BURTON-CUM-WALDEN PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

The Council
Jane Ritchie, Chairman
David Dent, Councillor
Andrew Landau, Councillor
Sally Sahin, Councillor
Victoria Whitehead, Councillor
Sue Ryding, Clerk

Chairman's Introduction

In addition to the matters mentioned below, the Council has been involved in various activities, including supporting the Fundraising Group which is now led by Gordon Lunt, Vicky Whitehead, Neil Smeaton and Emma Davis. We have also been pressing the Joint Management Committee for Aysgarth Cemetery to pay for the upkeep of the cemetery instead of relying on volunteers. Following an attempted break-in which damaged the Council's archive cupboard in the Village Hall, a new, more robust fireproof cupboard has been purchased and installed. A notice will be placed on the door of the cupboard pointing out that any funds owned by the Council are not kept inside but in a distant Barclays Bank!

Jane Ritchie, Chairman

The Council has had a busy year continuing to catch up with matters which had been put into abeyance during the pandemic, but also getting used to working with the new unitary authority, the North Yorkshire Council. Many systems for reporting faults, raising concerns and getting information have had to be reconfigured, both by the Parish Council and the higher authority. It is fair to say that it is still a work in progress, with some systems becoming easier and others more complex. We have continued to adapt to these changes as quickly as we can, and then adapt again when the changes are changed.

Committees and meeting

Councillors and the Clerk were nominated for the following committees and working groups.

- Aysgarth Cemetery Committee Councillors Sally Sahin and Victoria Whitehead
- Upper Dales Health Watch Councillor Jane Ritchie
- Village Hall Committee Councillor Sally Sahin
- Emergency Working Group Councillors Andrew Landau and David Dent and the Clerk, Sue Ryding
- West Burton Charity Councillors Jane Ritchie and Victoria Whitehead (also Mrs Sue Tiplady and Mr Richard Nolan)
- YLCA Councillor David Dent and the Clerk, Sue Ryding

Planning applications

The Council was asked to comment on five planning application during the year. One application related to retrospective remedial measure to dim the lighting at Aysgarth Lodge Holidays, Westholme. The Council continues to be concerned about the amount of light pollution emanating from the holiday complex, and has asked for further clarification.

All planning applications are discussed at a full meeting of the Council and anyone who is involved can come along and tell us about their concerns or ask for an application to be supported. Any valid objections to, or support for, an application can then be passed on to the Planning Authority. As has been explained in previous years, the Council only has the right to comment. It has no powers to grant or refuse any application.

Upkeep and maintenance

• **Street lights**. The reporting of street lights that are not working has been problematic, but the system of reporting has now been resolved, and most lights are now relit relatively quickly.

- Play area. North Yorkshire Council now carries out inspection of the play area on our behalf. We
 are investigating the cost of a new safety surface under the swings as the existing surface is now in
 need of replacement.
- **Village Green**. As in past years, we would like to thank our Parish Caretaker, Richard Chapman, for his efforts in keeping our Village Green, and many other areas of the village, looking good.
- Water leak by the Chapel. After nearly two years of investigation, and having denied any responsibility, Yorkshire Water finally located the cause of the persistent leak that emerged in front of the Chapel. It was traced to a broken join in a pipe under the front doorstep of the Clerk's house.
- Removal of ivy. The Council arranged for the ivy on the trees by the B6160 to be removed.
- Village sign. Work will begin shortly on restoring the damaged village sign on the B6160

Yorkshire Dales Authority Local Plan

A sixth consultation meeting was held at the end of April 2023. The focus was on where development will be allowed to take place within village boundaries. As with the other consultations, the Council responded through the Wensleydale and Coverdale Parish Council Forum, chaired by County Councillor Yvonne Peacock. We understand that the draft Local Plan will be available for consultation shortly.

Village events

The Coronation event was one of the highlights of the year, marked by the Council with the purchase of a Coronation bench which is now in place on the Village Green. The Council has also taken up the offer of a free portrait of His Majesty King Charles which should arrive shortly. Another welcome event to return this year was the May Fair which raised the astonishing amount of over £7,000. This sum, together with other funds raised previously, has been distributed between the three Parish organisations – the Village Hall, the Methodist Chapel and the Parish Council. In total, each organisation has received £2,438.00. The Council would like to thank the many people involved for their tremendous efforts in organising the wonderful May Fair and other fundraising events.

Our wonderful fireworks display and bonfire in November, and our traditional mince pies and punch gettogether when we light up the Christmas tree in December are now firm favourites in our calendar of events. We are again very grateful to the volunteers who organise and run these events, particularly Peter Wheeler and his team for their tremendous efforts in organising Bonfire Night, David Dent and his helpers for our lovely colourful Christmas tree, and Andy Landau at the Fox and Hounds Inn for the refreshments for both events. As always, we are very grateful to the owner of The Black Bull for allowing us to use their electricity to light up the Christmas tree. The efforts of all these people are very much appreciated.

Consultations

In addition to the consultation on the Local Plan, the Council has been consulted on the Government's plans for legislation on holiday lets, by the Walden Common Committee on proposed works, and by North Yorkshire Council on the provision of bus services and the organisation of the disposal of household waste.

Winter gritting

The Council Chairman and the Clerk recently attended a North Yorkshire Council highways seminar at which several matters were raised including winter gritting. Concern was expressed at how long it had taken to get the roads cleared and gritted this year compared to previous years. Several options were discussed with the Highways Department including being allowed to finance our own gritting. Further details of this will be on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held on 23 April in the Village Hall.

Finances

Our finances remain sufficiently secure to allow us, once again, to maintain the Precept at £6,600. The above mentioned sum of £2,438 received from village fundraising will be put towards the upkeep of the Parish. A summary of the accounts up to the end of the financial year can be found at Annex A to this report on the website at www.westburton-yorkshire.org.uk.