



## **Chairman's Annual Report 2025 – 2026**

During the year, one of our Councillors, Shaun Slack moved home away from the village, so we had to find a replacement, and in March we welcomed Janet Reid as a new Parish Councillor. Janet has lived in the village for some time and has taken up the role with enthusiasm.

The past 12 months have seen a continuation of our “usual” activities. Meetings have continued to our normal pattern of every 6 weeks, approximately, and continue to be held in The Burghwallis Pub, as the only suitable “public” venue in the village.

The finances of the Council were maintained at a healthy level, with a closing balance of approximately £3,000, or approximately 42% of annual turnover, which is slightly below the recommended level of financial stability. We therefore agreed an increase to the precept for 2026/27 of 15%, to allow us to bring the anticipated residual year-end funds closer to the recommended 50% of turnover. The significant items of expenditure were the costs of employing our clerk, approximately £3,200, public liability insurance, almost £800, and maintenance of the Playing Field, £750.

We have continued to maintain the village assets for the benefit and enjoyment of our residents and visitors alike; this includes the Playing Field, the Pinfold, the War Memorial and the roadside verges and benches. A contractor has also been engaged to effect repairs to the village Notice Board, which has developed signs of water ingress. This work has been completed, though there are still issues with damp, so we are still awaiting further repairs from the contractor.

The annual Remembrance Sunday service was once again held in St. Helen's Church, Burghwallis, with wreaths being laid at the War Memorial afterwards. We also acquired some lamp-post poppies which we displayed in November. We received several favourable comments about them so we will repeat this in 2026 with a greater number of poppies.



Once again, we were able to organize a senior citizens' Christmas Lunch, free to village residents, in The Burghwallis pub. Again, an excellent lunch was catered by the pub staff for 26 recipients, and the raffle raised over £100. We were also able to provide and decorate a Christmas tree at the War Memorial. The lack of a mains supply for tree lights remains an issue, though the solar powered ones we have made an adequate substitute.

We have maintained our programme of litter picking along the various lanes leading into and through the village and taken part in the now annual national Great British Spring Clean campaign. As always, we welcome any help with this never-ending issue, and we recognise and appreciate the efforts of those residents who continue to keep our roadsides clean outside of the organised litter pick events. Special mention must go to Brenda Grimes, who leads by example in this regard.

CDC support our efforts by promptly collecting all the litter we find and bag up, and they have also put up more signs on The Abbe's Walk and Scorcher Hills Lane, though, sadly, this does not seem to deter those who choose to dump their rubbish at the roadside. The "hidden" cameras at fly-tipping "hotspots" have apparently resulted in several prosecutions so, hopefully, some of the offenders will be deterred in future. Generally speaking, we are now seeing less of the larger "fly tip" events, and are reverting to the usual situation of items being thrown out of car windows.

In order to help us in our efforts to maintain our village in "fine fettle", we now have a Parish Council Facebook page, and a wider residents WhatsApp group, which we can use to "spread the gospel" about our activities. This has proved very helpful in generating a larger than usual turnout for our litter picks. It seems that these methods of communication are much more effective than expecting residents to find out about our activities via the PC website.

We are actively involved in the CDC North Community Engagement process, run by the Council and the SY police, with councillors attending the bimonthly meetings whenever relevant.

We continue to monitor the local Public Rights of Way and request maintenance and cutting back of trees and vegetation as necessary.



We are still awaiting the CDC work to increase the storm water culvert capacity on Grange Lane and the stream on The Abbés Walk.

Playing Field (and Pinfold) inspections continue to be made and reported weekly. We have re-stained the benches in the Playing Field and on Grange Lane. All historic sites are in good order.

During the past year, we have lost Pam Moses, long-term resident of the village and Margaret (Madge) Cawston, a previous long-term resident.

We have continued to work on the process of converting the Poores' Land Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which is a relatively new type of charity and is particularly appropriate to the Poores' Land. The essential difference is that the Parish Council, as a body, takes on the roles of the Trustee(s), which makes any changes to personnel much easier to manage. This is a complicated process, with a solution not easy to achieve due to the legalities of historic ownership (or not) and the covenants involved. This is a problem for many parish councils across the country, and we are awaiting legal guidance on the subject.

Our Future Priorities statement from 2018 remains unchanged:

- ✓ Routine liaison with CDC 'Street Scene', 'Highways Department' and local volunteers to help maintain roadways, road marking, hedgerows and paths, to ensure that we keep our footpaths and hedgerows clear of litter.
  
- ✓ Planting of shrubs and bulbs to restore and enhance roadside environments
  
- ✓ Maintain the Playing Field for the enjoyment of all
  
- ✓ Upkeep of all historic sites including the Poor's Field.
  
- ✓ Encouragement and support for the village Church, Pub and Squirrel Wood Scout Camp as community focal points



We would like to thank the residents of our village for your continued support of our activities, and we hope that we can rely on your support in the future.

This report is presented at the Annual Village Meeting in May, and published on the website. If any residents have any queries or comments on the content, please contact us via the clerk at [clerk@burghwallisparishcouncil.gov](mailto:clerk@burghwallisparishcouncil.gov)

Thank you.

Dave Maxwell

Chairman