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Catshill & North Marlbrook

Parish Council

Newsletter Summer 2015

Gordon Hands Over

THE Parish Council's first meeting after the elections that were held on 7th May saw the long-standing Chairman Gordon Witcomb step down after two terms in the chair and hand the Chain of Office to the incoming Chairman, Owen Sweeting.

Upon retiring Gordon said he had enjoyed his time as a parish councillor very much and that he had met some excellent people over the years. Gordon thanked all those he had worked with during his time as a councillor and as parish council Chairman. As a mark of gratitude for the amount of work Gordon has done on behalf of Catshill and North Marlbrook, members presented him with

a tankard and a book on fishing with a floral bouquet for Jill, Mrs Witcomb and send him their very best wishes for a happy retirement.



Outgoing Chair Gordon Witcomb hands the chain of office to Owen Sweeting.

STREET THEATRE RETURNS

This **Free** entertainment is returning on **Monday 3rd August** from 11.00 am till 3:00 pm.
Full details on page 7.

SUMMER GARDENS COMPETITION

The Parish Council awards a garden voucher to the 3 most impressive summer gardens in the parish, when viewed from the road.

DETAILS ON PAGE 2.

Election Results

JUST as with district and county councils, parish councillors are elected to office every four years. This year's election saw 10 candidates put forward for the 13 seats with the result that they were all elected unopposed. Since the elections on 7th May the parish council has co-opted one other member and so the current council looks like this:

Barley Meadow Ward:

Phil Baker, Mick Ball, Jill Bate, Martin Knight, Paul Masters, Malcolm Shephard, Owen Sweeting (Chairman), Shirley Webb

Lower Marlbrook Ward:

Tessa Gillespie, Bernard McEldowney

Woodrow Ward:

Glenys Blackmoor (vice-Chairman), 2 vacancies.

We would ask all readers to consider whether they would like to put themselves forward for co-option to the parish council, to represent the Woodrow ward and help the parish council in its endeavours to improve and protect the area. It is not necessary to live in the ward but there are some conditions that must be met, such as either living within 3 miles of the ward boundary or having a regular place of work here. More information can be obtained from the Clerk or from the parish council's website.

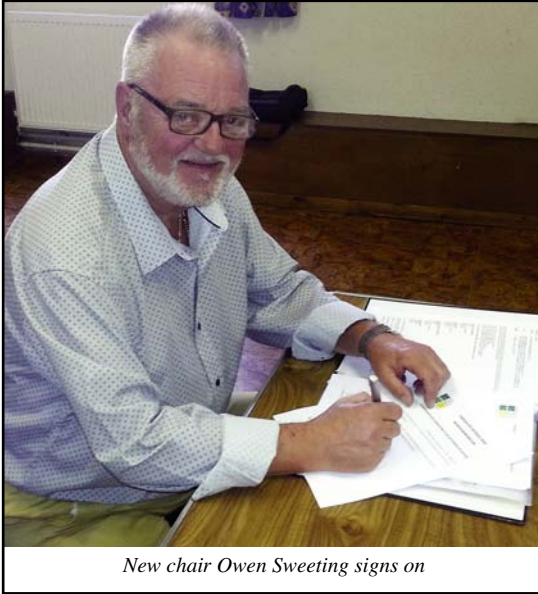
The elections on 7th May also saw the new district ward arrangements come into force with three Bromsgrove District Council members now representing our parished area of Catshill and North Marlbrook. There is one district member to cover the parish council's Lower Marlbrook ward – **Coun. Dr B Cooper** (Marlbrook); one member to cover the Woodrow ward – **Coun. Helen Jones** (Catshill North); and one member to cover the Barley Meadow ward - **Coun. Shirley Webb** (Catshill South).

Summer Gardens Competition

THE Parish Council awards an annual prize of garden vouchers for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of the front gardens that are judged the most colourful, attractive and well-kept in the parish. We know there are many keen gardeners in our community who are happy to brighten up the neighbourhood for us all to enjoy and we would like to reward this generosity. We shall be judging towards the end of July and would also love to hear from anyone who would like to recommend a particular site to us, although please bear in mind that we shall be assessing only the gardens that can be seen from the pavement.



THE parish council's new Chairman, Owen Sweeting, writes:



New chair Owen Sweeting signs on

This is my first attempt at writing a page for our Parish Newsletter. The village has changed unrecognisably since I went around with my aunt Alma in her land army van visiting farms as a **Rat Catcher**.

Your council has elected me as their chairman - a post that I will be proud to carry out to the best of my ability. As part of the newly elected council we are here to serve you and the village.

It is our intention to lift the profile of the council, announcing there will be 10 meetings over the coming year, held on the last Thursday of the month except for in August and December, in the sincere hope that anyone with a problem will come along and see if we can help.

There are a number of on-going projects such as planning for a new garden in partnership with the Baptist Church, replacement bus shelters and maintenance of Catshill war memorial.

We will also be preparing for the annual bonfire and fireworks event at Catshill Meadow on 31st October and for Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial on 8th November.

Talk to you again soon. *Owen*

New Homes Bonus

THE district council has made funds available to communities that have been affected by the building of new homes, aptly named the New Homes Bonus. This is a country-wide scheme funded by central government to encourage house building to meet the demand for new homes. As Catshill has seen the development of 80 new homes on a new estate off Church Road, the parish council has asked for funding to support the installation of a new bus shelter on the A38 to replace the one nearest to the Golden Cross Lane/Braces Lane crossroads.

Members would like to encourage sustainable living and as the increase in new homes will undoubtedly bring with it an increase in traffic, it is thought the use of public transport might be encouraged by making the bus shelters more attractive. Cheaper bus fares, more frequent services and a wider timetable would also help but these are beyond the parish council's remit at the moment! Let us know what you think.

The district council will let us know in September if our bid has been successful.

Flood Alleviation Work

NOW that the ground works for the Green Lane flood alleviation scheme have been completed the Parish Council is keen to enhance the natural flora and fauna of the site.



New flood alleviation balancing ponds on the Horse Course.

The area of open space which now includes a balancing pool that will fill up in times of wet weather was used in the past for allotments. It is hoped to plant a small copse of trees later in the year to encourage birds and bats into the area and a mix of wild seeds is to be sown in the hope of growing a variety of wild plants and flowers.

Whether it was related to the pond-creating works or not we don't know, but upon completion of the pond-works water started to leak out of the ground near to the Lingfield Walk children's play area. This caused considerable problems because no one seemed to know exactly where the water was coming from as there are no water pipes in that specific area, meaning the flow could not be stopped. However it seems to have stopped for now but the team from North Worcestershire Water Management are keeping a close eye on the site and visit regularly.

Tricky Steps!

THERE is a public footpath by the side of the new pool that lies between Birmingham Road, Sedgfield Walk and Lingfield Walk. The steps and handrail at the Birmingham Road end of this footpath can be a bit tricky to negotiate and so we are grateful to the management of the Hilton Hotel who have confirmed they will act to resolve this issue.



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CATSHILL Football Club is a community football club that caters for both boys and girls aged between 5 and 14. They play in the Central Warwickshire Youth League, and have teams catering for players from under-7 through to under-14 years of age.

Training takes place at Catshill Middle School on Saturday mornings, and they are currently on the look-out for children from school Years 1 and 3 to represent their teams next year.

Congratulations must go to the under 11 team, who won division 3 last season. They played 20 games, won 15, lost just 3 and drew 2. The winning team had been together for four seasons and the hard work that had been put in over the three previous seasons finally paid off. With just two games to go they had to play top of the league (and unbeaten) Studley. Catshill dominated from start to finish in this game, and only a superb goal keeping display from the Studley goalkeeper kept them in the game. Catshill ran out 2-0 winners. Then the final game of the season saw Catshill hammer Headless Cross 5-0 to win the league!

Catshill Village Hall

THE Chairman of the hall's management committee, Owen Sweeting, writes:-

Hello Again.

Your Village Hall was opened in 1897 (I was not there) and it is now refurbished to a high standard.

A number of you will know that I have been Chair to the Trustees and Management committee of your Village Hall for the past 10 years or so.

I am going to take this opportunity to unashamedly praise the hard working committee of the Hall; they make my involvement very easy. The Hall is now extremely well used, and listed below are some of the activities that take place:

Sticky Fingers

Callanetics Classes

M&C Friendship Club

Dance Classes For 6 Years And Above

Women's Institute

Cardmaking Group

One Fit Mama

Karate Classes

Slimming World

Dog Training Classes

Tots Play Time

Parish Council Meetings

Big Band Practice

Blue Cross Fair

The committee are very proud of the Hall and are delighted when the Village put it to good use.

Please visit our website www.catshillvillagehall.co.uk for further information.

This committee also arrange events in the village including a recent V.E Celebration & Dance at the Social Club.

Owen

THERE was a well-attended car boot sale at Catshill Meadow on the Whitsun bank holiday Monday. The event was organised by the North West Ward Association (NWWA) which is the charity that looks after this important open-air leisure facility in the parish. Plenty of stalls and boots were set up and the event was supported by a good crowd. Please watch out for further fund-raising events that support the NWWA's work in maintaining the playing field and recreation area for us all to enjoy.



Street Theatre

AFTER the success of last years Street Theatre event on Catshill Meadow, the good news is that this Free entertainment is returning on Monday 3rd August from 11.00 am till 3:00 pm.

This year the entertainment will include fun from Bruce Airhead – the meta-morphosis of a man and a six-foot balloon. One Brave Man, One Enormous Balloon, One Amazing Show, and Bernie Bennett-Hillbilly – a great mix of classic comedy and superb tightrope walking skills.

Plus there will be displays, children's activities, rides and more.

Please see Bromsgrove District Council's website for more information.

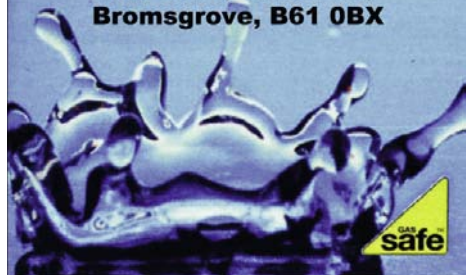
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HERE is a message from one of Catshill's churches; we would be happy to consider publishing articles from similar community establishments.

June 2015

Dear All,

I write this on the first day of June. Summer fast approaches and we here at the Manse have been spending time in the garden in the hope that during the coming months we shall have beautiful flowers to look at as well as plums to pick in future years.

When I was leaving West Yorkshire for Worcester 15 years ago people said to me that I was going to a lovely part of the country. My reply was words to the effect that I was leaving a lovely part of the country too. Now here in Catshill I'm in a lovely place too.

Two things to say about this – sometimes we do not appreciate things that we are used to. So I invite you to take a moment and give thanks for the place where we live and the amenities we enjoy.

The second is to say thank you to all those people, paid and unpaid, councillors and citizens who work, communally and individually, so that all of us do have a lovely place to live. I love looking at the flowers and bushes as I travel in the car or walk around.

For those of us with faith we believe that the wonderful world in which we live is a God – given gift and as stewards of this gift we have a responsibility to care for it.

Let's hope we have a good summer in order that we can fully enjoy our locality.

May God bless you always,

Anne Smith, Minister of Catshill Methodist Church



A New Garden



ONE of the parish council objectives via its environment committee is to create and maintain garden areas within the parish that can be enjoyed and appreciated by all. As you may be aware we currently maintain three garden areas. These are the Ivy Garden, next to what used to be the Ivy Cottage pub in Golden Cross Lane which will shortly be a retail outlet, the Diamond Jubilee Garden in Marlbrook at the junction

of Braces Lane and the A38, and the three planted areas in the grassy area at the junction of Barley Mow Lane and the A38. The parish council also regularly plants daffodil bulbs in areas it identifies as being suitable whenever possible.

We are pleased to announce that if all goes to plan there could be a new garden in the near future. We are working closely with the Baptist Church in Catshill to develop an area next to the church at The Dock. It is intended to dedicate this new garden in 2018 in recognition of the passing of 100 years since the end of the First World War.

IN each edition of this newsletter we like to feature a photograph from the past and in this edition we have a picture of Mrs Tranter who used to sell vegetables door to door around the area, from a horse and cart.

This photograph was supplied by Mrs Thelma Jones and it shows Mrs Tranter outside of what was Tustin's Bakery in Golden Cross Lane and was probably taken in the early 1930's. The building shown was



demolished long ago but it was situated where the grassy area now is on the right hand side when going down Golden Cross Lane, just before the right turn into Green Lane.

Thank you to everyone who has expressed an interest in this regular feature, and remember that we are always happy to reproduce your photographic memories in future editions. If you go to our website you can see all prior editions of this newsletter containing all the previous photographs that we have published.

Cllr Paul Masters.

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Parish Parking Problems

THE M5 motorway – love it or loathe it - is right on our doorstep! Living so close to it many of us drivers use it without a second thought to access a variety of destinations; because it's so handy and convenient we would be mad not to. But spare a thought for drivers who live further away who need to use the motorway but for a variety of reasons have decided to 'car share'. These drivers arrange to meet their colleagues at a certain spot where one or two cars are parked and all then continue their journey in the shared car.

The parish council applauds efforts to reduce pollution and the number of cars on the road, whilst also being aware that cars left on the sides of our local roads can be seen as a nuisance, sometimes a hazard. As we are so close to a busy motorway junction, should we expect to be treated as a giant car park? We are keen to know if this little-mentioned activity of car-sharing affects you at all.

Continuing on the theme of car parking, over the last few months the parish council has been made aware of two situations that have caused confusion, upset and some tears!

Firstly the car parking strip in front of the Toby Inn car park, next to the A38. Even though this site is just outside the parish boundary the parking here impacts on the parish to the extent that when a car-parking charge was introduced, drivers looked for alternative 'free' sites to park on instead such as in local side roads. As a result of complaints from residents who were upset by the influx of cars parked outside their houses all day the County Council managed to overturn the Toby Inn's charging arrangements. This means that once again there is no charge to park on this strip of land. Be warned though as you may continue to be charged if you park next to it, on the Toby Inn car park itself.

The second area that has caused some people a lot of upset is the privately-owned car park next to the Spar in Golden Cross Lane. Signs have been erected stating people will be fined for parking vehicles there if they do not then use the premises and a number of local residents were caught out. There is a big demand for parking space in Golden Cross Lane so we can understand why the parking conditions were introduced. If anyone can suggest a solution we would love to hear it!

Post Box Move

IF you have wondered where the post box that was outside the old Post Office in Meadow Road has gone to... the answer is just across the road! It is now directly opposite the old Post Office which is now the home of HB Boutique Hair & Beauty.

Now that the Post Office has been re-located within the Spar supermarket in Golden Cross Lane we have been informed that a new additional post box has been requested to be sited outside it.



Proposed New Opening Hours at Catshill Library 11

WORCESTERSHIRE County Council Libraries and Learning Service is asking library customers to comment on their proposals to change the opening hours at Catshill Library. The library currently opens two mornings and three afternoons/evenings each week. The proposal is to keep the total number of hours the library is open the same, but to create an extra morning session in place of the existing Friday afternoon session.



Customers are being asked to comment on these proposals by completing a questionnaire available in the library or online:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries>, and have until 31 July to do so.

Cllr Lucy Hodgson, Cabinet Member Responsible for Communities and Localism said: “Our proposal to change the opening hours at Catshill is based on current usage of the library which is indicating a need for us to increase the number of morning sessions. The change would also allow us to work more closely with local school and nurseries.

The decision to change the opening hours will be based on the feedback we received from customers so we would like to hear from everyone is possible”.

For further information about the consultation contact Nicki Hitchcock on **01905 822722** nhitchcock@worcestershire.gov.uk

	Current Opening Hours	Proposed Opening Hours
Monday	9.15 – 12.15	9.15 – 12.15
Tuesday	3.00 – 7.00	3.00 – 7.00
Wednesday	Closed	Closed
Thursday	3.00 – 5.30	3.00 – 5.30
Friday	3.00 – 5.30	9.30 – 12.00
Saturday	9.30 – 12.30	9.30 – 12.30
Sunday	Closed	Closed

Summer Reading Challenge

THIS year’s Summer Reading Challenge is on the theme of Record Breakers and will launch at Catshill Library on Saturday 27th June. As in previous years the Challenge is open to children between the ages of 4yrs–12yrs who are challenged to read at least six books during the 12-week period. There will be at least one activity for children at Catshill each week until 19th September. Information on events will be available from the library (single storey building at the back of the Middle School’s car park) and via Catshill library’s twitter feed [@CatshillLib](#) and facebook page.

THE parish is policed by the Bromsgrove North and Rural Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Bromsgrove North and Rural is made up of several areas including Sidemoor, Catshill, Lickey End, Marlbrook, Blackwell, Fairfield, Bournheath and Dodford. It has been covered for over nine years by PC Kelso the Safer Neighbourhood Officer who is still passionate about local policing and preventing crime and reducing risk. PC Kelso and the team are based in Slideslow Drive and can be contacted by dialling **101** or by email at bnr.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk.

The Parish Council was recently notified of the appointment of the new Area Commander, Superintendent Alex Franklin-Smith. He wrote to say that he joins the area having previously worked as Head of Intelligence for both West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police both of which are now working within a 'Strategic Alliance' and that he is delighted to join the North Worcestershire Policing Area where he hopes to build on the hard work of his predecessors.

Bromsgrove District Council have also recently announced their ongoing support to their commitment for ensuring safer communities via the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. Through funding provided by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner a new officer has been appointed to help reduce business and rural crime across the areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. David Rischmiller, formerly a West Midlands Police Inspector with extensive experience in investigations, neighbourhood policing and partnership working, has joined NWCSP as a Business and Rural Crime Coordinator to work with residents, businesses and partner agencies.

David will be going out and about visiting local businesses and rural areas to find out first-hand what the key community safety issues are for these communities. David will also be building links with other established forums to look at ways residents and businesses can help each other to reduce crime and improve safety in their areas; he can be contacted on **01527 534187**.

If you would like more information on policing in this area and the Neighbourhood Watch schemes, please get in touch with us via our contact details below.

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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