



CHRISTMAS MEAL



ON Friday 20th December 2019 the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council provided a festive lunch for 40 plus residents of the Parish. The three course traditional Xmas lunch took place at Catshill Village Hall. It was well received by all and many expressed their thanks and enjoyment both at the time and subsequently by letter and in person.

Lunch was followed by an appearance of Father Christmas and presents were distributed. A free raffle was organised by a local resident with a substantial first prize and many other presents.

Entertainment was informally provided by the diners themselves, local helpers and some Parish Councillors. Another Councillor provided the music throughout the afternoon and the Chairman proved to have a fine singing voice!

It would be true to say that again it was a well-organised and enjoyable event, well attended and thank you to all those who gave their time freely a special thanks to local businesses the CO-OP and the SPAR shops for their contributions of goodies.

The Annual Parish Meeting was due to take place at Catshill Village Hall on the 21st May 2020. Unfortunately due to the recent closure of the village hall for the foreseeable future, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Annual Parish meeting and all future Parish Council related meetings have now been cancelled. Please monitor the parish council website and our noticeboards for further updates

Winter Planting



We hope that you are enjoying the winter planting that has proved to be so colourful this year. Pictured is one of the Catshill signs and the Ivy Gardens which is just one of the four parish council maintained gardens within the parish. We will of course have the usual spring planting done in a month or so, ready for the summer.



Contacting the Parish Council

CATSHILL and North Marlbrook Parish Council welcome contact from Parishioners, whether this be with good news or information about areas that need our attention. There are various methods that can be used to contact the Parish Council. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk are available via email, telephone, facebook, voicemail or by visiting the office, which is open on Monday and Tuesday mornings between 9:45 and 11:15. As the Clerk, I like to be able to acknowledge receipt of requests and keep people up to date on my progress. There are also times where the Parish Council do not have the power to assist with the request and I would need to pass on other contact details to help with the issue, so please could I request that you leave some form of contact details to allow us to respond to your request and keep you updated.

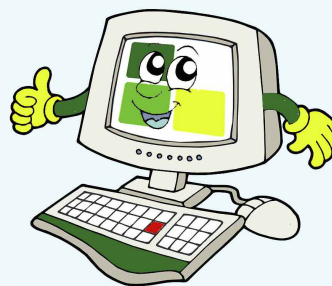
Thank you *Carol Blake Parish Clerk.*

Don't Forget to use our website

www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk.

It includes interactive features, up to date information, communication links, a very important link to the current Neighbourhood Plan and what is happening about that, all the information contained within the website is aimed to provide residents with information on what is happening within their Parish.

We are also on Facebook if you would like to check us out there too.



Chairman's Address

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WELCOME to the Spring edition of our parish magazine.

In my last 'Chairman's Address' in the Autumn 2019 magazine, I made reference to the Halloween and Christmas events which the Parish Council was planning. Thankfully all of the events were very well supported by the local community. My thanks as usual to all of those individuals and organisations who helped make those events a success.

As I write this address, the world is responding to the catastrophic coronavirus pandemic. We only have to look at the impact it has already had in countries like China, Iran, Italy and Spain, to imagine just how all of our lives will

be detrimentally impacted, for the next few months and maybe much longer.

In many respects we are entering a very scary phase of our lives. So much of normal life has been cancelled. Many people are being urged not to leave their homes. Many businesses are collapsing, and people are losing their jobs. Whilst the majority of people who get infected by the virus will not require serious medical interventions, for far too many people, the virus will require them to be hospitalised and some will not survive.

This is a time for all of us to pull together and be willing to help the more vulnerable members of our community. It has been very heartening to see groups like 'Bromsgrove Community Support' being created on Facebook, which allows people to either offer support to, or to indicate that they need support, for shopping, to get medication, transport etc.

Let's pull together during this difficult time. You will know who your vulnerable neighbours are.

I recently attended a meeting with the leader of Bromsgrove District Council, Councillor Karen May, who is coordinating the District Council's response to coronavirus pandemic and I made it clear to her that Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council was willing to assist in that response in whatever way she felt appropriate.

My thoughts are with you all during this difficult time.

Councillor Bernard McEldowney

Summer Gardens Competition

In 2020 the Parish Council will again be running the Summer Gardens Competition. Members of the Parish Council will drive around all roads in Catshill and North Marlbrook looking for the best flowering displays. You do not need to have a large garden to participate – pots, baskets and window boxes will also be taken into consideration. A first, second and third prize will be given out following the judging, so all you budding green fingered residents - get planting

Pact Meeting

I attended a Catshill **PACT** (*Partners & Communities Together*) meeting, at Catshill Village Hall on 12th March 2020. Also present were District Councillors Shirley Webb and Jo-Anne Till, and officers from the local policing team. The guest speaker was the Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion.



I was able to update the meeting with a number of initiatives which the Parish Council is involved with:

- 1). Working with the YMCA to provide enhanced Youth Services in the Catshill area. This is part of a strategy to address an emerging problem of anti-social behaviour in the Parish area.
- 2). I attended a recent meeting with Richard (Clewer) from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Highways Department to discuss speeding issues in the parish area. District Councillor Shirley Webb was also present. The following matters were agreed:
 - *Speed sign at Wildmoor Lane will be replaced by WCC and the Parish Council will take ownership for its maintenance.*
 - *Wildmoor Lane will be monitored for speeding traffic soon.*
 - *WCC will paint repeater 'Slow' or '30mph' speed signs on the tarmac at Wildmoor Lane.*
 - *WCC has a portable speed device which the Parish Council can borrow, to target specific identified speeding problems.*
 - *The Parish Council will give consideration to purchasing a mobile VAS sign.*
 - *We discussed the impact the proposed Whitford and Perryfields housing developments will have for Catshill, such as increased traffic flow and detrimental impact on air quality etc. It was agreed that Councillor Webb arrange a meeting with Mick Dunphy from Bromsgrove District Council Planning Dept to discuss the Whitford and Perryfields housing developments.*
- 3). Bromsgrove District Council are currently upgrading their analogue CCTV system to a digital system. They have no cameras located in our parish area. When the system has been upgraded, they will have the capacity to add additional cameras and will also have access to re-deployable cameras, which parish councils can bid for, to address specific crime or anti-social behaviour related problems. I have registered an interest for extra cameras to be installed in our parish area and to have access to the re-deployable camera.

Councillor Bernard McEldowney

Neighbourhood Plan

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THE Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) is still progressing work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The results of the Green Infrastructure Survey, which was included inside the Autumn 2019 parish magazine have now been analysed.

The chair of the NPSG, Dr Chris Fabray, who undertook the analysis, has advised me that there was a relatively low response to the survey. We will need a larger sample size to give the results of the survey more evidential force.

If any local residents still have copies of the Green Infrastructure Survey, we would appreciate it if you could complete them and send them to the Parish Office at Catshill Village Hall.

The NPSG has recently commissioned the following technical surveys to enhance the evidence contained within the NDP:

1). Design Code Report

2). Site Assessment Report

3). Housing Needs Assessment report

There is no cost to the Parish Council to have these surveys undertaken. They were funded by a central government agency. The more evidence we can include in the NDP, then the stronger the influence it will have in relation to future housing and other forms of development within our parish area.

The NDP is now at the 'Consultation Phase 3' point. The draft NDP has been completed and approved to proceed to the 'Regulation 14' six-week consultation.

We were aiming to undertake the six-week statutory consultation – workshops and events etc at Catshill Village Hall between May and June 2020. However, the Village Hall has now been closed for the foreseeable future due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Also, due to restrictions on movement of people, imposed by the government in response to the pandemic, we unfortunately are unable to determine when the statutory public consultation can take place.

The NPSG will continue to undertake work on the NDP and hopefully sometime later this year we will be in a position to proceed with the six-week statutory consultation.

A new Neighbourhood Development Plan website has been created by Dr Fabray. We would encourage parishioners to view the website:

<http://catshillandnorthmarlbrookplan.org.uk>

Councillor Bernard McEldowney

Christmas Lights 2019



The carols sung by Fairfield First School Choir delighted the crowd.

Laight, Chairman of Bromsgrove District Council were provided by the congregation of Catshill Baptist Church and the Indian restaurant Little Bengal provided delicious samosas. Thank you both.

Bromsgrove Scouts enthusiastically joined in with a stall selling craft items and Mettle Monkeys provided activity games for the children. They looked great fun and I think that some of the adults had wished that they were young enough to have a go!

We must thank Cllr Paul Masters for hosting the event, resident Roger Smith for providing the public address system

and the music, Dave Webb photographer and Claire Wing for her administrative skills, not forgetting the parish councillors, who turned out to prepare the site with



The Methodist Church Men's Choir were in good voice.

THE third Christmas Lights Event was held in late November 2019 following on from the success of 2018.

It started at 4pm with the Chadsgrove School Choir followed by the Star Dancers. It was then the turn of Fairfield First School Choir.

The Methodist Church Men's Choir also took part. It's lovely to see that we have so many fine voices of all ages in our Parish.

Father Christmas arrived with the assistance of Bromsgrove Round Table.

The lights were switched on by Cllr Rod Laight. Warming mulled wine and cake



Cllr Paul Masters and Cllr Rod Laight joined Father Christmas to turn on the lights.

all the equipment. We must not forget Councillor Shirley Webb, whose drive and enthusiasm spurred us all on. Our thanks go to all of you. Without you it would be difficult to stage such an event. The Parish Council was so pleased with its success and the crowds that it was decided to stage it again next year.

Hopefully more people will get involved, will tell their friends and swell the crowd.



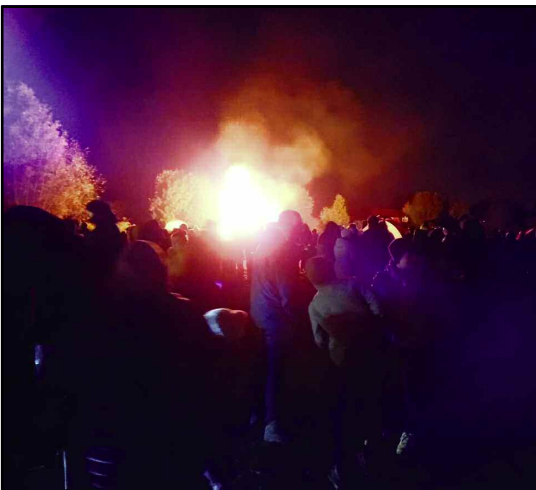
The lights in Golden Cross Lane.



The date to remember is Saturday 28th November 2020.

Please put it in your diary so that you don't miss out on one of the great events of the Parish Calendar.

Bonfire & Fireworks Event



A reduced crowd due to the rain enjoy the fireworks.

I would like to thank all of the local members of the community who supported our Bonfire and Fireworks event on the 2nd November 2019.

We were unfortunate to have had very inclement weather for most of the day, and the ground was rather soggy on the evening of the event. We seriously gave consideration to cancelling the event, for Health & Safety reasons. Fortunately, the rain did stop shortly before the due start time, allowing us to proceed with it.

Gate takings were down by 50%, when compared to last year, due to the lower attendance, which was no doubt influenced by the lousy weather.

Thanks again to Melanie Walker and her colleagues from 6th Bromsgrove Scouts who helped build the bonfire and set the meadow up for the event. As usual, 50% of the gate takings have been transferred to the Scouts. Thanks also to all of you who contributed materials for the Bonfire.

Councillor Bernard McEldowney

Remembrance Day 2019



Simon Gudger, the minister of Catshill Baptist Church officiated.

ON Sunday November 10th last year, the parishioners of Catshill and North Marlbrook paid their respects to the men who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. As usual, the event was well-attended with many people also showing their respects for service men and women who have died in recent conflicts though mercifully none from this Parish.

Simon Gudger, the minister at the Baptist Church officiated at both services held in Catshill Social Club and at The War Memorial.

There was a good turnout from members of Blackwell Band who played the music not

just to accompany the hymns but also as the parade assembled and departed.

As with the previous year, there was an increased presence of members of the Royal British Legion who were accompanied on parade by the local Scout troop.

The reading of the names of the men on the Memorial was led by Cllr Bernard McEldowney, Chairman of the Parish Council; he was assisted by Libby Wood from Catshill Middle School with Luke Smith and Lucy Kendle from the Scouts.



Cllr Bernard McEldowney lays a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.



Emily Lawrence from Catshill Middle School read a poem.



Blackwell Band, who played the music.



Paul Hatton played the bugle for "The Last Post".

Emily Lawrence from Catshill Middle School read the poem chosen for the secular part of the service which was "Sunset" by Rudolf Surr who lived in Kidderminster, studied at Malvern College and Birmingham University but died aged 25 at Delville Wood in October 1916.

Thanks to Daren Lacey from the British Legion who sourced the wreaths, Ian Hooper who organised the parade, Paul Hatton who again played the bugle for "The Last Post", Roger Smith who supplied the PA system along with the British Legion who

supplied the refreshments in the Social Club afterwards.



Blackwell Band, who played the music.



A38 Improvements Continue



AS you are probably aware the A38, including the section that cuts through our parish is being enhanced. Recently improvements were done to the A38 junction with Barley Mow Lane, and now work has started on widening and improving the traffic lanes to access and exit the roundabouts at Lydiate Ash and the Forest.

This photograph shows preparation work being done at the Lydiate Ash junction.

From our Past by Cllr. Paul Masters



M5 South Bound c1963 from Rocky Lane Bridge.



M5 Southbound 2020 also from Rocky Lane Bridge.

FOR this edition, I have found something which I hope you will find of interest from my own family archives. The M5 motorway from Junction 4 Lydiate Ash southwards towards Worcester, was opened on 20th July 1962. Interestingly the M5 North of Junction 4, towards Birmingham was constructed in sections several years later from 1967 to 1970!

The above photographs, both taken from the bridge in Rocky Lane, show the M5 motorway southbound in c1963 and as it is today in 2020. As can be seen in the early photograph, when this section opened in 1962, there were just two lanes in each direction, no lighting, surprisingly no central barrier, and obviously no sign of the M42 filter lanes which were to be constructed much later.



Hazel, Tim and Paul Masters c1963

My father Arnold Masters took the early M5 photograph along with this small photograph showing my mother, brother and I watching the traffic from the Rocky Lane Bridge in c1963. I remember it always felt like a treat to go and watch the traffic from the bridge for a few minutes, and was something we enjoyed doing as

a family, especially on the Friday evening of a bank holiday weekend when the traffic was at its peak. I am not sure that children today would think this was a fun thing to do, but we must remember that at the time the M5 was like something from out of the future, and was in stark contrast to the windy roads of Worcestershire.

As ever, if you have a photograph from the past that you would like to share, then please let us know.

Cllr. Paul Masters.



Before the M5. The old A38 at Spring Pools, north of Lydiate Ash.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

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IN the Parish Magazine 12 months ago we highlighted the increasing problem of loneliness and social isolation, a problem not just affecting older residents but younger people as well.

Back in June last year shortly after the formation of the new Parish Council, we looked at our priorities and programme for the next four years and decided to give precedence to projects that had a direct and beneficial effect on people's lives. This initiative includes measures to tackle loneliness.

Clearly there is a limit as to what the Parish Council can do but we are aware of a number of local organisations who would welcome people to their meetings and events. We would be happy to put people in touch with these bodies particularly if they are a little reticent or doubtful about making contact. The organisations we are aware of are as follows:

- **Local churches - Church of England, Methodist, Baptist, Christadelphian and Spiritualist**
- **Women's Institute (WI)**
- **Catshill & Marlbrook Friendship Club (meets monthly for chat and social)**
- **Exercise and fitness classes**
- **Men in Sheds**
- **Walking sports - includes football, hockey, netball, basketball with rounders and cricket planned for the Summer.**

We also believe that there are ample opportunities for other activities but it will need people to organise and run them. In most cases we think that most people would welcome an environment that is easy-going and fun rather than competitive or stressful so participation would be the theme.

Ideas that have been suggested are:

- **Singing and music (mostly for enjoyment rather than performance)**
- **Acting and drama (as above)**
- **Art, drawing, painting**
- **Reading groups or circles plus reading to elderly or blind people**
- **IT skills**
- **Gardening**
- **DIY skills**
- **Local history**
- **Foreign language learning**

The Parish Council would be interested in talking to anybody wishing to start up a social group that will tackle or contribute to reducing loneliness. Some funding may be available to kick-start any worthwhile initiatives.

Please contact our clerk with any by emailing:
parishclerk@catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk

In addition, please let us know if you are involved with an existing group and we can publicise in future editions of this magazine

News From the Village Hall



FOLLOWING our internal redecoration in August 2019, we have received many positive comments from our regular and party bookings, for which we thank you. We, The Village Hall Committee, are very proud of our Village Hall and its Victorian façade, which is a focal point in the village. However, as with any building of its age, maintenance is a time consuming and financially exhausting issue. We continually strive to provide the best possible venue for our loyal users and to that end have already, this year, installed new LED strip lighting in the kitchen, entrance hall, meeting room and toilets. Further electrical and lighting work, to include upgraded lighting in the car park and driveway, will take place in April. Maintenance work to the halls interior and car parking area are top of our agenda and additional work will take place throughout the year, when we have funding available.

Due to the current Corona Virus pandemic, the Village Hall Committee has reluctantly made the decision that the village hall would remain closed from Saturday 21st March 2020 for the foreseeable future. All forthcoming events at the hall have been cancelled until further notice'

For more information please visit the website:

www.catshillvillagehall.co.uk

Useful Numbers

Bromsgrove District Council: **01527 881288**

Out of hours emergency: **01527 871565**

Catshill and Marlbrook Local Policing Team

01527 583733 / 0300 333 3000

Crimestoppers: **0800 555 111**

Contact Us

Carol Blake, Clerk to the Council,
Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council,
Catshill Village Hall, Golden Cross Lane,
Catshill, BROMSGROVE. B61 0JZ.

Tel: **01527 873266** - Mob: **07813 671899**

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

www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk



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