

NEWS MAGAZINE



SPRING 2023

CATSHILL & NORTH MARLBROOK

Parish Council

www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk



Important Local Election Information – see page 2

Local Elections

WITH the local elections in England now just a couple of months away, it is important that you are aware for the first time in UK history, people wanting to vote in person will need photographic ID.

The first time this will be used will be during the local elections across England on May 4, please make sure you take your ID with you.

The pre-election period, previously known as 'purdah', describes the period of time immediately before elections or referendums when specific restrictions on communications activity are in place. This is due to begin on 27th March and will mean the Parish Council will not be as active on social media up until the Election period has finished.



Junior Councillors

CATSHILL & North Marlbrook Junior Councillors, along with Assistant Head Teacher Danielle McCrory, met with parish clerk Carol Blake and Cllr Brett Laniosh in May 2022 to set up a Junior Councillors group. The Junior Councillors give a young people's voice to the parish council, and you can read more about them in the previous edition of this magazine (Spring 2022), available from catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk/newsletters. The Junior Councillors group have suggested ideas for improving the village and presented their ideas to a Full Parish Council meeting last year. Their ideas include a skate park, a Lollipop Person and zebra crossings on busy roads. As well as an opportunity for the Junior Councillors to feedback directly to the council, termly meetings will take place to discuss progress on their ideas.

Where in the Parish?



ONCE again here is a photograph of something within the parish, but do you know where/what it is?

We will post the answer on our facebook page (once all editions of this news magazine have been delivered), just as we did with the autumn 2022 edition "*Where in the parish*" photograph. However, in case you missed the answer online, it was the monkey statue outside Dine India, next to the Spar in Catshill.

If you have not given our Facebook page a "like" yet, then do so as soon as possible!





WELCOME to the spring edition of our Parish News Magazine.

It feels great to be coming out of winter and hopefully heading towards a much milder spring. We were fortunate to have experienced a milder winter than many had anticipated, especially given the recent massive increase in energy costs.

In our autumn News magazine we informed you of work that was underway to create local 'Warm Spaces.' These have been a success (see page 4 for more details).

Last November's Bonfire & Fireworks event on The Meadow was probably the most successful event we have had in recent years (see page 6), and our Christmas

Lights Switch On was easily the best event of its kind (see page 7).

Paragraph 11 of our Neighbourhood Plan states; *"Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council will ensure there is compliance with the NP and that it is regularly reviewed."* I would like to thank the former chair of the NP Steering Group Dr. Chris Fabray for recently undertaking that review, which can be viewed on the Parish Council website.



Finally, we are keen for the parish to be involved in commemorating the coronation of King Charles III over the special Bank Holiday weekend of 6th – 8th May. We are aware that there will be a trail around the community on Sunday 7th May between 12 noon to 3pm, but we cannot publish full details of this and other events yet, as they are still being planned. Therefore, we will keep you informed via our Facebook page in due course.

Remember, if you want to organise your own street party, you will need to seek permission from Bromsgrove District Council, before

closing a road. More information is available on Bromsgrove District Council's website.

Councillor Bernard McEldowney (Chair)

Cover Photograph

THANKS go to Karen Tabberer of Catshill for supplying this edition's cover photograph. It shows a frosty morning looking across the fields to the Topaz business park.

Natural Networks Project

IN February work started on an exciting Natural Networks project near Catshill.



Through a partnership with North Worcestershire Water Management (for Bromsgrove District Council), Worcestershire County Council and Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council, work to reinstate a small tributary of the Battlefield Brook along the Millennium Way Sustrans route between Milton Road & Stourbridge Road, Catshill will be carried out. The project will also involve creating a wetland pond area near the confluence

with Battlefield Brook and creating an overflow channel further downstream.

This project will help to reduce the risk of flooding along this well used route, reduce erosion damage to the path and improve biodiversity locally. An ecologist has surveyed the site twice for signs of water voles and other protected species.

Upon completion of the groundwork, a community event will be arranged to help plant some native wildflower plants and bulbs, hang some bird-boxes and even build an otter holt. Details of this will be shared via the North Worcestershire Water Management Facebook page: www.facebook.com/northwocsflooding

This project is being part-funded through European Regional Development Funds administered by Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust as part of their Natural Networks Programme.

Warm Welcome



IN our Autumn edition, we informed you of an initiative being undertaken by several local churches, other organisations and individuals, to create community 'Warm Spaces' in response to the impact of the 'Cost of Living' crisis. So far these events have proved popular, and because it is envisaged that many of them will continue after the winter, they are now under the umbrella name of 'Warm

Welcome.' We have, and will continue to publicise all dates, times and locations of 'Warm Welcome' events via our Facebook page.

The Parish Council have also agreed in principle to offer funding to partially support the cost of running these events.

SUNDAY 13th November 2022 was Remembrance Sunday and we were able to return to the now traditional format of a service in the Catshill Club (opposite the War Memorial) conducted by the various Catshill churches at 10:00am, followed by a short parade from the Middle School to the War Memorial, where the annual act of remembrance was held from 10:50, until just after 11:00am.



Service inside Catshill Club.



Boys' Brigagde lead the parade.



Service at the Memorial.

Once again, large numbers of people attended both services along with members of the Boys' Brigade, Scouts, Brownies, and other organisations. The parade was led by drummers of the 2nd Bromsgrove Boys' Brigade Company, with BB Officer Paul Hatton playing the Last Post at 11:00am once all the names on the memorial had been read out. The excellent Blackwell Concert Band provided the music at both venues. Refreshments were served in the Catshill Club afterwards, and thanks must go to all involved in the organisation of this important annual event.



The Blackwell Concert Band.



Wreaths around the memorial.

Record Crowd Attend Fireworks Return



AFTER a three year break due to COVID restrictions, the Bonfire & Fireworks event returned to The Meadow on Saturday 5th November 2022, and it was almost certainly the most successful event we have had in recent years. There was an improved sound system, more toilet facilities and a choice of food from various vendors.

Attendance figures were more than triple the usual number, probably because Bromsgrove District Council did not host a similar event, and because of the very competitive entry price to what is a popular event anyway. The large attendance did lead to a long entry queue forming and therefore a slightly delayed start to allow everyone to get in.



This event was jointly organised by the *6th Bromsgrove Scouts* (based in Catshill) and the *North West Ward Association* (NWWA) who are responsible for managing the Meadow, with the many set up costs provided by the Parish Council.

The takings at the gate were approximately £8,500 with 75% going to the Scouts and 25% to the Catshill Village Meadow (NWWA).

Planning will soon start for this year's event, and we will look at ways of reducing the gate queues.



SATURDAY 26th November 2022 saw the full return of the ever popular Christmas Lights Switch On in Catshill.

There was a switch on event the previous year, but because of various COVID related problems, it was a much smaller affair with no entertainment or crowds, just the actual switch on on broadcast live over Facebook.

However, 2022's Switch On saw huge crowds return outside the village hall, slowly building up from the start at 3:00pm until well after the ten seconds to 5:00pm countdown to witness the lights on the Christmas tree, Village Hall wall and lampposts all come on together.



Thanks must go to *Cllr. Shirley Webb* for coordinating arrangements, *Chloe May's Dance Academy*, *the Stars Dance Academy*, *Fairfield First School*, and *Catshill Methodist Men's Choir*, for performing brilliantly, compère *Cllr. Paul Masters*, *the Village Hall committee* for providing refreshments, *Parish Cllr. Jess Charlton* for sourcing the Christmas tree, former Parish Cllr. *Ian Hooper* for erecting the tree, *Willowbrook Garden Centre* for a generous discount on the price of the tree, and everyone else involved.

THANK you for your continued interest in my From our Past articles. From the comments I receive, I know that they are enjoyed by many who share my interest in how things used to be in our ever changing community.

My thanks this edition goes to **Mr Peter Wilkins**, who has supplied these two splendid photographs from the late 1970s/early 1980s. They show the metal fabrication factory in Church Road just before it was fully demolished to make way for the construction of Marsh Way.



At the time Peter was an avid photographer and used his SLR Camera and 35mm film to capture these images.

Although we have featured other photos of the old factory in the past, I think you will agree that these images really capture a moment of change within Catshill.

If you have any old photographs of the parish that you would like to share, then please email me at p.masters@catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk

COVID Memorial Bench

A COVID memorial bench (mentioned in the last edition of the News Magazine) has now been positioned on the edge of the Car Park of Catshill Methodist Church Centre's car park in Golden Cross Lane.

Pictured are Ian Jones, Barry West and David Mills who worked hard to install the bench as a permanent memorial to those who died, suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.



The Bench was bought with the help of Worcestershire County Council's divisional funding.

DESPITE the disruption to bus services due to cut backs, there are still a number of services that operate in the parish and these can provide great opportunities for travel. If you've not travelled by bus for some time, it's definitely worth hopping on a local service and venturing out to visit somewhere you haven't been. Buses all offer contactless payment, (cash is still accepted too) and you can purchase day tickets, such as the 'Connecta' which can be used across different operators within Worcestershire. Checking bus timetables beforehand is essential and travel planners like www.traveline.info can help you find the right bus for your trip. With one exception, travel is challenging, if not impossible, after 7pm or on Sundays, so bear this in mind.

144 (First) This is probably the best known and longest running service, it operates seven days a week. It will take you to Bromsgrove town, Wychbold, Droitwich Spa and Worcester City, but it no longer takes you to Birmingham. The service operates a £2 maximum fare service for a single journey until the end of March.

144A (National Express) Running every 70 minutes (not Sunday), it will take you to Rubery, Longbridge and Longbridge Railway Station. The service operates a £2 maximum fare service for a single journey until the end of March. Day Saver tickets are available that be used across National Express buses that cover the West Midlands and Coventry.

147 (Keys) Running every two hours (not Sunday), it will take you to Wildmoor, Romsley and Halesowen. It's a fast service, taking half an hour to get to Halesowen Bus Station. In the opposite direction it will take you to Sidemoor, Bromsgrove and Aston Fields.

318 (Keys) Running every two hours (not Sunday), it will take you to Fairfield, Belbroughton, Clent, Hagley, Oldswinford and Stourbridge, completing its journey to Stourbridge Bus Station in 50 minutes. In the opposite direction it will take you to Sidemoor, Bromsgrove and Aston Fields.

202 (Diamond) Mostly an hourly, weekday and Saturday service, this will take you from Marlbrook to Lickey, Rubery, Frankley, Bartley Green, Lapal and Halesowen taking 50 minutes.

90 (MRD) Running on weekday mornings only, this local service will take you to Bromsgrove via Sidemoor .

WOD (Diamond) The Worcestershire on Demand (or BOD) bus offers a door to door service via an app (search for Worcestershire on Demand) for a fixed fee. It will take you as far as Fairfield, Bournheath, Blackwell, Tardebigge, Stoke Prior, Upton Warren, Park Gate, Woodcote, Dodford or any place within that circle.

145/145A (Diamond) This Monday to Saturday service runs hourly from Lickey End to Bromsgrove, Aston Fields, Stoke Heath, Stoke Prior, Stoke Works and Wychbold in one direction and to Burcot, Blackwell, Barnt Green, Cofton Hackett, Rednal, and Rubery in the opposite direction.

In the next issue of the magazine, I'll give details of the less frequent services that operate in the parish.

Lickey End Circular Walk

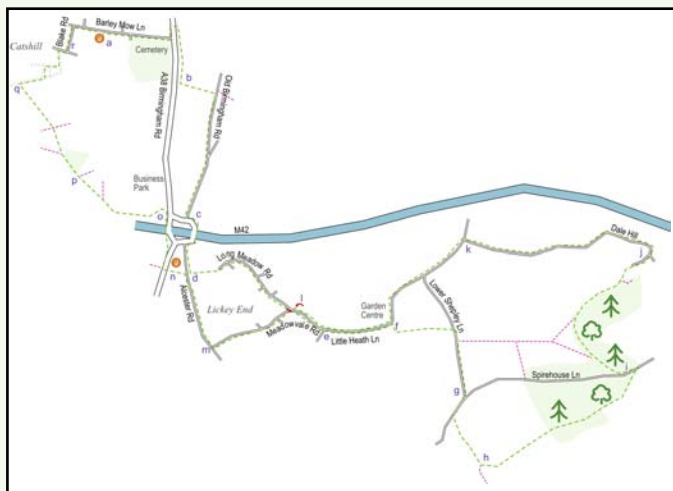
This and over 25 other local walks can be downloaded from walks.catshill.com which is sponsored by Catshill Design. If you would like to join or find out more about the local footpath work party that meets once a month to carry out maintenance tasks, please email b.laniosh@catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.uk

This is a 5½ mile circular walk that starts from the Royal Oak, Barley Mow Lane, Catshill, B61 0LU. Moderate terrain and an easy to follow walk, following roads and footpaths with some climbs.

Cllr Brett Laniosh

FROM the car park of the Royal Oak **(a)** turn right and walk up Barley Mow Lane. At the top of the road, turn left and use the pelican crossing to cross the A38, Birmingham Road. After crossing the road, turn right and walk down the A38 until you meet the footpath **(b)** beside a garage. Follow the path and walk uphill to Old Birmingham Road. Turn right **(c)** and follow the pavement to the M42 / A38 roundabout. Walk clockwise around the roundabout, so turn left and carefully cross the road you have walked down and then the lanes that lead to and from the motorway.

Follow the B4096 (Alcester Road) south a short distance, until you get to the footpath **(d)** on your left. The footpath is opposite a Methodist church and another footpath that you will be using on the return journey. The footpath meets Long Meadow Road which you will follow as it arcs to the right and downhill through a modern housing estate and into Meadowvale Road where you will turn left, until you get to the T junction **(e)** with Little Heath Lane. Cross the road and turn left into the lane. The pavement on the right side of the lane finishes and you will need to walk a very short distance on the road. Cross to the other side of the lane and walk past the garden centre. Carefully cross back over the road and pick up the footpath adjacent to a house **(f)** just before the road turns sharp left.



The path runs to the left of another house before following a track through a horse riding centre. When the track meets the lane turn right and follow the quiet lane to the junction **(g)** of Spirehouse Lane where you will turn right. After a short distance pick up the path on the other side of the road and follow it left into the field. After passing through a kissing gate you will meet another

path **(h)**. Turn left and follow it uphill into woods. After climbing (ignore the paths on the left) the path runs parallel to a fence before descending to steps and onto Spirehouse Lane. Turn left and walk a short distance **(i)** down the lane until you meet the track on your right into the woods. Follow the track as it veers to the right (there are excellent views to the left) before running beside a stream and finally turning into a tarmac road. Turn left **(j)** into Dale Hill and follow the lane (try to ignore the noise of the motorway) until you meet Little Heath Lane **(k)** where you will turn left. Carefully walk downhill going past the garden centre again and back into Meadowvale Road. This time keep left **(l)** and follow the road through the houses to Alcester Road **(m)**. Turn right, cross the road and walk up to the Methodist church. Follow the path beside the church **(n)**, cross the A38 using the pelican crossing and turn right. Follow the pavement, clockwise over the motorway until you get to the path on your left.

You can choose to walk beside the A38 back to Barley Mow Lane, but our route turns left **(o)** and follows the path around the business park. Ignore other paths and head through the field towards the left side of the copse of trees **(p)**. Keep straight on until you leave the fields and meet the pavement **(q)** beside the houses and turn right. Turn left, then right snaking around the houses until you come to Byron Way and directly opposite **(r)** Blake Road which you will take. At the T-junction turn right into Barley Mow Lane and after a short distance you will be at the Royal Oak again.

Local National Open Garden Scheme (NGS)

Garden open days

Oak Tree House

(504, Birmingham Road, Marlbrook
just opposite the hotel)

will once again be open to the public on
Saturday and Sunday 13th and 14th
March 2023 from 1:30 – 5:00pm.

Admission is just £4 (children free) and
light refreshments will
be available. Proceeds
will go to charity.

*If you have never
visited this local
garden, then don't
miss this
opportunity!*



FRIENDLY SPACES IN CATSHILL



THE CROWN INN

- Mondays
- 12pm-4pm
- Quiz/games

THE PLOUGH AND HARROW

- Mondays 3-4pm
- Tuesdays, Wednesday and
- Thursdays 12-4pm
- Bingo

THE ROYAL OAK

- Mondays
- 3.30-4.30pm
- Quiz/games

**All offering complimentary
tea and coffee in a warm friendly space**



PARISH COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT



THE Parish Council now has 7 vacancies out of the possible 13 councillors and we would like to fill these positions with local residents who are proud of the community where they live, would like to contribute to improving life for everybody in the local area and have a keen interest in the various functions of the Council

particularly planning, the environment, highways, finance and organising events in the Parish.

Anybody interested in being part of the Council can find out more information or even submit an application to the clerk, Carol Blake by emailing: parishclerk@catshillandnorthmarkbrookpc.gov.uk

More information about the Parish Council can be found on our website, <https://www.catshillandnorthmarlbrook-pc.gov.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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