagers and they him.

We open every Tuesday morning throughout the year. I would like to thank the members of the team who help every week.

(t) Parish Magazine:

Diana Forrest reported that the production of the magazine has continued to run smoothly throughout the year, with a rota of three editors (Anita Bone, Diana Forrest and Pauline Greenman), and with Brian Davis setting the text despite having moved to Folkestone. This seems to work well and we are very grateful for his invaluable help. Kay Crouch, who has been responsible for the advertising for 20 years, felt she would like to hand over this job and Deborah Whigham has kindly accepted the task. We also have a fourth editor, Revd Alan Duke, who recently joined the team. A slight increase in the charge for the magazine and advertising reflects an increase in productions costs. Thanks go to those who work quietly in the background, stapling and distributing 500 copies of the magazine every month to ensure you receive it on time and to Roger Barrett for printing it. Special thanks are due to Kay Crouch for all her hard work over the years in co-ordinating the teams of collators and distributors as well as looking after the finances and dealing with the advertising.

(u) Barham Wives Club:

Valerie Carter reported that they have 29 members, not all of whom are 'Wives', but we do not discriminate in spite of our name. We are open to all women from around the area to provide a friendly social evening. We meet on the first Tuesday evening of each month, having changed from the second Tuesday so as not to clash with Kingston Wives, some of whose members also belong to our group. Once a year we host, or are hosted, by each other. January 2011 we had an afternoon meeting as the previous two years had proved too icy for speakers to travel to us; we were not too keen to turn out then either. We use the small hall in the Village Hall and arrange for speakers to talk on a range of subjects. Over the past year, for example, we have heard from a UNICEF volunteer about her trip to an African country to see where the charity sends some of its money. Another month we heard from a young Vet about his training and career working with animals. Soon we will have a talk on wayside plants by a lady from Saltwood, so we try to have a varied program. Our program runs from September to July. At the beginning of December each year, we arrange and serve refreshments for the Church's Christmas Bazaar.

8. Any Other Business:

(a) Patti Earl asked whether the Parish Council was arranging anything for the Royal Wedding;

(b) Pattie Earl asked about BT Broadband, to which Councillor James Brown replied;

(c) Tamsin asked the Parish Council about providing allotments to which the Chairman replied;

(d) Valerie Caless asked about the possibility of the streetlights being turned off after midnight. The Chairman explained that we are communicating with the people who maintain our streetlights to ask as to what can be done and the cost thereof.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.