

**Brimpton Parish**  
**Annual Parish Assembly**

**Date:** Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023                           **Time:** 7.30pm  
**Place:** Brimpton Primary School

**Present:** Mr Hicks (Chairman Brimpton Parish Council ), Mrs Christine McGarvie (Clerk to Brimpton Parish Council ) and 24 residents

1.	Parish Council	John Hicks Chairman - Appendix A
2.	West Berkshire Council	Cllr Dominic Boeck – Aldermaston Ward – Appendix B
3.	Brimpton School	Heidi Davies, Head Teacher – Appendix C
4.	St Peter’s Church	Patricia Brims, Churchwarden – Appendix D
5.	Village Hall	John Dolphin, Chairman – Appendix E
6.	Brimpton Recreation Ground	Charles Brims, Chairman - Appendix F
7.	Women’s Institute	Doris Butler – Appendix G
8.	Brimpton Common Fuel Allotment	Bob Moore, Trustee- Appendix H
9.	St Peter’s Almshouses	Helen Timperley, Clerk to the Trustees – Appendix I

## **Appendix A – Parish Council Chairman’s report**

### **Annual Parish Assembly 2023**

#### **Parish Council Report**

Earlier this evening we began the Parish Council's 33rd Quadrennium since it was first established in 1896. A quadrennium is the term used for the four year period between elections, although this year – as in 2019 – there was no need for a ballot as there were six candidates for six seats. The only change to the Council is the departure of Mary Cowdery and the arrival of Wendy Matthews. Mary completed 10 years as clerk and 15 as a councillor. So Wendy ...

The Parish Council's prime role often seems to be to monitor what West Berkshire Council is – or is not – doing in the parish. They are, on the whole, helpful and co-operative. But we do have what I might best describe as moments of tension, particularly with the sections responsible for highways and for planning.

The issues which most concern the Parish Council from year to year are nearly always the same: traffic travelling in excess of the speed limit; the condition of the roads in the parish, and guarding against over development. But in case you think that's all we we have done, let me pick a few headlines from the past twelve months:

We have commented on 14 planning applications. In most cases WBC agreed with our recommendation, but in some they went the opposite way. Sometimes that's because they know something about planning law that we don't. On occasions decisions seem perverse.

We have commented on 8 topics put out by WBC for consultation. These varied from the WB Local Plan to bus services and from the public library service to the Minerals & Waste Local Plan. In 2017, the first draft of the M&W LP led to something not far short of an uprising in the village and Brimpton Common. We offered no objections to the final version because the proposed sites in this parish have been removed.

We have continued to monitor traffic speeds on Wasing Road, Crookham Common Road, Brimpton Road, Brimpton Lane and the notorious B3051. WBC support a reduction in the speed limit here; but whilst there has been some progress recently, Hampshire CC have not been very helpful. We can only hope that the recent death in a crash at the junction of the B3051 and Blacknest Lane will persuade them to see things our way.

I think all of us would agree the condition of local roads is variable, but this is not unique to this parish. We regularly report potholes to WBC and it's helpful if members of the public report them as well. The number of reports counts! On this subject, we were successful in pushing WBC for action on the flooding that occurred at Able Bridge in the winter and we will continue to monitor winter flooding on Brimpton Road between the Baptist Chapel and Willow Wands.

We have been pursuing Thames Water regarding the damage their tankers have caused to the verges in Brimpton Road, opposite Manor Farm. They tell us repair work will start in mid May. They have yet to accept responsibility for the trenches that now scar the small roundabout at the junction of Brimpton Road and Crookham Common Road. Nor do they seem willing to accept that it was their closure of the B3051 that resulted in lorries, unable to manage a 90 degree turn, churning up the verge at the junction of Blacknest Lane and Brimpton Lane.

During the year a developer approached us to enquire about a possible development on land running north from the War Memorial along Brimpton Road to the entrance to Hillcourt Lodge. After he had met the Settlement Boundary WP and then attended a Parish Council meeting, he decided what the residents wanted and what he needed to build to make the scheme viable, were not the same and withdrew his proposal. There're not many like him!

During the past year we finalised the lease on the additional land the Wasing Estate has provided for our use at the back of the Village Hall. This proved very useful during both the Jubilee and the Coronation celebrations.

And speaking of those celebrations, I would like to thank all those who were involved in 2022 in the organisation and management of the Jubilee beacon lighting, the barn dance, the street party, the flower festival and the nature walk. Many of the same people were also responsible for the beacon lighting, the Community Lunch and the decorated house competition held earlier this month. The Parish Council supported all these events.

Our Community Grants fund was used to provide a contribution to the costs of cutting the grass in the old and new graveyards at St Peter's Church. We also gave grants to the CAB in Tadley and in West Berkshire, to Parenting Special Children and to the NWN Christmas Parcel Fund. We were also pleased to support the Brimpton Arts & Crafts Exhibition last September which showcased some extraordinary local talent.

Back before Christmas, which I'm sure everyone noticed, for the third year running we decided not levy a precept. In other words, we did not add anything to the Council Tax you paid to West Berkshire. Since 2020 Brimpton Parish Council has come to you free of charge as we use our reserves to pay our bills and to reduce yours.

Each fortnight I have continued to circulate the Parish Update by email. There have now been over 135 editions and it goes to about 230 residents. If you want to be included, let me know your email address . It includes not only the work of the Parish Council, but also everything from consultation exercises to road closures, to local events and dates for the diary. It comes wrapped in my somewhat strange sense of humour.

After six years as the Vice-Chairman, Phil Bassil has stood down and was this evening replaced by Nick Matthews. As Phil will tell you, the Vice-Chairman's main job is to listen to Chairman getting over excited and then to say "would you like a gin and tonic". It's worked very well for the time we have been in office together and if I may divulge one piece of private information: Phil makes a very good gin and tonic. Thank you, Phil.

Before I end this round-up, I must thank the Parish Council Clerk, Christine MacGarvie. I can assure you that without that her sensible advice and her hard work on many different issues, our lives as councillors would have been much more difficult. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their efforts, their patience and their humour. It is worth saying that none of us is paid nor do we claim the allowances to which we are entitled.

When I look around at other similar organisations I realise how fortunate Brimpton is to have a team of councillors who don't spend time point scoring, or bickering or promoting schemes that will cost you, the tax payer, a small fortune. Within our powers as the first level of local government, we aim to represent the community, to take balanced decisions on development and to spend a minimal amount. I hope you feel that we have achieved that in the past year. We will try to do so again in the coming 12 months.

# Annual Report and 2019-23 Review

- Councillor Dominic Boeck
- Elected Member for Aldermaston Ward

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*Making West Berkshire a great place to live*

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## • Introduction

On 2 May 2019 I was elected for the second time to represent the residents of Aldermaston ward at West Berkshire Council, after first being elected in 2011 to represent Thatcham South & Crookham.

Since 2012 I had been a member of the council's Executive Committee in various roles and in May 2019, I was invited by Cllr Lynne Doherty, Council Leader to lead in the Children, Young People and Education portfolio, which is one of the most important areas of responsibility that the council has. In this capacity, I was legally accountable for all the council's children's services, including education and social care. This is a demanding role and one which I found deeply rewarding.

## • Achievements

Later on in this report, I will present an extensive statement of the Conservative administration's achievements and successes and here I will mention some of the ones that I am played a significant part in.

High standards of education are essential to the prosperity of West Berkshire and year after year, parents were able to send their children to schools that they chose. In the current school year, 98% of children are going to a school of their choice and 94% of our schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

During this administration, we built and opened two new primary schools with investment of £16m to make sure that places are available in future. The new schools were Highwood Copse in Newbury and Theale Primary. Early years capacity is equally important and we opened an early years building at Speenhamland Primary School. We agreed to invest a further £40m in new and improved educational facilities across the district.

We want everyone in West Berkshire to be treated fairly and generously and to have the same opportunities. The new Keevill Unit at Speenhamland was opened which provides improved facilities for children with disabilities.

Work started on the old Theale Primary School site to provide specialist education facilities for secondary-age children who have particular needs and disabilities. Planning has started for a similar provision for primary-age children at Kennet Valley Primary School.

Both of our special schools, Brookfields and The Castle School, retained their outstanding Ofsted rating. Castlegate, our respite provider was rated good, as was the specialist education provider Engaging Potential.

In 2022, our Children and Family Service was inspected and rated good by Ofsted, with recognition that “Leaders in West Berkshire demonstrate strong political and corporate commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children and families”. Our Family Support Model was praised and the inspectors said that kindness was a thread that ran through the service.

The pandemic brought unexpected pressures to families and households that still affect them. During the lockdown we set up a Winter Hardship Fund to help people and we made sure that all children in our care had laptops so that they could access remote learning from home.

During holidays, some of our more deprived families struggle to provide meals for their children and to keep them occupied, especially through summer. With government funding we set up Holiday Activity and Food programmes (HAF) which were delivered by schools and youth activity providers. HAF is free for deprived families and others may participate if parents want to pay. The programmes give children and young people great ways to keep active and to have fun with their friends.

Berkshire Youth run HAF programmes from their Waterside Centre in Newbury. I was pleased that we were able to support them with funding of £250k that allowed the completion of the refurbishment of the centre which they re-opened in 2021.

The number of young people not in employment, education or training in West Berkshire has fallen over the last four years and now stands at 1.7%. This is in the top 20% of all local authorities and is the lowest of all Berkshire authorities.

Our Youth Offending Team (YOT) was inspected by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation earlier this year and was assessed as outstanding. The service was already an outstanding one, having previously been assessed in a pilot inspection, and this was a well-deserved and satisfying outcome.

## • Local Elections

I was delighted to be elected once again to represent the residents of Aldermaston, Beenham, Brimpton, Padworth and Wasing and I give my thanks to everyone who voted for me. I am committed to supporting and speaking up for all our residents, parishes, community groups and businesses, regardless of political affiliation or none.

In this election, I worked particularly hard and I personally delivered literature, letters and reminders across the whole ward, as well as speaking to as many people as I could. Campaigning in such a rural ward is difficult and reaching each of our 3,010 voters in 1,582 residences is a challenge. I am sure that a few people didn’t hear from me and I regret that.

Of course, I was disappointed when it became clear that the Conservative group at council would not retain our majority. The Liberal Democrats now have complete control over the council and it will be interesting to see what changes they mean to bring about. In opposition, we will be supportive of decisions they make that are in line with our policies but when they are not, we will challenge them robustly.

Last week, the Conservative group elected Cllr Ross Mackinnon (Bradfield) to lead us and he has asked me to act as his Deputy. He also asked me to shadow the new administration on Children and Young People, Education, Governance and Transformation.

- **2019-2023 Review**

- We Care for our Communities
- *Our Offer of Support*

In 2020 we distributed £91m of government support - and were among the highest quartile in the country for distributing grants in a timely manner.

Home to school transport refunds done quickly to avoid hardship.

Extra funding was given to provide laptops for disadvantaged students.

Distributed Business Rates Grants totalling £29m (Statutory and discretionary)

Allowed pavement licences to support hospitality businesses during the summer of 2020.

Active Travel – encouraging greater use of walking and cycling routes.

Winter hardship fund for anyone experiencing extreme hardship £279,000.

We ran a successful Community Support Hub network - A month after Lockdown we had 89 Community groups and upwards of 3000 volunteers who had stepped forward to support their local communities. (Our new digital platform allowed us to track volume and types of enquiries in more detail and in real time).

The Council made available a £500 community float to groups and organisations providing shopping support to people identified as 'vulnerable' under COVID-19 government guidelines.

We set up a 'local heroes' web page on our website to celebrate the work of our communities.

We moved our Giving Tree annual Christmas appeal online (for victims of domestic abuse).

We ran a Community Santa appeal which had a superb response from the public with over 200 gifts being donated for those in our communities who have had a particularly difficult year, whether from shielding, bereavement or loneliness. Public really empathised and sent some very thoughtful gifts and messages.

We arranged for Christmas cards sent by public to those living in our care homes lifts the spirits of residents and staff.

Protected residents from known scams and rogue traders (successful prosecution).

Individuals in receipt of Council Tax Support, were given an automatic grant of up to £150 applied to their account.

Covid Winter Hardship Grant (2020) – in addition to finance received we topped up to almost £500,000 and provided a comprehensive package of support as well as FSM Vouchers during school holidays through our Community Support Hub.

We have funded 26 local businesses with a total of £112k+ through the Welcome Back Business Grant scheme.

We have made Free School Meal Vouchers available during school holidays for eligible children.

We partnered with Greenham Trust to offer the £33k Let's Get Active Fund to improve access to physical activities.

We successfully introduced a 'Summer Fun' programme to provide activities and great ways to keep children, young people and families happy and active through the summer holidays thanks to HM Government's Holiday Food and Activity Funding

We have 12 walking groups dotted around the district, each led by a team of enthusiastic volunteers.

We have distributed £695k to residents experiencing hardship from the Household Support Fund.

We gave out grants of £500 to £30,000 from our Surviving to Thriving fund to enable voluntary and community sector organisations in West Berkshire to apply for grants to fund projects aimed at helping improve the mental health and wellbeing of local residents impacted by COVID-19.

We have delivered a balanced budget and tried to keep Council Tax rises as low as possible.

We ran webinars to support businesses who wished to use HM Government's Kickstart scheme (and recruited 13 people within the Council, along with a further 12 externally).

Thanks to Government grants we have given over £5 million to businesses across West Berkshire through Additional Restriction Grants to support recovery since November 2020.

We have set up a Landlord's Forum to develop and support working relationships with landlords and agents who own/manage/rent properties in the private rented sector.

We sponsored the Rebel Business School to offer a free 10 day course starting for business start-ups in the district.

We awarded more than £17,000 to good causes from the West Berkshire Community Fund.

We facilitated the delivery of the Energy Rebate - £150 payments to people in Council Bands A-D.

We launched a new Business West Berkshire website – [businesswestberks.co.uk](http://businesswestberks.co.uk)

We have received £1,674,525 from HM Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which we will spend to help level up our communities – from regenerating run down high streets to fighting anti-social behaviour.

We provided Free Bus travel for Christmas and Easter shopping weekends, with a further one planned for the Jubilee.

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• *Our Strategies and Reviews*

We have reviewed and refreshed our Economic Development Strategy 2020-2023 and our Recovery and Renewal Strategy, as well as agreeing many new documents:

2020:

- Housing and Economic Land Area Assessment
- DEPZ – new emergency planning zone around AWE.
- Environment Strategy – 300 LAs have declared a climate emergency and we are one of the few that have actually published our strategy. First LA in Country to launch Green Municipal Community Bond. Chewing Gum Machine for Newbury. Recycling Trials.
- Economic Development Strategy – including support for EDC and work with LEP.
- New Housing Strategy – included new housing allocation policy.
- Playing Pitch Strategy – work in progress to deliver pitch solution for Newbury, more in January.
- Culture Strategy

- Leisure Strategy
- Digital Strategy - to further improve service delivery and pave the way for 5G, ultrafast broadband and full fibre connectivity across the district.
- Ultra Low Vehicle Emissions Strategy (ULEV)

2021:

- Vision for Newbury Town Centre
- Newbury Town Centre Masterplan
- Environment Strategy Delivery Plan following the 2020 Environment Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Adult Social Care Strategy
- West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme
- Leisure Strategy
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Social Value Policy
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- **We Take Action and Deliver**
- ***On the Environment***

Implemented successful appointment system for HWRCs.

Completed flood defence work in Thatcham.

Introduced a new recycling service for paper containers with metal ends, such as Pringles tubes, packaging used for hot chocolate, nuts and other products.

With the Greenham Trust, 2500 trees have been supplied to 67 different charitable organisations during the last planting season to form part of The Queen's Green Canopy. The scheme will open again at the end of June/early July inviting applications for the Autumn planting season.

Partnered with Enterprise Car Club to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Made our bin collection routes more efficient and resilient.

Began the process for the North and East Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme

Gave away Soil Conditioner produced from Garden Waste collections.

Switched to a digital system for our Household Waste Recycling Centre Permit Scheme.

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- ***On Education and Children***

Opened Highwood Copse, a £7.7m new school in Newbury.

Introduced Wellbeing Passports for Primary Schools.

Offered Cycle Skills training to children.

Gave 94% of children a place in their first-choice Primary schools.

Gave 98% of children a place in one of their preferred Secondary schools.

£52 million of investment in new and improved educational facilities across the district.

Invested £140,000 to upgrade storage for cycles at some of our schools.

Received a ‘Good’ rating from Ofsted for our Children’s Services, with recognition that “Leaders in West Berkshire demonstrate a strong political and corporate commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children and families.”

Respite provider Castlegate was rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted.

Specialist Education provision ‘Engaging Potential’ was rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted.

Hungerford Nursery School received its fifth consecutive ‘Outstanding’ rating from Ofsted.

Opened new Keevill Unit for Children with disabilities at Speenhamland School.

New Early Years building at Speenhamland Primary School was completed.

Supported the opening of the newly refurbished Waterside Centre – with £250k CIL funding.

We have the lowest number of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Berkshire and 7th lowest in England.

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- *On Planning and Housing*

Helped develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Compton.

Adopted the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.

Reduced Rough Sleeping to zero.

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- *On Transport*

Launched a Schools Streets pilot in Calcot to improve children’s journeys to and from school.

Funded three new Handybuses.

Invested £80 million to improve local infrastructure.

Introduced a new carbon-neutral road resurfacing project.

Successfully bid for a £280,000 Active Travel Funding Grant for walking and cycling improvements along the B4000 between Stockcross and the A4/A34 junction.

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- *On Health and Social Care*

Local Contact Tracing implemented.

Set up a new integrated drug and alcohol service, to be delivered by WDP, a leading drug and alcohol charity.

Hosted a Health and Wellbeing conference.

Introduced Healthy Living Kiosks in our Libraries.

Hosted a Cycling & Wellbeing Festival.

Created a new Safer Streets Champion role.

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- *On Digital, Leisure, Culture, Business*

Kick Start scheme launched.

Recovery Strategy Launched with 3 Key Priorities for future, Education, Local Economy and Health.

Supported our homeless in to ‘move on’ accommodation.

Opened a new full-size 3G playing pitch at Denefield School in Tilehurst.

Opened the green space at Faraday Road to the public.

Began development of the brand-new Newbury Sports Hub at Monks Lane, Newbury

Agreed to invest £12 million on upgrading our leisure facilities.

Worked with Virgin Media Business for a £1.7m project upgrade connectivity at more than 80 locations such as schools, doctors' surgeries, and public libraries across Berkshire – with more than 26,000 school pupils able to benefit from future-proof full fibre connections.

Consulted on plans for redeveloping Northcroft Lido.

Introduced new lighting at Newbury Library to save energy and boost accessibility.

Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group received part of £4m DCIA Pilot bid to help improve mobile phone connectivity.

Our Museum Collection was made available Online.

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• *To support those facing crisis abroad*

Afghanistan – the Council agreed to support both Refugees and Locally Employed Staff and now has families accommodated and are being supported in the district.

Ukraine – the Council has set up the Ukraine Support Hub and launched an Appeal while Officers work hard to support the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

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• *We Engage with the Public*

• *Our Communications and Campaigns*

We launched a new Communication & Engagement Strategy.

Sent out an advice leaflet for West Berkshire residents seeking extra support - we distributed 750 printed copies of the advice leaflet and activity sheet created by our public health colleagues many of which were distributed with food parcels.

Three district-wide leaflets distributed, two at the start of the pandemic and again as we went in to tier 2.

Conducted multiple Residents Surveys to learn more about our communities' needs.

We provided weekly news updates to our residents and hub volunteers. Encouraging subscribers to get news direct to their inbox. Up to 40,000 subscribers to Covid newsletter, the last one of 2020 was opened 63,000 times suggesting it is forwarded on.

We had a huge increase in our social media output.

Hosted several Facebook live sessions to answer questions that our residents wanted to raise about lockdown, our schools, financial support schemes. 4000 hits from the first one in April.

Our public meetings moved online and were broadcast for the first time in May 2020.

We ran a Local Outbreak Engagement Board and a public dashboard ensuring complete transparency for Covid Case numbers.

We launched ‘Berkley’, a Chat Bot – interactive customer service via our website.

In 2021, we ran 17 awareness campaign to improve lives across the district, including:

- Encouraging people to get vaccinated against Covid and Flu.
- Promoting reading to Children with our Summer Challenge, and to adults with another Summer Challenge.
- Supporting COP26 through event at Newbury College
- Tackling air pollution and idling cars.
- Encouraging more women into Local Government.
- Stamping out Fly Tipping.
- Pavements are for People – stopping pavements being blocked by cars.

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- *Our Consultations*

We have consulted on 18 matters in the past year, including on future plans for Northcroft Lido, a Budget Simulator which allowed residents to have a go at managing the Council's budget, and a Separate Food Waste Survey to influence our upcoming plans for separate food waste collections.

- **We are recognised for our excellence**

West Berks found by Plan UK to be 6th best place in Country to grow up as a female.

Newbury was named as one of the top European Cities of the Future in a report by the Financial Times.

Green Flag Awards for Northcroft & Goldwell and Holybrook Linear Park

Received the Public Finance Award for Community Bond in Sustainability & Social Value Category.

Received the MJ Award for Smart Cities Cluster Project with rest of Berkshire.

Received a national award for Digital Innovation and Technology at the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Places and Transport (ADEPT) President's Awards.

Cllr Lynne Doherty was shortlisted for the Local Government Information Unit's (LGIU) award for Leader of the Year.

**Appendix C - Heidi Davies, Head Teacher**  
**Brimpton C.E Primary School**

It's hard to believe a whole year has passed and how much has happened in that year. It's the time of year when Year 5 and 6 are getting ready for their residential next week after having shone as the stars they are in their KS2 SATs exams last week. Year 2's are currently doing their SATS and the children are adapting to being at school for a full week again after bank holidays resulting in 4 day weeks!!

We are 58 children strong and 15 staff. We have 3 regular volunteers, 4 peripatetic teachers and outside professionals that visit regularly such as the mental health support team. We have a governing body who are committed to supporting the strategic overview of Brimpton. Rev Jane visits us each week to deliver worship with Beth and Lucy. All of these people keep our Brimpton family going and help provide a rich educational experience to our children. John Hicks is always communicating and keeping us in the loop and is so valued a part of our Brimpton family.

All of the teachers at Brimpton are subject leads of several subjects and they ensure that opportunities are provided for extra curricular activities. In MFL for instance we have connected with a French school and created pen friends, In humanities we all enjoyed an Egyptian day where the children thought about the geographical impact of the Nile and In Science we enjoyed a whole school trip to Kew Gardens to study plant life.

We work together as a school for our topic based curriculum so that the children can develop communication between year groups and 4 year olds can be talking about our topic with 11 year olds and have something in common.

Last year saw us achieve our Sportsmark Gold again for commitment to the sports, giving it priority within our ethos and taking part in opportunities despite sometimes competing against much larger and more resourced schools. However, we were very lucky that Dominic Boak's member's bid and Wasing very kindly funded an activity wall for us which was the children's best 'Christmas present ever' so they told me!

At Christmas we enjoyed contributing towards an advent box that started with us and moved between Aldermaston and Woolhampton Primary school - each school contributing their Christmas interpretation of a range of activities.

At Christmas our rehearsals were in full swing for a Bethlehem Bake Off nativity and our performance at the O2 Arena in January with young voices. We then performed at the Anvil in Basingstoke in March and are currently working towards a whole school production of 'The Pink Peacock' which is a Musical written by Mrs Reed based on her children's book.

Even now we continue to see the effects of covid in the children and we are having to work on redeveloping social skills and building that resilience and self confidence. Working with the staff and children's mental health has been a priority.

We are currently waiting for the Ofsted phone call but I know that the school we all love and cherish is a good school where the children are the best they can be everyday.

Heidi Davies 16/05/23

## Appendix D - Patricia Brims, Churchwarden

News of St Peter's Church, Brimpton  
16/05/2023  
*That is the live church; - That is the live church;*

Thank you for inviting me to speak on behalf of the Rector, the churchwardens (Brenda and me), the PCC and all the church community.

I start with some good news: we are all going to feel warmer in church next winter. You know what it is like to have a chilly moment in the church, and I hope you will agree that it is a good thing that we will soon have new, efficient heaters under every pew, replacing the old oil-fired boiler, which has reached the end of its life. The new heaters will be electric, and green, and economical to run. The boiler has to be on for several hours before it's needed, and the heat rises up into the rafters. The new heaters will warm the bit you sit on, and waft warm air round you. And this will be possible thanks to the whole *whole of today* Brimpton community.

This leads to two important points:

The first, and most important, is that we are endlessly grateful for the support of our lovely community in so many ways. The most recent example was the plant sale last week, when so many people from the parish joined together and we raised over £500, which will go towards the heating. This has been matched with a further £500 kindly donated by a parishioner. It brought home to us that the church community really is not separate from the rest of Brimpton. The church in Brimpton is our church,

We are also thankful for the generous grant from the PC for cutting the grass in the churchyard. As you know, in law the PCC is responsible for maintaining the churchyard, so we are hugely grateful that the PC recognises that it is a village facility that everyone enjoys. Not every PCC is so lucky, and we are very grateful.

The second point that arises from the heating project is that it is the product of things that have been happening in the church this year. We have a new Ecology Group for the churches of our benefice, so we are very conscious of environmental issues at every level. We have also had two surveys; one, the regular Quinquennial Survey of the building by a qualified architect who advises on the condition of the building; and the other an Energy Efficiency Survey. Both of these recommended that we should move from oil to electric heating. We have also set aside an area of the churchyard where we are encouraging wild flowers and other wildlife.

And you know about the predicament of the spire, which is visible from miles around, but sadly the shingles are worn out, and the jackdaws are getting in. We don't yet know how much work needs to be done, but our architect has asked for information about the state of the internal timbers. John Dolphin kindly climbed up inside the tower and took photographs, but he couldn't get high enough for clear pictures. It turns out that we need to get an expert to get close to the timbers. Brenda tried to get a cherry picker, but the gate in the wall is not wide enough for it to get in, so we are still working on it. One way or another, we will get there, and then, I'm afraid, we will be calling on the good

will of our longsuffering community yet again for help. Once again, I hope we will all agree that the spire is a community asset.

*PCC*  
The purpose of the church is laid out by the Church of England, and it is “promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic and social in the parish of Brimpton”, which I think covers just about everything we do. As well as maintaining the building, we hold services, collect for charities, especially the foodbank, and we keep in touch with our lovely village School, all of which we see as aspects of the work of God in this parish. And importantly, I was able to write in the annual report, knowing that this is true: “The parish of Brimpton is a thriving community in which people care for their neighbours”. The work of the church is done not just by the PCC and the congregation, but by so many people in Brimpton, and on behalf of the PCC, a very big thank you to everyone.

*Patricia Barnes*  
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## **Brimpton Village Hall Management Committee**

**Tel.: 0118 9713731**

### **Brimpton Annual Parish Assembly**

**16/05/23**

Why is the village hall so important.

In the last 3 years the 4 nearest Public houses/ restaurants have closed.

This means that the hall is the only public space left within the parish.

Not notwithstanding the 2 churches and school as they have obvious limitations to their use.

Bookings are made up from

A group uses the hall for people with physical & learning difficulties.

A polercise group uses the hall for exercise/ fitness classes.

Also used by a private hire for the same purpose for the European champion.

A small group use hall for tau chi.

WI meetings.

PC Meetings

Upholstery classes

Craft Club

Ballroom dance practice

Opera practice

Lace-makers

And many birthday parties and other private celebrations

Some of the activities since last years Oct AGM

The fencing and gravel have finally been finished.

Good job we had the CCTV as they caught the lorry that broke the fence and drove off.

Solar Panels have been checked and are in a good condition

Having difficulty getting quotes for battery pack.

With the changes to night rates vs day rates does not make sense to pursue

1st Pizza Social evening

Hosted Murder at Brimpton Ballet

Another Murder Mystery is planned for the New Year., so get your tickets early when they go on sale.

2nd Pizza Social evening

PCC stake holder briefing

The Coronation Events were also held at the Village Hall

And for those that attended they were a great success

Hall “utilisation” of approximately 90%

This is not total hours but days when hall has a booking

The Next event is the Water Mill out door performance of Mansfield Park 24/06/23

Tickets are on sale

And in July back by very popular demand is the Bacon Butty morning 22/07/23

We are hoping to put more events on but need people to say what they want and also to help as the trustees can

not be expected to do all the work.

None of this would have been possible without all the work of the existing trustees.

John Dolphin

Chairman Brimpton Village Hall Trustees

16/05/2023

**BRIMPTON RECREATION GROUND**

(Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2023)

I am chairman of the Brimpton Recreation Ground charity. The other trustees are Wendy Matthews, Anne Johnson and Julie Goode. Our constitution requires us (and this is important) to provide benefits for the “inhabitants of Brimpton”: Brimpton people.

This was not happening at the old recreation ground so we sold it. It was not being used by Brimpton people. This is because it was poorly located, not even in the parish, difficult to access and, as a result, very little used by Brimpton people. When we sold the old ground, we said we would seek a better location for some replacement land to provide a community amenity, somewhere easily accessible for Brimpton people

We stressed that we were not looking for a full-blown Recreation Ground with football pitches because it had become clear that there was no longer any local demand from Brimpton people for that. Indeed, there hadn’t been for about 25 years. There was a football team called Brimpton: but nobody from Brimpton played for it.

And the good news is that, last year, we reached agreement with Wasing for the use of the land behind the village hall. Wasing have granted this land at a peppercorn rent, on a lease timed to match the other land that they lease to the parish for the patio and some of the car park at the village hall. When these leases expire, both we and Wasing fully expect them all to be renewed.

The Recreation Ground charity paid for this new land to be fenced off. And I am sure that all of you have already seen it in action at events such as the Platinum Jubilee last summer and the Coronation this month. Indeed, it has already had more use by Brimpton people in its first year than the old recreation ground had in the last 25 years. It is proving a great asset for our community. Both the field and the village hall benefit from being close together and so sharing facilities.

It is, in fact, a big enough space for most of our requirements. But we still hope to reach agreement with the Smallwood family for the use of their neighbouring field. This would only be required for the occasional bigger event such as a village fete. Rod Smallwood was ready to come to an arrangement with us, but for some reason his brother (and co-owner) has taken a different view. We still hope that we will be able to reach a suitable agreement with the Smallwood family at some stage. But, in the meantime, we are delighted with the success of this new land at the village hall: and we are grateful to Wasing, Andrew Perkins and Josh Dugdale for making it possible.

Charles Brims  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## **Appendix G - Women's Institute- Doris Butler**

### **President's report for Parish Assembly 2023**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Parish Council for inviting the WI to come and give a small presentation on what your local W.I. Gets up to in a year.

Secondly, you have probably realised from the fact that I am not wearing Dr. Martins and dungarees I am not Shelley Bassil. I'm Doris one of the 22 members of Brimpton W.I.

Unfortunately, this is WI night and Shelley is at the village hall doing her best to encourage the members to do seated yoga. The thought of getting myself in a down dog position filled me with dread and I asked to be excused!

They will also be discussing the annual resolutions which this year is about keeping our waters, either on beaches or rivers, cleaner. With the river Enborne so close, it's no surprise that many of us and our four-legged friends have used this stretch of water. We all hope that this resolution is passed, so that the government take more actions to keep the beaches and rivers healthy for future generations.

This time last year we were about to enjoy all those fantastic platinum jubilee events. The bacon lighting with fish and chips, the barn dance, the street party and of course the beautiful flower festival in the church where the W.I had the most outstanding display, in many ways (who else had a naked scarecrow covering their modesty with a W.I. Apron). Sadly, who would of known that only a few months later the Queen would die. She had been a member of the W.I. For nearly 80 years, she joined in 1943!

The rest of the summer continued to unfold with a BBQ at Manor Farm, the marmite quiz (love it or hate it) was a huge success. The hot trip on the barge up the Kennet and Avon canal and even an entertaining evening by our own parish chairman Mr. John Hicks who discretely spoke about his life as a Parish Councillor.

After a month off in August it was back to a programme full of excellent speakers such as the talk on ovarian cancer, Simon Jones who came to talk about the antiques that we had brought in to show him. My time as a magistrate by Brenda Harding and then the best event of the year the Christmas party where we all came together to provide food fit for a King!

And now we are already half way through a new year. We have already had talks about scenes of crime and the adoption process. The evening of this year so far has to be the silly game of beetle drive. Our summer outing this year will be to Englefield gardens with a chance for afternoon tea afterwards. Back by popular demand will be the quiz with a ploughman's supper.

The autumn brings talks and demonstrations on pottery, honey bees, wild life in your garden and the one I am looking for 'Life on a Nuclear Submarine' This will be an open event and any one is welcome to join us. Its not always just women.

The Christmas craft day will also happen once again in November. We will be selling tickets for this nearer the time as will many of our events it will be open to the whole community. There will also be trips to the ballet and theatre before the year is finished.

Brimpton W.I is not all about Jam and Jerusalem. We prefer to buy our jam from Robinsons and as for singing of Jerusalem I would have to dust off the song sheets as we don't know the words off by heart. What we are about is an amazing group of friendly ladies that get together on the third Tuesday of every month except in August at 7.30pm in the village hall to be together to laugh and learn.

Before I finish this report I would like to say that all these amazing things that we have done in the past and in the future would not have been possible without an amazing committee. Many thanks go to Annette Dolphin (County Chairman of Berkshire W.I) Sue Pearce, Brenda Scott, Chris Panting, Gwynedd Roberts, Tricia Kirby and Janice Cross. I would like to add that Shelley is the most fantastic president.

Our contact details can be found in the Village News, Parish Update or from leaflets here tonight.

**Appendix H - Brimpton Common Fuel Allotment- Bob Moore, Trustee**  
**Parish Assembly**                   **16 May 2023**  
**Brimpton Common Fuel Allotment**

History

I thought I should remind us all of some of the history in order to give some context so I'm going to begin with some poetry:

*They hang the man, and flog the woman,  
That steals the goose from off the common;  
But let the greater villain loose,  
That steals the common from the goose.*

Verse from Old English folk poem refers, of course, to the enclosures of common land that have taken place over the centuries and in particular in the hundred or so years from 1750 on. There were many acts of parliament sealing the consolidation of smaller parcels of land, previously worked by peasant farmers into the ownership of wealthy landowners to help increase the volume of production.

The Woolhampton Inclosure Act of 1811 saw lots of land around our area of the Kennet valley consolidated and handed over to wealthy landowners.

After enclosures of common land Fuel Allotments were created to provide some meagre compensation to rural labourers and, as the name suggests, were intended to provide fuel for firewood. And so our Brimpton Common FA was created back in 1815 and the local vicar, the Lord of the Manor and the Overseers of the poor were appointed to administer it.

Fast forward a couple of hundred years and the Overseers of the Poor have been succeeded by the Parish Council, but to this day, in true feudal fashion, the Lord of the Manor and the Rector remain as Trustees of the FA, although they are content to leave those of us appointed by the Parish Council to undertake the day-to-day stewardship of the land.

Location

As you know, the FA is located in Brimpton Common. It straddles the byway along the section opposite houses, lying mostly to the south and west of the byway. It's actually quite a small parcel of land, just over 3 acres in size.

The Land

We believe that the land was never forested, but was rough heathland where gorse was taken as firewood. As recently as 1946 aerial photographs show that the land was in pasture but soon after grazing was abandoned and woodland developed naturally over most of the site, save for two small areas of meadow, facing the houses alongside the byway.

Most of the young woodland habitat is mature secondary birch, with oak, sycamore, willow and holly with remnants of gorse and quite a bit of bracken.

The Charity

The Parish Council decided in 1970 to registered the FA as a charity and appoint local residents as Trustees to manage it on a day-to-day basis.

But in the 50 plus years since there appear to have been periods of inaction, coupled with times when new trustees were appointed, which coincided with a regeneration of interest and enthusiasm. As so is probably the case with the four of us at the moment, as well as myself over the last 4 years the trustees have been led by our chairman, Grahame Hawker (recently crowned King of the Common), together with Gaila Adair and Jan Main until she moved away last year and recently replaced by Nick Paus, all of whom live on the common. I'm the token member from the village.

Primary objectives of the FA are to provide fuel or funds to the poor of the parish and to ensure the sustainability of the site. To manage the site for the benefit of local people and to enhance wildlife, flora and fauna.

Unfortunately, the site is incapable of generating either the fuel or the funds to assist local people in hardship. And although we've not entirely abandoned the prospect of doing this but it looks highly unlikely to be within capacity. In fact in the last 50 years I understand there is only one report of a person having been supplied with firewood.

We do have a bank balance of £954, but much of that was accrued from wayleave funds we recently generated and our only ongoing income is a princely £39 pa from SSE.

It costs us £86 pa to pay for PL Insurance, thus far paid for by the Parish Council and a larger sum each year to cover the costs of cutting and raking the meadows, so if we wish to manage the meadows for the benefit of wildlife and (we hope) wildflower meadow we do not have any surplus funds.

#### Current Priorities are:

1. PL Insurance
2. Keeping the footpaths open and clear (well used by BC residents). Occasional cutting back of brambles & holly.
3. Safety – dead trees and wood overhead, periodic surveys, some works is needing to be done at the moment
4. Cutting & raking the meadows

#### Other Activites have included:

1. Replacing fallen posts on footpaths and ensuring damaged verges are reinstated.
2. Wildflower seeding
3. Dealing with littering – not a big problem
4. Responding to residents' requests to manage trees
5. Planting trees – we planted a number of native broadleaf trees (small whips) in two batches. (WB Climate Action network & Covid remembrance) grey willow; rowan; silver birch; field maple, wild cherry and oak. We're not absolutely sure what proportion have survived but some certainly have and we'll get a better picture later in the year.

#### Volunteers

We have managed to attract a small number of small groups of volunteers from among trustees and local residents.

## For the Future

We've been talking about:

Possibly introducing owl and bat boxes

Doing wildlife surveys – we know the area is species poor, but for the future it would be good to see if our efforts attract new inhabitants

We plan to erect some signage to raise the profile of the Allotment with local walkers.

We'd love to see the Parish Council make some headway on its ambition to establish a more direct walking route from the village up to the common.

## To finish – Ownership of The Land

I mentioned safety earlier and this involves us making periodic inspections to make sure no heavy bits of deadwood drop down on unsuspecting passers by.

This has brought into clear focus the fact that Wasing still view this land as being owned by the estate, although it is not registered with the Land Registry. Josh Dugdale has been helpful in sending in staff with chainsaws in the past. More recently, we have been held up as they do not have staff who are licenced to work at height. Nevertheless, it has been made clear by the Land Agent that they will undertake any necessary safety work in due course. If we / the charity needed to call in private contractors to do this work it would wipe out our budget.

We all know the PC tried to move forward to register the land in its ownership recently, but declined to proceed when it became clear that Wasing would contest such an application.

Disappointing though this was, it is possible to see the advantages of a continuing respect for the status quo from all parties. The Parish now has a long history of active interest in this land and it almost certainly means that our gentle stewardship towards a rewilding of sorts should ensure this area remains as an area of countryside and an amenity for us all to enjoy.

**Report to Brimpton Parish Meeting Tues 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

St. Peter's Almshouse Charities has been providing economic accommodation for local people for over 150 years. The building dates back to 1854 and has undergone several transformations. Originally consisting of 6 units before being converted into 4 self-contained flats in the late 1970's. Each flat has a fitted kitchen, separate lounge and bedroom and walk-in showers have replaced all the baths.

The building is run by a charitable trust and is managed by a team of trustees working on a voluntary basis. The current team of Colin Evans, acting Chairman, Patrick Bowring, Jonathan Shorten and Rev. Jane Manley has remained unchanged for almost 5 years. I have supported in my role as clerk to the charity since 2017 primarily with administration and keeping on top of current advice and legislation provided by the Almshouse Association which gives guidance on all areas involved with running an almshouse charity.

Three of the flats have been occupied by long term residents with the fourth being vacant for a short period of time last year when sadly local artist Ken Turner had to leave due to a deterioration in his health and mobility. The flat was ready for a new resident in November after a re-fresh by a cleaning team. The current residents are being encouraged to make use of the raised vegetable bed constructed after being requested by Ken. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the community who regularly assist residents of the almshouse when they experience difficulties, your help is very much appreciated.

Inevitably, due to the age of the building there is always something that requires attention. The next quinquennial inspection is due which will identify work which should be completed in the short-, medium- and long-term future. Significant expenditure over the past year was the final payment to Xpert Energy for the installation of the Air Source Heat Pumps, boxing in of the pump pipe work by a local tradesman, repair the front car park wall and all the relevant electrical testing.

The trustees acknowledge our appreciation to our predecessors including Dennis West, Peter Main and Doris Butler, who have contributed so much to the past running of the charity. The trustees feel the charity is in a financially secure position for the foreseeable future and believe that we are now in a strong position to maintain the fabric of the building and serve the needs of the residents and the Brimpton community for many years to come.