

## **REPORTS FROM VILLAGE GROUPS AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MAY 2026**

### **BPC Chair's report 2026**

Welcome again to everyone and thank you for your time in coming here today. It is great to see so many of you here. My report will highlight the issues we have and are facing as a village and details of these will be provided by the individuals responsible in subsequent reports.

To begin with, I should like to thank all my fellow councillors and our clerk for their kindness in giving their time in attending meetings and training for their roles – most of which is voluntary. We are pleased to welcome to the PC this year a new councillor – Kelly Hathaway – taking our numbers to 5.

As you know, Babraham is a beautiful and exceptionally unusual village with a rich agricultural and scientific heritage. We all have a common aim in trying to preserve this. Although small – around 260 residents – as a village we face very large issues and I shall cover **some** of these briefly now.

**Council tax** – one of the primary roles of the PC is to set the bar for the CT. A couple of years ago this was inadvertently raised due to the change in our boundary which reduced the number of houses. This meant that a slight increase was caused. I am pleased to report that we reduced that back to the original level and this year maintained that level i.e. no increase from the PC. However, the Council Tax precept for the District Council will increase by 2.99% or £5.24 per year for a Band D property. This compares with a CPI inflation rate of 3.4%, wage growth of 4.2% (both from December 2025), and a state pension increase of 4.7% this year

Which brings me to jump straight into the glaring issue of potholes. Whilst this is a nationwide issue the fact that in many cases these are now craters and of extreme danger has not gone unnoticed. As a PC we have repeatedly reported our potholes both within and approaching the village and shall continue to do so. We are pleased to see that the state of the roads to Stapleford and Sawston have been repaired on the verges which had become deeply dangerous – although often these pop/pot up all too soon! We thank you for reporting pot-holes so on the `SCDC web-site as well. They have caused unexpected expense to many of us – myself included- and we continue to urge the DC to address this issue urgently. I am pleased to say that patching is occurring more frequently but is clearly not a long term answer to this issue.

**Village Hall** – perhaps our most exciting news is the fact that after many many years, a village hall solution has been agreed upon and is in action. There has been significant legal work involved in this massive achievement for the village (largely due to Stuart Laurie, Sally Punshon and the VHC especially Sandra Bandy) The easement on the Covenant has now been agreed and is in place which means that the build has started! The first £100,000 has been agreed to initiate the build. We are currently looking into getting advice re the running of this new village Hall, ownership, bookings, VAT position etc. A garage/building for storage of grounds equipment will also be included in the build. Permission has been granted to site this in the school grounds, it will come out of the Village Hall fund. It can be used to store items from the school whilst the building work is in progress.

**Forest Garden Project** - in partnership with the BRC we have continued to develop the Forest garden land on the way down to the Church led by Emma Adeane and Hannah Thomas. New plantings will be reported on later but I should like to mention here that the Parish Council was gifted a Wild

Cherry tree to commemorate the support provided by Parishioners during the COVID pandemic. The cherry was planted in March in the Forest Garden and a plaque provided alongside. Thanks to Rob Attwood for doing this on all our behalves!

Babraham is a magnet for dog walkers and we are delighted to provide that facility which provides such a tranquil place for all walkers in this busy world. However, although we provide dog litter bins and have a contractor who is supposed to empty these regularly, in past years, overflow especially along the Church walk had been pretty revolting. Delighted to report this was swiftly rectified. In addition, a dog poo bin at Cheveley farms – has been sited along that bicycle way.

Our biggest issue to face has been of course the proposed new housing development originally expected to be up towards the A11 and behind the current High Street of 3,500 new homes plus a large motorway style bus route cutting across the countryside to enter the Addenbrooke's campus. This proposal is known as CSET (Cambridge South East Transport) has been widely opposed in the village for obvious reasons. An alternative transport scheme proposed by the campaign Better Busways, proposes a bus lane from the A11 (where a new P and R is to be sited) up to Addenbrooke's. However, there is now a new proposal – Grange Farm – which proposes a new town (6000 houses) adjacent to the FourWentWays roundabout. This Grange Farm development has been included in the Local Plan so is likely to go ahead. E.g. The County Council's Assets & Procurement Committee has agreed a partnership with developer Prologis to support the future expansion of Cambridge Biomedical Campus. 67 acres of land owned by the county council is being put forward to allow the campus's next phase. People working here will clearly need somewhere to live so it seems likely that the CSET busway will also go ahead. A decision is likely in November. Whilst this new proposal would tend to preserve our village structure, we are aware that the transport challenge for such an increase in population remains a point of critical debate and we intend to rise to that challenge to preserve our village and its own transport links.

Our relationship with the BRC remains close and cordial. Despite ongoing development of its site, the BRC always seeks and is a good neighbour and is fully-involved in the Neighbourhood Plan and the FG.

And finally on that note, I should like to mention and thank Chris Chapman from the BRC who is retiring from his post after many (over 30?) years. Chris has been an exceptional friend to the BPC – always professional, courteous, kind and a well of information about the parish. We shall miss him enormously and thank him for all his work with the PC over the years. Thank you, Chris and have a wonderful retirement ahead.

### **Babraham Research Campus Annual Review**

The year 2025/26 has seen a number of milestones and changes for the campus.

Our activities within the community have continued to go on apace within the education and skills arena, with local and regional visits at secondary, sixth form and beyond attending as visits, open days, workshops, conferences and laboratory based activities. Importantly this is in both the academic BI setting and the early stage commercial innovation Live Labs. The Institute also supports Form the Future and the youth STEM awards.

We also continue to support the annual Open Day for local communities to visit and experience campus talks, exhibitions and tours. Our lunchtime market events are also now open to the village, with the Summer and Christmas markets to come.

On the estate, we have been active in removal of dead ash trees, the victims of ash dieback, to try and slow down and stop the spread of the disease on the estate. Continuing pollarding of willows at the river bank will help to ensure their healthy growth and survival. Work to maintain and improve the paths through the estate has also been underway.

The campus has received requests from the Five Rivers project to undertake river channel improvements and if these get the go-ahead further improvement work will go ahead.

You may have seen anglers fishing on the river over recent years and these are members of the Cambridge Trout Club, who have permission to fish the river, within the estate boundary. They also act as guardians of the river assisting to maintain it wherever possible.

This year has seen the return of arable farming to the estate. The Institute, who are the lease holders of that land, have made the decision to directly manage all of their leasehold directly and the campus estate team will concentrate on the area north of the river.

Wherever possible we look to provide ad-hoc emergency help to St Peters Church and on Wednesdays the campus has the opportunity to meet with Kathryn and Ian at the church.

Of course wherever possible we look to help the various groups that underpin village life and it remains a pleasure to do that wherever possible.

I have left the future development of the campus to the end and all of you will be aware that we have submitted an Outline Planning application to develop the campus further. This will be both redevelopment of existing areas (The Close and Central Campus) and new development on land near to the main entrance off the A1307. Our hope is that the application will be heard by the local planning committee this summer.

If the application gains consent this will be long term development over at least 15 years. It includes removal of old R and D buildings and car parking areas in the centre of the campus, replacement buildings in their place, opening up of the green spaces to provide more outdoor amenity areas, new R and D builds, multi-user paths access into the campus from the south side with additional bridges and importantly a redevelopment of The Close to increase the number of dwellings and the inclusion of amenities for the wider community and campus.

Importantly, the key elements of this will be to open up the campus with entry for anyone who wishes to take advantage of the estate setting and amenities within it.

For my own part I want to say thank you to everyone in Babraham for the fair hearing you have always given me, but always with robust debate. Most of all thank you for the kindness you have shown me throughout these times.

## Events

- Education and Skills outreach; schools and colleges, visits, open days, talks/debates/panels, events and exhibitions, Schools day for secondary and sixth form students, 6<sup>th</sup> form conference, Form the Future and Bioinspire workshops, visits activities, support youth STEM award

Schools and Colleges within the Programme:

- Babraham Primary School

- Gretton School
- Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology
- Linton Village College
- Sawston Village College
- Sawtry Village College
- Sir Harry Smith Community College
- Abbey College Ramsey
- Hills Road Sixth Form
- Long Road Sixth Form
- Parkside College
- Cambridgeshire Home Educating Families (CHEF) group
- Littleport Vista Academy
- Castle Manor Academy
- City of Peterborough Academy
- North Cambridge Academy
- +52 schools across the country using our digital resourced through the Youth STEMM Award

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### **Report from the Neighbourhood Plan group**

A Pre-submission Draft NP was produced by the Babraham NP Working Group and was reviewed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) NP Team in April 2024. LPA feedback informed us that significant delays to the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan would prevent the submission of a NP that included any policies on housing development inside the Green Belt (i.e. The Close).

Since then, however, the BRC have decided to move ahead with an application for outline planning permission for housing development in The Close. An approved NP will mean that all proposed developments or changes, including the future detailed planning application for the Close, will need to take account of to the Design Guidelines that have been developed through the NP process. If the NP is developed and approved to align with the BRC planning process, we will be able to demonstrate that Babraham Parish has met its housing allocation and has no need for any further development.

A plan has been established to complete the Neighbourhood Plan this year, which will also require the local planning authority to complete a series of actions, before final public consultation and referendum of the village next year.

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### **St Peter's Babraham report for Babraham PC annual meeting 2026**

Our regular Sunday services have continued at St Peter's. This was made possible by the ministry team including Rev Gordon Harper and our two curates, Rev Will Lyon Tupman, who left us in October to become a team vicar in the Cottesloe benefice in the Diocese of Oxford, and Rev Ian Henderson. Ian's first mass was held at Petertide last year, our Patronal festival. During the year there were two funerals. A number of activities were held in the church including the

monthly Saturday afternoon teas during the summer, Easter and Harvest treasure hunts, and an extremely successful Art Exhibition. The Summer Concert and Strawberry teas were also popular with several children from the local primary school/village playing as well as other musicians.

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. The year 6's came to the church for a time of reflection to mark the end of their time at the school during the last week of the summer term. Babraham Nursery visited the church once again for their Nativity and a member of the ministry team has visited the nursery during the year on several occasions to talk to the children about church festivals.

The St Peter's Babraham Management team is now well-established helping to maintain the church building and churchyard. Thanks to all our volunteers but especially to Chris and Rob for the huge amount of work they have done on the churchyard and we are working towards an award from the Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust for the care of the churchyard encouraging biodiversity in this space. 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.

Sadly, St Peter's has been put on the Historic England Heritage at Risk register not least because the building is not watertight. We are hugely grateful to Matthew Punshon for the immense amount of work he has done working with the architect, Diocese and contractors to put together plans for repairs to the south aisle roof and improved drainage. The planning has been slowed down a little by the need for a bat survey which will need to be repeated during the year, as more than one species of bat rather likes our medieval building.... We are hoping to put in for a National Lottery Heritage Funding application for this work which we simply could not afford to do without the grant

During the year one of the ministry team has been present in the church on Wednesday lunchtimes for Wednesday@ a space which is primarily aimed at the Babraham Research Campus staff. A small number of people come to the church to chat over a cup of tea or simply just to sit. A Campus Carol service was also held. Granta deanery has now appointed a lay person to be the chaplain to the BRC which is a voluntary position initially two days a week and we hope that the person will be licensed and start in a few months once all the necessary safeguarding training and checks have been completed.

Despite the many good things that are happening, the church's position remains precarious. It is incredibly hard to raise the £10,000 per year needed just to run the church and that is before any repairs or maintenance is done; last year the church did not break even. We still don't have any church wardens which makes the running of the church in its current form unsustainable. Ongoing discussions are being had as to how best to run the church for this community for the future.

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# **The Bush & Bennett Charity**

## **Report from the Bush & Bennett Charity Annual Parish Council Meeting, May 2026**

### **Trustees & Residents**

It has been a more settled year – with no Trustee or Resident changes in the last 12 months. Although Mandy Ogilvy-Stuart has sadly left the village, she is still thankfully continuing as Treasurer in a remote capacity.

The Trustee Board therefore still comprises: Hannah Axon; Amanda Ogilvy-Stuart (Treasurer); Sally Punshon (Chair); Kathryn Waite and Marian Watson (Secretary/Clerk). We are still very much on the look-out for Trustees – particularly (but not restricted to) anyone with legal, fund-raising or hands-on property management experience – so please do get in touch with any of us if you might be interested.

Our almshouse residents all remain in situ, with Ed & Mary in the Old School House and CYP Counselling still occupying the front part of the Old School Room.

### **Building works**

All the important works highlighted in the 2024 Quinquennial Review have been completed in the last year – specifically the repointing to the east, south & west elevations and chimneys. In addition to these major works, a leaking oil tank resulted in the need to purchase a new one which, in turn, required us to re-locate the oil tanks in line with current legislation. The two tanks are now sited – with the appropriate planning position – on the land adjacent to the almshouse gardens. The other unforeseen work this year was the filling of a sink hole that alarmingly appeared in the back garden of one of the almshouses. Thankfully the amazing Gary & Charlotte from GA Landscaping were more than quick to assess the problem and, once we had completed all the due diligence with the council etc., the hole was filled and the garden “replaced” in 5 days!

### **Finance**

The above works, together with essential repairs have meant that our outgoings this year have somewhat exceeded our income – overall the repairs required to complete all the Quinquennial works & the extraordinary repairs have amounted to £41K.

### **Governing Scheme changes**

Our request to change our objects to allow for the build at the school was approved by the Charity Commission and we were able, at the same time, to change the make-up of our almshouse beneficiaries to allow for men as well as women and, where necessary, to widen the area of benefit beyond the parish of Babraham. We are now in the midst of incorporating the charity, but will then have to make further amendments to our objects since the Diocesan permission for the shared facility at the school is contingent upon the C of E education at the school to be a part of our objects.

Sally Punshon

On behalf of the Bush & Bennett Trustees

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## **Babraham Forest Garden - Progress Report – April 2026**

### **Planting the next layer of the Forest Garden**

A full forest garden design includes 7 layers: 1) Canopy layer (Large fruit and nut trees; ecosystem support trees); 2) (Low tree level (small fruit trees); 3) Shrub layer (currants and berries); 4) Herbaceous layer; 5) Soil surface ground cover layer; 6) Root crops; 7) Vertical climbers and vines. Plants for the herbaceous layer were ordered and planted along the foraging hedge at the top of the Forest Garden, the majority planted in October with a follow up planting in February. The

herbaceous layer design involves planting specific edible plants that are good companion plants to the existing shrubs and small trees:

- **Elephant Garlic** (see pic) acts as a natural pest deterrent for apple trees, reducing aphids and mites, but also helping prevent fungal infections like apple scab. It suppresses grass around the base of trees, reducing competition for nutrients and improving soil health. The resulting garlic bulbs have a mild, delicious flavour.
- **Good King Henry** is a hardy, perennial edible that has deep taproots that support a healthy soil structure and accumulates soil nutrients for other plants to access. The plant is a natural deterrent for aphids and attracts beneficial insect species.
- **Bronze fennel** (see pic) attracts ladybirds and hoverflies which keep aphids down around other vegetable plants. The leaves, flowers and seeds have an aniseed flavour and aroma and can be infused to make tea, added to salads or used in cooking.
- **Lemonbalm** has antioxidant and antiviral properties and is used to make calming teas. It attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies and repels ants, cabbage worm and mosquitoes.
- **Horseradish** is a hardy perennial that attracts pests away from other plants. Big leaves can easily be used as mulch and the roots are used for horseradish sauce ([video of uses](#))
- **Garlic chives** attracts pollinators and repels pests. Both the leaves and flowers are edible.
- **Russian comfrey** will provide natural fertiliser for the soil and forms dense, fast-growing clumps that outcompete weeds and grasses around tree bases. It can be used to make a liquid fertiliser ([Video of uses](#))



### Covid Remembrance Tree



The Parish Council was gifted a Wild Cherry tree to commemorate the support provided by Parishioners during the COVID pandemic. The cherry was planted in March in the Forest Garden and a plaque provided alongside.

### Forest Garden Signage

We have received quotes for the purchase and design of a sign to explain the Forest Garden. The Forest Garden Steering Committee will be reviewing these and then adapting the poster designs to the chosen style.

### Finance Report

The Precept was kept at £14,000, unchanged for the past 3 years. This was not increased as we have enough in Reserve to keep at this sum, especially with the cost of living rising.

The money which has been held by the Village Hall committee was transferred to the Parish Council so that all costs for building the Hall are paid from one account.

Money was received from SCDC Sec 106 towards costs for maintaining the bus shelter.

Expenditure has stayed mainly the same, with most extra costs being spent on legal work associated with the building of the Hall. This will continue now until the building work has completed.

31/03/2026

Current Ac 1,592.06

Savings Ac 464,307

Building Soc 85,878

551,777.06

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
SALARY	4639	6855	5923	6137
HMRC	962	2026	1743	1934
GENERAL EXPENSES	20151	165	319	556.12
TRAINING/BOOKS	197	130	0	0
MILEAGE	0		0	0
INSURANCE	826	875	1121	1145
AUDIT	540	690	834	852
ELECTION COSTS	75	0	0	0
SUBSCRIPTIONS	467	513	740	977.18
HALL HIRE	0	360	0	0
PROFESSIONAL FEES	144	7404	180	180
POSTAGE/STATIONARY	0		0	0
BANK CHARGES	93	89	85	79.5
IT	928	979	1263	891.33
GRASS CUTTING/POO BINS	3502	3698	3655	5237
PETROL/MOWER	407		143	392.2
STREET LIGHTING	145	79	0	0
EQUIP REPLACEMENT	200	235	0	21.74
TREES/GROUNDS	0	0	0	50.8
PLAYGROUND	0	0	0	0
STRUCTURES	0	0	110	415.51
DEFIBRILLATOR		393	0	0
ZERO CARBON FOREST	3571	2526	180	833.36
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	9388	7863	4685	0
COMMUNITY EVENTS	334	250	100	166.93
VILLAGE HALL	21445	2730	5004	29,599
	<b>68014</b>	<b>37860</b>	<b>26085</b>	<b>49468.67</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
PRECEPT	16144	14000	14000	14,000
INTEREST	843	3265	6188	6439.66
FOREST GARDEN GRANT		0	0	0
NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT	9870	6235	0	0
REFUNDS SOLICITOR		0	0	0
REFUNDS VAT	5864	2406	2634	4077.88
DONATIONS	1472	20,000	0	36
VILLAGE HALL CHARITY	0	0	0	247,375.09
SEC 106		92,169	94796	7060
	<b>34193</b>	<b>138,075</b>	<b>117618</b>	<b>278,989</b>
<b>Reserves</b>			<b>31/03/2025</b>	<b>31/03/2026</b>
Village Hall money	71,362	147,094	145,154	422,554
Public Art		18,207	18,207	56934
Playground	26246	26246	26,246	25000
Neighbourhood Plan	£5,265	£0	0	0
Forest Garden	£1,778	£1,778	735	735
	<b>104,651</b>	<b>193,325</b>	<b>190,342</b>	<b>505,223</b>