

**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
APRIL 2016**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Parish councillors

Parish Council elections were held in May 2015, and 12 councillors were elected to the 19 available seats. I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman, Alan Samson, for his support over the last year. We were very sorry to lose Cllr Ian Foster who died last June. Cllr Edwina Glover resigned from the Council in January. However, during the year, the Council has co-opted three councillors – Jackie Slater, Ekta Kaur Ross and Pauline Poole – and we were delighted to welcome them onto the Council.

Council staff

The Parish Clerk, Haydn Selwyn-Jones left the Council in May 2015, and the current Clerk, Sheridan Edward, joined the Council in September. We'd like to thank the Locum Clerk, Jonathan Holder, for all his work in managing the Council in the interim period. The Assistant Clerk, Jacqui Mansford, retired from the Council after 18 years, and we'd like to thank her for her long service to the Council. We are also pleased to report that a new Assistant Clerk, Tabish Wazir, and Finance Manager, Alexa Collins, started in January. The Office Manager, Colette Whelan, is currently on maternity leave, and will be returning part-time in May.

The grounds and George Pitcher Memorial Ground continue to be managed by Jim Wotherspoon and Tim Garrett, who have served the Council for 24 and 15 years respectively.

Finance

The Council received a very critical internal audit report for the 2014/15 year. The Locum Clerk, Jonathan Holder, and members of the Policy & Resources Committee worked hard to resolve the issues, and the new Clerk, Sheridan Edward, has continued to make improvements to the procedures and processes. The internal auditor has made several visits during the year, and with a new administration, including a new Finance Manager, we look forward to receiving a much more favourable report this year.

The Council has been undertaking a comprehensive spending review, and already identified many areas for savings. Most of the savings have been from cutting back on unnecessary overheads, and renegotiating service agreements, and energy contracts. To date the projected savings for the coming year total c.£40,000. These have allowed us to protect the service we provide to the community.

The Council will not be raising the precept for the coming year. The tax band D equivalent rate will therefore remain at £101.85 for 2016/17. Of the £101 that the average tax payer pays: £33 towards Council overheads and staffing; £25 towards paying off the loan taken out for the building of the new Burnham Park Hall; £20 towards parks, playgrounds, streetlights, public toilets, and other amenities; £16 towards supporting the business of Burnham Park Hall as it grows and becomes self-sufficient; £6 towards rebuilding Council reserves; and £1 towards subsidising the George Pitcher Memorial Ground.

Bishop Centre s106 funds

The Council has been managing the disbursement of several funds given by the developer, Land Securities, to offset the impact of the development.

1. The Playground Fund has been used to replace all the play equipment at the Hag Hill Playground, and the remaining £3,500 is being held for any future maintenance and improvements at the playground.
2. There has been significant progress with the fund established for traffic calming measures around Hag Hill Lane. Following positive feedback from residents to a consultation on possible schemes, a brief has now been submitted to Transport for Bucks for a stage 1 feasibility study. It is hoped that this will be completed in June, and a final scheme implemented thereafter. The Council will also be received another £13,500 from a separate s106 fund, held by the County Council, to help towards the cost of the work.
3. The Land Securities Committee has been working hard to make improvements to the High Street, with the High Street Improvement Fund. Schemes include an hour free car parking; refurbishment of the Jennery Lane toilets; new planters and benches; rebranding of the High Street; a fund for renovating shop fronts; accessibility aids to improve access for the disabled; and a deep clean of the High Street. Around £55,000 remains in the fund for further improvements. We would like to express our thanks to the members of the High Street Improvement Working Party for their efforts. We are glad to report that many of the working party have now joined the Land Securities Committee, and we look forward to working with them. We would also like to thank Burnham Health Promotion Trust for their generous contribution to the refurbishment of the toilets, and Burnham Access Group for their input on accessibility aids for the High Street.

Burnham Park Hall

Bookings continue to increase in Burnham Park Hall, with total income increasing by £12,000 in 2015/16 and c.£14,000 in 2016/17.

We would like to thank Louise Reid, General Manager, and all her team – Clinton, Cory, Nikki, Sheila, Colin, Denise, and the rest of the staff – for all their hard work throughout the year. We would also like to thank Cllr Perry Davies and the members of the Burnham Park Management Committee for their support during the year.

We are pleased to say that due to increased bookings, the former manager's flat is being converted into two more meeting spaces. The building work is being completed this week, and the new rooms are available for hire from the beginning of May.

In recognition of the community's support, we have launched a £4,000 community events fund, to subsidise events for local residents.

The Hall continues to host a wide range of events, classes, and private functions, including regular band nights; pilates, yoga, soft play, Zumba, after-school clubs, and many more. We also organise several larger events – including the St George's Day beer festival, taking place this Saturday – as well as the Christmas Fayre with the Lions Club; Burnham Rocks and many others.

Parks, playgrounds and amenities

We are pleased to report that the Council was successful in a grant application for £12,000 to improve Burnham Park. The money will be used to resurface the whole of the park, and we are working with The Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches and Burnham Health Promotion Trust on further improvements later in the year. With the support of the Rotary Club, we have moved the community orchard to a sunnier spot in the park, and we hope it will now thrive.

Our Groundsman, Jim Wotherspoon, has been working hard to improve the grounds around Burnham Park Hall and the war memorial, and we would like to thank County Councillor Lin Hazell for her grant towards the landscaping costs, and Davies Brothers Nursery for their donation of plants for the war memorial, and Obelisk on the High Street.

The Council has also been fundraising for five public access defibrillators for the parish. We are pleased to announce that we are on track to provide all five in the coming months. We would like to thank the Rotary Club for their pledge of two defibrillators; Maidenhead Community First Responders for their advice; and May's Chocolate House for their Easter raffle. We would especially like to thank all those members of the public who made donations towards the project.

George Pitcher Memorial Ground

The Council is pleased to see that the football pitches at the George Pitcher continue to be well-used and are almost at capacity during the weekends. The ground continues to be very-well maintained, as well as the trim trail and nature park, and we'd like to thank the groundsman, Tim Garrett, for his continued work. A long-term licensee will be leaving the Pavilion in June, but we are hopeful of finding a new tenant for the building.