



## **Chairman's Annual Report 2023 – 2024**

The year started off with a shock as two long-standing members of the Parish Council resigned. Jill Laming had been a member for well over 10 years, and Dave Hudson for approaching that length of time. We advertised the vacancies and received interest from 2 relatively new residents of the village. After meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair, Shaun Slack and Chris McIroy were duly co-opted on to the council and have become established as positive and valued councillors.

The past 12 months have seen a continuation of our “usual” activities, with no changes to members of the Council. Meetings have continued to our normal pattern of every 6 weeks, and continue to be held in The Burghwallis Pub, as the only suitable “public” venue in the village.

The finances of the Council were restored to a satisfactory footing during the year, which meant that the precept for 2024/5 was increased by 5%, at a rate below the general rate of inflation. There were no “abnormal” costs incurred during the year, though we did have to replace the hinges on the pedestrian gate from Grange Lane, as the previous hinge presented a potential finger-trap hazard. We also commissioned CDC to “clean” the wet pour surfaces as there was a potential slip hazard with them. We were not satisfied with the cleaning done by CDC, and so we remain in dispute with them regarding payment.

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 and the War Memorial. There is still some work to be completed with the War Memorial gate following the demolition of the wall last year, but a contractor has been found who should be able to rectify the problem. The same contractor has also been engaged to effect repairs to the village Notice Board, which has developed signs of water ingress. This work should be completed in May.

Once again, we obtained a supply of saplings from the Woodland Trust, which have been planted along Scorcher Hills Lane, in order to fill in the gaps in the hedge along the field side.



Due to the decision by the local council and police, it was not possible to host the annual British Legion parade to the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday, so the service was held in The Burghwallis car park, with wreaths being laid afterwards. This looks like being the norm from now on.

Once again, we were able to organize a senior citizens' Christmas Lunch, free to village residents, in The Burghwallis. Again, an excellent lunch was catered by the pub staff for ?? recipients, and the raffle raised over £130. We were also able to provide and decorate a large Christmas tree at the War Memorial; however, the tree was so large and "full" that the solar-powered lights and decorations faded into insignificance. We will purchase a smaller tree in future.

We have maintained our programme of litter picking along the various lanes leading into 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. As the "regulars" are all getting older, we would welcome some "new blood" to join in with this much needed activity and this can be done by contacting any member of the Parish Council.

DMBC 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 Scorchers 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.

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

We continue to lobby both the Police and DMBC Highways regarding speed restrictions through the village, though it would seem that we are some way down the list of priority areas for more stringent speed limits and other measures.



Playing Field (and Pinfold) inspections continue to be made and reported weekly. We have re-stained the benches in the Playing Field and repainted the play equipment where necessary in line with the requirements of the Fields in Trust report. All historic sites are in good order.

We continue to support the “public” buildings in the village.

During the past year, we have lost Dave Thomas, a long-term resident of the village.

We have continued to work on the process of converting the Poors’ Land Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which is a relatively new type of charity and is particularly appropriate to the Poors’ 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.

Our Future Priorities statement from 2018 remains unchanged:

- ✓ Routine liaison with DMBC ‘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 [clerkburghwalliscouncil@talktalk.net](mailto:clerkburghwalliscouncil@talktalk.net).

Thank you.

Dave Maxwell

Chairman