

Burrington Parish Council Newsletter - March 2024

and Invitation to

Annual Parish Meeting

8th April 2024

Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held at Burrington Parish Rooms on Monday 8th April 2024. We hope as many people as possible will join us for refreshments from 7pm, followed by the meeting at 7.30pm. As with all our meetings, there will be the opportunity to comment on and raise queries about local matters. If you are unable to attend, please feel free to contact members of the Parish Council directly if you wish.

The Parish Council website - <https://burrington-pc.org.uk> - contains an archive of minutes and accounts together with links to other useful local information such as church services, public transport and the Parish Rooms. Noticeboards at the bottom of Rickford Rise, outside the Parish Rooms, in Rickford village and opposite the Langford Inn are also updated regularly.

Newsletter

We hope you will find this an interesting and informative update on the activities of the Parish Council over the last 12 months.

Parish Maintenance

Our village orderly, Pete Marshall, keeps the parish tidy, including hedge cutting along the Burrington/Rickford Lane twice this year. He also maintains some footpaths and bus shelters around the parish.

The burial ground is maintained to an excellent standard by Jeff Martin, who mows the grass and keeps the area tidy and free from litter.

We have been lucky to have Duke of Edinburgh Award participants helping in the parish, working on keeping litter down and footpaths clear, and are grateful to them for their hard work. As our insurance will not cover anyone litter-picking in the Combe (because of the absence of a pavement), that area remains a problem.

Fly tipping in the parish also continues to be an issue. North Somerset do come and remove rubbish reasonably quickly once it has been reported, and in some problem areas have fitted CCTV to try to catch/deter offenders.

Over recent weeks there have been problems with rainwater drainage, particularly in Lower Langford and along the A368 in Upper Langford. The Parish Council requests drain jetting from North Somerset after almost every meeting, and will continue to do so. We understand that at present the council does not have enough money to carry this out frequently enough and to a satisfactory level.

Planning Matters

The Parish Council reviews all planning applications submitted in the parish and liaises with the neighbouring parish of Churchill and Langford on proposals in Churchill that are likely to be significant for residents of this parish. Over the last year there have been further proposals for substantial housing schemes in Churchill raising concerns about drainage and traffic generation in particular.

As North Somerset Council is unable to ensure a five-year supply of developable land for new housing, the district remains highly vulnerable to planning decisions being taken on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. Increasingly North Somerset Council seems to be agreeing to proposals that are contrary to the Local Plan, rather than face the costs and effort involved in contesting planning appeals, especially as it has a continuing shortage of planning officers.

In this parish, planning applications are few in number and mostly for relatively modest proposals such as residential extensions or conversions/changes of use of agricultural buildings. The only site for more than a couple of homes is the former Blagdon Garden Centre site, part of which is in Upper Langford and part in Churchill parish. Permission was granted on 2nd July 2020 (19/P/1963/FUL) for redevelopment and conversions to create 12 dwellings. Progress with these proposals has been slow because of the need to address drainage and ecological issues, but pre-commencement conditions now seem to have been discharged.

The most important proposal in recent years will be a forthcoming planning application by Yeo Valley Ltd for redevelopment of the sites of the former Burrington Inn and Burrington Garden Centre. Representatives of Yeo Valley Ltd have met with members of the Parish Council and addressed a Parish Council meeting on 6th November 2023. The aims of the redevelopment are to enhance the environment by removing some of the existing buildings and to provide improved facilities including a café, shop, visitor information centre, recreational activity centre, and some overnight accommodation at this important gateway to Burrington Combe and the Mendip Hills National Landscape Area.

A *Screening Opinion* has been requested from North Somerset Council to indicate whether they will require a full *Environmental Impact Assessment* (EIA) to be submitted in advance of a planning application. No decision has yet been published on this request, but it is likely that a full EIA will be required. The Parish Council will monitor progress with the planning application when it is submitted and engage with Yeo Valley Limited, North Somerset Council, the Mendip Hills team and other stakeholders, to achieve a successful outcome. The Parish Council will also seek to ensure that parishioners are fully informed by means of publications, meetings, the web site and Facebook page, as detailed proposals emerge and that there will be opportunities for the views of parishioners to be heard.

Progress on the North Somerset Plan (2024-2039) has been slow, but a pre-submission (regulation 19) draft has been agreed for submission to the Secretary of State and examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Parish Council has commented on successive stages of plan preparation and may participate in the Public Examination of the Plan. There are no major proposals within this parish, but it is important to keep an eye on proposals in neighbouring parishes and the district as a whole.

Parishioners may also have noticed the publication of proposals for major changes to the A38/A368 junction at Churchill Gate. Under the guise of North Somerset Council's *Bus Service Improvement Plan*, it is proposed to replace the existing junction by a large roundabout with signal-controlled approaches in all four directions, bus lanes on the north and south A38 approaches, a bus gate for access to Dinghurst Road and new bus stops north of Ladymead Lane.

Public consultation on these proposals took place between 23rd February and 5th April and North Somerset Council will publish its response by 3rd June 2024. Full details are available at this link: <https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/BSIPChurchill/consultationHome>. The Parish Council has commented that these changes will affect parishioners and it is surprised that they are being presented as a *bus service improvement plan* when the only buses passing through the junction are the hourly Falcon service between Bristol and Plymouth, the 125 service (Weston-Winscombe-Churchill-Wrington) 5 times a day and the 62 service (Weston to Bridgwater College) once a day. Are the costs and disruption involved in the proposed roadworks justified by improvements in traffic flow? Could simpler changes, for example in traffic light sequencing, reduce traffic queues in Dinghurst Road?

Burrington Combe Public Conveniences

The Parish Council have been managing the toilets for 12 years and the council appreciates the work the Husher family carry out, keeping the facilities clean and tidy on a daily basis. In the last year, Bristol Water have issued the council with a water bill covering a number of previous years. However, the total amount has been halved and has now been paid following some negotiation. The council is grateful that some of the local activity groups continue to support with the running costs. This year we have added to the donation post a "QR Code" sign which has helped the overall income during the year as so many people do not carry cash. The Mendip Hills and the AONB have, in the past, supported with a grant and we are in the process of applying for a further grant which will prevent the council putting the costs on to parishioners. These facilities are well used, but with maintenance of the building and acts of vandalism, rising electricity costs and water costs the council is finding it harder to maintain.

The Village Defibrillators

The defibrillators are kept on the "Emergency List" by being checked on a regular basis. The council thanks Matt Hartley for checking and notifying the Ambulance service that they are operational. There are two in the Parish; one in the telephone box in the village square and one on the external wall of the Plume of Feathers. During the year one was serviced, and a battery replaced. The council replace the Pads on a regular basis as they only have a short shelf life.

Churchill and Langford Minibus Society

Burrington Parish Council is pleased to support the minibus society with a small financial contribution each year. Most days during the week, the Society organises trips from the villages to various destinations such as supermarkets and garden centres. They now also run a Hospital Transport Scheme to help people get to their appointments, and assist with delivery of medication from the Pudding Pie Lane Surgery.

Police and Crime

The parish is covered by PCSOs based at Nailsea Police Station. Two Burrington councillors met with them during the year to discuss problems and policing in the parish. Happily, we live in a relatively low-crime area. Currently resources are insufficient to provide a permanent or regular presence, but we have been assured that the neighbourhood team is being expanded.

Accounts

The 2023-2024 accounts are currently being audited and will be available on the website and to view at the annual meeting.

An increase in the Parish Council precept to £8000 has been necessary this year due to rising costs. However, based on a rough calculation per inhabitant, Burrington still has one of the lowest precepts compared to similar parishes.

100 Years Ago

Looking at the old record books and the older minute books, it was noted that in 1924 there was an issue with footpath stiles being dangerous, and this was the main discussion for the next 4 meetings. Remarkable to think that 100 years on all our old stiles have just been replaced by Kiss Gates due to North Somerset applying to the Hinkley Point Fund. We hope they will last for another 100 years!