

# **Burley Parish Council Strategy May 2019 to May 2023**

## **Introduction**

The previous objectives for the period May 2015 to May 2019 are reviewed and a brief report made as to what was successful and what did not meet the agreed objectives, together with the reasons for not achieving an objective. The same headings as in the previous strategy are largely used for the new strategy to take us to the next Council election in May 2023 (in order to make comparisons with the last strategy and the new one.)

## **Vision**

**Burley has a healthy society with a Pre School, a Village School, a thriving church, village stores/Post Office, a range of shops and many societies catering for different interest groups. BPC will do all it can to support the village, its environment and businesses as far as our limited budget will allow.**

**We need to meet the aspirations of the next generation: A vision for a contented, diverse village, proud of its heritage but looking to the future. We need to help make Burley a better place for the next generation with a good demographic balance, with young people able to live in affordable houses.**

## **Objectives**

### **1. Continue to improve the Village Environment and Amenities**

Respond to Villagers' requests e.g. drains, verges, pavements, vegetation clearance. This has been successful thanks to the HCC Lengthsman scheme whereby HCC grants money to the Parish Council for work to be carried out by our Lengthsman, Jon Narey and administered by Neal Martin. We benefit because we can respond quickly without bureaucracy slowing up action and the County benefits because it is more cost efficient for them. This scheme may possibly come under costs savings pressures from County over the next 4 years and Burley Parish Council (BPC) will seek to top up the County grant from our share of the Council tax. In addition BPC, led by Veronica Johnstone and Neal, liaises with other Authorities who are helpful to the village, Hampshire Highways, NFNPA, Forestry Commission and the Verderers.

In this throw-away society we will strive to keep our village clean and clear from litter by working with other local authorities, businesses, and organising the twice a year village litter pick.

The War Memorial Fund which Villagers kindly donated in 2009 is administered by BPC and used to clean the Cross or repair it on a regular basis. The War Memorial is now classed as a Grade 2 listed monument. BPC proposes that in 2020 a new Donations Appeal will be made to replenish the Fund. We have continued the programme of replacing the old village benches with new oak ones (4 replaced in last two years) together with the maintenance of the milestones. We were successful in persuading the various authorities that the iconic trees in Pound Lane should be replenished and moreover, fenced.

As part of our vision for the next four years we will consider setting up a working party with local businesses to look at the presentation of the village centre with a view to improving the general view. Possibly this could cover the provision of hanging baskets which has been suggested by the WI.

Objective 6 of the previous strategy was Provision of a Play Area which we know from the past is a popular objective. We have identified appropriate finance and companies that provide safe play equipment but what we still need is land. So although BPC has not yet achieved this objective we should continue to seek solutions from private landowners to make this happen.

(Burley Village Heritage Trust and the future of the Wathen Bartlett Club is dealt with in Objective 3 below)

## **2. Roads and Road Safety**

Work with Hampshire Highways (HH) to ensure our roads in and around Burley are maintained in a safe manner. Relations with HH are very good and we have been able to keep potholes under control and some roads have been tarmac re-dressed around the village. The replacement of the Holmsley A35 road bridge will cause quite a lot of disruption but BPC is a consultee to ensure the village voice is heard over resultant road closures. (Portfolio holder for roads and safety, Neal Martin)

Speeding by motorists causes suffering to animals on the roads and is a danger to people in the village centre. BPC has worked with organisations to improve signage and campaigns to limit accidents with animals. Reduction of the speed limit in the village to 20mph is still an objective. Consideration is being given to acquiring or borrowing a speed warning indicator.

## **3. Burley Heritage**

Some progress has been made with a draft Burley Village Heritage Trust (BVHT) being set up with a number of individuals volunteering to become Trustees, Discussions led by Peter Russell are ongoing to form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

A number of sites for a Heritage building have been examined including the Old Garage property and the Wathen Bartlett Club building (should that become available for the village). Planning permission has also been granted by NFNPA for a “new build” barn like structure adjacent to the NFDG car park. These alternatives have been approximately costed and discussions have taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund but all involve large sums in the range of £800,000 for a new build to £2,300,000 for the Old Garage site. Finance would be a big challenge.

The future of the Club is under consideration by its Members. BPC has reiterated its desire to help to retain the site for the village.

The objectives are now to decide on the site for a Heritage Centre, develop further the business plan and seek finance for the project. BPC would also like the building, whichever is chosen, to provide some Parish functions such as a Parish office, records archiving and small meeting facilities.

## **4. Emergency Plan**

Our thanks to Tony Bracey and Ian Mason-Smith who have stepped down from the post of Emergency Co-ordinator. BPC, led by Peter Egerton is currently updating this important scheme. Currently we have 35 people who have requested help in an emergency and 30 helpers who have agreed to cover their areas in the village. Although we have not had very severe winter weather recently, we have been able to successfully test the system during the last two winters.

## **5. Affordable Housing**

BPC has had an objective to facilitate more affordable housing. It has taken quite a time to organise a modest first step but with the NFNPA’s help two three-bedroom houses will be built in the next year for rent (NFNPA will be the landlord) on land acquired from Mrs Dixon, adjacent to the car park. There are other possibilities where land may become available for this important objective to be achieved and BPC continues to investigate those possible opportunities.

## **6. Broadband**

We were successful in getting two broadband cabinets at the Cross and Lester Square which has improved reception for some houses within 1km of the cabinet but until houses are connected by optical fibre rather than the current copper phone wire, broadband speeds will not improve. BPC

will continue to lobby HCC and Open Reach for improvements to the system for our village as well as making better provision at Burley Street.

#### **7. Planning**

BPC, led by Robert Clarke, continues to work to protect the village from unsuitable planning proposals while not opposing sensible schemes which do not infringe conservation or other NFNPA policies. A healthy debate has been carried on with the Planning Authority seeking to promote policies for conservation that are practicable; sometimes a fixed objective to preserve all buildings, however decrepit, is not sensible.

BPC has had influence on the monitoring and future strategy for Wetland Restoration by participating in Planning Appeals and recently by being a member of the Wetland Strategy group looking at the future. We will continue to monitor plans by the Higher Level Stewardship organisations who are responsible for the new Wetland Strategy

#### **8. Finance**

BPC has sought to be a prudent manager of the village precept (that part of the Council Tax that pertains to Burley) by not increasing the precept since 2017. We have managed to supplement the precept with grants from HCC and NFDC. The Central Government grant which used to contribute about 5% of the BPC income has ceased but despite this we have continued to support deserving village causes e.g. Scouts, Youth of Burley, Little Deers, and Citizens Advice Bureau. We shall continue to support our organisations albeit with limited resources.

#### **Consultation**

**The village is invited to help the Parish Council to set objectives and the means of carrying them out. Public Participation, which precedes all of our monthly Council meetings is often a lively affair and everyone is invited to participate by coming along at 6.30pm every second Wednesday each month.**

**Burley Parish Council May 2019**