

# **BURTON OVERY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Chairperson's Annual Report for the Period: May 2022– April 2023**

### **Current Councillors:**

Cllr Bob Warwick - Chair  
Cllr Sarah Rankine - Vice Chair  
Cllr Dave Fletcher  
Cllr Nina Garner  
Cllr Bob Pain

**Clerk to the Council:** Phil Woodward

The Parish Council conducts its business through monthly face-to-face meetings in the village hall. Members of the public are warmly welcomed to council meetings, the agendas for which are advertised beforehand both on the Parish Council Noticeboard (which is located on the wall opposite Wheatridge on Main Street) and on the Burton Overy Noticeboard WhatsApp Group.

A total of eleven regular parish council meetings were held in the reporting period, namely one per month with the exception of the month of August. The council reviewed 32 planning applications including 16 full planning applications and 12 applications concerning trees in the conservation area. In a number of cases the parish council raised concerns relating to the planning application. In the event, four of the planning applications were refused by the local planning authority, namely Harborough District Council (HDC). These cases illustrate the very important role of the parish council in providing a focus for local opinion on plans that may impact upon the unique character of the village of Burton Overy.

The Burton Overy Neighbourhood Plan (BONP), which was made in January 2019, has proven to be a crucial document when considering planning applications of importance to the environs of the village. The parish council held a special BONP Review Meeting in March 2023 with a view to updating the BONP over the next 12-month period. The conclusions of this review were: (i) that the key policies of the BONP were working well and did not demand any major changes; (ii) that the status of the Community Action ENV policies did need some additional consideration and (iii) that some updating of the background data and external references made in the BONP were required. The review of the BONP will continue over the coming year.

As reported in previous years, following significant expenditure on street lighting and the replacement of office equipment, the parish council has set itself the goal of rebuilding its cash reserve up to a prudent and sustainable level (as advised by organisations such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils). As virtually all of the parish council's income comes via the precept (i.e., the parish council component of the council tax collected by HDC), this has necessarily required above inflation increases in the precept request in recent years. However, for 2023/24 the precept request represented just a 4.5% increase (as

shown on your recent council tax demand!). We are very grateful to the village for supporting the parish council through the council tax mechanism.

In October 2021, the parish council established two new WhatsApp Groups as replacements for those first set up to support the community during the early phases of the Covid crisis. The first of these groups is the **Village Forum**, which provides a channel for the discussion and highlighting of topics of interest to village residents and also a route for seeking local help or advice as and when required. The second group is the **Burton Overy Noticeboard**, which is used for the occasional dissemination of information relating to the activities of the parish, district and county councils. These WhatsApp Groups continue to prove very useful and popular. Currently, there are 102 participants in the Village Forum and 95 participants in the Burton Overy Noticeboard group.

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated over a four-day UK bank holiday weekend from 2nd-5th June 2022. In Burton Overy the celebrations included a big Lunch Event held (due to the inclement weather) in the village hall. To mark the occasion the parish council commissioned a commemorative china mug produced by Edward and Lockett Ltd of Stoke-on-Trent. In keeping with the longstanding village tradition, one such mug was gifted to every village youngster aged 16 or under. In addition, a commemorative jubilee bench was purchased by the parish council and installed on the grass verge at the exit to the village along Washbrook Lane. The acquisition of both the commemorative mugs and the jubilee bench was supported by generous grants from HDC.

As noted last year, if you walk along Back Lane, you cannot fail to notice the four blue hearts staked into the grass verges near the junction with Main Street. The blue hearts mark out Burton Overy's first official wildflower area. By agreement, the County Council does not cut back these verges so as to encourage native flower species. On a related theme, you may have noticed the three planters at the foot of the village signs on the three approaches to the village (Mayns Lane, Washbrook Lane and Carlton Lane). The wildflower verge and the planters are tended by a team of local volunteers. The parish council extends its thanks to all those involved in these activities.

The village Christmas tree was installed at the corner of the Banks Field (near the junction of Back Lane and Main Street) in the third of week December 2022. This year's tree was quite large and looked reasonably impressive adorned with lights and large baubles. The accompanying "Tree-Lights-Switch-On" event proved surprisingly popular judging from the volume of mulled wine consumed! Once again, the parish council would like to extend its thanks to all those involved with the setting up and taking down of the Christmas tree.

Cllr Bob Warwick

May 2023