

Annual Report Burton Overy Parish Council 2015/2016

The annual report is an opportunity to look at the work of the Parish Council over the past year, to mark our achievements and to outline plans for the coming year.

Financial

The precept is the amount of money requested by the Parish Council from Harborough District Council. It is a grant to the Parish to enable it to carry on its work and is raised through the council tax. The precept was increased last year by £500 and has been increased again in the current financial year by £1,000 to bring the total amount to £5,000. The amount requested is at a realistic level to enable the Parish Council to carry out its work, employ a clerk and keep pace with increasing costs including to street lighting and electricity, the provision and emptying of dog waste bins and the maintaining of a Parish Council website which we are now obliged to do by law.

Thanks to some very time consuming and hard work by the clerk the Parish Council is compliant with the Transparency Code for smaller councils introduced by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Pursuant to the code, the Councils financial information including financial regulations, end of year accounts, governance statements and internal audit report are available to view on the Parish Council website. The budgeting process which begins in December of each year for the next financial year can also be inspected on the website. The Parish Council received a grant of £740 from the Government towards the cost of the work involved in complying with the Transparency Code.

Planning

As usual we have been kept busy with our consideration of and response to planning applications, the majority relating to small extensions, alterations, listed building consents and trees in a conservation area. There have been several significant applications made or determined over the past year. The wind turbine application for land east of London Road 14/00880/FUL was finally refused at appeal. Application 15/00711/FUL for a barn off Washbrook Lane was allowed at appeal. Other applications which have generated a lot of local interest and brought parishioners to the Parish Council meetings are 15/01568/FUL for the erection of two dwellings adjacent to Thatch Cottage, Main Street, and 15/01216/FUL for the erection of a single dwelling at 4 Baileys Lane, 15/01216/FUL.

The Parish Council has continued to respond to the consultations relating to the new Local Plan for the Harborough district and in particular the Housing Options Consultation which will decide where the majority of new housing will go in the Harborough district. We have also responded to the consultation on the Great Glen Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan process was officially begun with the declaring of the Neighbourhood Area and the formation of a steering group under the leadership of Councillor Mark Firth. The steering group, which also includes Councillor David Fletcher, has made great strides forward with the appointment of a consultant Your Locale and the obtaining of grant monies and the process is well under way. A village questionnaire was issued and a very well attended Drop In event was organized in the village hall in April. Following on from that two theme groups have been formed to take forward the detail of the plan. The steering group is to be congratulated and thanked for its work so far.

Community Projects

The new village notice board was installed on Main Street and has proved very worthwhile, it is well used and kept fresh and up to date.

A village litter pick was organized in April as part of the campaign for Clean For The Queen. This was very well supported and over 50 bags of rubbish as well as sundry large items were collected from the verges around the parish.

Councillor Carolyn Carson has continued to work on the Good Neighbour Scheme and a new village directory has been completed. Application has also been made to join the Rural Watch Scheme. This is a new scheme to unite rural communities in the fight against crime. It will create a network of villages, farmers, churches and businesses with the aim of working together to share information and combat crime affecting rural communities.

Parish Council Website

I would like to express grateful thanks to our clerk Kate Barker on her excellent work on the website. Not only is it set up to comply with the Transparency Code, but it is kept up to date in many areas affecting the parish including the details of meetings, the minutes, consultations, planning, the Neighbourhood Plan and much more. It is also a good tool for councillors as the member's area, which has been enhanced by Kate, contains the council's governing documents including the Code of Conduct, the Standing Orders and councillor's responsibility for safe guarding public money.

The Leicestershire County Council is withdrawing its provision of this website facility and the clerk has investigated and is setting up a new arrangement with 2-Commune.

Councillors

Following the elections last May the council was a member short. This position was filled with the co-option of David Fletcher in September 2015. A casual vacancy arose in April with the resignation of Stephen Rankine. Stephen resigned

to take up the position of Church Warden at St Andrews Church in Burton Overy. We thank Steve for his time and work on the Parish Council

Miscellaneous

We continue to liaise with the appropriate authorities in respect of pot holes, blocked drains and fly tipping. In addition after the installation of a new substation in Baileys Lane, negotiations are taking place with Western Power to try and ameliorate the impact of the structure on the street scene.

The cost of running and maintaining the street lights continues to be an area for discussion. The Parish Council remains vulnerable to increases in the cost of electricity and in the cost of maintenance of the lamps. A consultancy known as Utility Wise is in the process of investigating the position and advising the Parish Council.

Plans for the coming year

The steering committee and the theme groups will continue to work on the Neighbourhood Plan under the guidance of consultants Your Locale.

We will continue to keep up to date with developments and consultations surrounding the new local plan

The review of street lighting and cost will continue

Work will continue on the setting up of a new website which will have the capacity to host not only the Parish Council but also the village website and village organizations. This will include training and the application for further Government grant monies to subsidize the work involved.

The Good Neighbour Scheme, community emergency plan and the Rural Watch scheme will continue to be developed.

An event to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday is being planned and organized and will take place on 12th June 2016.

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to thank the councillors and clerk for all their hard work during the course of the last year. We have a lot of change to cope with and significant decisions and representations to make on behalf of the parish. Everyone has played an important part and I am very grateful for your commitment, contribution and support. I would also like to express our thanks to the volunteers who do a number of jobs for us mending and maintaining generally and more particularly installing the new notice board.

Fran Brown
Chairman
16 May 2016