

# DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Annual Report for 2024-2025

Jane Brentor – Chair.

# Processes and meetings – not as boring as it may sound!

- We have a new website and logo – more attractive, easier to use and more representative of our approach
- Our three-year strategy which focusses on working together with the community – is available on our website and shared widely
- We have a trained tree officer – our Admin Officer – who takes part in tree warden events and liaison re planning applications
- We've had a clear out and a clear up! Leases, contracts and our store.
- BWSCA lease decisions
- Flood group – special thanks to our flood volunteers and wardens
- Gully clearance – what a difference this has made!
- Work on the Neighbourhood Plan – thanks to all involved.

# Use of our time

- I can't avoid an issue that has an impact on the use of our time during this Civic year and in the past.
- The decision to defend and the subsequent dismissal of claims heard in the Employment Tribunal in January this year has taken significant councillor and officer time
- The Council has necessarily had to hold parts of our meetings in confidential session.
- I consider that this may have deterred people from becoming councillors.
- However, the claim has been defended and protected £23.5k of local taxpayers' money and means we can now move on to more exciting projects (more about these later!)

Never-the-less 2024-25 has  
been a year of many  
achievements and we have so  
much that I want to talk  
about!

Springtime at the  
Beacon

Daffodils looking  
wonderful – with  
newly planted bulbs  
just showing their  
heads!



# Making our Parish even more beautiful!

- Coronation grant trees – Charlton All Saints, the Beacon and the Memorial Gardens. Special thanks to Susan and all our volunteers including Duke of Edinburgh students.
- Bulbs, bulbs, bulbs – the Cemetery, the Memorial Gardens and the Beacon. Special thanks to so many gifts left in the Coop and the Bull.
- Woodland Trust saplings – the Cemetery and again thanks to volunteers and primary school pupils. We really hope that these can grow to become beautiful hedging as long as vandals and walkers do not damage them.....
- Planting of lavender cuttings along the Cremated remains path at the Cemetery – thanks to gifts from the Friday group
- Beech hedging on the boundary of Moot Recreation ground.



# The Cemetery

Edge of contemplation  
area with snowdrops  
coming up



# ....and more about keeping the Parish looking attractive.

- Our Parish Steward has cleared weeds, cut back overgrowth, managed small pot holes and much more – again thank you to Susan for making sure we have a strong relationship with Steve.
- Complaints about the quality of bin collection and grass cutting over the year have resulted in a much-improved relationship with our provider and the results are clear this year – thanks to persistence from Mel.
- We have recruited two new litter pickers and welcome Nick and Tom to our team but also want to thank Max and Elle for their work in the past.
- Construction work in our Cemetery has resulted in a new area for quiet contemplation with a new planter, steps and bins.



# Money well spent

- A little can make a big difference...
- Trafalgar School art students are to paint a mural on the shelter in the Memorial grounds – together with a Wiltshire Council Youth grant, the Parish Council has contributed £1k
- Signs to keep alive some of the Parish history have been funded by the Council and fitted by the Downton Society to some of our footpaths and alleyways
- Training on use of a defibrillator has been funded by the PC and provided by Community Heartbeat – and the 4 local defibs have been maintained or replaced.
- Annual plants have been funded to fill the planters in Moot Lane.
- A contribution was made to Charlton All Saints church to enable its grounds to be used as a meeting hub.

# Making good use of our Parish facilities

- As well as providing attractive environments for residents and visitors, our open spaces have been used by local groups – the Greens for the Cuckoo Fair, the Memorial Ground for DoE excursions, football practice on the Moot Recreation ground as well as several open events.
- Our bus shelters are cleaned by the Parish Council and, this year, we have included cleaning of the shelter roofs in the contractual provision.
- Some of the posts on the Borough greens have been replaced; the iron railings to the Memorial Ground have been repainted and the bridge railings have been cleaned (thanks too to the Downton Society)
- Our public toilets have been well maintained by our local cleaner seven days a week morning and night – thanks to Richard Watts.

# Celebrations and local engagement

- We helped to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D Day landings in June 2024 – thanks to Malcolm Dean and Brian Morris
- We had an open evening to celebrate and thank our many volunteers for all the hard work they do (and hopefully to encourage even more people!)
- We had a Summer celebration to recognise the new play equipment in the Moot Recreation ground – which was a bit less wet than the original event!
- We had a well attended meeting of our footpath group together with the Downton Society and met lots of new footpath users
- We celebrated Christmas with Father Christmas and his elves – and of course mince pies and mulled wine. Thanks to a volunteer from the Baptist Church Larder for turning on the tree lights.
- We have representation on many local groups and organisations – for example the Millennium Green, the Moot, the schools, the Cuckoo Fair, the Sports Association, the Memorial centre and the Allotments.

Our lovely  
volunteers!

Fruit trees planted  
in record time!





# Thank you to lots of people

- I have mentioned many people already but here are a few more.....
- Our local police officer Marc Evans for attending our meetings or sending reports
- Richard Clewer our Wiltshire Councillor who comes to all our meetings
- Bryan Morris for his organisation of the Remembrance Day parade.
- Paul Leo for his work with the Towns Grant use
- Our officers – Mel Camilleri our Clerk and Susan Parsons our Admin Officer both of whom work over and above their hours with great loyalty. Without their commitment and enthusiasm, we could not achieve so much of the things I have mentioned tonight
- Our councillors – all of whom give their time without pay and for the benefit of the Parish. Amongst so many other things they have fairly patiently sat through long meetings, commented on planning applications and monitored the safety of our playgrounds. However, we are too few.....

# The future is definitely interesting!

- The Towns grant (I know Downton is a village....!) We have had some money to help promote our local centre and a website to do this is in development which will be used to showcase local events, encourage local improvements and promote community engagement.
- We have some money from local housing development:
  - £37,691 early years provision**
  - £16,045 Community Facilities**
  - £14,220.41 Open Spaces**
- This is a huge and exciting opportunity for the Parish – some of it has already been allocated but it's a lot of money and we want local engagement in prioritising how it is spent.
- We are coordinating possible uses and plan to hold an open event to gain views.
- Why not think about becoming a Councillor and joining us in future projects?

Come and join us – to find out how,  
talk to us via our website or give me  
a ring, I'd love to hear from you.