



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 Cafes.

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

Please note full minutes of the event including district and county council reports and resident questions can be found on the Parish Council website.

Financial Update

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BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND BALANCE SHEET 2025/2026

INCOME	2025/2026	EXPENDITURE	2025/2026
Allotments	£4,701.28	Jubilee Reading Room	£4,528.95
The Recreation Ground	£20,894.02	Mandeville Hall	£16,256.90
Pauline's Swamp	£0.00	Cemetery	£2,994.54
Administration	£25,744.00	The Pavilion	£7,572.43
Agency Grass Cutting	£1,947.75	Spring Close	£1,930.00
Precept	£257,036.60	Margaret Field	£5,624.00
CIL Funding	£195,754.46	Allotments	£2,013.53
Repair Café	£638.37	The Recreation Ground	£22,018.29
Deposits	£3,100.00	Pauline's Swamp	£4,285.57
Margaret Field	£3,200.00	Street Lighting	£384.50
Cemetery	£12,530.00	Public Areas	£16,774.25
Gardiner Memorial Hall	£23,271.49	Administration	£39,781.00
Mandeville Hall	£24,795.56	Staff	£146,069.59
Gardiner Solar Income	£196.34	Agency Grass Cutting	-£260.00
MH Grant Solar	£24,736.53	Donations	£850.00
Bank Interest	£4,776.41	Repair Café	£1,271.86
Donations	£1,120.00	Deposits	£3,125.00
		Play Equipment	£1,875.84
		Climate Change	£2,000.00
		Other MH Solar and General Waste	£41,817.07
		Gardiner Memorial Hall	£15,295.76
		Newmarket Road Sports Hub	£4,000.00
		ICT Equipment	£1,366.99
		Community Garden	£46.73
Total	£604,442.81	Total	£341,622.80
Income for the year ended 31st March 2026			£604,442.81
Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2026			£341,622.80
Income over Expenditure			£262,820.01
Retained Reserves at 1st April 2025			£364,440.70
Retained Reserves at 1st April 2026			£627,260.71
<u>Investments</u>			
Cash/Bank		£366,895.54	£621,926.62
Debtors		£3,244.63	£5,174.00
VAT		£2,507.89	£8,872.24
Prepayments		£2,582.42	£1,344.75
		£375,230.48	£637,317.61
Less			
Creditors		£5,726.40	£4,195.22
Receipts in advance		£5,063.38	£5,860.90
Error Adjustment			£0.78
		£364,440.70	£627,260.71

BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND BALANCE SHEET 2025/2026

		<u>Balance Sheet</u>			
<u>Current Assets</u>				<u>Current Assets</u>	
as at 31.3.2025				as at 31.3.2026	
£2,582.42			Prepayments		£1,344.75
£5,752.52			Sundry Debtors		£14,046.24
£366,895.54			Cash in Hand		£621,926.62
£375,230.48					£637,317.61
<u>Current Liabilities</u>				<u>Current Liabilities</u>	
as at 31.3.2025				as at 31.3.2026	
£5,063.38			Receipts in Advance		£5,860.90
£5,726.40			Creditors		£4,195.22
£364,440.70			Error Adjustment		0.78
			Fund Balance		<u>£627,260.71</u>
<u>Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2026</u>					
20/21 Capital Trees			£1,000.00		
Pauline's Swamp			£11,062.25		
Recreation Ground/Pavilion Sinking Fund			£30,459.38		
Gardiner Memorial Hall Entrance			£20,000.00		
25/26 LHI Flash. Speed Signs Bunting Path and Causeway			£8,404.49		
CIL Funding			£51,082.48		
Newmarket Road Sports Hub CIL Funding			£200,000.00		
Newmarket Road Sports Hub			£1,000.00		
Climate Change			£2,422.00		
Community Garden			£1,921.31		
Spring Close Signs			£264.00		
Spring Close Chalk Stream Project			£2,000.00		
Repair/Swish Café			£3,118.40		
Westhorpe Play Area			£2,267.27		
Solar/Storage Donations			£10,000.00		
Lighting MH (Solar/Storage)			£0.00		
Jubilee Green Play Area inclusive Play and gen			£10,000.00		
Building Maintenance Fund			£20,000.00		
26/27 LHI Pound Hill Zebra Crossing			£5,000.00		
Office and Maintenance Equipment			£7,500.00		
Balance of Earmarked Reserves			<u>£387,501.58</u>		
<u>Summary</u>					
Total Funds			£627,260.71		
Earmarked Reserves			£387,501.58		
Balance of Funds Available			<u>£239,759.13</u>		

Minutes:

In attendance circa 35 members of the public

Parish Councillors: Liz Swift, Lea Dodds, Hazel Barber, Pat Cleary, John Damian, Richard Jenkins, Ben Lucas, Yemi Macaulay, Ryan Noyes, Jim Perry, Geraldine Tate, Ben Vinten, Paul Webb.

Apologies received from Linda Kitching, Michael Geary and Brenda Wilson

District Councillors: Apologies received from David Brown and Lavina Edwards

County Councillors: Yannifer Malinowski

Parish Council Report

A summary presentation of the above report was given by Cllr Swift (Chair of Burwell Parish Council) and Lea Dodds (Vice-Chair of Burwell Parish Council).

This is available on our website: [Annual Parish Meeting Presentation](#)

District Council Reports:

East Cambridgeshire District Council Annual Report 2025/26 – Cllr David Brown (read out By Cllr Dodds):

The District Council moved from no overall control to a majority control for the new “Conservative and Independent Group”. Changes at senior officer level saw both the Chief Executive and Finance Director retire after years of service. Their replacements are in place.

Following the announcement from the Labour Government that all councils in England will move to a Unitary Authority much time is being spent on how that might work in practice. A decision from Government on the final make-up of Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is expected in July 2026.

In the meantime the Conservative and Independent Group continues to deliver the Corporate Plan which is based on the promises made at election time by Conservatives.

These promises included:

- Keeping costs low for residents – only increase Council Tax as a last resort.
- Retain free parking in our city and town centre car parks.
- Invest millions in local infrastructure, such as GP Surgeries, youth and community buildings and village hall upgrades. This includes the recent grant to Burwell Community Sports Centre of £48,000 towards new flooring.
- Consider the final business case for an eco-bereavement centre, near Mepal. This is scheduled to open this summer.
- Continue to implement our Environment Plan with a focus on nature recovery and reaching net zero by 2035/36.
- Bring in changes to the waste and recycling service, including black wheelie bins and a separate weekly food waste service. This new service is on schedule to start on 1st June 2026.
- Secure improved cycling and walking infrastructure in our district.

Budget

- The Council froze its share of Council Tax bills for the 13th year.
- The Council has £0 external borrowing, £0 debt servicing costs.
- Balanced budget for next 2 years.

- Additional money for waste and recycling.
- Additional money for Internal Drainage Boards.

Local Planning

- Full planning permission granted for the housing development at Newmarket Road.
- Applications for solar farms and associated battery storage sites have taken considerable time.

Committee Membership etc

During 2025/26 I have been: Chair of the Audit Committee; member of Operational Services Committee; and a member of the Swaffham's Internal Drainage Board.

David Brown, District Councillor for Burwell

Cllr Lavinia Brown's Report (read out by Cllr Swift) :

During the last twelve months I have served on the following committees at East Cambs District Council: Planning Committee, Licensing and Sub for Audit Committee. I am also a Member of Swaffham Drainage Board. Planning meetings have seen applications for a battery storage facility at Hightown Drove and a Agrivoltaic scheme at Anchor Lane Farm in Burwell.

During the year I have been involved in the reporting and helping to get the dreadful potholes which are all over the village filled in.

I have also helped and assisted Burwell residents with planning issues, waste collections, housing and financial concerns. Also, the slow down for ducks sign.

County Council Report given by Yannifer Malinowski

This marks one year since I was officially sworn in. I am very happy to represent such a diverse, vibrant and friendly part of Cambridgeshire - steeped in history and teeming with proactive community minded residents who want the best for their area. My work over the last year has mostly consisted of learning the ropes - reporting potholes and trying to protect our green spaces from over-ambitious solar farm developments that do not benefit local communities.

As part of my councillor role, I am a member of the Fire Authority and Vice Chair of Scrutiny - where I work to hold the authority to account for its risk management, forward planning and ensure it is ready to respond in the event of an emergency. This has allowed me to hold officers at the authority to account and raise the issue of battery storage safety planning in large scale solar farms which is obviously a key concern for our community. And working with local voices I will continue to hold them to account as best I can and stand up to developers re any developments that do not work with or provide benefit for local residents.

The county council has made fixing the roads it's top priority and is still in the process of completely overhauling the highways department and the way it operates. We have put an additional £20 million into the roads repair budget and built new systems to ensure reporting is easier. The task now is to ensure those reports are acted on swiftly and we are reviewing the work of our contractors to make sure road repairs are carried out to last and that appropriate roads are resurfaced not just temporarily patched. I am working hard to make the case for Burwell's roads alongside the Parish Council, and we are setting up regular meetings with officers to try to expedite fixes. It is slow progress but progress nonetheless.

Local government reorganisation has also dominated my time as Burwell's councillor so far - with the government set on moving to Unitary Authorities from as early as next year. Much has been made of

plans to put East Cambs, and more specifically our corner of East Cambs in with Peterborough instead of the more logical and convenient option of merging with Cambridge and South Cambs. We have fought very hard both at County Council and in local consultations to make this case and the case specifically for our local Newmarket-adjacent areas and will await the governments verdict in June/July.

At council we have passed motions to protect the poorest from the rising costs of heating oil, to preserve funding for creative arts in schools, and to protect the dignity of LGBT+ people in an increasingly hostile political climate. ! I am proud to have been a part of this work.

I also have the pleasure of serving as the Armed Forces Covenant Champion for the council and in this capacity have brought a motion to next council expressing support for our Armed Forced in a volatile world. This motion highlights and strengthens the work of the many organisations that support the council in delivering on its pledge to our soldiers, service personnel and veterans - as well as their families, that their service should not be forgotten as they navigate their way through life.

If you ever need me do not hesitate to email, or say hi if you see me out and about. I will continue to attend parish meetings, where I can, and report back monthly. It is a great privilege to represent this fantastic area and I remain grateful for the faith residents have shown in me as I have come into the role and continue to learn to navigate the system. I hope to resolve more issues faster in 2026/7 now that my feet are under the desk.

Questions from the Public

1) Why don't district councillors attend Parish Council meetings and what can be done to encourage them to attend? Could they run a surgery in Burwell?

There was some discussion about this. The Parish Council explained that district and county councillors are invited to all of our meetings but there are no legal requirements for them to attend. There are locations available for them to hold surgeries should they wish. We will pass on this feedback to District Councillors. Another member of the public stated that they had provided helpful support to them when requested.

2) Why is one pothole filled in and others nearby are not?

The Parish Council is keen to get an answer to this question as well. Cllr Malinowski said they are working closely with contractors to look at how they operate. County Council are responsible for the Highways.

3) What is happening with drainage on the High Street?

There was some work scheduled on the High Street and Mandeville area and the Parish Council have been trying to get some feedback on this and will continue to pursue this. A member of the public mentioned it was straw from farmer's lorries causing blockages and another member of the public talked about the issue of how Anglian Water only measure water capacity in summer which meant there were issues with capacity of the drains.

4) What is happening with the pothole outside of the Chemist?

The Parish Council has written to the estate agents to ask them to regularly clear up the stones. We have also logged the pothole several times with highways as we believe it crosses a right of way.

5) Pound Hill zebra crossing is very dangerous – the markings cannot be seen again

The Parish Council repeatedly reported this to Highways and the lines were re-painted however this very quickly degraded again. We have applied for local highways initiative funding to improve the visibility of this crossing with halo lights and new markings. We should find out about this application in October 2026.

6) How do we establish a baseline for biodiversity data should there be an incident from the Battery Energy Storage Systems in/nearby to the village?

The Parish Council are looking at this as part of their Climate Change, Biodiversity and Pollution Forum. There is a current a County Council led project called: Nature Recovery – from the ground up which we are learning about, and Wild Burwell are actively participating in.