

# GROUP 4 NEWS

For the Parishes of Barton Bendish & Eastmoor, Beachamwell, Shingham & Drymere, Boughton and Wereham

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6<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parish Clerk

## Group4News

We are writing to you as "The Partners of Group 4 News" who have studiously published Group4News for more years than we care to remember. This is an entirely volunteer led organisation and all the income received from advertising is used to pay for the printing of Group4News, which is produced monthly, except that we produce a combined December/January edition. Hard copies of the magazine are hand delivered to every household in the 4 Parishes of Barton Bendish & Eastmoor; Beachamwell, Shingham & Drymere; Boughton and Wereham.

We believe that G4N, as we call it, is a very useful publication in that, as well as enabling many local business to advertise their services, it contains details of the many events going on within the 4 Parishes, information about transport links, church and civic events. Of course, for many of us who have access to the internet and the ability to travel, much of this information is readily available but for the elderly, particularly those with mobility issues, the regular copy of G4N is their window to the wider world, particularly in relation to rural matters. It was for those reasons that G4N was first published.

For most of its life up until 2020 matters were relatively stable but the onset of Covid 19 made life quite difficult for many, including many local business, and, although the worst of the problems caused by the pandemic are behind us, our income, and consequently our reserves suffered as many small businesses folded and advertisers have found new and cheaper ways to advertise using Social Media. Furthermore the problems caused by the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, which has resulted in significant increases in many costs, particularly of paper used for printing the magazine, is making the viability of G4N seem very doubtful.

Of course, like every other business faced with increasing costs, we could simply increase the rates we charge for advertising and we have done that over the years and will continue to do so in the future. However the recent significant increase in printing costs cannot easily be recouped as most of our advertisers are on annual contracts; furthermore, because of the effects of Covid19, our reserves are lower, so we are at a crossroads.

We are now at a time when we have to make some hard choices. Our options seem to be:-

1. Run the magazine down to a close by taking no new advertising and not renewing the contracts of existing advertisers as they close. This would mean increasingly reducing the pages available for "parish matters" to match the available income.
2. Keep the magazine going by increasing rates as and when we can (i.e. when contracts run out and provided advertisers are prepared to pay more) albeit this may mean some restrictions on the availability of space for local advertising in the meantime.
3. Significantly reduce the pages available for local parish advertising, perhaps a maximum of 3 pages per parish (to include all advertising of parish events).
4. Seek funding form local Parish Councils, say £250 p.a. from each Parish.

Because we believe that the magazine is a useful asset to the wider community our preference it to keep it going in its present form and for that reason we are asking Parish Councils to consider a modest subsidy. If that is not forthcoming then we will do what we can to keep going but, as indicated above, that is very likely to result in the final product being of far less use than the present model. We would appreciate it if this matter could be raised at the next Parish Council meeting and, subject to availability, will gladly attend to answer any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area of the letter.

Letter sent by Email to the Parish Clerks of:

Barton Bendish  
Beachamwell, Shingham and Drymere  
Boughton  
Wereham