

Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)

2020/21 Report

Unfortunately, the work of BRAG has been severely impacted by the Corona Virus pandemic and as a result meetings have not been held in person since March 2020. The AGM was also not able to go ahead because of the ban on public meetings. In the meantime we have been communicating via email and holding virtual meetings via Zoom.

The BRAG volunteers continue to meet at the picnic area on Tuesday mornings during the spring, summer and autumn months (weather permitting) and have done an amazing job maintaining and improving both the picnic site and the footpath/bridleway leading to the canal.

In conjunction with MWPC a number of benches around the Bowerhill area have been replaced and some new ones installed. Also, some new picnic tables have been installed at the Hornchurch Road Public Open Space. Some new litter bins have also been installed.

The litter-picking normally carried out by BRAG members/volunteers has had to be put on hold but will resume as soon as circumstances permit.

The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Air Cadets in this area have worked closely with BRAG helping with tree/spring bulb planting and the creation of wildflower areas.

We worked closely with MWPC, local residents and Taylor Wimpey to make sure that the new development either side of Pathfinder way delivered all that had been promised. Several public meetings were held and the developers worked hard to address the concerns of those residents directly impacted by the development.

We continue to work with MWPC to address the issue of dog fouling around the estate and we are able to access the County's Dog Warden to assist with this problem.

BRAG played an active part in campaigning against the Town Council's campaign to merge with MWPC and are pleased to see the Electoral Committee recommendation that the merger should not occur.

We also provided input into the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and the Seend Parish Plan and it is pleasing to see that the picnic area is noted as 'green no development land'.

Plans for the future

- Working with our local councillors and MWOPC to ensure local residents are kept fully apprised of any future housing developments and the impact that any future Melksham bypass may have on them, the surrounding green areas and wildlife. Where appropriate gain support and campaign for change.
- Continue to work with our local councillors and MWOPC to ensure that the housing development at Pathfinder Way delivers all that was promised in particular the new infant school and that it is positioned so that it benefits the whole estate
- Working with our local councillors and MWOPC, local residents and interested youth groups identify whether a youth shelter is appropriate and if so where it is best located on the estate.
- Arrange regular litter picks and continue to look to involve residents and in particular the younger generation.
- Look to obtain funding to support the addition of further benches and picnic tables around the estate.
- Continue with the work at the Picnic area and the promotion of its use in particular to local schools and nurseries.
- Continue to source further trees from the Woodland Trust and plant them around the estate.
- Listen to residents' concerns and act appropriately to address issue that arise.
- Find a new Chair as I need to step back from the responsibility and I believe BRAG will benefit from the impetus a new chair will give, at a time where we could be facing the challenges that the routing of the bypass will bring.

Thank you to all Bowerhill residents for your continued support this year. I would like to offer a huge thank you to the committee for your support.

Report on Picnic Area activities from May 2019

by Jenny Butcher

Approximately a total of 664 voluntary hours worked by a team of five people meeting every Tuesday morning plus other days as and when needed.

Work done over this period of time was:-

- Strimming paths and ditches and later in the summer cutting the hedge from the top of the bridle path down to the canal. Three persons cutting and two clearing the debris away.
- Planting of new trees, shrubs and flowers and sowing seeds.
- Installing new bat box and bird boxes.
- Watering of above and planters.
- Litter picking on the site and along the ditches every week.
- Weeding - a never ending task of the picnic site plus flower beds.
- Sanding down of the wooden notice boards and re painting plus all wooden seats. Flower Planters were repainted as well and the large dustbin. A seasonal job.

BRAG entered for the competition RHS Britain in Bloom for the sixth time. Won level 5 Outstanding for the sixth time.

Vandalism struck - twice

Damaged plants, trees, benches, pond, Bug Hotel and planters plus broke large slabs leading up to the dustbin.

When the site had been restored to some normality, they struck again the following week by trying to force out of the ground the new Bug Hotel which my husband had rebuilt by using one of the builders planks which surround the site as a lever, they only managed to unbalance the structure as they were unaware that we had filled the base with the broken concrete slabs plus lots of cement.

This all added to our costs as we had to buy cement, bags of small stones to replace the broken slabs leading to the bin plus we then purchased and fitted up signs warning of CCTV in the area which we were advised to do by the police. Also purchased black vandal paint to defer further damage which seems to have worked so far.

As the pond was damaged and had to be removed, we were then donated, by a local resident, a recycled preformed pond which we fitted late Autumn, again adding to our costs as we had to purchase sand and soil in order to fit in that area.

Due to this vandalism BRAG was overwhelmed with donations, cash, cheques through our letterbox and my granddaughter set up a just giving page which again was unbelievable and final figures show on our BRAG accounts for 2019/2020.

2020. We were just about to start work on the site in March of this year and of course the virus struck so work only started when it was safe to do so late May so lots of future plans for the site will have to wait to next Spring 2021.

Treasurer's Statement by Jenny Butcher

Statement of Accounts for the year 16th April 2019 to 15th April 2020

<u>Opening balance bank account 16th April 2019</u>		<u>£958.42</u>
<u>INCOME</u>		
03/06/2019	Cash/cheque Vandalism donations local residents/canal users	£190
08/06/2019	Just Giving Web Site Vandalism	£250
06/07/2019	Melksham Rotary Club Grant	£200
06/07/2019	Picnic Area Donation Box	£20
28/09/2019	Just Giving Web Site balance O/S	£48
29/08/2019	Benevity Giving Platform	£350
08/11/2019	Seend Parish Council Donation	£50
27/11/2019	Waitrose Green Token Scheme Grant	£180
07/12/2019	Asda Token Scheme Grant	£200
26/02/2020	Cash Donation	<u>£6</u>
TOTAL		£1494.00
<u>ADD OPENING BANK BALANCE 16th April 2019</u>		<u>£ 958.42</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>£2452.42</u>

EXPENDITURE

<u>Chq. No.</u>		
000293	21/04/2019	Fuel, woodstain £49.50
000294	21/04/2019	Black Paint £7.00
000295	14/06/2019	Zurich Public Liability Insurance £251.77
000296	14/06/2019	Four Bags Cement, screw, metal plates etc.,plants £90.57
000297	26/06/2019	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall May AGM £12.00
000298	09/07/2019	Four fuchsias, 2 pks busy lizzies Tubs Picnic Area £14.99
000299	09/07/2019	Fuel, Strimmer Parts. £27.87
000300	18/07/2019	Bulk Gravel, camera signs, bamboo canes £106.78
000301	23/08/2019	One Stiga hedge trimmer and one cutter+fuel £350.00
000302	23/08/2019	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall 9 th July ADJ. £2.00
000303	23/09/2019	Clutch for the old BRAG Strimmer £40.00
000304	18/10/2019	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall 24th September £11.25
000305	31/10/2019	Two bulk bagged sand and two pks violas £109.20
000306	31/10/2019	Fuel. Old hedge cutter sharpened and serviced £89.70
000307	31/10/2019	Two new Brass Plaques for vandalised benches £40.00
000308	09/11/2019	One bulk bagged soil (xchanged one bag sand) £20.40

000309	02/12/2019	Invoice 1553 Village Hall Rent 2018 adjusted	£15.00
000310	03/12/2019	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall November Inv. 1577	£11.25
000311	23/01/2020	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall January 2020	£11.25
000312	27/02/2020	Hedge trimmer attachment plus clean fuel system	£97.02
000313	15/03/2020	Rent Bowerhill Village Hall March 2020	£11.25
000314	06/04/2020	Hornchurch Picnic Bench	<u>£721.94</u>
		TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>£2090.74</u>

TOTAL INCOME	£2452.42
LESS TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>£2090.74</u>
=	£361.68

Jennifer Butcher Treasurer 16th April 2020