



Burston and Shimpling Parish Council

Chair's Annual Report for Year Ending 31st March 2024

Nigel Frankland stood down as a councillor at the election in May 2023, so this is my first report as Chair. During the year we have had other changes too, as our Clerk Ann Baker has asked to concentrate on her family and other Parish duties. We wish her well and welcome Fran Sharp as our new Clerk.

We have new members too and thank John Mallows for his contributions during his time on Council and look forward to working with James Gowing and Toby Kheng.

Keith Cowley continues to have an overview of the continuing improvements and diversity in the Recreation Ground, organising tree planting and the ongoing work to maintain the wildflower meadow, assisted by a group of volunteers. Keith was instrumental in encouraging the various agencies to address the significant flooding in Shimpling and is now assisted by James to make sure that the work is completed.

Anita Hughes is point of contact for any footpath issues in the Parish. After her extra help in the community during the recent flood events she is reviewing our Community Resilience Plan. After identifying a community interest in a Pétanque Court, Anita initiated some crowdfunding and volunteers to build one. The opening event was won by the Fishwick's.

Angela Belgrove organises the Don Swanton community award and the very successful Spring and Autumn Litterpicks. It is disappointing that too many people do not respect our villages when they drive through but heartening that so many residents care about their environment and collect the rubbish. The tasty refreshments provided by Angela are much appreciated.

The Parish Council has confirmed the legal status of Church Green and have been advised there are orchids growing on it, so the grass cutting will be adjusted to support their spread. South Norfolk have a Biodiversity policy to support public open spaces and improve the environment.

Keeping the villages tidy continues to be done by Hadleigh Drake and the grass cutting in the Recreation Ground by C & G Trenching with other areas looked after by thoughtful residents. Flags are flown by Phil Stevens. In Shimpling the Hawthorns host and monitor our defibrillator.

The Parish Planet is our quarterly magazine and after many years Christine Stevens is retiring. We thank her for her service and contribution to the community whilst Editor.

After delays created by COVID and complexity of covering 9 parishes, the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan, (which Burston and Shimpling forms a part) was completed and passed Government inspection and public referendum. It will have to be considered by anyone planning any developments in the Parish.

The Friends of Burston School organised some events for the King's Coronation and many people gathered in the school hall to watch the proceedings together.

In previous years the Parish Council has organised the Candlelight Service for Christmas in St. George's Shimpling, how the new Rector Reverend Carl Melville is keen to be more involved and led a thoroughly enjoyable evening of poems, hymns and readings.

After researching the costs of installing and maintaining a toilet in the Recreation Ground and finding it prohibitive, we trialled hiring a port-a-loo. This was sufficiently successful that we will be having one again during the Spring and Summer of 2024.

The Parish Council would like to thank all the groups and people who support our community in anyway during the year often unnoticed. The Thelveton Estate and Mann family for their co-operation and support, especially their involvement in the Shimpling Flood relief works. ForFarmers for the printing of the Parish Planet and support for other tasks around the Parish. And everyone in our community who contributes.