

BURTLE PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7.30pm in Burtle Village Hall.

1 Present

Councillor R Dallimore (chairman)

Councillor S Bull (vice chairman)

Councillor J Hedges

Councillor N Ponsillo

Councillor J Porter

District Councillor Stuart Kingham

Lyn Goodliffe Chairman Burtle Village Hall Committee

Mr Morris Chairman Burtle Silver Band

2 Apologies

Police

Burtle Church

Burtle Harvest Home Committee

Burtle Babies

Burtle Book Club

3 Parish Council Chairman's Report *copy attached*

4 Parish Council Financial Report *copy attached*

5 Reports from Organisations:

Police *copy attached*

Burtle Church *copy attached*

Burtle Village Hall *copy attached*

Burtle Harvest Home Committee *copy attached*

Burtle Babies *copy attached*

Burtle Book Club *copy attached*

Burtle Silver Band - the Chairman gave a short update regarding the band. He was delighted to report that the band had survived Covid and, in fact membership, had increased. They are very keen to foster good relations with the village as all the events and charity donations that they make includes the name of Burtle. They were booked to play at the Harvest Home and hoped that they would have more bookings in the village. They are looking forward to the future.

6 Closure of Meeting

There being no further business the Chairman closed the formal meeting and informal discussion was held over tea and coffee.

Richard Dallimore

Chairman Burtle Parish Council

Parish Council Chairman's Report 2021-22

1st April 2021 marked the fortieth anniversary of Burtle becoming a civil parish and having its own Parish Council although it had been an ecclesiastical parish since 1856. The new parish was made up of parts of the parishes of Catcott, Edington and Chilton Polden. The minutes show that items discussed at the first meeting were road safety, footpaths, noticeboards and village signs. As you will see from what follows in this report, the same topics which feature in our meetings today!

The first meeting of the year was held via zoom as, although we were still in lockdown, the essential business of the Parish Council had to continue. The Government Emergency legislation to allow virtual meetings ended at the beginning of May and we very cautiously returned to 'in person' meetings again. We did not meet every month for a while limiting meetings to when there was urgent business to discuss in an effort to limit contact and keep everyone safe.

All District and County Council staff together with staff from other bodies such as Environment agency, Natural England etc were still working from home for part of this year and this has generally resulted in slower response times to enquiries. Most site visits had been stopped and this has resulted in a backlog in dealing with the various enforcement issues and other breaches of regulations around the parish.

A few of the topics that we have dealt with during the year are:

Road Safety

A detailed review of road signs and white lines was undertaken by the Parish Council and submitted to the Traffic Engineer in October 2021. Around the end of the year, we were informed that it would be carried out in the new financial year as no more work could be ordered until after 31st March 2022. We are now nearly two months in to the new financial year and no sign of the white lines.

Speeding through the village continues to be a problem and some funds were identified to enable the Parish Council to purchase a Speed Detection Device similar to those seen in some surrounding villages. Burtle did have a SID on a regular basis as part of the Somerset County Council scheme but this ceased some years ago as apart of a cost cutting exercise. The hoops that Parishes have to jump through to purchase and install a SID are many. A detailed report of where we would like to locate the device and the type of SID that we wish to purchase was submitted to the Traffic Engineer in March but we are still awaiting approval before we can proceed any further. Again, we will continue to ask for a decision to enable us move forward with the project.

We welcome the continued attendance of the Police mobile speed unit as a deterrent to the many motorists who fail to observe the 30mph limit through the village.

Highways

The usual assortment of potholes have been reported to the Highways dept – some take longer to be repaired than others but through perseverance we usually manage to get them repaired.

Planning

The Parish Council has been consulted on four planning applications during the year as well as some amendments to the permission at the Burtle Inn site. It is good to see the two most prominent sites in the village finished at last. Both have had problems along the way especially the Burtle Inn site where sadly most of the original features have been lost.

Enforcement issues

Many Enforcement issues remain outstanding in the parish some dating back several years. We continue to monitor them and remind all the relevant agencies about these matters.

Sandpit

Sadly, Storm Eunice blew down some of the trees on the Sandpit. These were cleared and opportunity was taken to remove some of the paths which had become overgrown and seed the areas making maintenance easier. The small garden area by the bench has recently been cleared by volunteers and will be replanted. We continue to employ a local person to cut the grass on the Sandpit to maintain it as very pleasant local amenity area.

Fly tipping

This continues to be a nuisance. Covid restrictions meant that we were unable to hold our Annual Village Clean up but with the easing of restrictions our first for two years took place in March. A large pile of rubbish was collected by a band of volunteers who were rewarded with refreshments at the Village Hall afterwards.

Footpaths

There are still many longstanding footpath issues in the parish despite the efforts of our Footpath Liaison Officer. We continue to try to get them resolved.

Vandalism

There seems to have been a spate of vandalism recently. First 30mph signs were sprayed over. A car hit the bow bridge in Catcott Broad Drove and was

abandoned just around the corner in Burtle Road. The finger post at Black Bull Bridge has been knocked over and recently a vehicle has deliberately driven at various road signs in the area knocking them out of the ground. The bus shelter was also hit by a vehicle. All these incidents have been reported to the relevant bodies and it seems that other parishes in the area have been targeted too. The Parish Council has made repairs to ensure that the bus shelter is safe but more extensive work is needed.

Election

All Somerset Parish Councils held elections this May. Four of our existing councillors Sandra Bull, Julian Porter, Nathan Ponsillo and myself stood for re-election and were returned to office together with James Hedges who we welcome to the Council. There were only five candidates for the five seats on offer so no poll was needed.

One councillor Tony Duval did not seek re-election. Tony had been a councillor since 2013 and was a much valued member of the team. His thoughtful deliberations on matters will be greatly missed and we thank him for nine years of exemplary service to the Parish.

Report from Police

Over the past year the your local Neighbourhood Team have been busy across the beat area with lots of community engagement and crime prevention.

We have attended many E-Watch sessions which include Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators expressing any concerns they may have in their areas and working with the local beat team to tackle these issues. This can be a range of issues, such as fly tipping, aggressive animals, local neighbourhood disputes, anti-social behaviour and crime.

In 1 year we have had 919 Crimes reported to police across the whole beat area. Approximately 14 were from the Burtle area, these range from violence against a person which can include domestic assault, fraud, burglary, public order and threats.

The beat team have set up/re-started 2 community speed watch groups with another one in the process across the different villages.

We have conducted a couple of bike marking events (should you have a community event you would like us to attend with our bike marking kit please let us know)

We will also aim to attend the coffee mornings when shifts allow.

We have signed many farms up to farm watch or horse watch, if you would like to be signed up to this or know someone that would please make contact and we can arrange a visit.

Please make contact should any concerns be raised in the meeting.

St Philip and St James Burtle Annual Report 2021

Services

During 2021 we were able to continue our regular pattern of two services a month, one Holy Communion and one Informal worship. We also take part in joint services with other churches in the Polden Wheel.

At Christmas we once again displayed a life sized outdoor nativity scene in the Churchyard. We held a Carol service for the Polden Young Farmers Club and a community Carol singing evening around the nativity in the Churchyard and on Christmas morning a service of Holy Communion.

Churchyard

The boundary fence has been completed with palings fitted to the frame work left by the owners of the old school and gifted to the church. Once again, we left an area in the northeast of the churchyard unmown to encourage wildflowers and other wildlife., a few spikes of pyramidal orchids put in an appearance again and were protected from mowing. The long grass was mown and raked up in the autumn. We are grateful to volunteer who have helped with the maintenance of the churchyard., and also of course the Parish council churchyard support grant.

No building works have been undertaken but we were very grateful for the volunteers who washed down the internal walls which had become covered with black mould after the church was closed up during lockdown.

Social

We were able to hold some social events during the second half of the year, including a popular cream tea in the garden at Catcott Burtle Farm and this was also the venue for the start and finish a very well supported Classique Car run in August with over 50 cars taking part. We held a Harvest Lunch with more limited numbers on the Saturday of our Harvest Weekend and again this was well supported and in October we held a social evening and quiz at The Duck.

The churchwardens wish to thank all who have helped the church throughout the year, the ones mentioned above and also musicians, flower arrangers and cleaners etc. and all who support the church financially .

Burtle Village Hall - Chair's Report 2021

OVERALL VIEW OF THE YEAR

2021 was another Coronavirus disrupted and disappointing year!

The Burtle Village Hall had been forced into a second lockdown from 5th November 2020 and it did not reopen again in 2020. We started the year of 2021 in a third national Lockdown, after coming out of a Tier system. It was such a disappointing start to the year as we had planned to reopen the Burtle Village Hall on 4th January 2021. At this stage there was optimism as the vaccine roll out had started and we were looking forward to the New Year. However, it was a very long haul before Government restrictions lifted and we were able to reopen.

The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee continued to hold monthly meetings but all via Zoom, as was the AGM in April and the first meeting of the new Committee in May. It was not until June that we were able to meet in person in the hall where we welcomed three new people to the BVH Committee in person, making a total of eight Committee members. This included a new Treasurer, Secretary and Assistant Hall Manager. All three have settled in well to the Committee bringing different strengths and expertise. The Chair remained in place and there was a change of Vice Chair.

The BVH finally reopened in mid-April but only for a few rental groups who could comply with the restrictions at the time. Although further restrictions were lifted in May, it was not until July that Government restrictions were fully lifted and a few more rental groups returned. It was lovely to welcome back groups and to see the hall being used again. We were itching to start holding social events for the community and two took place in August. It was wonderful to see villagers and friends enjoying these events. A 'welcome morning' was also held to give Newcomers to the village some information about Burtle and its activities.

The long standing monthly Saturday Café Burtle restarted in September and the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity coffee morning was also held that month. Café Burtle and the Community Coffee Shop were both held in October too. We really thought we were on our way and back to a sense of 'normality' but the situation began to change once again. The 'Delta' variant arrived later in October with an increase of Coronavirus cases and more hospital admissions. So, once again events were cancelled late October and in November. A new variant 'Omicron' in December altered the landscape once again. The Government introduced new restrictions and all the lovely events leading up to Christmas had to be cancelled. Community events have been sorely missed in 2021 and it was the 'here we go again' that made a depressing end to 2021.

The financial situation continued to be worrying having had very little income for 2020 and now very little income in 2021. Our rental income for 2021 was only £2,457 – this in ‘normal’ times would have been approximately £6,000. Other income was only £1,000. At the same time, the maintenance of the Burtle Village Hall continued. The Management Committee has to ensure the hall complies with all relevant legislation and is up to date with all the necessary checks and assessments – whether the hall is open or not. All appliances have to be tested and serviced regularly by qualified personnel, and all equipment inspected and serviced under respective contracts. Once again, there were visiting rodents and the Pest Controller was a frequent visitor. All of this maintenance had to be paid for and scheduled. The hall also had to cover an increased cleaning schedule, and pay for the various licences that are required.

The biggest expenditure is the Insurance cover which is just under £2,000. The hall is very energy efficient due to the straw bales in the walls and the sheep’s fleeces in the loft but this does add to the Insurance premium, as it is classed as a ‘non-standard’ village hall. The second biggest expenditure is on the Utility bills – approximately £1,800. With increasing costs of heating bills, this is only set to increase drastically in 2022.

A lot of time was spent on sourcing and applying for different grants and support. We received a Government grant of £2,000 in February for the third national lockdown. We also received £500 from the Burtle Parish Council ‘for loss of income that would have arisen from the Parish Council’s use of the hall for meetings and events’ to cover both 2020 and 2021. We managed to obtain rate relief from Sedgemoor District Council and some other small rebates. The Management Committee runs the Burtle Village Hall 100 Club which adheres to the gambling rules and regulations, with a one-off yearly payment for a number and monthly cash prizes. This raises funds for the Hall – approximately £650 - and continued all through the year 2021. In May BVH was delighted to obtain a business support grant from Sedgemoor District Council which helped to relieve the financial pressure. Without these grants, the Burtle Village Hall would be in a very different place financially.

Financial Strategy

A formal Financial Policy which set out responsibility for the prudent management of Hall funds had been in place and this policy was updated in June 2021. It is the objective of the Burtle Village Hall Management Committee to maintain income at a level which ensures that basic running costs are met – this is approximately £10,000 per year. Finance is an item on every monthly Committee meeting agenda and monthly statements are produced for each meeting – transparency is considered very important. A change of bank was made in September 2021, moving to 24/7 online banking. The four accounts previously held with a high street bank have now been consolidated into one

online banking account. All invoices for payment are now brought to each monthly committee meeting and authorised. The Treasurer then sets up the payments with Unity Trust Bank but does not make the payments. There are four signatories with the bank and only when two of these four - randomly selected – have authorised payments electronically are the payments released. This gives protection to the Treasurer but also keeps the whole committee informed of income and expenditure throughout the year. This new system is working well. I would like to sincerely thank Jim Murray for all his hard work in setting up the new banking system and thanks also to Steve Allen who although no longer on the Committee continued to act as the link with the previous bank as he was still a signatory until the changeover was completed.

One of the most important issues in 2021 was to continue with a rigorous cleaning schedule – this meant high expenditure on cleaning but the Committee felt it was a priority for all our users. In February a ‘Fogging Machine’ was bought and this has been one of the best purchases made for the hall. We are delighted with its performance, how it enhances the cleaning, destroys any viruses and gives extra confidence to hall users. Due to its success several other village halls have followed our lead and purchased the same machine.

Behind the scenes this year there has been a considerable amount of work to maintain and improve the Burtle Village Hall, paid partially from the reserves built up from prudent housekeeping over the three years prior to the pandemic and from the grants received in 2020 and 2021. In April, the old, stained and badly worn flooring in the Bar was replaced with a new plywood base and new safety vinyl. It was a big project as all the big coolers and machines had to be disconnected and moved out of the bar to allow access. Stock was checked, the bar was deep cleaned, including all the shelves and glasses.

The Kitchen was also deep cleaned, including cupboards, fridges and freezers. In July the walls and skirting boards in the main hall were painted. Later the bar area, entrance and foyer were also painted. In August, the main hall floor was professionally cleaned and refurbished and the entrance and Kitchen floors were also professionally cleaned. This took a complete week but the results are spectacular and will hopefully last a long time. In September, a new lock was fitted to the front door as this had been causing trouble for some time and new keys were issued. In November, a new key safe for the kitchen key was installed and a hand rail fitted in the store room on the stairs. In December, a new till for the bar was purchased, as the previous one was causing problems and was ‘past its sell by date’. Likewise, a new Water Boiler for the kitchen is on order for January 2022, as the original water boiler has been causing problems and finally stopped working.

Hallmark is a nationally recognised Quality Standards scheme for village halls. It recognises good quality of management administration and practice and

ensures compliance with legislation relating to community buildings. The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee had achieved Hallmark One and Hallmark Two accreditation in July 2019. In addition to these Awards, Burtle Village Hall was also surprised and delighted to receive the 'District Hall of the Year' for Sedgemoor in 2019. The Management Committee applied for Hallmark Three early in 2020 but due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all visits and assessments were cancelled. The application stood for 2021 when external validation resumed. The Burtle Village Hall is delighted to report the achievement of Hallmark Three in July 2021 – the final award. It was a highlight of the year and I would like to thank the present BVH Committee and the previous Committee for all their support and hard work with this project. It has helped to maintain and improve all standards for the benefit of current and future users.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BVH 2020 and 2021 Committee members during this disruptive Coronavirus pandemic. I have nothing but praise for every one of them. They are all volunteers and the majority are in full time employment, including key workers, which mean they have great demands on their time, and yet they all give as much as they can for the benefit of the BVH and the community. It has been a constantly changing landscape and not easy at times having to respond to the restrictions, guidance and paperwork of the Government, ACRE, Community Council of Somerset, and our Insurers. Events have also been planned and then had to be cancelled which was frustrating.

In particular, I would like to thank Tracy Fear and Jayne Murray who are leaving the Committee at the AGM in April, although both will still be around to help and support. They have both served on the Committee since 2016 and given many hours of their time and much expertise. Tracy has held a number of positions including Treasurer and Bookings Secretary but most recently has held the position of Bar Manager. She has been a superb Bar Manager and along with Mark has stocked and run a truly friendly and successful bar. We will deeply miss Tracy as Bar Manager and it is a difficult role to replace. Tracy has also proved an excellent organiser for Events, coping in a calm, efficient and cheerful way. Jayne has been a tower of strength in supporting the work of the BVH Committee and has been responsible for all media aspects. In particular she produces the creative and informative monthly BVH Newsletter. This Newsletter was complimented during our Hallmark Three visit and assessment in 2021 as being an excellent village communication. The assessors were impressed it had continued throughout the lockdowns, albeit in digital format. Jayne has improved the BVH website and produced wonderful posters for information and Events. Both Tracy and Jayne will be sorely missed from the BVH Committee and we sincerely thank them all for their time, ideas, expertise, and sheer hard work!

The Burtle Village Hall would also like to thank Maureen, Jenny and Zac for running Café Burtle and to thank Heather for running the Community Coffee Shop. Let's hope we have a continued run in 2022.

Acknowledgements

The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee would like to thank the residents, family, and friends of Burtle for their continued support of the Hall. The majority of Hall bookings come from the Parish and local clubs, organisations and individuals who either live in the village or have links with Burtle. Unlike many village Halls, Burtle Village Hall does not receive regular grant support towards running costs and has to be self-supporting.

The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee also acknowledges the continued advice and support received from the Community Council for Somerset (CCS). Once again in 2021 we have appreciated the guidance, help and support of both 'Action with Communities in Rural England' (ACRE) and CCS – this has taken the form of numerous emails and information sheets with updates as the situation constantly changed. There have also been Zoom Webinars on various topics concerning the pandemic and the running of village halls which have been informative and helpful.

So, 2022 – Let's hope 2022 will be a more stable year with less restrictions and a much more positive outlook for us all. We all hope we can gradually return to a more 'normal' timetabling of rental groups and social events and that we can learn to live without the viruses dominating our lives in the community. The Burtle Village Hall is the social hub of the village and it has been sorely missed. We also need to return to a more secure financial footing in order to run the Burtle Village Hall without the financial pressures of the last two years, especially as it is unlikely there will be further national or district grants available.

Burtle Harvest Home Committee

The Burtle Harvest Home Committee are well advanced for preparations for the event to be held on August 6th 2022. As you are aware this event was originally scheduled for August 2020 but due to COVID lockdown was postponed until 2021 and then again to 2022. All being well nothing should hinder us this year. Tickets sales are going well with 224 booked for the Lunch, price for the lunch is set at £25.00 each which includes entry to the evening event. We anticipate 330 lunches plus the top table of 8 guests. Evening tickets are £5.00 each, under 16 is free. Having prudently retained funds from the last event and through many profitable fund-raising events throughout the intervening time we have a healthy bank balance. Fund raising events over the last few years have included

Turkey Suppers, St Georges Supper, Spring Lunch, Duck Race, Halloween and of course the regular meat raffle at Café Burtle.

Many of the services we require (marquee, catering vans, tableware, band etc.) were booked back in 2019 and therefore protected from recent price increase, however, we are expecting sponsorship and donations to be significantly down on previous events. I believe it was customary for the Parish Council to make a contribution to the Harvest Home and we would appreciate anything that the Council felt able to give us on this occasion.

As with previous events the day will comprise a parade starting from the Duck, followed by a short service and then the lunch. We are hoping to have a number of stalls in the field to provide some amusement for the guests after the lunch while the marquee is prepared for the evening event with live band and hog roast. Due to health and safety the marquee will need to be positioned in a different place this year which will present some challenges, not least re-routing the water supply.

The marquee also needs to be collected in the Sunday which will necessitate clearing up before noon on the Sunday so helpers will be required.

Here is hoping that the weather will be kind to us and we can all enjoy a well deserved village celebration.

Burtle Babies

Burtle Babies started back following the Pandemic break in September 2021. It was a bit of a shock to find that most of our Babies had now started School and over the last few months we have been building our numbers with new babies.

With the hike in Hall Rental we have struggled financially but have now secured a donation from The Polden Post to help us through. Numbers are gradually increasing and we now have a great group of parents/carers who appreciate the social offering of our unique group within The Polden Hills.

The Bbc - Update for Burtle Parish Meeting 2022

The Bbc - Burtle book club - has now resumed normal service, having been disrupted by covid during the past two years.

We are meeting again monthly, kindly hosted by The Duck, and as always we discuss the book we have all read in the previous four weeks or so. Our loans are still provided by Street Community Library Partnership, and our member pay a small sub to cover the reservation fees.

Like all reading groups, our aim is to challenge keen readers to explore genres, authors, subjects and styles that they might not otherwise experience. Our members are from Burtle and other Polden villages. We currently have three or four spaces and anyone interested can contact Jenny Duval for more information on jtduval.burtle@gmail.com