

Reports from Village Groups at the Annual Parish Meeting May 1st 2025

Chair report

This has proved a challenging year for the council to actually achieve some of its objectives due primarily to the lack of monies available to the District and County councils of Cambridgeshire. However, we understand that the government has now provided local councils funding to repair pot holes.

We welcomed Tim Jones to the council recently and thank him for stepping up and hopefully not putting his head on the block.

On a sad note, we will be saying goodbye to Jane Goody, who has served on the council for many years and has been invaluable as our eyes and ears, keeping us abreast of any local developments. We wish her and Michael good luck with their forthcoming move.

With Jane's departure we have a vacancy for a replacement councillor. The job involves meeting once a month, making financial decisions and helping to guide the village in line with the wishes of the parishioners.

Pavements

We have complained regularly for the past 5 years about the state of the pavements in the high street, particularly in front of the thatched cottages. Some work was eventually carried out and the worst damage in that area repaired but, in general the paths remain in poor condition.

Speed ramps

As you will be aware we installed speed bumps to reduce the speeding through the village at cost to the parish of around £19,000. Sadly 2 of the rubber cushions became detached and were removed by the highways department. A third cushion is loose and its securing bolts exposed. Since the first cushion was removed, we have badgered highways to replace them with fixings that are fit for purpose, but to no avail. We recently threatened legal action to recover, either the cushions or the money spent and eventually received a response that they were at last looking into the situation. That was over a month ago and no further communication has been received to date.

This will be a priority for coming year.

Forest garden

The project continues well despite more very hot weather and a report will be made later in the meeting. We have received a number of comments from parishioners and the general public as to its function and to this end signs indicating the full potential of this area will be put in place by the steering group in the near future.

Babraham Campus

We are fortunate to have good relations with the campus and they have assisted with a number of activities and provide an excellent walk by the river. This is not an official footpath and relies on their good will to permit access.

Thank you to their management for the cooperation provided.

Bus shelter

Unfortunately, someone with a limited flair for art decided to share their love of a class 1 drug by spraying their message inside the bus shelter. The message has been obscured using a first class white substance! (Paint)

Neighbourhood plan and CSET

As I understand the neighbourhood plan is in limbo awaiting completion and release of the Local plan. The good news is that Babraham has achieved its 5 year housing quota of new builds so we are safe from major development for a while.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) have submitted their plans to build a guided busway from Babraham, via Sawston, Stapleford and Shelford finishing at Addenbrookes hospital. Given the recent safety problems experienced with the existing busway in Cambridge let's hope they have improved their risk assessment for this proposal.

Babraham Church and grass cutting

We continue to mow the churchyard and the grassed verges on the high street. We have accepted a bid from a local source to take on this contract for the coming year. This will not only save money but provide direct communication with the contractor.

Pocket park

The park continues to provide a place for contemplation and if you're lucky, a glimpse of a kingfisher. Councillors continue to maintain the area on a voluntary basis. Sadly, the benches were thrown into the river by vandals on 2 separate occasions, and they will need to be secured in future.

Village Hall

This timeless saga continues and the idea of combining with the school was pursued, building additional rooms on the existing hall and sharing usage. Unfortunately, the school land and buildings are owned by the Bush & Bennet charity and are governed by strict rules of use. We have, in conjunction with the school, DEMAT and particularly the Bush and Bennett representative, tried to have these rules relaxed to enable us to proceed with the project. Hopefully a report from Bush and Bennett will throw some light on the current position.

Dog walking

Campus continues to permit dog walking in the paddock adjacent to the church road. The Parish council supplies the poo bins and foots the bill for emptying them. A cost around £2700 for the year. This has helped keep the poo problem to a minimum but it is still wise 'watch your step' in this area.

Functions & Celebrations

Social gathering: A joint barbecue breakfast with Babraham church, free to all parishioners, will take place on the 7th June and be held in the churchyard with refreshments and toilet facilities available inside the church. The vicar hopes to run a raffle to support church funds. Hope to see you there.

At Christmas the George Inn was again very festive and very busy serving Christmas fare and continues to provide an excellent watering hole/ eatery in the village. Across the road Christmas was celebrated once again by Jonas Webb who donned his finest red father Christmas costume.

Finance Report

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
EXPENDITURE					
SALARY	3467	4635	4639	6855	5923
HMRC	867	1149	962	2026	1743
GENERAL EXPENSES	277	336	20151	165	319
TRAINING/BOOKS	75	175	197	130	0
MILEAGE	55	10	0		0
INSURANCE	908	790	826	875	1121
AUDIT	235	768	540	690	834
ELECTION COSTS	0	0	75	0	0
SUBSCRIPTIONS	430	739	467	513	740
HALL HIRE	86	0	0	360	0
PROFESSIONAL FEES	145	3379	144	7404	180
POSTAGE/STATIONARY	56	87	0		0
BANK CHARGES	72	113	93	89	85
IT	1030	972	928	979	1263
GRASS CUTTING	2580	3284	3502	3698	3655
PETROL/MOWER	142	145	407		143
STREET LIGHTING	753	286	145	79	0
EQUIP REPLACEMENT	0	0	200	235	0
TREES/GROUNDS	22	1985	0	0	0
PLAYGROUND	0	0	0	0	0
STRUCTURES	0	3383	0	0	110
DEFIBRILLATOR	109	23		393	
ZERO CARBON FOREST	0	12875	3571	2526	180
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	0	5184	9388	7863	4685
COMMUNITY EVENTS			334	250	100
VILLAGE HALL			21445	2730	5004
	11309	40318	68014	37860	26085
RECEIPTS					
PRECEPT	12250	16142	16144	14000	14000
INTEREST	61	299	843	3265	6188
FOREST GARDEN GRANT	0	9835		0	0
NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT	0	6950	9870	6235	0
REFUNDS SOLICITOR	0	2000		0	0
REFUNDS VAT	1216	3640	5864	2406	2634
OTHER INCOME			1472	112,169	94796
	13527	38866	34193	138,075	117618
Reserves					31/03/2025
Village Hall money		£92,000	71,362	147,094	145,154
Public Art				18,207	18,207
Playground		£26,246	26246	26246	26,246
Neighbourhood Plan			£5,265	£0	0
Forest Garden			£1,778	£1,778	1,668
			104,651	193,325	191,275
31/03/2025					
Current Ac	3660				
Savings Ac	139454				
Building Soc	84236				
	227350				

Please note that County Councillor & District Councillor can be found on the Parish Council website

Village Hall Report

As per last year's update we have planning permission approval to build a small extension to the existing school hall, this includes a larger kitchen, toilets, storage areas and meeting room. The meeting room will be available to the parish to hire during the day, evenings, and weekends. The school hall will become the Babraham village hall during evenings and weekends, with a little TLC (painting, VA system etc).

Last year we have spent £18k on the planning process, which has all come out of the s106 funds. £14k on architect fees and £4k on the planning process (including searches and surveys). The original funds remained untouched.

We were unfortunately unable to proceed with the build as the land is owned by Bush and Bennett and leased to the school. As the village hall will not solely be for educational benefits, Bush and Bennett will need to amend their charitable objectives. We have created a working group with Bush & Bennett, Babraham Primary School, DEMAT and Village Hall Committee to help facilitate this.

The working group have produced a document that has been sent to the Solicitors for final review prior to submission to the Charity Commission with the aim of including village activities within the school hall.

This year we have agreed to fund the solicitor fees incurred by Bush and Bennett to the value of £20k excluding Vat. This will again come out of the s106 funds.

Unfortunately, two trustees resigned from the Village Hall Committee during the year, Damon & Jerney. I would like to thank them both for their efforts in helping with the planning process. We now have space for a least two trustees. If you would like to join us, please email/contact me!

Hopefully it won't be long until we can start building.

Primary School Report

It has been another successful and happy year at school. With 96 pupils on roll, the school is full, and it continues to be a popular choice for parents.

The staff team continues to work extremely well together to provide an excellent education for the children. The Babraham Way is at the core of everything we do at our school, and the three strands - "We try our best", "We are kind" and "We look after our school, our community and the world", are well-embedded. Curriculum enrichment is a focus at Babraham, with pupils enjoying trips to concerts, museums and Ely Cathedral, and visits to school from the Research Campus, a Bird of Prey expert and a Tiny Magic Orchestra, to name but a few.

We have enjoyed considerable sporting success this year, with our girls' Football Team crowned Small Schools Champions, and our mixed Football Team winning the sportsmanship award. We also have a successful Netball Team which came second in a recent tournament.

This year we were lucky enough to receive a grant from Astra Zeneca. Working closely with the Oakington Garden Centre, we have improved our pond and are looking forward to enjoying this area of the school as the plants develop and mature.

After a wait of nearly twelve years, we received an Ofsted Inspection in March, with the inspectors having no concerns, and judging the school to be good in all areas.

We continue to enjoy our links to the Church and the research campus. We are very fortunate that The Friends of Babraham School (FoBS) help with many fundraising events for the school.

It is time for me to retire from Headship, either in July or December, depending on recruitment, and I am proud to leave the school in such a stable and confident state.

Victoria Penty

St Peters Church Report

Our regular services Sunday services have continued at St Peter's. This was facilitated by a number of new members to the ministry team including two curates, Rev Will Lyon Tupman, and from July. Rev Ian Henderson. During the year there were two funerals and two baptisms. A number of activities were held in the church including monthly Saturday afternoon teas during the summer, Easter and Harvest treasure hunts, and an Art Exhibition. The Summer Concert and Strawberry teas were very popular with several children from the local primary school/village playing as well as other musicians. A Punk and Indie concert took place once again in the church in September.

The vicar (or one of the curates) has continued with their weekly visits to Babraham Primary School which includes taking collective worship. The Vicar is also on the Local Governing Body of the school. The school attends the church for special services including the school Carol Service and a pre-Easter 'Way of the Cross' service, both of which were also well attended by parents. Babraham Nursery visited the church once again for their Nativity and a member of the ministry team has visited the nurse during the year on several occasions to talk to the children about church festivals.

I am delighted to say that the St Peter's Babraham Management team met for the first time in August 2024. The aim is that members would help with different tasks to help maintain the church building and churchyard. The team has already made huge progress in tidying the churchyard. A very successful churchyard working party with more than 20 volunteers in attendance took place in October. Many thanks to all those who came along. Sadly, on the same day as the working party there was an act of vandalism and one of the leaded windows was badly damaged. The window is currently being repaired. We are grateful to the Parish Council and the Babraham Research Campus who also continued to help with the maintenance of the churchyard during the past year.

From the autumn, a short reflective service (Wednesday@) was started on Wednesday lunchtimes, primarily aimed at the Babraham Research Campus staff. A small number of people attend, with others coming into the church on a Wednesday lunchtime to chat to the member of clergy present or simply just to sit. A Campus Carol service was also held. Work is currently being undertaken with other churches across the deanery looking to start a formal chaplaincy service across the science parks. This would build on what is already happening in Babraham. Funding is currently being sought from various sources.

We are grateful to Mary Hunt for all she has contributed to the running of the church over the last 40 or so years. She is now stepping down from the PCC. With no church wardens and with potentially

only two people on the PCC, unless any others step forward, the running of the church in its current form is no longer sustainable. This will necessitate serious discussions within the congregation and the wider community about the way forward. One option would be to form a joint parish with St Mary's Sawston with a single PCC, who would be in charge of the governance of the church. Advice from the Diocese regarding the way forward is continuing to be sought.

Bush and Bennett Report

The last year has been a year of significant change. The biggest, sadly, being the loss of both a much loved Trustee and a lovely resident. Our Trustee – and Treasurer -Brian Page was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease at the beginning of last year but managed to continue as both Trustee and Treasurer until last summer when his symptoms sadly meant that it was impossible for him to continue. He died at the beginning of April this year and is a massive loss to the Charity. Not least because of his unstinting support to all the trustees and the residents, but also because of his extraordinary knowledge and understanding of heritage buildings and how to look after them – not to mention his meticulous work as Treasurer.

We are happy to report, however, that Mandy Ogilvy- Stuart has stepped in to the breach as our new Treasurer and Trustee and we are thankful that Mandy was able to meet with Brian several times such that the handover was seamless. Mandy will be known to many of you - she is a retired Neonatologist...And has lived in the village for 27X years. We are also very grateful to Hilary Seaward for helping us bridge the gap!

In addition to this Clare Glendinning has also had to resign earlier this year due to pressures of work and ill-health. Clare's legal expertise was brilliant in helping us update a number of key policies and she is already very missed. We are looking to replace Clare as soon as possible if anyone might be interested from the village?

Indeed if anyone is interested in taking an active part in the charity (the charity is run and managed by the trustees) please do get in touch.

The other massive loss this year was a long-standing resident – Irene Boast. Irene moved into her almshouse back in 1972. She especially loved her garden and very much enjoyed talking about gardens and giving other people advice about gardens, even when she was no longer able to care for her own. It was wonderful that she was able to stay in her almshouse up until the last few weeks of her life. Irene's almshouse has now been refurbished – with a new shower room and kitchen – and we are very happy to announce that a new resident – Maggie - has just moved in!

Meanwhile we continue to be supported by the wonderful residents of the Old School House – Ed and Mary Hunt. And are happy that the occupiers of the Old School Room – Cambridge CYP Counselling – have renewed their lease for another three years in October!

Building works

In other news – the Quinquennial review of all the buildings, undertaken at the beginning of last year, detailed significant works to be done both immediately and within the next five years. Quite a bit has already been done – re-tiling much of the rear roof slopes of the almshouses with associated guttering realignment. Next steps are to address the repointing requirements to the east, south & west elevations plus chimneys. The boundary wall has had much of the vegetation removed and will also require remedial work.

In addition we have replaced all the consumer units in all of the properties and are in the process of upgrading all the smoke alarms across all properties.

Shared school/village facility

We have finally received informal approval from the Charity Commission to change our objects which will allow for this facility to go ahead on the school land. We are awaiting formal approval and will then be in a position to make the necessary changes and for the Parish Council to get going! After that we will be seeking to incorporate the charity as recommended by our solicitors.

Other governing document changes

We have also received permission to widen the scope of the beneficiaries & area of benefit for the Almshouses such that we are no longer restricted to only women and can advertise outside the village for new residents. Thankfully another clause in the governing document has allowed us to look outside the existing area of benefit for our current new resident.

Babraham Research Campus report

BPC AGM - BRC Report for 2024/2025

Outline planning Application

The campus intends to submit an Outline planning application for future development of the campus. The application will look to develop further R and D facilities, including redevelopment of the central campus. Importantly our intention is to redevelop The Close to both increase and improve existing housing provision together with the provision of community amenities (Pre-School Nursery, Shop, Gym and Café).

The redevelopment of the campus as a whole will see significant new landscaping around the research buildings to reduce the surface car parking and improve the walking and cycling experience through the campus. A key part of these improvements will be open access into the campus to allow the local community to enjoy the environment and amenities within it.

Our aims within the campus are not confined to increasing housing, amenities and R and D provision. A central theme is to raise biodiversity net gain by 20% (The Natural Cambridgeshire target) and reach Net Zero Carbon in our operations by 2040. Sustainability in all its forms is at the heart of the vision for our growth.

We have held public consultation events in February and May 2025 to both gather the thoughts of the community around us and then show how we have responded to those ideas.

B960 – New Build completion and occupation

In 2024 we completed a new building, which attained the BREEAM Excellent accreditation. The building incorporated key sustainability technology underpin its performance, notably Photo Voltaic array and dual heating/cooling air source heat pumps for renewable energy provision and Rain Water Harvesting providing grey water for WC's and a source of water for landscape irrigation. The project also exceeded its biodiversity net gain target (20%) by a significant margin.

The building is occupied by the two scale-up companies, who are enjoying their new surroundings and the campus community.

Impact Report

In 2024/25 we commissioned a report to analyse the impact of the campus and effectiveness of the investment that has been made. We carried out a similar exercise in 2019 and we wanted to know how or if our impact had changed over the following five years, which included significant societal and economic events. The end result has seen us increase our impact on the Life Science sector and the economic return on investment into the campus. A link to the report is here

<https://babraham.com/impact-report/>

Estate Report

Past 12 months highlights:

To paraphrase a famous politician it is planting, planting, planting. We have:

- Planted over 6000 bulbs around campus (daffodils, crocus, snowdrops)
- Planted over 12000 more trees (circa 70,000 since 2004)

More tree planting and border creation/planting to come.

The Estates team have been busily finishing off the end of the seasons tree surgery works all across the public footpaths and boundary areas of the estate. The most notable of these being the declined Sequoia on the front parkland - the team has been creative in making some seats from the stump - please do drop by and pay your respects to this veteran tree.

The Estates team have been finishing off the winters tree works, which culminates each year with pollarding a section of the willows along the river. The best of the tops are bundled up and propped in the pond for a couple of weeks - by which time they will have developed roots ready for planting out on the estate. This year this has yielded 940 new sapling willows.

We are also carrying out the first application of a new natural deer repellent product, derived from sheep lanolin, which will (fingers crossed) deter the deer from causing browsing damage to the new coppice regrowth in the woodlands.

There are newly planted areas of hedgerow restoration out on the Estate, grown on from cuttings of the pollards along the Granta.

Grasslands & meadows are annually topped to check-back the dominating grass species and allow the wildflowers to establish. The Wild Bird cover and winter food areas have been tilled ready for re-seeding

We continue to undertake restoration works to the River Granta and this will be ongoing with the external partners commissioning them.

Local Community

A Cambridge Wide Open Week is to be held on Wednesday 11th June, which includes all the major science campuses around Cambridge. All members of the community are invited to attend and there will be a series of events here at Babraham, notably

- Sustainability Tour – Led by our Ecology & Land Manager, Matt Antrobus, this guided tour will take attendees through key sustainability initiatives on campus. Learn about the exciting steps we're taking toward a greener future.
- Campus & Innovation Tour
- Summer Market with Local Businesses – So far we have the Gog Farm Shop, Jack's Gelato and Kelly's Cake Kitchen confirmed, and we will be announcing the line-up of vendors in the next few weeks.

- Games on the Lawn & Bar Open
- Commercialisation Success: A Masterclass in Driving Successful Commercialisation using the Triple Chasm Navigator Tool

We continue to provide support to St Peters Church including marketing events, providing support for maintenance of the church yard and providing a root for disposal of green waste.

In February we held an Exhibition and talk for the village on the many archaeological excavations and discoveries on campus over the past 30 years. This was presented by Dr Chris Wakefield of the Cambridge Archaeology unit and I know it was well attended and appreciated by all.

Forest Garden Report

1. Forest Garden maintenance

- In March, new hedge tree saplings (provided through a free gift from the Woodland Trust) were planted along the hedge to replace those that did not survive their first hot summer after planting.
- Watering and mulching sessions will be held over the summer – starting in June - to help the new plants get established, and to continue to support the existing trees in their 3rd year.
- In the Autumn, new ground layer foraging plants will be put in at the top enclosed area, and wildflower areas will be established in the main section. As natural wildflower meadowland is a priority habitat for the Babraham estate, the BRC Estates Team are happy to provide advice and management support to the Forest Garden.

2. Engagement with the Campus Community

- Chris Chapman represented the Forest Garden at the annual Green Labs event held at the Babraham Research Campus, an initiative that promotes sustainability and environmental working practices to combat climate change. A proposal was presented to all the participating companies whereby they could select specific Working Parties dates for team building activities. We have received several responses from campus companies requesting to join the working parties.

3. Forest Garden Governance

- The Forest Garden Steering Group has been evaluating options for long-term governance of the Forest Garden that ensure the site remains managed as a Forest Garden for climate change mitigation, biodiversity enhancement and community benefit. The preferred option was agreed as:
 - Babraham Institute to sublease the Forest Garden to Parish Council
 - Funds/grants for the Forest Garden to be ringfenced and managed by the Parish Council (to avoid requiring a dedicated bank account and financial liabilities)

- The Steering Group (with its representation from the community, BRC, PC and Forest Garden Project Management) would remain the decision making body
- As the Babraham Institute is restructuring its own leasing arrangements within the Babraham Estate, however, the Forest Garden sublease is likely to be very delayed.
- In the meantime, the Steering Committee will ensure that the objectives of the site are achieved through day-to-day governance and strong engagement between the community, the Parish Council and the BRC.

4. **Signage**

- Signage is being developed to inform passers-by and visitors about the Forest Garden (what it is; what the foraging plants are; what the long-term plans are). Initial designs have been created and quotes for design and building are being gathered.