

Parish Council update report: April 2022

Thanks are passed to everyone who helped with the Litter-Pick in March – particularly Hannah and Adam Griffiths who kindly coordinated the event again. A large amount of litter was collected and hopefully everyone can help to ‘keep Buriton tidy’.

Thanks are also recorded for all the hard work being undertaken by Denise and Lee Lloyd and all the other volunteers who are arranging the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee festivities. There will be fun for all the family from Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th when a big photograph of everyone in the village will be taken outside the church at 11am. It is hoped that everyone will come to that – and to many of the other activities that are being arranged. Details will be circulated to every household as well as being on the community website and the Buriton Life Facebook page. If you are able to help in any way please contact Lee or Denise: Leelloyd66@outlook.com; denise@thedirectorygroup.co.uk

Volunteering for community activities such as litter-picking and Jubilee events helps retain the sense of community spirit that has always been so strong in Buriton. Many other places in the country lack this sense of community – but it’s been here for decades and we must try to make sure that it continues long into the future.

Some new volunteers are needed to help keep the village show going. Can you help? The current organisers (Buzz Cousins and Ian & Maggie Johnson) will support all new faces! For most of the year there’s little to be done, with most activity in the run-up to show-time in August. Without some new volunteers, this year’s Show could be the last! Surely that mustn’t happen? Please contact Buzz to offer some help: 07526 757639 or cousinsjulien@gmail.com.

Parish Councillors are other volunteers who give time to try to ensure that Buriton remains a special place. In the last few months significant amounts of time have been spent on planning applications and representing the community at meetings of the Planning Authority in Midhurst. For three consecutive months (February, March & April) we travelled there to speak about significant proposals. Helpful support was given by Jonathan Jones and the Village Design Group: more volunteers who give time for the community.

The National Park’s planners refused the application near the Greenway Lane roundabout for 60 holiday lodges, a re-charge centre for electric vehicles and spaces for shops, cafes and about 125 parking spaces. They felt that the proposals were contrary to national guidance as well as many local policies – including the very sensitive ‘pinch-point’ part of the International Dark Skies Reserve.

So, amongst other things, the existence of our wonderful star-studded skies helps to discourage inappropriate development. Here again, ‘everyone can do their bit’ to make sure that Buriton remains a special place: one of the best areas in the UK for observing the night sky with views not only of star constellations and planets, but also of the neighbouring Andromeda galaxy.

Light pollution not only stops people seeing stars but also disrupts wildlife whose life-cycles depend on the dark. Unlike some human effects on the natural world, light pollution is reversible: pulling curtains and switching lights off are very effective and, if outside lighting is essential, use ‘shielded’ lights which direct light downwards to minimise glare and glow (switching off when not needed).

The Parish Council's work to help wildlife is likely to receive more help from experts. We were already one of only six places chosen by the County Council to help pollinators – but two applications to the National Park Authority have also recently been approved.

The focus is to allow strips at the edges of the recreation ground to return to a more natural state, with native wild flowers – with opportunities for engagement and learning, too. This could become part of a wider network for wildlife: including family gardens, farm field margins, local nature reserves and other land owned by the District and County Councils such as road verges.

The 'cut & collect' mowing of the wild strips on the recreation ground in April should bring a number of benefits: by taking the cuttings away (rather than leaving them on the ground) it should reduce the build-up of a 'thatch' of cut grass, keep nutrient levels low and create bare ground for plants to regenerate from seed. This has been shown to be a good way of maintaining biodiversity. It's envisaged that this special cut will take place annually, in addition to a community 'Hay-Day' in September: a very popular event last year. At other times these wild margins will be left to grow long again.

There has been more progress on our Climate Change work, too. As well as buying the Thermal Imaging Camera for use by households in the parish (reported elsewhere on the website), changes to the village hall are due to be made in August with new double-glazed windows and doors. Other energy-efficiency measures and solar panels are being considered, with the possibility of providing Electric Vehicle charging points in the future. And the Council is pressing Housing Associations to provide heating and insulation benefits for their properties in the parish.

As reported in the past, we have arranged for EHDC dog wardens to visit regularly and they now issue £100 Penalty Notices for failing to pick up after dogs have fouled. At least one resident has had to pay this penalty. There are plenty of bins in the village for dog waste in sealed bags – but no excuses!

There's an extra reason for everyone to help prevent this anti-social habit because cows can be infected with a parasite from dog faeces (Neospora) which then causes weak calves and abortions. Once infected, cattle remain infected for life and pass it on to their female offspring. This means that many farmers choose to destroy infected animals. This has happened in this parish recently, affecting cows which graze in the valley along the Hangers Way footpath. Dogs are the hosts of this parasite and so everyone should always deal with their dog poo properly.

Parish Council meetings have now returned to the Upper Hall part of the Village Hall. Details are always on the noticeboard in the High Street as well as on the community website. Minutes of meetings are also on the website (www.buriton.info).