



=====

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

This annual report summarises the activities of the Parish Council over the past year ending 31 March 2024.

Governance

- The Parish Council held six meetings in the past year – May, July, September, November, January and March. These meetings were well attended, with questions and comments from the public at most of them. The minutes of the meetings and associated documents are available on the Parish website <https://www.bucklandnewtonparishcouncil.org.uk/>
- Andrew Foot took over the role as chair at the AGM in May 2023 and Mick Ames became Vice-Chair. The Council has ran with the full complement of nine councillors.
- All Councillors are required to maintain an online Register of Interests. The register is available to the public on Dorset Council's website A-Z of Town and Parish Councils.
- Clerk and Councillors have attended training to keep up to date with best practise and legal matters
- Parish Plan - following consultation with parishioners via a questionnaire in 2022, the Parish Plan has been updated. The plan covers areas of concern raised by parishioners that fall within the remit of the Parish Council and will form the basis of the strategic planning for the next few years of the parish council.
- The Emergency Plan, General Risk Assessment and Policies have been reviewed and updated.
- Risk Assessments for Parish Assets have been put in place and been carried out by Councillors.
- Appointed Councillor Manny as a trustee to the United Charities
- Answered parishioner questions and queries relating to over grown hedges, dog fouling, litter, muddy river, erosion of verges, no electricity, fly tipping and tracing burial plots
- Responded to consultations on Dog related Public Spaces Protection, Dorset Council Housing Strategy, Dorset & Wilts Fire & Rescue Authority and Leisure Strategy
- Cllr Crouch attended quarterly meetings with DAPTC (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council) to keep up to date with current topics and share best practice.

Finance

- The main income for the Parish Council was the precept £ 12,075. A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment of £ 3981.26 was received. This money cannot be used for the day to day running of the Parish Council, but can be used on projects to enhance/improve facilities within the parish. Some of the CIL money has been used to pay for the boundary fencing on the Parish Paddock. A donation of £ 4400.00 was received from the United Charities of Buckland Newton towards the resurfacing of the all-weather track.
- The main expenditure for the year has been on the Clerks Salary, Repairs and Maintenance (repairs and replacement of metal estate fencing around the play area and along the road opposite the school, dragon's teeth, grass cutting of the parish field, hedge cutting and parish pavilion upkeep) and Insurance of Council assets.
- The Parish Council has continued to pay a donation of £ 150.00 towards the cost of hosting the Post Office in the village hall and paid for the village website.
- The precept form for 2024/25 financial year has been submitted.

Planning and Neighbourhood Plan

- The Parish Council has consulted and commented on 20 planning applications
- Concerns from parishioners were reported to enforcement.
- Neighbourhood Plan - The current Neighbourhood plan is considered out of date. There are three choices available, either to do (1) Full blown revision of plan, (2) Light touch to plan, (3) do nothing. Cllr Baker has consulted with Dorset Planning Consultant and Cllr Haynes. Both have advised to wait until the new local

plan has been completed. Councillors discussed the options and weighed up the pros and cons, it was agreed that at the time it was a low risk to have an outdated plan, but this would be reviewed after the next annual full council meeting.

Highways and Transport

- Highways have been contacted in regard to flooding issues, speeding issues, pot holes, road signs, faded road markings, blocked gullies and drains and requested resurfacing works.
- Following parishioner concerns over large lorries using the small lanes, the Parish Council has been successful in getting Highways to agree to signage on the A3030 junction pointing the Pulham industrial site out.
- Speed Indicator Device (SID) - Positive feedback has been received about how the SID has made a difference to vehicle speeds; many residents have commented on seeing the vehicles braking as the SID flashes 'Slow Down'. These comments are backed up by the data taken from the SID, which records speed information. Average speeds have reduced across all the SID location sites compared to that gathered by Highways Dept prior to looking into the viability of the SID device. Thank you to Cllr Ames, who maintains and moves the SID between locations.
- The Parish Council worked with Dorset Community Transport to ascertain feasibility of restarting bus service following concerns raised by parishioners about lack of public transport. As only a couple of parishioners confirmed they would use the bus regularly, it was suggested that they contact Buckland Newton Community Car scheme who would support them.

Communications and Events

- A monthly report has been put in the Lydden Vale News
- Parishioners have been updated with information from Southern & Scottish Electricity Networks (SSEN) on being prepared in the event of disruptions, Environment Agency on preparing for flooding, Police Reports and information from Councillor Jill Haynes.
- Cllr Ames has regular meetings with the school and is liaison for the Police.
- A public meeting was held to appraise and consult with parishioners on the proposal from FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Action Group)
- Notices have been put on the Community Facebook Page
- The Annual Parish Meeting was held on 18 May 2023. Chris Loder MP was the guest speaker who also presented awards to members of the Youth Club. Reports were given from various groups and organisations within the village.
- The Parish Field and Parish Pavilion hosted a village get-together to celebrate the King's Coronation
- Councillor Manny and Cllr Crouch ran a jewellery stall at the Fete
- Litter picks were organised in May 2023 and March this year. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who turned out to help with the recent litter pick around the village - your efforts resulted in many bags of rubbish being collected. The next litter pick will be arranged in the autumn

The Parish Council would like to thank the following people who have taken on voluntary roles for the Council:

- Flood Warden - **Mr Doug Morse and Mr Kevin Morse** - keep an eye on the sand store at the parish pavilion, providing/allocating sand bags to parishioners and putting out the flood signs when required
- Rights of Way Liaison Officer - **Mr Stephen White** - Stephen can be contacted with issues regarding rights of way and liaises with Dorset Council on matters/issues raised.
- Parish Council and Community Websites - **Mr Jeremy Collins** who designed and manages websites, making sure that it is accessible to all and meets the required accessibility regulations.