



BURSTON AND SHIMPLING PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2018 - 2019

This year has seen Burston recover from the installation of the new sewer, and has also seen various additional farm buildings in both Shimpling and Burston, and a new house in Burston. We are still facing a likelihood that there will be further development in our Parish as a result of the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council has a clerk, Ann Baker, who does a tremendous job providing all the necessary 'back-office' services for the council. I am the Chair and there are six other councillors. Alison Wakeham, the Vice-chair, is the Responsible Financial Officer, our 'lead' on planning, and maintains the website. Christine Stevens is responsible for footpaths, and edits and produces our full colour magazine 'The Planet', and is Liaison with Burston House. Lindsey Bilston is our Tree Warden and is responsible for safeguarding and liaison with the school - but will be leaving the Council in May. Keith Cowley is responsible for the playing field and community orchard, and Jim Rudd deals with highway matters, including Community Speedwatch and the SAM camera. Isobel Pugh joined the council recently and is handling the Don Swanton Award. We must not forget Tom Grieve, who resigned from the council earlier in the year, who masterminded the litterpick and other events. My thanks to them all.

Throughout the year the Council has provided the necessary services to maintain our villages. The Council has had regular meetings, and has done all the things that a Parish Council usually does, but which are only really noticed when they are not done. This has been achieved 'within budget', and in spite of the amount of funding provided by South Norfolk being reduced to zero for the coming year we have managed to prepare a budget that only increases the tax on a Band D house by £1 per year.

During our meetings this year we have considered many planning applications for developments within the parish. We have liaised with representatives of the Norfolk Highways department, and our meetings with them have led to various improvements and repairs which otherwise might not have been done. A Community speedwatch team has been instituted which has been on the roads of one of our villages every week apart from a short break over Christmas. We now have a share in a SAM camera that is in our Parish 50% of the time, showing and recording how fast vehicles are travelling. We have made efforts to ensure that our footpath network is accessible at all times, and that the paths are signposted appropriately. We have liaised with local landowners, and in many cases they have been able to help us.

We have maintained the playing field, having the grass cut by contractors, having the equipment inspected on a weekly basis to spot any safety issues before they become serious, and having a RoSPA inspector carry out an annual inspection. A drainage system has been installed to prevent the dips in the BMX track becoming flooded. A memorial stone has been installed and dedicated with a ceremony in the community orchard. We have maintained the churchyard in Shimpling, and contributed to the maintenance of the churchyard in Burston. We have trimmed hedges,

organised a litter-pick, and liaised closely with the Unite Union regarding The Rally. We have organised the Don Swanton Award which will be presented this evening.

Councillors have been involved in on-going meetings regarding a Neighbourhood Plan for Diss and the surrounding parishes, and also the Greater Norwich Development Plan.

During the year we have completed all of the paperwork at The Land Registry to prove our ownership of the playing field and Church Green. For Church Green we had to rely on the Shimpling and Burston Inclosure Award of 1870, which is in the archive of Norfolk County Council. We are assisting, where possible, in the establishment of a high speed broadband network.

One of the challenges of the year has been Back Lane, Shimpling, where Norfolk County Council said they would have to take the bollards away. We have managed to persuade NCC to apply for a Traffic Regulation Order, to keep the track closed to motorised traffic, and have secured nearly £5,000 of funding for this process, with funds coming from several sources including several residents. The proposed Order was advertised on 5th April, and letters of support must be sent to arrive by 25th April. We have restored all the benches in the Parish, and the Burston Village Sign has also received attention and is being repainted.

All of this does not happen on its own, and I am very grateful to all who have helped in any way.

In addition to my thanks to all of the councillors, I must express gratitude to all of those who help the villages and the community in any way. For Farmers contribute behind the scenes to village events, and also pay for Church Green to be mowed, and also arrange for The Planet to be printed. Sir Rupert Mann helps in many ways, and is always willing to co-operate. Jamie Churchard works hard as our village caretaker in spite of the challenges that he has faced over the last year. Many other villagers 'do their bit' to help keep our Parish a pleasant place to live, and my thanks goes to them all.

And as we move into the next year, we will keep up all of the 'regular tasks' as well as continuing to undertake specific projects, such as the fencing of the play area.

Nigel Frankland (Chairman)