

DANBURY

SPRING 2021

TIMES



No. 57



ANNUAL REPORT



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This year this meeting will be conducted by Zoom on
Monday 19th April at 7.30pm.

You are invited to ask questions on the Annual Reports which are in this
 newsletter, and on any other village issues.

Please contact the Parish Office to arrange for a Zoom link to be sent to you.

EASTER ACTIVITIES

Between April 2nd and 6th why not walk round the centre of the village and
 Dawson Memorial Field looking for 6 pictures of Easter related objects and an
 associated letter making up a key word.

Please let us know what the word is and send a picture of your own drawing or
 painted egg to parish.office@danbury-essex.gov.uk so that we can make a collage
 record for a Facebook display and archives.

COMMUNITY WOODLAND PLANTING



Whips



Mature Trees



DANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

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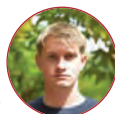
Chairman of Parish Council
Ex-Officio member of all committees

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Vice-Chairman of Parish Council
Ex-Officio member of all committees, Chairman of Environment

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Member of Environment

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Chairman of Facilities,
Vice-Chairman of Leisure and Activities, Member of Environment, and Resources

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Vice-Chairman of Environment, Member of Health and Wellbeing

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Chairman of Planning,
Vice-Chairman of Facilities and of Health and Wellbeing, Member of Community Engagement and of Leisure and Activities

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Member of Environment,
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Member of Environment,
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Chairman of Resources and Member of Leisure and Activities

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Member of Facilities,
Leisure and Activities, and Resources.

CO-OPTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Alexander
Planning

Mark Schofield
Planning

Liz Hiscock
Health and Wellbeing

DATES OF MEETINGS

March

Tuesday 30th
Wednesday 31st

Health and Wellbeing
Parish Council

April

Tuesday 6th
Tuesday 14th
Monday 19th
Tuesday 20th
Monday 26th
Wednesday 28th

Planning
Leisure and Activities
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Community Engagement
Planning
Resources

May

Tuesday 4th
Monday 10th
Wednesday 12th
Monday 17th
Tuesday 18th
Wednesday 19th
Wednesday 26th

Health and Wellbeing
Environment
Facilities
Planning
Leisure and Activities
Resources
Annual Parish Council

June

Monday 7th
Tuesday 15th
Monday 21st
Monday 28th
Wednesday 30th

Planning
Health and Wellbeing
Community Engagement
Planning
Resources

July

Monday 12th
Wednesday 14th
Monday 19th
Wednesday 21st
Tuesday 27th
Wednesday 28th

Environment
Facilities
Planning
Resources
Health and Wellbeing
Parish Council

PARISH COUNCIL STAFF

Michelle Harper



Parish Clerk

Maria Dyer



Assistant Clerk

Lesley Mitchelmore



Assistant Clerk

NORMAL PARISH OFFICE OPENING TIMES

The parish office will be closed during this crisis but the telephone and e-mails will be manned during office hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm. If you wish to contact the office please use: **01245 225111**

E-mail: parish.council@danbury-essex.gov.uk

Website: www.danbury-essex.gov.uk

Like us on Facebook

“Watch the website for changes when restrictions lift.”



LEISURE AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

On 1st December the above committee was established to oversee the two projects below:-

Increasing Facilities for young people on Dawson Field

Following the first lockdown, it was clear that there needed to be more exercise related facilities for those too old for the current play area. We have produced a plan with several options that is currently being consulted on and was delivered with the February edition of 'Focus' throughout the village. This will produce a shortlist that will be further consulted on to enable decisions to be made. We will keep you informed.

Community Sports and Social Centre

The centre is managed by the Danbury Community Association Trust Ltd (DCA) who are a registered charity, and are the legal leaseholders. Parish Council as owners of the building are their landlords. Following the March 2020 Covid 19 lockdown and later government restrictions the DCA approached the council with concerns as to the potential financial implications based on their projections for the centre.

Following discussions council agreed ways to help including cancelling all rent until 1st April 2021, transferring lettings for pitches to the DCA to increase their income, funding some of their maintenance costs and underwriting the projected loss as of the 31st March 2021, which thankfully was not needed.

As lockdowns and restrictions continued throughout the year, discussions with the DCA resulted in them producing further possible financial implications for the centre from 1st April 2021 which indicated a significant loss.

This information was important as council has to consider and approve its precept (the village element of council tax) at our November full council meeting. The precept requirement has to be submitted to Chelmsford City Council in December to enable them to complete their processes in time for bills to be sent out in March.

Following long soul-searching discussions within this committee and at the subsequent Resources Committee it was decided to recommend to full council that an amount of £75,000.00 be earmarked to ensure the 'future of a Community Sports and Social Centre' in the village. This was not agreement for the DCA to be able to directly access this fund. This amount is made up of £42,000.00 from reserves and £33,000.00 from part of the increase in the 2021/2022 precept and which amounts to 26 pence per week on a band 'D' property. Full council agreed to this recommendation.

Whilst the DCA then offered Parish Council two seats on their board, it was felt that as Parish Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that public money is spent in an open and transparent way without the risk of any conflict of interest, this option was untenable.

At the time of writing, February 2021, we are still in lockdown and cannot be certain when the DCA can re-open the centre, bearing in mind that a key element of their business is the gym, and a number of their other activities are likely to be impacted by on-going social distancing regulations. "The DCA declined Parish Council's offer of conditional support at this time, therefore any future requirement will have to be submitted for Parish Council's decision."

Parish Council remains determined to maintain a Community Sports and Social Centre within the village.

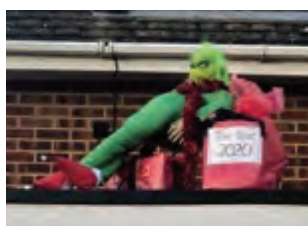
Stuart Berlyn - Chairman of Leisure and Activities, and of Parish Council



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement Committee has continued to strive to improve the ways we communicate with, involve and support the residents of Danbury, particularly in these difficult times.

Part of our focus this year has been to adapt events we had previously planned to comply with the Covid restrictions. Regretfully we were unable to go ahead with the Christmas tree lighting event but endeavoured to try to make the village look as festive as possible with the tree and our new Santa at Eves Corner. The festive scarecrow event gave us some very impressive creations which we hope will inspire more residents to enter next year. Here are the results:



1st Place

3rd Place

As a way of welcoming new residents to the village we produce New Neighbour Packs containing information about the village. We are currently reviewing the content of these and would welcome any ideas. It will also be necessary to review information about clubs and organisations once they are underway again when restrictions begin to lift. Do contact the office if you know of new residents or are moving yourself and could leave a pack for those moving in.

A **Neighbourhood Watch** group was formed in the village some years ago but in recent years has been kept going by its last faithful member, David Whiteing. The committee has been considering how the scheme could be developed and will be asking residents to indicate an interest in becoming involved in sharing information and helping to keep our village a safer place.

As some of you will have noticed the **last phone box** in the village has now been reinstated in Pedlars Path. Once refurbishment is completed by a contractor there will be further discussion with residents about its future use.

We all need things to look forward to at this time and we are hoping that at some point in the future we will be able to go ahead with the **Community Festival** which we hoped to hold in May or June 2021. From 2nd to 5th June 2022 there is an extended bank holiday to commemorate the Queen's Platinum (70th) Jubilee. Depending on when restrictions are lifted we are considering combining the two events and also generating other ideas about how we can commemorate the Jubilee.

Meanwhile we hope our young people will take part in our **Easter activity** described on the cover, finding the clues and that everyone will be able to enjoy some Easter sunshine.

LAND SLIPPAGE UPDATE

The Parish Council has reviewed the design for the remedial works to be carried out to repair the land slippage on Dawson Memorial Field. The proposal by the consultants appointed (Green Earth Management) is for reprofiling and increased drainage.

At the moment the provisional timetable for works is:

March -Tender process started and tenders returned

April - Contractor appointed

April/May - commencement of remedial works expected to take 2-4 weeks

The works may involve some restrictions on the availability of the Mayes Lane carpark and facilities due to the movement of plant and materials. However, the Parish Council will endeavour to keep the village residents informed of progress via its website, Facebook page and through village magazines.





ENVIRONMENT

Trees:

Parish Council will not join the Tree Charter now but reconsider it next year; we cover several of the suggested actions already. The regular survey of all trees on Parish Council land and associated works were agreed for Winter 2020/21 and some deferred to 2021/22. Some emergency work was also undertaken. The creation of a Community Woodland (see front cover) on former football Pitch 4 has gone well. 15 mature trees and 2000 whips of various native species have been planted by Chelmsford City Council and some village volunteers, with deer fencing protection for a while. We plan to install picnic benches, bins and small activity equipment for children beside the central path.

Public Footpaths:

Heavier use by people exercising during the pandemic and very wet weather have caused lots of mud and some flooding. The state of the paths is monitored by the footpath officers and major problems reported to Essex Highways. Overhanging hedges and branches are also reported. The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) co-opted 4 members of the public but due to Covid, work for this group - e.g. on sign posts - must wait until restrictions lift. Updating and reprinting of the Danbury Circular Walks booklet is on-going.

Highways Issues:

Over time, various schemes have been submitted to the Local Highways Panel (LHP); two were agreed, funded and completed - warning signs at the junction of the A414 with Hyde Lane, and the wigwag signs at St. John's School. Funding was also made available for a study on problems at the crossing by The Bell.

Other schemes have been less successful: width restrictions on Sporhams Lane are not feasible and the County Quiet Lanes trial has not been progressed; due to its cost the one way system and lay-by at the Well Lane to The Heights service road will not be funded but we wait to see whether residents will apply for yellow lines to prevent the dangerous parking; the walkable verge along Penny Royal Road to Mayes Lane is now unlikely to happen because of cost.

Some schemes are still in validation such as the area at Danbury Palace Drive across the A414 between the bus stops. Potholes including the service road to The Heights and fallen bollards are being dealt with. A Route Based Strategy Study of the A414 through Danbury is being pursued with help from County Councillor John Spence.

Cycling:

Inconsiderate parking on Copt Hill, most likely by visitors using Danbury Common, has caused problems blocking drives and making ambulance and emergency access difficult. Members of the public attended a meeting and it was agreed that the South Essex Parking Partnership would assess possible measures to alleviate the problems; this was done and a recommendation for residents to apply for yellow lines was made.

Climate Change/Recycling:

Notices on public waste bins encourage people to take their rubbish home to recycle.

TerraCycle is an organisation which recycles items not currently dealt with by kerbside containers such as crisp packets and hard plastic. There are collection points nearby, especially one in Maldon; do search online for maps and details. Solar Streets is a scheme to encourage people to consider the installation of solar panels; further information can be found online.



FACILITIES

For the past year we have used specialist contractors to maintain Dawson Memorial Fields, Elm Green, Runsell Green and other open spaces throughout Danbury. This has proved to be very successful and the decision was made to continue with contractors and not to employ a permanent groundsman. Following on from this decision the heavy machinery associated with having a groundsman, the large tractor etc, has been sold and the capital realised added to the Council's reserves.

General repairs have been carried out on the Sports and Social Centre including much needed work on the snooker hall roof and guttering. Due to bad internal drainage flows, resulting in leaks and aromas, all the internal manhole covers and gullies have now been replaced. Last year the Centre was closed for a considerable time due to government lockdown. Football and cricket bookings are now being handled directly by the Centre to help supplement their income. To further help their finances Parish Council agreed to suspend rent over the period of closure. Rents from the Tennis and Bowling clubs were suspended for three months.

A **drinking water fountain** is to be installed on Dawson Memorial Field near the Sports and Social Centre to encourage the 'refill' attitude and help reduce plastic use.

The decision was made to renovate **football pitch 3** in preparation for the coming session as it is expected that there will be an increase in demand for football once restrictions are lifted on team sports.

Repairs have been carried out to the gate to the external storage area of the Old Pavilion; the gate and fence have now been repainted, including the bollards, making the area quite smart.

Due to the various limitations caused by Covid 19, **Play in the Park*** activities were reduced to two half day sessions in July and August and the numbers attending were capped at 30. Skateboarding was considered the highlight. Those attending thought the sessions well run and that Team Kinetix leaders engaged well with the children.

Repair work had to be carried out on the Bowling Club Green to correct a sinking corner. More work is planned to ensure that the green is maintained at the required standard. An electrical installation report of the club buildings indicated several urgent safety issues so work had to be carried out to bring the wiring up to the required British Standard.

The **children's playground** continues to be very popular and its yearly inspection did not raise any major issues. The poor surface in front of the Youth Shelter was highlighted and this has now been replaced. A review of the wooden posts surrounding the various green spaces in the village was undertaken with the intention of replacing damaged and missing posts, including replacing the damaged rails around Eves Corner pond.

* Play in the Park

On each of the following dates Parish Council have booked Chelmsford City Council (CCC)'s Play in the Park Team to operate the morning session from 10.30am to 12.30pm., and the afternoon session from 1.30 to 3.30pm. All sessions will have general activities as usual plus extras shown below:

Monday 2nd August	am	Parkour
Thursday 5th August	pm	Inflatable assault Course
Monday 9th August	am	Skateboard lessons

All sessions are restricted in numbers as last year and booking is vital. Details will be on the CCC and Parish Council websites as soon as they are decided.





HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The last year has been challenging for many people in many different ways, but it has been heartwarming to see the village community supporting each other with generosity and compassion. We have been very fortunate that the Danbury Coronavirus Volunteer Group has been supporting our shielding residents and others in need. It has throughout been led by Health and Wellbeing members Councillor Mandy Hessing and Liz Hiscock. We would like to thank all the individuals, organisations and businesses which have generously contributed to our community's health and wellbeing during these difficult times.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee had to put some plans on hold during the restrictions, but we are delighted that the public defibrillator is now in place at the front of the Co-op and available to residents twenty-four hours a day by telephoning 999 to obtain the code for the box. We hope to provide CPR training by Danbury First Responders to help increase people's skills and confidence.

To help combat social isolation, the 'Happy to Chat' bench is due to be installed soon at Eves Corner. This idea, very successful in other areas, opens up avenues for friendly conversation. As loneliness can have such a negative impact on our health, through our provision of a specific bench we hope to break down that social barrier and allow us all to say a friendly 'Hello' whilst observing current social distancing guidance.

The Danbury Carers' Group was launched online in the summer to facilitate social connections and shared activities and to be a source of valuable information. Providing carers with mutual support during exceptionally difficult times, we have enjoyed live festive music as well as support and guidance from a specialist speaker. It is planned that the group will switch to face to face meetings in the village once the restrictions have eased. The group is open to all carers.

PLANNING

The planning committee have had quieter a year than expected due to Covid -19 a summary of what we have done over the last year;

75 planning applications with 60 tree applications being considered and response made.

Planning Applications

Parish Council Response	CCC Refused	CCC yet to be decided	CCC Permitted
22 objected	2	5	15
53 no objection	1 split decision	15	37

Tree Applications

Parish Council Response	CCC Refused	CCC yet to be decided	CCC Permitted
18 objected	1 and 1 withdrawn	1	15
42 no objection	3	14	25

Consultations:

The committee also considered and responded as appropriate to a number of consultations including: Bradwell B Scoping Opinion and Bradwell B stage one, CCC Making Places Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Obligations Supplementary Document, South Woodham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan Consultation, School Organisation- New Primary School in Rettendon, CCC RAMS Supplementary Planning Document, Government Right to Regenerate, NALC's Locality survey, Planning for the Future - White Paper

Proposed Solar Farm Consultation:

After much discussion and consideration of the representations in person and by e-mail from residents, it was decided that although the committee agreed solar farms were very valuable, they would strongly object to this application for a range of reasons which can be found on the CCC planning portal.





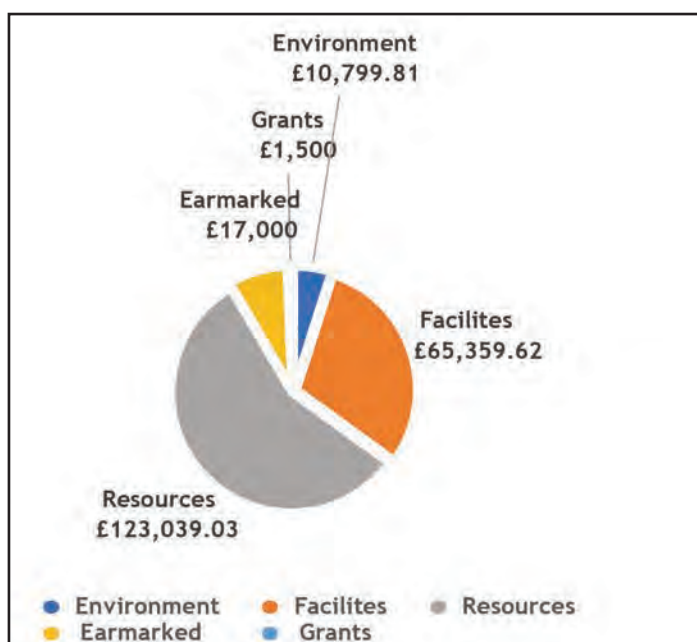
RESOURCES

2019-2020 - Qualified Accounts

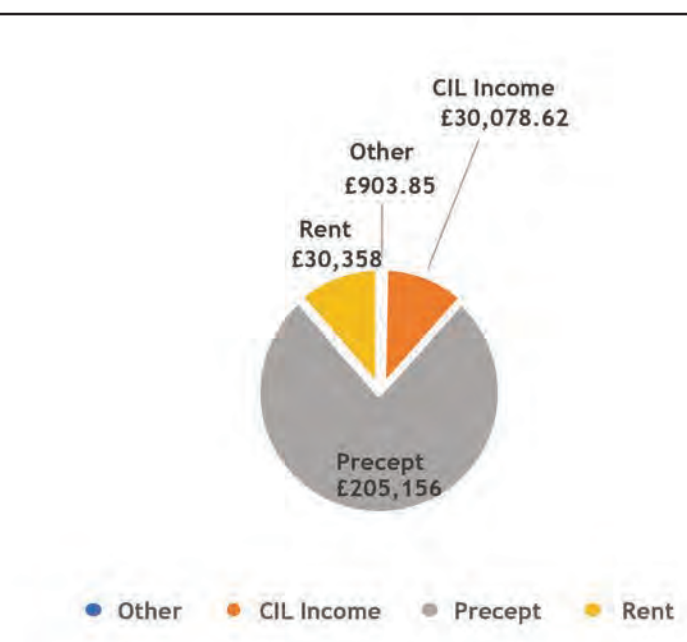
During the financial year 2019/2020 the Council was in receipt of a total income of £266,496. The precept was £205,156 (a small reduction on the previous year), rental income from Council owned properties was £30,382 and an additional £30,078 was received in Community Infrastructure Levy from Chelmsford City Council in respect of developments in Danbury for investment into projects that enhance and improve the village infrastructure.

The total expenditure for 2019/2020 was £217,698, leaving £157,526 in Earmarked Reserves and a general reserve of £120,990.00. Spending was broadly in line with budget planning.

Expenditure 2019-2020 - Total £217,698



Income 2019-2020 - Total £266,496



2020-2021 - Unqualified Accounts

At the time of writing (February 2021) this financial year has not yet closed; however the pre-cept had been set at £212,481, a small increase on the previous year with income projected to be around the same as last year despite the loss in expected income due to the closure of many facilities due to the coronavirus pandemic. The level of projected income is mainly due to the money raised from selling of the unused grounds equipment. Expenditure is expected to be in line with budgeted costs; after works needed on the Bowling Green the general reserve will be around £90,000 which remains within the scope of the Reserves Policy. Earmarked reserves are expected to be around £147,000 with £65,000 set aside for the remedial works for the land slip and £42,000 towards the facilitation of a sports and social centre.

2021-2022

The precept has been set for £265,623. This equates to an overall increase of 41pence per week for a Band D property.

