

Newsletter Spring 2010

From The Chair

WE have now completed another year during which the Parish Council was involved in a variety of projects.

I do hope as many of you as possible attended the annual fun-filled Fun Day at the Meadow last year and would urge you all to look out for the next one to be held in June this year. We received suggestions at last year's Fun Day to resurrect the Senior Fellowship Group and I am extremely pleased to say that having received support from the Parish Council this group is now gaining in strength and numbers under the banner of the M & C Club.



We also supported the successful bonfire and firework display held at the Meadow, last year accompanied by music, which was organised by the local scout group and we look forward to the next one later this year. For the younger residents we arranged a Halloween Bash at Catshill Village Hall, which was enjoyed by those who attended.

We have been pleased to see that major road and footpath improvements have been carried out and are now near completion with some footpath lighting also being upgraded.

Our County Councillor Sheila Blagg and District Councillor Anthony Blagg regularly attend our monthly meetings thus forming links to both County and District councils. We would like to publicly record congratulations to Sheila Blagg on her recent appointment as Chair of West Mercia Police Authority and wish her well in the role.

We now have a new year to look forward to and expect to complete several environmental enhancement projects including two new bus shelters in Catshill Village (one at Meadow Road, the other to replace the District Council's dilapidated shelter on Stourbridge Road) and an ornamental garden alongside the A38.

Our meetings are always open to the public and we meet in Catshill Village Hall on the last Thursday of every month, starting at 7.30 pm.

Councillor Gordon Witcomb



The Parish Remembers

ON Sunday 8th November, the villagers of this parish paid their respects and remembered those from the village who made the ultimate sacrifice during the two World Wars. It is thought that this was the highest attendance at the War Memorial in Catshill for many years. The Lickey End Branch of the Royal British Legion covers Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish, and meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at Lickey End Social Club, starting at 7 pm. The newly elected committee are looking at ways expand the services the branch offers and to attract new members. Membership is no longer restricted to serving, or ex-service personnel. For more details, please contact the Branch Secretary, Alan Kelly on **0121 445 2574**.



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Police Matters

Happy New Year from Bromsgrove North Local Policing Team!

WE should like to take this opportunity to welcome two new members to the Bromsgrove North Local Policing Team. Sergeant Tim Harper who has taken over the role as North Sergeant, in place of Nick Husbands who has left the team to pursue a different role within the Police, and Community Support Officer Stacey Hegenbarth.

On a positive note, the average number of crimes in the area of Catshill and Marlbrook have decreased. As we know there are plenty of opportunists around, especially when it comes to vehicle crime, we encourage people to be extra vigilant and strongly advise you not to leave anything of value in your vehicles.

As most vehicle crime is opportunistic and happens as a result of a vehicle being left vulnerable or unsecured, for example:

- *Doors or windows left unlocked*
- *Keys left in the ignition*
- *Personal belongings on display e.g. handbag, laptop*
- *Sat nav and holder left in vehicle*

We encourage you to contact us if you have any concerns, or if you see any unusual activities, such as people hanging around which may raise your suspicions, then please contact us with any information.



Catshill Village Meadow

IT is good to report that the North West Ward Association, the charity that maintains the George Wagstaff Memorial Meadow in the village, enjoyed another successful year in 2009.

Many fund raising events took place for groups in the village. The Fun Day, held in June, was the best ever as a major village event that involved everyone who belongs to a local organisation. The Fun Day has diverse attractions to entice the many visitors who attend. When I look back I remember at a committee meeting Ian and Karen Prust originally thought that we may be able to re-create the wonderful Catshill Carnivals, which were part of the 70s and 80s. All so long ago and now again we go from strength to strength.

Other groups have also enjoyed the three and a half acres of enclosed grassed area with the facilities we offer. The Boys Brigade held a successful boot sale in May. The scouts boot sale last June was well attended, in part, I think for the wonderful food tent with mouth watering menu and served by volunteers with cheery faces. The scout leaders Fiona, Carl and Keith worked very hard to achieve this fund raising event.

The scouts were also responsible for the bonfire and firework event. We were blessed with good weather, which saw the meadow packed with adults and children. It took all the many volunteers the whole day to prepare the bonfire with so much to burn, and we eventually had to turn away material for the fire. It went off very well, and gets better each year. There was some doubt about the future of the event. However, our Parish Council agreed to help financially and I hope that this generosity will continue in the future.

Many dog walkers use the bins provided for dog waste, but there are several persons who allow their dogs to foul the paths and green area. This is anti-social and has been discussed at many committee meetings. Notices have been displayed, and bags left with a note attached to "bag it, tie it, bin it". We will continue to make efforts to shame those guilty of such selfish behaviour..



We are lucky to have two football teams playing on the meadow. They like the facilities we have to offer, especially the mothers who now are able to make a cup of tea during the cold weather.

We look forward to holding many more events involving the villagers of Catshill, but need more volunteers to help at these events, as well as new committee members.

Finally, I should like to wish you all a Happy New Year and enjoy the "*Green oasis in a concrete jungle*".

Don Prust. Chair of NWWA.

Catshill Village Hall

OVER the past five years, Catshill Village Hall has been transformed from a suggestion of closure to an excellent community venue. The hall, which is a registered charity, is now self sufficient, after a complete refurbishment, which included a new kitchen, compliant with today's environmental and health and safety standards, up to date rest room for the less able bodied, new toilets and a meeting room. The main hall now boasts network facilities for IT training. The building also houses the Parish Council office.

There is a range of regular activities in the hall, from karate, card making, children's groups, big band practice, computer training, WI meetings, slimming classes, the Parish Council meetings, and a great deal more. Not withstanding this, it is **your** village hall. If you have any activities you would like to see included, please contact the Parish Clerk, who will forward them to the hall trustees. Although the hall is well used, it is still available to hire for private parties, so get in touch to use **your** village hall.

Bromsgrove and District Citizens Advice Bureau

THE Bromsgrove Citizens Advice Bureau based in Bromsgrove has never been busier and has seen a 14% increase in enquiries this year. The largest demands for our services are for debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment, relationship breakdown and tax credit enquiries. The financial stress being placed on people during this recession is causing families considerable hardship and much of our work relates to assisting people to regain control over their debts and finances and maximise their income by identifying benefits and tax credits. The bureau has recently secured funding through Bromsgrove District Council to fund an Owner Occupier Debt Adviser specifically to assist clients with mortgage difficulties to ensure where possible early help is available and the threat of repossession is avoided. We are also working with Bromsgrove Council on a number of Government initiatives such as Mortgage Rescue.

As many people from rural areas have difficulty in reaching advice centres, the bureau has introduced appointments in addition to the drop-in service and screening interviews to quickly identify the best method of helping people. Additionally we are increasing the availability of our telephone advice line in the afternoons. We also have a Specialist Housing Unit to advise on all aspects of housing enquiries.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your rent, mortgage or other debt issues please contact us to see what we can do to help at **50 – 52 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove B61 0DD**

Telephone **01527 831480**

For Housing related enquiries telephone: **01527 557937**

Our service is free, confidential, impartial and independent.

The Marlbrook and Catshill Club (M & C)

A coffee morning organised by Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council at The Marlbrook Hotel on Thursday 24th September, 2009 was an auspicious event for many retired people in the area. This coffee morning was arranged by the Parish Council in response to a request by resident Mrs Marjorie Williams, who asked whether it would be possible to re-establish the fellowship club.

The response to this inaugural meeting was extremely positive, so the Parish Council agreed to subsidise further coffee mornings and act a facilitator until such times as the club became re-established. The Winter Calendar has already been a great success. New members enjoyed an excellent pre-Christmas lunch at The Marlbrook late November. In order to raise funds for this new venture the club organised a quiz, a film show, and an afternoon of games and raffles throughout December. Members also attended a Christmas Concert of festive and familiar songs and music presented by the children and staff of Catshill Middle School. Everyone agreed it was an excellent, heart-warming, programme indeed and sent their congratulations and thanks to the School.

The club, now called The Marlbrook and Catshill Friendship Club, meets every first and third Monday in Catshill Village Hall between 2.00pm and 4.00pm. Details of events and outings will be placed on the Parish notice boards, or contact the Secretary Mrs. Anne Glendenning on **01527 882169**

Changes to Recycling and Garden Waste Collections

BROMSGROVE District Council is making improvements to the recycling and garden waste services in 2010

From April 2010 **recyclable** items will be collected from a **green wheeled bin**

From March 2010 **garden waste** will be collected from a **brown wheeled bin**

Household waste will continue to be collected from grey bins on alternate weeks to the recycling and garden waste.

You will be able to keep your old recycling boxes, but if you do not wish to keep them, you may drop them off at the Council Central Depot or call the CSC on **01527 881288** and arrange for them to be collected.

Garden Waste Customers

As green bins will be used for your recyclables, you will need to use a brown bin for garden waste. To receive your brown bin, apply for the 2010 garden waste service now and your bin will be delivered as soon as possible.

Keep Informed

Look out for information in the Council Together Bromsgrove magazine (July, November & March) for more information.

If you would like to be kept up-to-date on these changes you can register your email address with the Council by emailing recycling@bromsgrove.gov.uk and you will receive regular updates on the progress of these changes.

Can you help?

THE Parish Council consists of thirteen members drawn from the local community of Catshill and North Marlbrook, with 9 members representing Catshill Village ward, 2 members representing Barley Mow ward and 2 members representing North Marlbrook ward. The members are voted into office every four years, with the next election to be held in May 2011 alongside the District Council elections. Sometimes a casual vacancy will occur when, if there is no call for a by-election, the Parish Council can co-opt a member without the need for an election.

At the moment we are operating with only eleven members and the Parish Council would like the two vacant seats to be filled as soon as possible. The council meets at Catshill Village Hall on the last Thursday evening of each month except for August and December; committee meetings are also held on Thursday evenings.

If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor and can commit to the regular monthly meetings we would like to hear from you. Please see our website www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk or telephone the clerk on **07813 671899** for an informal chat and more details.

Parish Word Search

N	X	S	T	Z	C	M	L	M	I	D	D	L	E	S	C	H	O	O	L
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D	C	A	T	S	H	I	L	L	X	C	F	K	V	K	J	Z	I	P	L

**Housman
Horsecourse
Caddy Corner
Crown**

**The Meadow
Catshill
War Memorial
Donkey Row**

**First School
Marlbrook
The Old Dairy
Village Hall**

**Middle School
Ivy Cottage
Barley Mow
Marlbrook Gardens**

**Chadsgrove
Cunny Green
Braces Lane
Wagstaff**

Home Composting

GOOD news! The worst of the winter is over and spring is just around the corner. Now we can look forward to planning and working in our gardens after our period of inactivity in them. I wonder how many of you compost your dead plants, grass cuttings, leaves and vegetable matter. Well, now is the time to set up your very own composting bin. You do not need to buy a bin specifically for this purpose as it is possible to make your own out of reclaimed wood, which can be made of a size to suit your garden. Place the bin, on soil preferably, in a sunny position and begin to put into it your vegetable peelings, fruit peel, tea bags, coffee grounds (green matter), scrunched up newspaper, shredded paper, egg boxes (not plastic), egg shells (dried out in the oven on a baking tray the next time the oven is used and crumbled when dry) the inner rolls of foil, cling film, kitchen and toilet paper (brown matter). If you have a lot of grass cuttings in the summer, put a good layer into the bin and add some soil and scrunched up newspaper. This will help to avoid it becoming a soggy mess by soaking up the excess water. Keep layering the grass cuttings with any other brown matter you have to compost. As air plays an important role along with the worms, it is good if you can turn the composting material over to speed up the decomposition, which takes between 6 months to one year, depending on the outside temperatures. Other accelerants are comfrey leaves, nettles (minus the seed pods) and diluted human urine. Worms do not like the cold weather, so they work a lot slower in the winter and remember they do not have teeth, so keep your waste matter small. Whatever you do, do not add any cooked food or meat to your bin as this will encourage rats. If you do have any cooked food waste (which ideally you should not, as this creates methane gas when it is put into landfill sites) this should be treated in a Bokashi bin, to which the special bran added. After two weeks of treatment, it is then ready to be put into your compost bin, where it will continue to decompose. No compost bin should smell or encourage vermin. The end product is a good addition to any garden either as a fertiliser or mulch and after sieving can be used to germinate seeds and cuttings if mixed with potting compost. What better way is there to get something for nothing – a rare experience these days don't you agree? If you would like more information on composting, please contact Margaret or Robert on **0121 445 2554**.

Worcestershire Walks

THERE'S no doubt about it, walking is good for you. It's good for your heart, lungs, muscle and bone growth of your children and for your feeling of wellbeing! Strong scientific evidence now supports the many benefits to health of regular walking – it is recommended that we take at least 10,000 steps a day. Studies show that walking can:

Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke

Lower blood pressure

Reduce high cholesterol

Reduce body fat

Enhance mental well being

Walking offers a great way to help children get the active habit. If parents express excitement about the prospect of a walk in the countryside, they are more likely to transmit this feeling to their children. It's important to treat the walk as an exploration or adventure and to go at the child's pace, no matter how often they want to stop and look at things. Take treats to eat and plenty to drink and head for some landmark that will appeal to them such as a castle, a playground, an ice cream van or a boating pond. If children experience walking as part of a fun activity they are more likely to want to go again. So, how do you find out what is on offer? John Harris, a keen walker, got fed up with the lack of information on walks that were going on in the County. So, he decided that if he couldn't find what he was looking for – he had better create it! So www.walkinginworcestershire.co.uk came into being and gives you all the information you need for the best walking in the county. Details of more than 80 walks to download and print free, with details of all the Worcestershire walking groups, maps and walk books – plus loads more information. So check out the website and get walking!

Catshill Fish Bar

139 Golden Cross Lane, Catshill.

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15% discount on orders over £10 with this voucher

We Are Online



WE are constantly adding to the functionality of the Parish website, please take a few moments to browse. You will find many pages of useful information about the council, such as when the next full Parish Council meeting will be, along with details of the various committees and groups that meet. Minutes from the meetings can also be downloaded. There is a page showing details of your Parish Councillors, the committees and groups on which they sit, and how to contact them. You can now request work to be done by the Parish Lengthsman, and/or Parish funded litter-picker from the **Parish Services** page.

The **Whats On** Page has been revised so that it now shows events listed by day of week, and has direct links to various organisations within the Parish - plus there is a new **Special Events Calendar**, which allows everyone to see what is going on, and helps to ensure that organisations do not arrange events that clash. Please look at this calendar, and use the email facility within it to inform us of any events you wish to be listed.

All Parish newsletters are downloadable from the **Newsletter** page, and we are also in the process of creating audio versions too! Finally, we are building up a library of interesting photographs of the parish from times gone by that will be added to the website shortly. If you have photographs that you would like to share, then please let us know.

Parish Events

AS Chair of the events committee it has given me a great deal of pride and pleasure to report that since re-election in May we have taken a still relatively young committee and done some remarkable things.

I speak with a massive debt of gratitude, when I say that the achievements have certainly been astonishing. Over the last month I have at times wondered where we would all find the time and energy to fulfil the many items on our wish list.

Since the last newsletter we have helped organise and facilitate:

The Hanging Basket competition

The Halloween Bash

The M & C Club

The Bonfire and Fireworks

Remembrance Sunday

The Christmas Lights competition.

We plan to hold a VE Day Party on Saturday 8th May in the Village Hall. See Parish notice boards for more details.

When you consider that three of these events took place over two weeks at different locations, I am, I feel justifiably and extremely honoured to lead this committee of councillors who time and again give me everything and more that I ask of them.

We have also endeavoured to help all sections of the community regardless of age, gender, race or religion, and this is something we shall continue to do.

Dale Carter.

If you are organising an event in the Parish, and would like to feature it on our website, as well as in the newsletter, or if you wish to write an article for the next newsletter, please contact the clerk. We should like to have a comprehensive list of activities within the village in future editions.



Remembrance Sunday

Useful Numbers

Bromsgrove District Council Hub.

01527 881288

Out of hours emergency **01527 871 565**

Catshill and Marlbrook Local Policing Team

01527 583733 or 0300 333 3000

Crimestoppers. **0800 555 111**

Write to the Parish Council

**Catshill & North
Marlbrook Parish Council**

Catshill Village Hall

Golden Cross Lane

Catshill, Bromsgrove B61 0JZ

Planning

Planning applications can now be viewed on line; to see them log on to **<http://appview.bromsgrove.gov.uk>**.

and enter either the application number or the address details.

Parish Council telephone: **07813 671 899**

Published by Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council.

e-mail: clerk@catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk

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