

NEWS MAGAZINE



AUTUMN 2020

CATSHILL & NORTH MARLBROOK

Parish Council

www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk

We Need Your Help in Finalising the Neighbourhood Plan

IT'S been 4 years since we started the Neighbourhood Plan in September 2016. We are now nearing the end of the road after hundreds of hours of consultation, developing policies and writing reports. From the route map you can see how far we have come in this time and the stage which we are now.



We have a draft Neighbourhood Plan report on which we want to consult with you so you can make the final decisions on the policies we have developed. In this report we cover policies relating to where houses should be built, their design, type, mix and affordability. We seek to protect and enhance the community services and facilities. Local businesses are supported. A top priority of the report is the environment and many policies seek to safeguard green spaces, ensure that well used open spaces like the Meadow are always protected and the network of foot paths through the village are maintained and enhanced.

Please complete the questionnaire within this magazine to help us to designate a number of areas within the parish as local green spaces to protect them from development.

The period of consultation about this draft report will take place between 21st September and 2nd November 2020.

We will be holding drop in events in the village hall during this period, on **3rd October 2020, 17th October 2020 and 31st October 2020.**

when you can talk to the people who developed the plan and view the entire draft report, the background reports and papers. These events will take place in a covid secure environment.

A summary leaflet of the Neighbourhood Plan will be available for you to read and write your comments in. (This summary leaflet is also included as an inset to this magazine, together with a freepost envelope).



***Copies of the draft report will also be available for inspection in the entrance of the village hall on Monday and Tuesday between 10 and 12 noon each week during the consultation period.
Catshill and Bromsgrove libraries will have copies for you to read as well.***



We have our own neighbourhood plan website, www.catshillandnorthmarlbroomplan.org.uk and you can download copies of the draft plan, all the background papers and reports, together with a comments form. This form can also be completed online. We would appreciate it if you use this online form as it makes our job easier collating the results.

Our promise to you is we will take into account every single comment we receive and amend the report as necessary before its final submission to Bromsgrove District Council.

With your help we can make the village an even better place to live and work in over the next ten years.



WELCOME to the latest edition of our parish magazine.

When our Spring magazine was published, we had just commenced our entry into a protracted and in many ways a confusing period of 'lockdown', in response to the Covid_19 pandemic. In recent months various relaxations have been announced by the government, including details of family bubbles, social bubbles, rules regarding the wearing of face coverings in various public settings, changes in quarantine periods etc. I now think we are all at a point where most of us are simply confused as to what we are or are not allowed to do.

Bromsgrove suffered one of the highest Covid_19 related death rates in the county and I am conscious that a number of families in our parish area will have been directly impacted by this truly pernicious virus. My thoughts and those of my colleagues on the Parish Council are with all of you who have been affected.

It was good to see the community pull together to help out vulnerable residents who were required to socially isolate for a long period of time. Special thanks go to Brett Laniosh who created the 'Catshill Community Support Group' and the team of volunteers who worked with him over the past few months. Thanks also to the great work undertaken by Catshill Food Bank, who had to manage an increased demand for help. The Parish Council has provided some financial support to the food bank. Thanks also to the many local residents who provided support to their vulnerable neighbours.

You will see lots of information in the magazine about the Neighbourhood Plan. I would urge you to complete the 'Green Infrastructure Survey' and provide comments on the enclosed '*Neighbourhood Plan leaflet*', which provides a summary of the draft Catshill and North Marlbrook Plan. It is your plan and it is important that we get your input, which will influence the contents of the final plan.

I think it is important for me to again thank the chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG), Dr Chris Fabray and his fellow lay members of the NPSG, Paul Cysell and Phil Sharp, who have literally volunteered hundreds of hours of their own time to get the plan to its current advanced stage. It is fair to say that without their personal contributions, the Parish Council would have struggled to make meaningful progress with the plan. Public Consultations on the plan will take place between the 21st September and 2nd November 2020.

We are aware that there has been some disquiet in the local community about the housing of asylum seekers at the Britannia Hotel on the Birmingham Road. The Parish Council has been contacted by a small number of residents, who have expressed concern that the Parish Council had not notified local residents about this development. The reality is that we were never formally notified about this

decision, which was taken by the Home Office, using emergency powers, in response to the Covid_19 pandemic. In order to achieve social distancing, they needed to relocate some asylum seekers from the detention centres to a number of hotels around the country. I have personally been in contact with our local MP and district and county councillors about this matter, which we will continue to monitor.

Sadly due to the many Covid_19 related restrictions which are still in place, the Parish Council has recently had to take the difficult decision to cancel all planned Parish events for this year, including the Bonfire & Fireworks event. It simply will not be practical for us to safely undertake these events. We will review the decision next year.

Events 2020

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic all events for this year have had to be cancelled, this includes Fireworks, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lights Switch On and Elderly Peoples' Party.

The Parish Council Office is also closed for the foreseeable future.

Some good news though.....we will still have the Christmas Trees and Christmas Lights on display around the Village for the festive season and your Parish Council is Exploring the possibility of holding the Lights Switch On and Remembrance Service 'virtually'.

News From the Village Hall



DURING this period of lockdown, we have been maintaining the Village Hall and cleaning to a high standard to ensure a safe environment as far as possible in this difficult time. For example, the Village Hall has been tested for Legionella and has been certified free from this disease.

We are hoping to open gradually from September to selected groups. It is important that all Hirers maintain social distancing, hand washing and general hygiene around the Hall for all their clients, as we cannot have management available as support at all events. The Hall Manager will always keep potential hirers informed.

The Hall will not be opening for party bookings in the near future; again the Hall Manager will keep the Website updated on information and contact details.

J. Bate - Village Hall Management.

CLLR. Shirley Webb has informed us that because of Covid 19, our local school children and scout group were understandably unable to replenish the hanging baskets and planters as was hoped. However, Cllr Shirley Webb and Cllr Jo Till along with volunteers Daren, Phil, Val and Gary took on the task instead with support from the Willowbrook Garden Centre. This means that we can all enjoy the planters once again this year.

There are still plans to increase the number of planters as part of Catshill in Bloom, including the grassy area to the left as you go up Golden Cross Lane, just after Green Lane. You may have noticed that this area has now been fenced off, as have other grassy areas in the parish, in order to enhance and protect them for all to enjoy.



New fence being constructed in Golden Cross Lane.



Ivy Garden winter flowers.



Ivy Garden summer flowers.



The planter on the corner of Meadow road and Wildmoor Lane

The Parish Council also continues to brighten the community up with its various gardens. The Ivy Gardens has come in for much praise this year as not only did the winter planting provide a beautiful display in the spring, but the summer planting is already looking amazing too.

I think all will agree, that with the four parish council maintained gardens and signpost planters, along with the *Catshill in Bloom* tubs and hanging baskets, our parish has never looked so colourful.



Catshill & North Marlbrook Neighbourhood Plan

Green Infrastructure Planning

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please help us to designate six green spaces in order to protect wildlife, woodland areas, and places to walk and enjoy the countryside.

We are repeating the questionnaire (first included in the Autumn 2019 edition of the parish magazine) to gain further support to designate six areas as green spaces that would be protected from future development. More responses are required to ensure a favourable decision is reached in the designation of these spaces. This questionnaire also asks about your use of foot paths and cycle ways in the parish to help us develop an overall environmental plan for the village, including green corridors for the protection of wildlife. The first question of the survey looks for your support in providing additional protection for well-known recreational areas like The Meadow and Lyngfield Playground.

The Environmental Map

A map of the parish can be seen on the previous page, highlighting the green spaces, well-known open spaces, foot paths, cycle ways and green corridors. Please use this map to identify the locations of all these places.



Foot path by Battlefield Brook.



Play area at the Meadow.

FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick '✓' in the appropriate boxes in the tables on this questionnaire and return to The Clerk to the Parish Council in the free post envelope provided either by post or hand delivery to Catshill Village Hall. You can help us protect the village environment with your responses. An online survey of this questionnaire at our Neighbourhood Plan website is also available at:

[**www.catshillandnorthmarlbrookplan.org.uk**](http://www.catshillandnorthmarlbrookplan.org.uk)

Q1. *To what extent does this statement apply for each well-known open space?*

‘This formal open space is ‘highly valued and very important to the community’

Place a tick '✓' in the appropriate box for each open space based on your view on the above statement.

FORMAL OPEN SPACES						
REF	DESCRIPTION	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
A	Braces Lane recreation ground					
B	Lingfield Playground & Sports Field					
C	The Meadow					
D	First & Middle School Playing Fields					
E	Playground/Sports Field Milton Road					

Other Comments.

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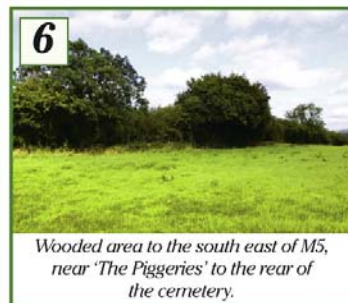
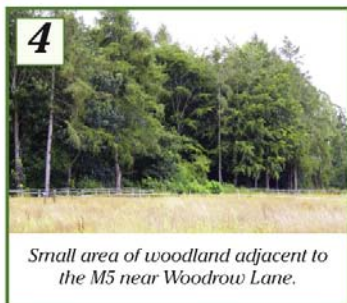
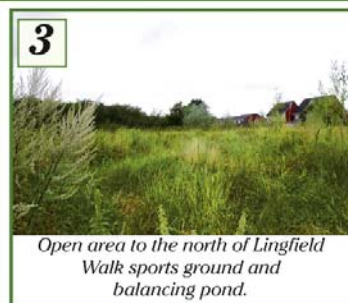
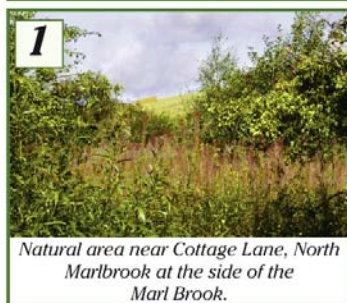
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Q2. *To what extent do you feel that the following descriptions apply to the identified green spaces?*

Place a tick '✓' in the box if you think this description applies to a particular site. You can tick more than one description for a site, if appropriate.

LOCAL GREEN SPACES.						
DESCRIPTION	SITE REFERENCE					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Beauty						
Historic Significance						
Recreational Value						
Tranquillity						
Richness of Wildlife						

Local Green Spaces



LOCAL GREEN SPACES

SITE REF	DESCRIPTION
1	Natural area near Cottage Lane, North Marlbrook
2	Natural ground to north of Braces Lane Sports Ground
3	Open area to north of Lingfield Walk Sports Ground
4	Small area of woodland adjacent to M5.
5	Wooded area to the rear of Cowslip Close near M5.
6	Wooded area to the south east of M5 near 'The Piggeries'.

Other Comments.

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Q3. *Regarding the Public Footpaths shown on the environment map, to what extent do you feel that these definitions apply to the following statements?*

Place a tick '✓' in the appropriate box for each statement depending on your view of the statement.

PUBLIC FOOTPATHS						
	STATEMENT	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
i)	I/my family regularly use the public footpaths					
ii)	I/my family are satisfied with the condition of the public footpaths					
iii)	I/my family consider that there are sufficient public footpaths for our needs					
iv)	I/my family would like to see more dedicated cycle paths					
v)	I/my family feel safe when using the public footpaths					

Other Comments.

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SOCIAL media is playing an increasing role in disseminating information within our community, and it may be worth noting that not only does your Parish Council have a very informative and constantly updated website (www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk), but it also has its own Facebook page, which although comparatively new is growing in popularity.

However, for eight years the **Catshill** Village Facebook page, with over a thousand followers, has served as a hub to village life, sharing local news, events and traffic updates, keeping people in touch and helping reunite lost pets as well as providing a place for local businesses to promote their products and services.



During the recent pandemic crisis villagers who need help have been put in touch with others and regular updates on events locally and nationally have been provided.

Recently the decision was made to migrate the page to a group as

Facebook have made it increasingly difficult to post to 'Pages', and the two will run concurrently for the time being, anything posted will appear on both.

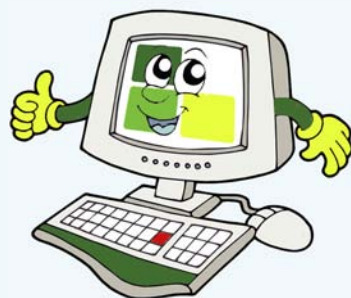
Another interesting Facebook group is **Catshill Past**, which has been running for five years, and has many wonderful memories, discussions and photographs of how the village used to be. You will even find some of the "*From Our Past*" articles from this very newsmagazine finding their way onto this group's page, which is wonderful, because it all helps document the vibrant history of Catshill and surrounding area.

During recent weeks another Facebook group called **Catshill Community Support** has also been formed, and I am sure there will be other groups in the future.

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.



Martin & Lindsay before the event.



Lindsay & Martin after the event.

ON Sunday 16th August, Lindsay Peniston and Martin Tingle Braved the Shave!

THE husband and wife team have been raising money for MacMillan Cancer Support for many years, usually by hosting Murder Mystery dinner parties, but because of the Covid-19 restrictions, they have been unable to do this, so they decided to “Brave the Shave” instead.

The weather was kind, and on the car park of the Catshill

Methodist Church at 3pm, a socially distanced crowd gathered to witness the event, which was also streamed live on Facebook.

First of all Lindsay shaved Martin’s hair, leaving him with just his beard that he had been growing since last November’s “Movember” event. Next, Martin took the clippers to Lindsay’s hair, before finally Lindsay took great delight in removing Martin’s beard.

At the time of going to press over £2000 has been raised for MacMillan Cancer Support by this event, with the total still rising – Well done Martin and Lindsay!



Lindsay shaves Martins head.



Martin shaves Lindsays head.



Half of Martin's beard is gone.



OUR parish has a wonderful network of footpaths. They have always been useful to those that use them, but during the Covid-19 lockdown, because for many the only exercise that they could get was walking, they became especially useful. Perhaps you took a walk down a footpath that you had not previously noticed was there, or one that you had not walked for many years. In each edition of our *Newsmagazine* we will attempt to bring you a photograph showcasing one of our many footpaths. Here is a photograph of the footpath from Oak Road leading to Golden Cross Lane.

M5 J4 Update



IN the spring edition of this *Newsmagazine*, we included a photograph of the work that had started on widening and improving the traffic lanes to access and exit the Lydiate Ash roundabout.

Work is still in progress, and so here is a photographic update of the work so far. You can see where the extra filter lane(s) will be.

Hopefully by our next edition, this work along with the improvements to the Forest junction roundabout will be complete. *Photos by Paul Masters.*

FOR several decades one of the most well attended youth organisation in the parish was the 1st Bromsgrove Boys' Brigade Company that was based at Catshill Methodist Church.

The Boys' Brigade is the oldest uniformed youth group in the world and was founded in Glasgow on 4th October 1883 by Sir William Alexander Smith. As of 2018, there were 750,000 Boys' Brigade members in 60 countries.



The 1st Bromsgrove Boys' Brigade Band lead Bromsgrove Carnival in 1974

In the mid 1960s Catshill Methodist church was home to what was simply called a Boys Club. It was independently run and not part of any national organisation. Then in c1969 the volunteers who ran the Club, which met on Thursday evenings, decided it would be a good idea to apply to become part of the Boys'

Brigade. This was a massive commitment... The helpers all had to attend the required training courses to become BB Officers, and the boys, and officers all had to get new uniforms. Being the only BB Company in Bromsgrove at the time (not just Catshill) meant that they carried the name "*The 1st Bromsgrove Boys' Brigade Company.*"

The BB continued to meet on Thursday evenings, and went from strength to strength. It was split into 3 sections, with almost 90 boys attending each week.

The boys of the company enjoyed success with their football team (which played on the Meadow, and then on the pitch off Perryfields Road), and they also had a successful award winning band. It was this band that almost *everyone* who lived in Catshill throughout the 70s and 80s would hear each first Sunday of the month as they led a huge parade around the village with the BB company, the Girl Guides and the Brownies; all ending up at a packed Catshill Methodist church. The band would always lead the annual parade to the war memorial on Remembrance Day, the Catshill Carnival, and various other local summer carnivals and parades. For several years they led the Bromsgrove Carnival procession, and this photograph shows the band leading the Bromsgrove Carnival through the High Street in 1974.

Sadly by the mid 1990s the 1st Bromsgrove Company ceased to be, but it will be remembered by all those who were members, and the wider community who enjoyed the sound of the band. Please note that the 2nd Bromsgrove Boys' Brigade Company, formed later and based at The Methodist Centre in Bromsgrove still runs to this day.

THOSE people fortunate enough to have their own garden, regardless of size, have realised more than ever this year, the benefit that can bring, especially during lock down. But although lock down meant many spending more time than usual in their back gardens, it also meant that gardens that normally opened to the



public, to raise money for charity, had to close to try and stem the spread of the virus. One of the local gardens the government restrictions affected was at Oak Tree House, in Marlbrook, owned by Dave and Di Morgan. Dave and Di have been opening their plant filled garden, along with Dave's brother and wife, and another close neighbour in Braces Lane, for 15 years for the National Garden Scheme (NGS), and during that time have helped raise nearly £70,000 for the charity, which passes 80% of its income to nursing and healthcare charities such as MacMillan's, Marie Curie, Hospice UK and Parkinson's.

This year the garden was due to open on the last Sunday in May, as although the garden looks good in summer, it is primarily a spring garden with an array of various spring plants such as rhododendrons, azaleas, and late flowering tulips – but of course it couldn't happen. However, in an effort to share their garden they posted 3 short videos and a series of pictures (the photos taken on VE Day) on the Catshill Methodist Church's website which are still available to view at <http://www.catshillmethodists.org.uk/notices.htm>

The NGS got the "green light" from government to start opening gardens again in June, although open garden days were under a strictly controlled system of pre booked tickets and garden owners having to state how many people could be safely allowed to enter the garden, and visitors allowed entry in timed "slots". Not every garden owner felt they could do this as many were shielding or felt their

garden was not suitable to allow for social distancing; however Dave and Di decided to open their garden on the first 3 Sundays in August. Visitors were requested to maintain social distancing and between each “slot” surfaces such as



seats and hand rails were cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes, but over 70 visitors came during those 3 afternoons (despite thunderstorms on the third Sunday!) and nearly £500 was raised for nursing charities.

Di, who Dave says is the “Head Gardener”, said that her biggest problem in lock down was how to get the plants, compost, plant food and other garden related items, with garden centres being closed, although she did manage to get one large delivery from the now closed Fresh at Burcot, whereas Dave said that his biggest headache was where to stack the 30 large bags of garden refuse that couldn’t go into the compost bins (which were already full) that had built up during the weeks when the brown bins were not being emptied!

But overall they both agreed that it was a worthwhile exercise – not just because of the money they raised, but also, based on the comments that visitors made, because everyone seemed really grateful to have a garden to visit and had enjoyed spending some time with nature and like minded people.

More about the NGS can be found on their website www.ngs.org.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

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