15th May 2025

Annual Parish Meeting May 2025

Community Plan for Bradley - Beautiful Bradley Update

Progress since last year.

You will recall that in June 2023 we launched the Community Plan. Copies had been available in the Church and Pub (until it closed). All 150 copies have now been distributed to residents.

This is the fourth time we have reported the progress we and other stakeholders in the parish have been making to prepare and issue the plan and update you on the potential initiatives residents have said they would like to see considered and delivered to maintain the village as the beautiful place it is.

This time last year I reported that:

Recycling

We have a small recycling point outside Luke and Sara's house in Smithy Lane for residents to deposit packs and containers, such as tetra packs, milk cartons, and coffee cups, that the borough council do not recycle from goods put in our blue bins. This is still there and being used by residents.

Gardening Club

A small group of 13 residents had come together to form a gardening club called Bradley Bloomers on WhatsApp. The group continues to 'chat' covering various subjects such as nematodes and slug resistant hostas, rats, composting, dahlias, plant donations, etc. Residents remain welcome to join in with the gardening 'chat'.

Pop Up Market

In March 2024, led by Sue Holliday, we held the first Pop Up Market in the Village Hall. We have since held a further four Pop Up Markets but more on that shortly.

Community Bulk Oil Purchasing Scheme

A scheme remains in place with Wells Farms Dairy's regular supplier of oil, 4 Fuels of Stoke on Trent, where all residents of Bradley receive a 3 pence per litre reduction on the cost of their home oil twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays), subject to tanker capacity.

Wells Dairy Online Farm shop.

The online farm shop run by Wells Dairy continues to sell a full range of dairy and associated products, with local residents receiving a 10 % discount across all products. Delivery is free on Tuesday and Saturday mornings.

Initiatives over the last twelve months

Over the last twelve months, more initiatives that residents asked for have been progressed. They are:

Pop Up Shop

Knowing that the Pop-Up Market was proving popular, we began to explore the potential of establishing a Pop-Up Shop with a bigger ambition to see if the demand was strong enough to support a Community Shop. We went to visit a community group in Blymhill that had established their own Community Shop. Blymhill and Weston Parish is larger than Bradley, but it is made up of two distinct communities, and the Blymhill side of the parish has a similar feel to Bradley with the same number of residents (c650). They converted the 'boardroom' of their village hall to a community shop with funding support from their Parish Council, and with a group of 15 volunteers, including a chair, treasurer and buyer, they have successfully run a community shop from there since COVID, open five days a week albeit across restricted opening hours on most days. It is a 'not for profit' social enterprise that regularly donates funds to various community initiatives from the 'profits' they make from the shop. I certainly felt very inspire by what I saw and the positive discussions I had with the group.

We therefore opened discussions with the Trust to explore the possibility of using the village hall for a Pop-Up Shop with a view to testing the interest and demand amongst residents for something bigger. We opened the Pop-Up Shop in October 2024 for a months trial, and then with a reason response from residents, we started up again in November with goods provided by Harvey at the general store in Haughton on a 'sale and return' basis and ran it every Monday between 11.30am and 1.30pm, to coincide with when the post office service was open. We made teas, coffees and biscuits available to try and encourage residents to dwell and socialise. Sadly, despite advertising the facility in the bugle, on road-side posters, leafleting all houses in the village , and posting regularly on Bradley Buzz, the facility just did not attract any more than a small handful of regular residents, and so despite the hard work of a small group of willing volunteers, we decided to stop running the Pop Up Shop at the end of February 2025, ending the prospect of promoting a community shop.

On reflection, when comparing ourselves with Blymhill, the big difference is that in Blymhill the nearest store for groceries is Aldi near to Newport which is a twelve-minute drive away compared to Harvey's store in Haughton for us, which is a two minute drive away. There were not enough residents who do not have access to a car that supported the Pop-Up Shop.

The creation of a woodland area.

Despite being surrounded by green fields, Bradley does not have any green space immediately adjacent to the village centre for walks and quiet recreation for our residents. Our roads are sometimes dangerous with heavy and speeding vehicles and the public walks that surround our village are poorly maintained, often inaccessible with flooding, sometimes

have electric fencing across them that obstruct and there's the cattle protecting their young. Residents therefore asked that a woodland area be considered. We therefore made a number of enquiries with organisations such as Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and the Countryside Commission to find out more information about what level of support was available, including funding, for the creation of a woodland area. We received a lot of help and support from the Woodland Trust who directed us to a huge resource of information and gave us a lot of helpful advice. It was clear that help and support was out there for residents that wanted to plant trees and hedgerows in their communities to create woodland areas. Green Party Councillor, Jack Ross, was also very helpful in providing potential borough council support for the initiative.

Boyd by this potential support in the knowledge that a business case could be made, we first of all wrote a draft vision of what the purpose and benefits of a woodland walk would be. We then set about considering potential sites immediately adjacent to the village centre that could lend themselves for a woodland area in line with our draft vision. Our analysis dismissed any land along Bradley Lane because in reality this land has a medium to long term prospect of potentially coming forward for residential development, so it was assumed that no landowner would be willing to sell their land for anything other than inflated prices to reflect the long term prospect of securing permission for residential development, and so our analysis focused on land off and around Church Lane. We had a high level list of four potential sites which following our walk along Church Lane led us to reduce this to two, both of which would have made excellent sites for woodland areas. Tentative enquiries were made to both landowners but disappointingly, both declined to consider our approach and confirmed that they did not wish to sell. With no other suitable sites available, at least for the time being, we have therefore had to accept that we are not going to be able to take forward the woodland walk initiative.

Attempts to address the speed and frequency of traffic in Holly Lane

20 mph speed restriction in Holly Lane

At this meeting twelve months ago, we reported that the BB Group had met with representatives of the County Council about the possibility of reducing the 30mph speed limit in Holly Lane to 20 mph. The County agreed that, as it had been ten years since the last traffic survey was undertaken (when the speed limits across the village were reduced to 20 mph), a new survey should be undertaken. This has now been done and the results of the survey shared with us and the parish council. The survey confirmed that on average 14 HGVs and 56 LGV's travelled along the lane over a 24hr period, with an average speed over seven days of 23mph. For us, this was compelling evidence that as the average speed of vehicles was above 20mph, a speed we consider to be the safe speed for vehicles traveling along this narrow lane, some form of intervention should be put in place to reduce the speed limit to 20mph but disappointingly, the County Council did not share that view and stated that as the safe speed in their opinion is 30 mph, the majority of vehicles are travelling at a safe speed. We intend to take the matter up again with our new county councillor, Jack Ross.

No HGV sign

What we have managed to persuade the parish council and Councillor Mark Winnington of the county council to do is to erect a second 'No HGV' sign at the junction of the A518 and Bradley Lane, facing in the direction of Haughton and Telford in an attempt not to prevent HGV from accessing farms and businesses with the parish but those HGVs that travel through the parish. The sign was installed earlier this year.

Improving IT Skills

In response to a wish from residents to hold IT training sessions, Luke and Sara have taken a stall at a couple of the POP Up Markets for any resident that would like their assistance with any IT issue i.e. use of mobile phone, us of the internet, including internet banking, use of social media, including Bradley Buzz. Our thanks go to Luke and Sara for organising this for residents.

The Red Lion/Lewis Partnership

Of course, the great disappointment this year has been the closure of the Red Lion. I know residents have mixed feelings about the Lewis Partnership and how the pub was managed, but it was personally disappointing to see it closed because I know the positive things the Lewis Partnership tried in response to the residents wishes from the community plan such as adapting the menu with more traditional food, holding a number of 'community evenings' when the menu changed with heavily discounted prices, maintaining the LP Rewards scheme for residents, etc but sadly as we all know they didn't address some of the more fundamental issues that led to its closure. We all delighted that Davenports have now acquired the pub and we all look forward to it reopening soon.

Initiatives over the next twelve months.

We are coming to the end of most of the initiatives that residents asked to be considered for implementation. Whilst some still remain with other stakeholders to address within the parish, two that the Beautiful Bradley Group still wish to pursue are:

Explore shared footway/cycleway to be constructed along Bradley Lane.

The county council have already declined our approach on this but now that we know we will not have a community shop, we do want to raise this again with the county to improve accessibility to Haughton, its shops and other services.

Explore a community led scheme to install solar panels and air source heats pumps.

We also want to pursue this at the right time, particularly given the renewed commitment of the new UK Government to the green agenda and the possibility of new community led energy companies being created to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions.

Note of appreciation

Since the Community Plan was launched two years ago, an immense amount of work has gone into promoting community initiatives by the BB Group. My thanks go to them for their hard work.