



## **Chairman's Annual Report 2024 – 2025**

During the year, one of our newer Councillors, Chris McIlroy, resigned as she felt that she was not suited to the role, so we had to find a replacement. After putting out a few enquiries, we were delighted to recruit Amanda Welke in September. Amanda seems to have taken up the role with enthusiasm and is supportive of all our activities. As a younger member of the team, we are seeing a gradual shift in the average age of Councillors to a younger profile, which can only be a good thing.

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 £2,000, or approximately 30% of annual turnover, which is the recommended level of financial stability, and allowed us to agree an increase to the precept for 2025/26 of 5%, broadly in line with the rate of inflation. The significant items of expenditure were the costs of employing our clerk, approximately £2,500, public liability insurance, £665, maintenance of the Playing Field, £1,400, and repairs to the War Memorial gates, following the RTA the previous year, £310.

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 is still outstanding, awaiting the contractor.

Since it is no longer possible to host the annual British Legion parade to the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday, the service was held in St. Helen's Church, Burghwallis, with wreaths being laid at the War Memorial afterwards. This admirable solution 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 pub. Again, an excellent lunch was catered by the pub staff for 22 recipients, and the raffle raised over £100. We were also able to provide and decorate a Christmas tree at the War Memorial; all agreed that the smaller tree this year was much better than the larger one the previous year.

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 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. 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.

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.

The heavy rain downfalls in January 2025 highlighted the inability of the culverts to manage the increased flow of water. Both those across the Grange Lane junction and The Abbe's Close are inadequate at times. CDC have inspected and may increase the culvert capacity on Grange Lane, but that on The Abbe's Close may not fall within their jurisdiction, and it will be the responsibility of the residents to keep clear.

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.



In the last few months, there have been several serious power outages in the village, at least two of them due to overhead cables being brought down in storms by “dead” trees on The Abbe’s Walk. We have requested CDC to examine the trees on a particular stretch of the road to prevent such events recurring.

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

During the past year, we have lost Joyce Miller and Michael Whiteley, both long-term residents 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. 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. Meanwhile, we have a new tenant for the land, following the departure of the previous one.

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