

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – BPFMC AGM – APR 2023

(REPORT FOR OPERATING YEAR 2022)

I would first like to remind you that the Barn and associated playing fields are owned by the Village, for use by the Villagers – all the work you see is carried out by unpaid volunteers, with no management support from SKDC or the Parish Council. We have to rely entirely on support from Village volunteers to ensure these facilities remain available for use by the Village.

As we entered 2022, BPFMC was still recovering from the loss of revenue from the 2 previous years, due to COVID Restrictions placed on the use of the Barn and Playing Fields. However, whilst the Barn and fields were not been used, there were basic and statutory outgoings that had to be funded – insurance, licences, rates, gas, water, electricity, website, checks and inspection of the boiler, fire extinguishers and electrical system and grass cutting – which allowed Villagers to continue to use the field for exercise purposes during lockdown.

As with all homes in Baston, we continue to suffer from increased utility costs - heating and lighting bills are increasing and the Government restrictions placed on the use of Red diesel in 2022 has resulted in a £600 per year increase to the cost of our field maintenance. Initially, the contractor tried to absorb the cost increase of using White, rather than Red diesel, but this was not economically viable, so costs had to be passed on to his customers. Additionally, the field normally benefits from very free draining due to the gravel under the area, but this also resulted in severely dried out pitch during last year's drought. This necessitated expensive, unplanned remediation work, and the addition of over 9 tons of top-soil, fertilizer and re-seeding. The football pitch is now restored to a good condition.

There were more boiler repairs required than expected. The system had been developed in stages over several years, not all were fully compatible or economical. The system appears to be running efficiently now, and heat is delivered to all areas around the building.

The final, and most disappointing reason for increased operating costs has been deliberate petty vandalism. Over the past 2 years this had increased alarmingly and last year resulted in over £2000 been spent and over 100 hours of Committee members time needed to repair damaged fence rails, fence posts, damaged play equipment, damaged tennis court fencing and to remove and make safe deliberately broken tree branches. Money and time that could have otherwise been spent on improving and enhancing our facilities.

CCTV Images routinely show groups of 3-4 young male teenagers roaming around on the premises late at night, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays – messing about on the toddlers play equipment, trying door handles to the Barn then moving onto the field, out of CCTV range.

At the end of 2022, we reviewed our hire charges; some have increased slightly but we have currently managed to retain the preferential commercial rate given for any Baston-based businesses (Thai Chi, Pilates, Mums & Tots) – a further review of Hire charges will be conducted at the mid-year period in July, so we can quantify the effect of increased gas and electric charges against our derived income and determine whether another increase is necessary. Current Budget forecasts indicate

that, without any revenue generated, we have expected operating costs of almost £14,000 for 2023.

In Jan 2022, we took delivery and installation of the Adult exercise Equipment, funded primarily from a Lottery Grant and with BPFMC funds and a kind donation from Baston Events. During the summer months, this equipment was much used and we received favourable comment. The project was managed and funding obtained by the Committee and we look to obtain further funding sources this year from the SKDC Prosperity Fund and the ASDA Community Fund.

The Barn now fully compliant with Fire Safety Regulations – following introduction of the remaining additional internal emergency lighting in 2021 and we have added additional external emergency lighting last year.

Overhanging tree branches around the site have been trimmed back as they posed a hazard if they broke and fell.

Looking to the future, I have informed the Village about the SKDC Prosperity funding, and received several suggestions that were considered by the Committee; those that were agreed have been submitted to SKDC for funding. We are also building a closer working relationship with Parish Council and Baston Events, but ensuring we maintain our independence in order not to compromise our Charitable status.

Our principal issue remains the lack of support and assistance from the Village; yet there is always the expectation that the Barn, playground and sports pitches will always be available for Village use. However, following a series of appeals for assistance, I am pleased to report 4 x Villagers kindly came forward to offer their services as Volunteers, some with specialist knowledge of Fire Safety and Maintenance requirements. This has enabled me to concentrate fully on the duties of Chairman, when I took over this role from Alan Hutchins in July last year; and I would like to make specific mention and recognise Alan's hard work and diligence as Chairman of BPFMC over the past years.

The Committee still seeks additional support from the Village, we now only have the minimum number of 3 x Trustees required to legally retain our Charitable status and I have personally been fulfilling the roles of Chairman, vice-Chairman and secretary for the latter part of the Year; but I can report we have received an application for the position of vice-Chairman, but we still seek a Secretary and additional Trustees for the Committee.

Without the necessary Trustees and BPFMC Committee Executives, the Barn, Playing Fields, Children's play area and tennis courts could face closure; so I appeal again to the Village for support - it is your facility, owned by the Village for use by the Village, but cannot function or develop without support from the Village.

Martin Wynne

Chairman BPFMC

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