

BURTON-CUM-WALDEN PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

The Council

Jane Ritchie, Chairman
David Dent, Councillor
Andrew Landau, Councillor
Sally Sahin, Councillor
Victoria Whitehead, Councillor

Chairman's Introduction

This report reflects a lot of hard work by my fellow councillors, other parishioners, and the Clerk. We nominated our Emergency Working Group for an award and were pleased they were shortlisted. Richard Nolan has made significant progress with the registration of Parish land, with some success despite the extreme tardiness of the Land Registry which his report refers to.

Constructive working with NYC, YDNPA and an architect is underway, to consider the possibility of converting the school building into Robinson House for Affordable Housing for local people and essential workers. The school was originally founded by H.T. Robinson of Edgley as the Robinson Memorial Church of England Primary School, and it has been agreed therefore to revert the building back to its original name.

Jane Ritchie, Chairman

The Council has had a productive year. Councillors have also continued to be involved with local matters, contributing to consultations and meetings of various organisations such as the Cemetery Committee, and following the progress of the new Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan.

Committees and meeting

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

- Aysgarth Cemetery Committee – Cllrs Sally Sahin and Victoria Whitehead
- Upper Dales Health Watch – Cllr Jane Ritchie
- Village Hall Committee – Cllr Sally Sahin
- Emergency Working Group – Cllrs Andrew Landau and David Dent
- YLCA – Cllr David Dent and the Clerk, Richard Nolan

West Burton Village School

Residents will be aware that in March this year (2026) North Yorkshire Council took a decision to close the School. This will mean that when the closure takes effect, the School buildings will revert to the charitable trust that has owned them since the School was founded in the 1880s. Though the Council itself does not own the buildings, it has taken a keen interest in how they might be re-purposed after the School closed. A working group composed of Councillors and some other individuals and called "Friends of Robinson House" has been formed to co-ordinate these efforts. The working group would welcome any thoughts from residents on re-purposing the school.

Planning applications

The Council was asked to comment on nine planning applications during the year. Planning applications can be accessed online through the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority website:

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/planning/view-planning-applications/

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 Yorkshire Dales National Park 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

- **Parish Land.** The Council has continued to maintain various areas of land it owns in the Parish, including the Green. It is also still overseeing the painfully slow process of securing registration of the Council's title to the three remaining areas of unregistered parish land.
- **Play area.** North Yorkshire Council has continued its schedule of inspections of the play area on our behalf. The Council has continued to maintain the play area, and some work may be required on the swings shortly.
- **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.
- **Waterfall.** The Council is aware of littering by the Falls, and some antisocial behaviour. At the Council's request, North Yorkshire Council has installed a new litter bin in the area of the Falls and will maintain it. The Council hopes this will reduce litter by the Falls.

Roads

The Council has liaised with North Yorkshire Council (the Highways Authority and owner of public roads in the Parish) about roadworks and the state of the roads, particularly in connection with the ducting work being undertaken by Quickline Communications Ltd in preparation for laying a network of fibre-optic cables in the Village. The Council is aware that these works are a source of frustration to some residents, and it is doing what it can to mitigate the problems.

Motor mower

The Council has purchased a new motor mower, thanks to some very generous donations to cover the cost. The Council hopes that this new purchase will continue to keep the Green in good order, and that maintenance costs for the mower will now be reduced.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Local Plan

The new Local Plan has been published in final draft and is awaiting sign off from the Minister. The new plan contains quite a few changes of emphasis on affordable housing and other matters and sets out policies that will be put in place to regulate all future developments and planning applications. It can be accessed through the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority website on:

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/park-authority/living-and-working/planning-policy/local-plan-2023-40/

Village events

Members of the Parish Council are involved with the Fundraising Group and have contributed to various events during the year including the Community Teas and the very popular Quiz Nights. We would like to thank the Group for all their hard work.

We would also like to thank everyone involved with the organisation of Bonfire Night and the traditional activities around Christmas. In particular, we are very grateful for the efforts of Peter Wheeler, who has organised the amazing bonfires and firework displays in November for a number of years now, and David Dent and his team for the beautiful Christmas tree and lights. This year we had an additional well-supported and delicious community tea before the switch-on of the lights as well as the popular punch and mince pies provided by the Fox and Hounds Inn.

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. With the agreement of the owner, we have over the last few years sent a donation of £25.00 each to the two Air Ambulances, by way of thanks.

Winter gritting

We would like to thank Mr Edward Dent for his continuing efforts keeping the Parish roads clear during cold weather.

River pollution

We would like to thank Mr Neil Smeeton who represents the Parish on the Stop Ure Pollution group (“SUP”) which monitors pollution of the River Ure and its tributaries. The Parish Council made a donation to SUP as its work benefits the Parish and its residents. The Parish Council has again been in correspondence with Yorkshire Water regarding discharges from the West Burton sewage works into Bishopdale Beck and has received further confirmation that an upgrade of these works is being considered.

Finances

The Parish Council has decided to increase the Precept to £7,800.00 for the financial year 2026/27. This represents a 3.36% increase from the 2025/26 Precept of £7,400.00. The Council Tax for a property in Band D (middle range) will go up by £1.36 as a result of the increase in Precept. The Council is aware that no increase is welcome, but general inflation (the Consumer Price Index) has been at that level (over 3% per annum), and the Council is not immune from the effects of this inflation.

A summary of the accounts up to the end of the financial year can be found at Annex A to this report on the Parish Council’s website at www.burtoncumwalden-pc.gov.uk .

Council Website and Email

In order to comply with new regulation, the Council has moved its website to a gov.uk domain:

www.burtoncumwalden-pc.gov.uk

and created a new generic email address for the Council:

clerk@burtoncumwalden-pc.gov.uk

Retirement of the Chairman

Jane Ritchie has been Chairman of the Council for 19 years. She will stand down as Chairman at the May 2026 meeting of the Council, though she will continue as a Councillor for the remainder of her term into 2027. Mrs Sally Sahin (Councillor) has agreed to become the new Chairman of the Council, and we are very grateful to her for agreeing to take on this role.

Richard Nolan, Clerk
7 April 2026