



Burwell Parish Council Annual Report 2025–2026

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report of Burwell Parish Council for 2025–2026. This report summarises the Council's activities over the past year, highlights key achievements, and reflects our continued commitment to serving the residents of Burwell.

This year's Annual Parish Meeting adopts a more informal format, enabling local organisations to showcase their work and providing residents with opportunities to talk directly with councillors.

Your Parish Council Team

We are pleased to report that Katherine Hyett has settled in well as Parish Clerk and continues to be an excellent appointment. Yvonne Rix remains in her role as Responsible Finance Officer, and Sarah Ashby is a critical part of the office team managing hall, cemetery and allotment bookings and supporting Katherine on many other aspects. The Council also wishes to thank George (Maintenance Officer), Debbie (Senior Facilities Supervisor) and Martyn (Assistant Facilities Supervisor) for their continued dedication and professionalism.

This year also brought change within the Council itself. We said goodbye to eight councillors, including Gus Jones, who gave many years of service, and Michael Swift, who sadly passed away in September. At the same time, we were delighted to welcome seven new councillors, bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the Council.

How the Council Works

The Parish Council meets twice a month, supported by Working Groups that meet regularly and bring recommendations to Full Council. In July, we held our annual Strategy Day, where we reviewed our priorities for the short, medium and long term available in our 5 year plan.

As part of this review, we reshaped some Working Groups to better reflect the work being carried out:

- The **Community, Safety, Health and Sport Working Group** now incorporates the former Safety Group.
- The **Land, Buildings and Facilities Working Group** replaced the Assets and Environment Group.
- The **Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Forum** expanded the scope of the former Climate Change Forum.
- The **Finance and General Purposes Working Group** continues unchanged.



Finance and General Purposes

Responsibilities

- Budget and finance
- HR management
- Councillor training
- Creation and review of policies and risk assessments including the standing orders and financial regulations
- Health and safety
- Volunteer management
- IT and data management
- Insurance

Chair: Cllr Paul Webb

This year brought challenges and change for the Finance Group, with the Chair being seriously ill and with Vice Chair Michael Swift leading proceedings for part of the year. Despite this, the group continued its vital work supporting the Council's financial planning, review of policies and support of staffing issues including health and safety.

Financial pressures continue, particularly in relation to energy and maintenance costs, but careful budgeting and forward planning have ensured that essential services and facilities remain well managed. At the same time, we have continued to make progress towards our ambition of net zero operations by 2030.

The Parish Council has healthy earmarked reserves for planned projects and maintenance work, including earmarking provision for £200,000 (Community Infrastructure Levy funding) towards the Newmarket Road Sports hub. In terms of income the Parish Council has exceeded expected income from tennis courts, halls and the cemetery and is slightly below expectations for allotments. We have also received significant Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and additional grants.

A key responsibility is providing the recommendation to set the **Parish precept**. Unlike larger authorities, the Parish Council relies entirely on the precept, lettings income, Community Infrastructure Levy and grants to fund services and projects.

The **precept for 2025/2026 was £256,575**: the Parish Council proportion of Council Tax for a Band D property is £104.32 which is equivalent to **£2.01 per week per household**.

The **precept agreed for 2026/2027 is £290,000**: This represents a **12.33% increase for a Band D property** ensuring continued investment in staff, facilities, green spaces, halls, play areas and ongoing climate commitments. The Parish Council proportion of Council Tax for a Band D property is £117.18 which is equivalent to **£2.25 per week per household**.

Looking ahead, the group maintains a rolling Five-Year Financial Plan, ensuring that projects are planned responsibly and delivered when funding allows.



Land, Buildings and Facilities

Objectives

- To maintain all Council owned properties to a standard acceptable to the users and local community
- To operate and improve Council owned properties to achieve the best energy efficiency/lowest environmental impact possible.
- To maintain to an acceptable standard area of the public assets that are the responsibility of the Council (bus shelters, trees, benches etc.)
- To maintain to an acceptable standard all open spaces that are in the ownership of the Council considering biodiversity as well as community needs
- To work with and support the Pauline's Swamp Trust and the Spring Close and Priory Meadow Management Groups alongside outside agencies in the maintenance and development our open spaces and nature reserves
- To ensure that Council owned play areas are well maintained, safe, inclusive, welcoming areas to visit.
- To maintain the cemetery and allotments appropriately. To sympathetically monitor the rules relating to the site.

Chair: Cllr Lea Dodds

The Council is responsible for maintaining a wide range of buildings and open spaces, including village halls, play areas, the recreation ground, cemetery, allotments, street furniture and trees on council land.

Key achievements this year include:

- Completion of major energy-efficiency works at Mandeville Hall, funded through a Net Zero Villages grant. Improvements include solar panels, battery storage, enhanced insulation and LED lighting.
- Repairs and efficiency upgrades to the heating system at Gardiner Memorial Hall.
- Ongoing maintenance of council buildings, including restoration works at the Ness Road cemetery chapel.
- Continued development of biodiversity-friendly grass-cutting regimes, balancing ecological benefits with safety and access.
- Professional surveying and management of parish trees, with priority work undertaken where needed.
- Introduction of the civic.ly digital asset management system to improve compliance, safety and efficiency.





Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Forum

Objectives:

- To deliver on the Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Action Plans as agreed by Burwell Parish Council and to facilitate networking between relevant groups and stakeholders around the village to achieve this.
- Prevent or minimise pollution to air, water and land
- Protect and enhance the quality, extent and accessibility of Burwell's 'green infrastructure' (open spaces, trees, waterways and natural environment) for people and biodiversity.

Vision:

- For Burwell Parish Council to become carbon neutral by 2030
- To have a plan to manage the local impact of climate emergencies
- To support the reduction of Burwell's carbon footprint, increase biodiversity and improve access to green spaces.

Chair: Cllr Geraldine Tate

The Council remains committed to achieving net zero operations by 2030. Working with partners including Wild Burwell, Spring Close Management Group, Pauline's Swamp, Wicken Fen and Cambridge Carbon Footprint, the Council has:

- Delivered regular Repair Cafés and Swish clothing events, reducing waste and supporting sustainable living

Overall, 6840kg of carbon emissions have been prevented by the 329 successful repairs carried out at the eleven Burwell Repair Cafés.

60% of the items presented to our amazing volunteers have been repaired.

Only 52 of 570 items have been unrepairable!

That is equivalent to the amount of CO₂ saved by growing 120 tree seedlings for 10 years, or driving about 30,000km or charging over 360,000 smartphones!

- Supported investigations and monitoring of the village chalk stream, with advice from Historic England and environmental specialists.
- Hosted well-attended community engagement events, including workshops focused on reuse and recycling.
- Published A Biodiversity plan, and we plan to update our Climate Change Plan later this year.
- A significant milestone this year was securing funding to upgrade Mandeville Hall as part of our ambition to make Council buildings net zero by 2030. Solar panels, improved insulation, LED lighting and battery storage have now been installed, greatly improving energy efficiency and reducing running costs.



Community, Safety, Health and Sport

Objectives

Community

- To assess and advise Council on small grant applications from outside organisations
- To support activities that help local groups to address their own needs.
- Working with the District and County Councils to improve provision for the youth and elderly or other groups in need.
- If requested, to provide representation on outside bodies.
- To recognise, promote and work to support heritage assets
- To organise public events and to support other organisations with their own community events.
- Support and promote the Repair and Swish Cafes

Safety

- To observe and record the speed and volume of traffic within the parish and support the Speedwatch Initiative.
- To consult with residents regarding traffic problems and report any issues to the relevant authority.
- To work in partnership with the Local Authority to find practical solutions to improve the safety of road users, cyclists and pedestrians using the village's roads.
- To monitor the condition of village footpaths and report any damage to the Local Authority.
- To work with volunteers to grit certain footpaths when icy conditions prevail.
- To support initiatives to improve cycleways within the parish and surrounding area.

Health

- To promote use of open spaces to improve health.
- Improve the health of the village through Parish Council resources

Sport

- To work in partnership with the Local Authority and parish sports clubs and organisations to ensure that the sporting needs of the community are fully met.
- To maximise liaison with Burwell Sports Centre

Chair: Cllr Geraldine Tate

The Council continues to support a wide range of community initiatives. During the year:

- Donations were made to local and regional causes including the Twinning Association, Ely Foodbank, Library Summer Reading Scheme and Sports Centre.
- The recreation ground has been very well used by football teams, tennis players, skatepark users and children.
- The Newmarket Road development, now known as Millstone Park, has progressed, with many homes already sold. Work on the proposed Sports Hub continues, and we are liaising closely with partners to resolve outstanding site issues.
- New bus routes (T4 and T5) improved access to Cambridge, Addenbrooke's and local colleges. We work closely with the A-B1102 pressure group for ongoing engagement to address service gaps.
- Road safety continues to be a priority. We are pleased to report success with our Local Highways Improvement Initiative application. New solar-powered warning lights will be installed near school entrances on Buntings Path and The Causeway later this year.
- The Council has supported the Speedwatch scheme by funding new equipment, enabling the group to resume activity. Speedwatch sessions are now being run regularly, with volunteers continuing to play a vital role in monitoring traffic speeds and improving safety.
- Through Burwell Action for Youth (BAFY) we continue to work with Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council to improve youth provision in Burwell. The Connections Youth Bus now visits Burwell during term time, offering a safe and supported

space for young people on Thursday evenings.

In addition, the Parish Council organises and supports important village events, including:

- Remembrance Sunday, incorporating the Act of Remembrance and village parade.
- Christmas carols, bringing the community together at the end of the year.

These events remain central to village life and are well supported by residents.

Thanks and Appreciation

None of this work would be possible without the commitment of our staff and councillors. Parish councillors give their time freely and they receive no remuneration for the work that they carry out for the community. I would like to sincerely thank them, along with our staff team, for their hard work and support throughout the year.

Burwell Parish Council remains committed to listening, learning and working proactively on behalf of residents as our village continues to grow.

Liz Swift

Chair, Burwell Parish Council