

BURTON OVERY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report for the year ending 31 May 2014

This has been a challenging year in which the Parish Council has had to overhaul its working practices and account keeping to ensure effective and accountable administration and compliance with the increasing regulation and demands brought about by the Localism Act 2011 and the changing landscape in local government. The council has had to become an employer, monitor and regularly update its governing documents and substantially increase the precept to enable it to cope with increasing demands on its time and resources. I am pleased to report that the Council's internal auditor has confirmed that subject to two recommendations which will be acted upon, he is satisfied that the Council's system of financial control is adequate and working satisfactorily.

As the Government and County and District Councils look more and more towards Parish Councils to help deliver services and play a greater role in community projects and local initiatives, I believe Burton Overy Parish Council is rising to the challenge in a manner entirely appropriate to the size and nature of this village. I am very grateful to my fellow councillors and the clerk for the readiness and willingness to keep up to date, attend training and liaison events, forge links with other parish councils and get involved on a practical level to get work done and projects completed within the village. All these matters are time consuming and many hours are given on a voluntary basis to keep the Council functioning effectively.

Keeping abreast of developments has been an important part of the Parish Council's work over the past year. More challenges lie ahead and in particular the changing approach to planning and development. In this respect the Parish Council has begun a process of gathering information and taking advice on the implications of Neighbourhood Planning Schemes.

One of the most important areas the Parish Council gets involved in is responding to planning applications. This year has seen the renewal of the Prowind UK application to build a large wind turbine between Carlton Curlieu and Burton Overy and an application for a similar sized turbine on Grange Farm. The Parish Council objected to both applications and invested a great deal of time and effort understanding and responding to them. To ensure that parishioners were well informed about the applications a walk was organised to the proposed sites which was attended by the local MP and the County and District Councillors. A public meeting was also arranged in the village hall. This was well attended and had the support and input of the County and District Councillor. The Prowind UK application was refused and the Grange Farm application was withdrawn.

This year has seen some good foundations laid for the Parish Council's future work and I am confident in the Council's ability to meet the challenges ahead. I would like to express my thanks to my fellow councillors for all their hard work and support over the last year. Grateful thanks also to Kate Barker who has been the council's clerk since October 2013 and has worked extremely hard and effectively in getting the Council's accounting and administrative processes in good working order.

Fran Brown

21 May 2014

