

Boughton Parish Council

Chairman's Annual Report to the Parish, 28th April 2025

The Parish

The electoral role current 1st April 2025 shows some 1881 electors in the area administered by the parish council. This is a slight reduction on the number last year of 1890 due to the transfer of 99 Boughton Rise houses to Kingsthorpe Parish Council area balanced by completion of a slightly lesser number of Buckton Fields dwellings.

The Council

The Parish Council normally meets on the third Monday of each month. In the year 13 meetings were held. The year opened with one vacancy. It now has a full complement of 11 members, of whom some have "special responsibilities": Roy Adams, Aaron Awan, Nasir Chatha (finance), Karen Fletcher (trees), Andy Gibson (police), Rosie McDonnell (footpaths and flowers), Carolyn Penny (schools liaison and street lighting), Simon Phipps (vice chairman and quarries), Tracey Redwood, Jon Sambrook and John Shephard (chairman). The four year term of the Council ends on 30th April 2025. As nominations closed for the new Council eight positions are filled. As a result there will be no election on 1st May and the new Council will have opportunity to coopt up to three members. Those retiring in addition to myself are Roy Adams, Aaron Awan and Nasir Chatha. All others are re-elected together with former member and chairman Lorraine McEllin.

At the start of the year the Council's clerk was Ciara Wanstall. She took maternity leave from September and returns in July. We have welcomed Maria Sadler as our interim clerk. We also employ Mark Frost as parish lengthsman (a C17 term meaning someone who keeps a length of road or canal passable and tidy). We have seen Mark make a difference in this his first year of service.

Finance

The Council opened the year with a healthy balance. The 2024/5 precept was £60,000 and this is retained for the current year. This is a Band "D" figure of £48.04, significantly below the district average of £95.10.

NWRR and traffic calming for Boughton.

The road is being built in two parts. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has completed the eastern section which we can all see. Persimmon is building the western part. The road is planned to be completed towards the end of the year and opened in early 2026. It is well recognized that additional traffic will arrive at the Harborough Road roundabout and attempt to pass through the village as a result of the new road opening. For that reason as promotor

of the road, WNC is required to agree with the parish council a form of measures to alleviate the problem. The measures must be in place before the new road is open. The Parish Council has been in discussion with WNC since December 2021. Parishioners representing all streets of the village came together as a “task and finish group” and met twice with the WNC lead officer in early 2022. Options, including Moulton Lane closure, have been suggested. In February WNC put forward its latest proposals which are fully described on the parish web site and will be discussed at a parish meeting on 19th May.

Buckton Fields Development

The build out of 1103 dwellings was expected to take 10 years or so. Some 950 are now complete. Bloor and Martin Grant Homes have between them completed Phase 1 (376) and most of Phase 2 (380). Taylor Wimpey are now constructing 262 as Phase 3 together with the community building. There is ongoing discussion as to the fitting out of the hall and the contribution of the parish council to the cost. A number of Buckton Fields residents have put themselves forward to help in the running of the new facility, which is very helpful.

Buckton Fields Phase One administration

Owners of properties in Phase One are members of Buckton Fields Management Company Ltd. The company is being run by the developers. Residents have been eagerly awaiting the company calling a general meeting at which current nominee directors will resign and resident directors will be elected. From then on resident directors will operate the management company which maintains open spaces on the estate. In my 2024 report I recorded that I was assured that this would take place in that year. It is certainly overdue, in my view.

Buckton Fields School

The school has pupils in years R, 1, 2 and 3. They are now being taught in temporary accommodation. The school building is to be demolished and a new structure will be ready in September 2026. I am delighted that the new building will also have accommodation for early years children; this is something that I have been pressing for as WNC member for some years.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL of c£2+m is paid by the housebuilders in Buckton Fields, of which the parish council receives 15%. In the course of the year the Council scrutinised bids from the three principal charities in the parish and allocated to the trustees of the village hall £180,000 towards a substantial refurbishment, to the trustees of the playing field £84,000 for new play equipment and to the PCC £36,000 for church rooms refurbishment. All these projects are expected to be completed in 2025. Further CIL receipts are informally allocated to projects in Buckton Fields

Planning – Development control in the parish

The views of the Council are sought on all planning applications in the parish. The total number in the year was 20, a slight increase from 16 of the previous year. Of note was the withdrawal of an application in respect of Jacksons' Field.

Planning - WNC Local Plan

On its creation in April 2021 WNC inherited local plans from the three district council predecessor authorities. It is now in the process of producing a single plan to run to 2041. The change of government policy required WNC to find some 11,000 additional dwellings. The revised draft plan is anticipated to be published for consultation in September.

Planning - Northampton Planning Policy Area

It is a feature of all local plans that different planning policies apply to urban and countryside areas. In very general terms, development within urban areas (usually by infill and on brownfield sites) is encouraged whilst building in the countryside is discouraged. Those drawing the new plan have to make a decision about Boughton. Is it urban or countryside? The suggestion being made is that the current built environment of the village, with Buckton Fields, is regarded as urban and the remainder countryside. The Council considered the matter in two May meetings; its formal response is published on the web site.

Community Governance Review

Periodically (typically every 10-15 years) a district council must review the boundaries of parishes. A review by WNC took place and was implemented with effect from 1st April 2025. The only change was to transfer Boughton Rise, comprising 99 houses, to Kingsthorpe Parish Council area.

2025/6

We anticipate that the NWRR and traffic calming measures will be in place in 2025/6. In addition the community facility in Buckton Fields will be open for business. The Council intends to facilitate a form of youth provision to operate out of the new building. Also we will see dramatic enhancements to the village hall, pocket park and church rooms, together with the opening of a permitted footpath over land towards Bunkers Hill.

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Chairman
April 2025

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