

Report from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd May 2023 at the Gardiner Memorial Hall.

Present: 24 members of the public

Parish Councillors – Liz Swift, Helen McMenamin-Smith, Michael Swift, Paul Webb, Ian Woodroffe, Jenny Moss, Linda Kitching, Hazel Williams, Jim Perry, Lea Dodds, and Gus Jones.

The following apologies had been received: Joan Lonsdale, Geraldine Tate, District Councillor David Brown and District Councillor Lavinia Edwards.

Liz Swift, Chair of the Parish Council welcomed all to the meeting and gave the following Chairman's Report:

I would like to welcome you to our Annual Parish Meeting and am pleased that we are able to meet in the Gardiner Memorial Hall this year. We held the official opening of our refurbished Hall in July last year which was well attended by residents of Burwell and we received many positive comments.

This meeting is the occasion when we report to you on the activities of your Parish Council during the previous year. We have come to the end of our four-year term as Parish Councillors and we are sorry that four of our Councillors are not standing for re-election. Hazel Williams, Derek Reader, Joan Lonsdale, and Gill Miller. Hazel, Derek, and Joan have between them been Burwell Parish Councillors for a total of 93 years and have each served as Chair of Council on two occasions. We wish to thank them for the time and dedication they have given during their time as Councillors and we will miss their local knowledge and expertise. Gill has served for one Term of four years and during that time she has played an active role in the refurbishment of The Gardiner Memorial Hall and The Safety Campaign. However, we are pleased to welcome our new Councillors, Clive Leach, Charles Milner, and Sarah Phipps.

Burwell Parish Council continues to meet twice each month and our four Working Groups meet every other month and make recommendations which can be approved by Full Council.

These Working Groups are Finance and General Purposes, Asset and Environment, Community leisure and Sport and Safety. We also have established a Climate Change Forum comprising Parish Councillors and a representative of Pauline's Swamp Trust, Spring Close Management Group, Burwell Environmental Group and Wild Burwell which follows on from the adoption of our Climate Change Policy and Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Chair of each Group will give a detailed report for your information.

The facilities at The Recreation Ground are still very popular although we are sorry to report that the Pavilion cannot be used at present following an horrendous flood. Hopefully, work to rectify the extensive damage will commence soon.

We held a Strategy Day in July when we considered our 5-year plan looking at our short, medium and long-term objectives.

Our year-long Safety campaign has been successful and highlighted many issues of concern within the Village. We hope to continue liaising with the School and many residents are displaying the 20's Plenty Stickers on their bins.

Following discussion at our Climate Change Forum meetings it was decided to hold a Repair Café in Burwell. We worked closely and took advice from Cambridge Carbon Footprint and our first Repair Café was held in November 2022. Due to its success another one was held in February and two more are planned this year in June and September.

We have been aware for some time that The Westhorpe Play Area needs to be updated and we are pleased to report that funding is in place and Playdale have been chosen to carry out the work which we hope will be completed later this Summer.

I would like to thank Yvonne our Clerk and Sarah our Assistant to the Clerk and my fellow Councillors for their help and support during my time as Chair of Burwell Parish Council. I would also like to acknowledge the work carried out by George, Debbie, and Martyn.

As our next four-year term begins, we will continue to be a proactive Council working hard to benefit the residents of Burwell.

Finally, I would like to point out that all Parish Councillors are volunteers and that they receive no remuneration for the work they carry out.

Reports were then given from the Working Groups:

Assets and Environment:

The responsibility of the Working Group is to maintain all Council owned properties and play areas to an acceptable and safe standard.

All the Recreation Ground and play areas are now completed with Westhorpe due to be refurbished later this year and we have received many compliments for the variety of activities. It is therefore very disappointing that we have had several acts of vandalism resulting in the Council having to spend further money to carry out repairs. The Police are always notified, and we supply CCTV information.

We are lucky to have many trees in the Village, but they can be a concern to Residents following bad weather. We have contacted the ECDC Tree Officer for Parks and Spaces for guidance and it has been decided that an annual inspection is to be carried out by a Professional independent should be carried out on all the trees on Parish Council land.

We are continuing, together with interested parties, to review the grass cutting regime on all Parish Council sites and to encourage wildlife diversity. Parish Council is working with our grass cutting Contractor to satisfy all Residents' views and the potential for an increased expenditure. It is more expensive to NOT cut the grass than to cut more frequently because the grass may be contaminated and more expensive to remove. Letting wildflowers grow sounds idyllic but the reality can be very different.

Finance and General Purposes:

Income to the parish council comes largely from the precept paid by each household as part of their council tax. Unlike the county and district council, who also receive extra money through the rate support grant from the government, all money the parish needs is raised from the precept, in addition to letting income from village halls, Community Infrastructure Levy from new houses that have been built and funding from grants that have been applied for.

The precept covers staff and office costs, maintenance of recreation, sports and play areas, cemetery, allotment, and grass cutting, tree maintenance street furniture, and halls. It also pays for some capital expenditure throughout the village. There is a full list of how money has been spent available for those who want more detail in the Annual Report, and it is also on our website.

One of the roles of the finance working group is to plan ahead so that, as far as possible, there are enough funds to carry out the projects that the council proposes to do. This may mean that some projects have to wait for future years. Our Five-Year Plan is reviewed each year.

We have been fortunate this year in receiving funds from Solar Farms and Battery Storage Facilities in our parish. This year a substantial amount has been allocated towards the Westhorpe Play area.

Warnings about increases in energy costs have entailed a lot of work looking at the best way forward for the council, as our halls in particular, use a considerable amount of energy. The Gardiner Memorial Hall heating uses air source heat pumps, but Mandeville uses gas. Fortunately, our energy contract did not expire until 31st March 2023 giving the clerk time to look for the most cost-effective solution.

Recent projects have included a major project renovating and updating the Gardiner Memorial Hall. This has been completed on the original building, but further funds need to be raised to add an extra room planned to be added behind the present hall.

In the year 23-24 the total council tax, for a Band D property, is £83.16 and the parish receives £205,529.91 of this, which is £1.60 per week. All of the money we raise is spent within the parish.

Community, Leisure, and Sport:

The Community Leisure and Sport Working Group has met 6 times during the year along with numerous sub-group meetings with other Village and outside Groups and Agencies.

Eleven recommendations were made to Full Council – all being approved.

Finance has now been secured for the planned modernisation of the Westhorpe Play Area. A contractor has been appointed and work should begin in the early Summer. At the Recreation Ground lighting has been installed for the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) and additional fencing put into place between the MUGA and the Tennis Courts. Unfortunately, the January freeze led to a major flood at the Pavilion. Hopefully the damage caused will be remedied before the start of the next Football Season.

During the hot weather last Summer, we also suffered several instances of vandalism at our other open spaces. The most serious was a deliberate fire at Pauline's Swamp that destroyed a bench and forty metres of mature hedgerow including many trees. Quick action by our local Fire Station stopped a situation that could have led to far more extensive damage at this well-loved local wildlife site. Damage had also been caused to a further 30 m of hedging by a neighbouring landowner. The landowner was asked to reinstate the hedge by ECDC Tree Officer. Despite the hedge being reinstated, it did not survive due to a lack of watering. It is hoped that further planting will take place. Our well-established teams of local volunteers have also had a busy year. Tree and hedge replacement, fence mending and scrub clearing to mention but a few. Without their support, Burwell would be a much poorer place to live.

The Parish Council helped to organise the two successful Repair Café sessions held at both our Community Halls. It is hoped that these events will become a regular feature in our annual Village calendar.

The plans for the proposed Community Garden at the Recreation Ground are in place and the Council is now seeking external funding. Over the next few months the programme to install new interpretation boards at Spring Close should be completed as well as better Disability access to the

site. At the Community Orchard the identification Map has been revised and shortly a tree numbering system will be put in place.

Finally, discussions with This Land regarding the earmarked Sports' Hub at Newmarket Road have continued throughout the year. The Football Association has also been involved together with Burwell Football Club. The cost to develop the sports hub is likely to be in the region of £2 million.

Safety:

The last year has been one where the Safety Working Group concentrated its efforts and activities primarily on delivery and implementation of the Burwell Village Community Safety Campaign. The Main Topics of Discussion and Action in the current year have been:-

- Primarily, the Community Village Safety Scheme Plan & Implementation for 1/4/2022 - 31/3/23
- MVAS continued operation
- Burwell Exning Cycleway progress
- Speedwatch continued operation
- Local Highways Initiative Application for 2023 20MPH Burwell Village
- Village Safety Scheme Plan

The scheme was launched at Burwell at Large, as you may have recently seen in Clunch. The main objectives of the campaign are educational to increase the safety in our village for all our residents – **WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE BURWELL SAFER- THINK SAFE, BE SAFE.**

It was phased to run throughout the year and consists of FOUR Major Components:-
Speed – Your Journey, Their Safety, Our Village – reduce speed in the village & launch 20's Plenty in Burwell – Car window stickers were available at our office and recently 20MPH safety Bin Stickers & letters have been delivered throughout major roads in the village. Again, more are available at our office.

Parking – Think Safe, Be Safe – promoting considerate parking & adherence to new highway code changes.

Paths, Equestrians, Pedestrians & Cycleways – Reduce local car journeys & promote safe cycling & walking etc.

Personal Safety – Promote awareness of personal safety issues & resources.

You hopefully saw the scheme promoted throughout the village, and at Carnival in June, and at the Family Fete Day in early September.

In addition, there were TWO public village meetings on Safety issues at the Gardiner Hall, in October '22 and March '23.

Our Safety Scheme and updates were featured on a dedicated webpage on the Burwell Parish Council website and a dedicated email address was set up to report safety issues. In addition, regular scheme material and updates were posted on both the Village Community Facebook Page and the BPC Facebook Page.

- MVAS
Moveable Vehicle Activated Signage – three operational units within Burwell.
Now 21+ approved locations in Burwell - currently added Toyse Lane, North Street & The Causeway.
MVAS data is to be published regularly on the new updated BPC website.
- Burwell to Exning cycleway discussions continued – Suffolk County Council taking the lead. Southern route has been finalised. Work scheduled to start once 106 CIL funding release occurs from Newmarket Road new housing development.
- SpeedWatch .We are now actively seeking additional SpeedWatch volunteers to increase from ONE to THREE Speedwatch Teams and hence increase activity.

- The Cambs County Council local Highways initiative for 20MPH in villages was discussed by our working Group and proposed and accepted by Council. initiative 3/4/23 – submission date 31/4/23.
Our, village survey (paper & online) 2017/18 highlighted speed as a village issue and led to the formation of the village Safety Campaign in which ‘ 20’s plenty in Burwell’ has been well supported & a major component.

Climate Change

The Forum was initiated a few years ago, after the Parish Council declared a climate emergency, and created a Climate Change Action Plan, a document that indicates what the Council and the Parish can try to achieve. The Forum is made up of Parish Councillors, and representatives from local groups – Wild Burwell, Burwell Environmental Group, Spring Close Management Group.

Our starting point with the Forum was to look at the Climate Emergency Action Plan and to begin getting its teeth into it. The Action Plan has an introduction, a section that divides the local causes of carbon emissions into 7 basic categories, a breakdown of these categories and the Council pledges, followed by short, medium, and long term aims, and the final preamble, but is currently under review for updating.

The seven categories are:

Energy Usage and Sources

Transport and Travel

Agriculture and Food

Housing, Infrastructure, Home insulation

Local Business

Waste and Resources

Environment and Land use

In almost all cases, the best that the Parish Council can actually do is to lend support, share knowledge, petition, and engage, but there are some more material things within its power, such as the setting up of a local repair Cafe, applying for grants for EV charging points etc. These things are co-ordinated by the Climate Forum, with recommendations going to Full Council where necessary. Members of the Forum have initiated an Open Day at the local allotments, encouraged environmental stalls at our local nature reserve Open Day, and drawn up a little information leaflet. We have representatives on the East Cambs Climate Partnership Forum and the Wicken Fen Forum. We try and submit a regular article to the Clunch and have had an article about the Forum in a local newspaper. We commit to maintaining the green areas of Burwell and searching for alternatives to fossil fuels in the Parish. We lobby for carbon neutral new builds and support the local environmental group hosting educational days in one of the Parish halls.

All in all, this doesn’t sound like much, but little ripples make bigger waves, and I’m proud that our council is part of this.

The Action Plan is available on the Burwell Parish Council website, and further information can be found in our tri-fold leaflet in the foyer.

The following written report had been received from District Councillor Lavinia Edwards:

During the last twelve months I have served on the following committies at East Cambs District Council Planning Committee, Licensing and Audit

Committee. I have also been a member of Swaffham Internal Drainage Board which is an outside body. This year I have helped Burwell residents with issues ranging from planning concerns, waste collections, housing and financial issues, transport problems and highway safety problems.

An open discussion then took place on the proposal to change the legal speed limit through the village from 30 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

Liz Swift informed those present that Cambridgeshire County Council had invited parishes in the County to apply to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph. 5 towns and parishes have already taken part in the scheme with a whole village reduction and a further 9 have reduced the speed limit in areas of the parish. Paul Webb continued to explain that from 17th September 2023 Wales and some counties in England will be adopting 20 mile per hour limits. Based on the Safety Campaign and the initial Village Traffic Survey carried out in 2018, where over 50% reported that speed is an issue in the village, Burwell Parish Council has submitted an application to reduce the speed to 20 miles per hour throughout the whole village. The submission of the application was agreed to by the Council on the condition that should the community not back the application, then it could be withdrawn. Paul Webb continued to inform the meeting that all applications would be prioritised by the County Council Highways and there is no guarantee that Burwell would meet all the criteria or be prioritised high enough for the reduction to be delivered within the current funding tranche. The County Council anticipated that lowering the speed to 20 miles per hour will see improved road safety. County Council information available to the general public indicates that there have been 13 accidents in Burwell over recent years. Exact details for the accidents are not known. Reducing the speed limit should also make it easier for residents to be involved in active travel such as cycling, reduction in pollution and particulate matter, as well as reduction in congestion. A presentation on the results of a feasibility study carried out by Sustran on behalf of East Cambs District Council (ECDC) indicated that in order to improve cycling routes through the village, one option is to create a one-way system along Newmarket Road, Isaacson Road, and the High Street. The initiative to create a greenway for active travel from Swaffham Prior through to Cambridge will see the reduction of speed between settlements along the B1102 to 40 miles per hour. Drivers travelling through the village from Soham, Fordham and further afield will see using the A142/A14 as a quicker option to travel to and from Cambridge. Having received data from traffic counts in the village, which have recorded at peak times over 900 vehicles per hour, any reduction can only be a benefit for the village.

Questions and comments from the audience

Question/Comment	Response from the Council
How would a 20 mph speed restriction be monitored?	Through education, enforcement, Moveable Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS), signage, Speedwatch, identification of hot spots for Police to monitor
The outcome of incidents/accidents within the village recently would probably not change if they had happened at a lower speed.	Noted
Larger vehicles travelling through the village, many at an unsuitable speed is very dangerous, especially where there are narrow footpaths. It is noticeable from the tyre marks found in the debris on the edge of the roads, just how close to the path these vehicles are being driven.	Noted
The speed of vehicles can be very deceptive. There are too many lorries going through the	Noted

village. Very dangerous around the corner by the chemist.	
	The County Council is providing special funding to support the rural 20 mph scheme. If the scheme is found to be suitable and money is available for its implementation within Burwell, it is unlikely to be delivered until Summer 2025.
Bad parking especially on the pavements needs to be addressed	Unfortunately, the Parish Council has no jurisdiction over parking. Some parking on the Highway can create the slowing down of traffic.
	Reducing speed in rural villages to 20 mph is becoming a national programme
Areas in Newmarket have had a 20 mph speed limit in the past, is there any data to back up the reduction.	Data is available nationally, that there is a 6% reduction in accidents.
A lot of noise levels especially later than the normal working hours. Parking on the side of the road does slow traffic down.	Noted
It is difficult to change individual's attitudes to driving. Need to look at data collected elsewhere in the country.	London has good data on achievements, with data coming from a large data set, large areas, and a number of different types of roads and weather conditions.
It is definitely safer as a cyclist, dog walker and walker when traffic is at a lower speed.	Noted
Educating local contractors and drivers of massive lorries is also important	Noted
Many drivers are not residents of Burwell	Noted
Will this be enforceable by the police.	Yes, Police can enforce.
20 mph is too fast for some areas of the village.	Noted
Spring Close is used as a rut run when there are traffic lights in the village. Could a sign be put up asking for people not to do this.	Something informal could go up
Is this a change to 20 mph throughout the village?	Yes it is. It was discussed by the Safety Working Group and agreed that if it is village wide, then there would be less confusion of traffic speed within the village. Cambridgeshire County Council also prefer village wide application.
Disappointed that the flashing school signs have not been installed in Buntings Path	Advised by Highways not to do, as should the village be accepted for the 20 mph speed restriction then the flashing signs would need to be removed.
A lot of the vehicles speeding in Buntings Path are heading for the school.	Noted
Slower vehicle speed creates more pollution/nitrates as engines run most efficiently at 30 to 55 mph.	Noted
Who will make the final decision?	Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Burwell Parish Council will only proceed if village supports

40 to 30 Buffer Zones are a good idea. Is there any data on the effectiveness yet?	Currently no data due to inability to use Speedwatch equipment in a 40 mile per hour zone.
Concern about the lack of publicity for the meeting	The Annual Parish Meeting has been advertised over the last couple of months. Council only decided on 25 th April that the discussion about the 20 mph speed limit should take place tonight. Advertised on noticeboards and Community Facebook Page the best that time could allow.
A vote was taken to give a rough idea of the thoughts of those present for having the speed limit reduced to 20 mph in the village. In favour = 16 Against = 8 Undecided = 3	
More zebra crossing needed in the village especially to help the elderly and vulnerable. More people need to walk and cycle.	The recent installation of a zebra crossing in Ness Road was very expensive and a drawn out process. Finding a safe place to have the crossing was difficult. Not all zebra crossings will cost as much as the one on Ness Road. Could apply through the LHI scheme for zebra crossings, but need to go to Highways with an issue we are looking at resolving and allowing Highways to come up with a solution. There is now a £500 charge for the initial consultation fees for an LHI application.
Issues with Newmarket Road traffic lights, can the Parish Council do anything?	Advised to contact the Police or the Traffic Management Company if there is a fault.
What is happening with the Newmarket Road development planning wise.	Revised layout plans currently out to consultation.
Concern re drainage around the area of the Gardiner Memorial Hall and Church.	The Parish Council regularly reports issues to Highways. The pipework in this area is very old and has a narrow diameter causing problems with the flow away of rainwater and debris. Road sweeping is the responsibility of ECDC.
The recent refurbishment of the Gardiner Memorial Hall was praised.	Noted
Pleased that Westhorpe Play Area is being refurbished.	Noted
Changes to the ownership of Lloyds Chemist to Jardine's.	Noted
What is happening with changes to the exit of the Gardiner Memorial Hall to make safer.	Report just received from Andrew Firebrace. Options to be investigated.
Road markings and zebra crossings need repainting.	To be discussed with the Highways Supervisor at a meeting due to take place shortly.
A vote of thanks was given to Derek Reader and Hazel Williams for their long term service to the Parish Council.	

There being no further matters for discussion the meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

