



BRIZE NORTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

APPENDIX 06 DOCUMENT A

Version 7- SEPTEMBER 2024

VILLAGE FACILITIES

*“our village
our community
our future”*

DOCUMENT A

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DOCUMENT A Section 1

ST BRITIUS CHURCH



St Britius is the Parish Church of Brize Norton and administered by Brize Norton Parochial Church Council. This beautiful Norman church has seen continuous Christian worship for around one thousand years, serving the Domesday village and has been the centre of village life.

The parish is one of two, the other being St John the Evangelist in Carterton which together form part of the Brize Norton & Carterton Benefice. It is part of the Witney Deanery and the Oxford Diocese.

The Anglican services can be described as traditional though a more modern service book is used for family communion on the first Sunday of each month. Sunday services are held at 9.15 am with a midweek communion held on Wednesdays at 7.00 pm.

The Church is served by a Rector and Team Vicar. There is also support from the padres based at the nearby RAF Brize Norton.

The church runs its own website which is fully integrated with the village community site run by the churchwarden. This can be found at www.bncommunity.org and has much information of interest. This includes church newsletters, hymn and readers rota's, marriage guides, a guide to the church and details of burials and internment of ashes in the churchyard. The community website also includes histories of the village and an extensive write up of our eighteen fallen service personnel from WW1.

A recently added alphabetic index helps people to find relevant burial plots.

THE ROLE OF St BRITIUS CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

One of the church's key objectives has been to engage with the residents of Brize Norton by playing a leading part in village activities. This has a number of benefits not least to be a visible presence in the community highlighting the role of the church in today's society.

The church is there in times of need. It is not about people attending church on Sunday Services, but about meeting their needs in good times and bad. Baptisms and weddings occur at good times and there have seen a growing number of the former over the past few years (in 2019 there were nine baptisms and two weddings). Trends in wedding practices have changed in recent years, but for those who prefer a traditional church wedding St Britius offers a very attractive village venue.

St Britius churchyard is where villagers have been laid to rest over several hundred years and fortunately there is still room to serve the community as the Church owns an additional large consecrated plot opposite the church on the east side of Station Road. A number of qualifying couples have reserved burial plots in the churchyard to give them and their descendants some assurances for the future. There is a special area reserved for the interment of ashes and appropriate services are held in the church. There were three burial services held at the church during 2019 and five interment of Ashes.

Also, special services through the year cater for the needs of the community. Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest Festival, Christmas and Remembrance Day when attendance exceeds 50 (the normal congregation stands at 16-24).

Perhaps the most popular event each year, when over 150 people attend, is the Candlelit Carol service with its Nativity Tableau and the children dressing up to create a nativity scene.

Not only is the church there in times of need for the village but the villagers are there for the church. The best example is the massive demonstration of support for the restoration of the church roof under the banner "Stop the Drips at St Brits". Substantial fund raising involving many events around the village led to £400,000 being raised for a new roof plus other necessary works. These consisted of a toilet and kitchen in the base of the tower, new under-pew heating and an electronic chiming mechanism for the bells. Another initiative at this time was "The Friends of St Britius" attracting villagers and others to lend financial support because they believed in the church even though they weren't 'church goers'.

In addition to the above, church members take an active part in village activities and events. The annual Village Bash which includes the School Fête sees the church offering tea & cakes in the village hall. The fireworks and bonfire event benefits from soup, hot dogs and cakes provided by the church. Other events include a pancake evening on Shrove Tuesday.

The church runs a Flower Festival each year as part of the National Gardens Open scheme in association with the many village gardens open on the same day.

Mention should also be made about the church's links to the village Primary School which holds three services each year in the church with over 150 attendees at each. These are at Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas. The church also presents books to the school leavers at the 'end of year' service which is held in school.

In 2018, to mark the centenary of the end of WW1, the church took a leading role in organizing events which included a Remembrance Service, a two-minute silence at the war memorial and an afternoon tea party.

St Britius Church is on the repatriation route from RAF Brize Norton to Oxford via the Repatriation Garden which is situated within the Parish on Norton Way and the church bells are rung as the cortège passes by.



There is a second altar in the church which is commemorated to the RAF. On the altar is a record of all those men and boys from the village who gave their lives in the service of their country during WW1. There is also a record of all those service personnel that fell during the Afghanistan conflict. Above the altar are two RAF Standards from disbanded squadrons (99 and 216) who elected to have them preserved in the church.

The repatriations of fallen service personnel from the conflict in Afghanistan were flown into RAF Lyneham followed by the cortège passing through Wootton Bassett (now Royal Wootton Bassett). After the closure of RAF Lyneham in 2011, RAF Brize Norton took over this role. The Union Flag, which was used at Wootton Bassett and now Brize Norton, is held by WODC and is only used at repatriations. It is flown in the Memorial Garden in Norton Way when the cortège passes through the village.

During the Afghanistan conflict, a total of 453 service personnel were repatriated of which 379 passed through Wootton Bassett and 74 passed through Brize Norton.

However, there are other occasions where there is a requirement to fly a Union Flag at the Memorial Garden and a substitute flag is used. The first flag was used from 8th September 2011 and was finally 'laid-up' on 1st April 2015. It is this Union Flag which is flown above the altar.

Another substitute Union Flag was in use between April 2015 and March 2019. However, this has now been presented to the Royal British Legion and a new Union Flag is now used.

DOCUMENT A Section 2

ELDER BANK HALL

Elder Bank Hall was opened on the 2nd of August 1980 by Councillor Miss D. G. Thomson.

The construction of the hall was partially funded by the sale of the Victory Hut site which was on the east side of Station Road, opposite the Primary School.

The hall is owned by Brize Norton Parish Council (BNPC) and is run by its own management committee. There was an extension build in 1983, comprising of a bar area and storage room.



The facilities available at the hall include a kitchen, tables and chairs, bar area, children's play area, men's and women's toilets, and an entrance hall. There is a full-sized Badminton court marked out on the sprung wooden floor as there used to be a Badminton club which regularly hired the hall. This floor is also suitable for various types of dance and gymnastics.

The hall also owns a stage which can be set up for events. The curtains situated at the back of the hall are on a beam that can be moved forwards to accommodate the stage.

The Elder Bank Hall committee consists of the booking secretary, treasurer, representative from BNPC and representatives from the various associations who use the hall on a regular basis. These meetings take place on a quarterly basis.

The hall is available to anybody who wishes to rent it for a private occasion, although there are many groups which hire it on a regular basis.

Current recurring clubs/societies which hire the hall on a regular basis include:

- Brize Norton Village Pre-School (4.5 days a week)
- Brownies (1.5 hours each Monday)
- Fitness Classes (1 hour every other Monday)
- West Oxfordshire Wood turning Association (3 hours on the first Tuesday each Month)
- Ballet Classes for children (1.5 hours every Tuesday)
- Brize Norton Women's Institute (3 hours on the second Tuesday of each month)
- Contemporary Dance Classes for children (1 hour every Wednesday)
- Fitness classes (1 hour every Wednesday)
- Ballroom Dancing (2 hours every Thursday)
- Karate classes (1 hour every Friday)
- Young Farmers (2.5 hours on Fridays booked during the winter months)
- Judo classes (2 hours every Saturday)

N.B. Some of these bookings only run alongside the dates of the school term.

Private bookings include children's parties, Christening Receptions, Wedding Receptions, Funeral Receptions, Adult Birthday Parties and committee meetings.

In the past, the hall has been used for the Millennium Celebrations, The Queen's Birthday celebrations, the annual "Village Bash" plus the annual Village Horticultural Show.

DOCUMENT A Section 3

BRIZE NORTON SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB



Sports pavilion

The Brize Norton Sports & Social Club (BNS&SC) and recreation ground are situated adjacent to Elder Bank Hall on Station Road and share the car parking facilities.

The building opened in 1970 and the BNS&SC was formed in 2007. It took over the responsibility of the village sports pavilion from Brize Norton Parish Council (BNPC) with a view to ease the financial burden on the PC and to encourage both the sport and social sides of the village.

The village football club have been playing on the recreation ground ever since it reformed in the early 1960's; and continues today. The cricket team followed shortly after in 1967 and run until the late 1990's. The ground is now rented by Minster Lovell Cricket Club to play their 3rd XI fixtures. This helps keep the facilities being used and maintained, as well as a number of villagers taking part in the sport.

Both the pavilion and recreation ground are the centre piece for many a village event - such as the annual Village Bash. The recreation ground is an open public facility being used by both the villagers and the local primary school for their sports day etc. There is a children's play area adjacent to the primary school playground in the north east corner.

The upkeep of the old building is a constant concern both constructional and financially, with any improvements only really papering over the cracks. The promise of S106 money from the Bloor Homes development, with its inevitable delays, has halted any major repairs or construction.

However, there is now a timeline from which the management committee can plan for the future. Firstly, BNS&SC are putting plans in place (along with other interested parties) to renovate the existing pavilion which includes new changing facilities, toilets and a new cafe. It is hoped that this will encourage a much wider use of the facilities.

In the not so distant future, a new modern pavilion is being proposed along with an extension to the recreation ground, which will open up a lot of exciting possibilities for all ages.

There is a tennis court managed by BNPC available for the community, which is situated on the south side of Elder Bank Hall and for which pre-booking is not required

DOCUMENT A Section 4 The Primary School

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brize Norton Primary School in Station Road is a small village school of 121 pupils. It has been at the heart of Brize Norton village since 1875 and half the school is the original building; the rest was built ten years ago and opened by David Cameron in 2008.



Half the children attending live in the village with the rest mostly coming from neighbouring Carterton: in the current financial climate a school with only the village children would not be viable.

The school is popular with parents, often with double the number putting it as first choice, because they like the thought of a small, family-feel school with a high reputation.

However, children living in the village are given priority and the school does its best to make spaces for children who move into the village later in their primary school career.

There are five classes (FS/Y1, Y1/2, Y3/4, Y4/5 and Y6). The staff consists of one headteacher, five class teachers, 10 part-time teaching assistants, two office staff, one cleaner and one caretaker.

The school was rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2013. They carry out a computer-based analysis of the schools results every year and due to the fact that they have decided not to visit, they must believe the school is continuing to do well.

In 2018 the school received a letter from Nick Gibb, Schools Minister, saying it is in the top 1% of primary schools nationally for attainment in Mathematics.

However, the school believes that it is about much more than test results and are proud of the number of extra experiences the children enjoy, including swimming and Forest School for every year group, regular sports events with other local schools, drama (including performing *The Tempest* at the New Theatre Oxford recently) and outdoor trips such as last year's camping trip and walk up Snowdon.

Since 2015, the school became an Academy and member of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). Although one of very few non-church schools in the Trust, the school has been made very welcome as it follows their ethos of inclusion, welcome and serving the community. ODST is a supportive group offering the school advice and guidance where needed as well as being part of a mutually-supportive group of schools.

DOCUMENT A Section 5 The Poor's Plot

THE 'POORS' PLOT

In the will of Henry Fletcher dated 1755, he bequeathed a cow pasture to provide 5 shillings to support two 'poor' widows.

Common rights were stopped because of the Brize Norton Enclosure Act of 1775. However, on the 26th April 1776, the Enclosure Commissioners 'awarded' a 10-acre field in the south of the Parish to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the raising of 'furze' or other fuel for the 'poor' of the Parish. This award was known as the 'Fuel Allotment' Charity. This field is the same area as indicated on the 1770 map which is noted as Marsh Haddon Common which is on the opposite side of the road (now called Station Road) to the entrance track to Lower Haddon Farm. Turning to modern times, this field now lies behind Colebrook Villa.

The original parchment Section dated 26/04/1776 which recorded the proceeding of a Royal Commission is owned by Brize Norton Parish Council. On 02/04/1955, this Section was loaned by BNPC to Oxfordshire County Council and is held in their record office.

In 1805, the land was rented out and the income was distributed to the 'poor' of the village at Christmas. It is noted that in the years 1825 and 1835, the income from the so called 'Poor's Plot' was approximately £5.00.



The 'Poor's plot' - shown as Allotment Gardens on this 1884 map - Map ref 24

The next available records are dated from 1895 when the Parish Council took over the running of the Charity. At this time, the field was let out as allotments at a cost of 2 shillings (10p) per chain [1] and the record of 1896 shows that there were 47 allotment holders and 88 people in the village received a 'coal ration' of 1cwt (25kilos) which was funded from the rentals. However, over the years, the allotment holders dwindled and in 1931 the whole field was rented out to Mr Albert Timms. Just before the commencement of WWII, the 'coal ration' was replaced by cash sums. In 1957, Mr John Bosley took over the rental of the field and his son is the present tenant.

[1] A chain is a unit of length which is 66feet (22 yards) long. A chain was also known as 100 links or four rods. 10 chains equals one furlong, 80 chains equals a statute mile. An acre is an area of 10 square chains or one chain x one furlong.