

Chair's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 21 April 2026
Review of the Past 12 Months, Presented by Ellie Buckton, Chair of Strumpshaw
Parish Council

Good evening everyone, and a warm welcome to our Annual Parish Meeting. I'm Ellie Buckton, and it is a privilege to serve as Chair of Strumpshaw Parish Council.

It's lovely to see so many of you here — residents, friends, and representatives from our local community groups. Your presence reflects the strong sense of community that makes Strumpshaw, Buckenham and Hassingham such special places to live.

We also hope you've enjoyed the refreshments this evening. We're pleased to support a talented local baker, Dreamy Bakes, whose treats have added a welcome touch to the meeting.

As we look back over the past year, I want to begin by thanking everyone who contributes to village life — whether through volunteering, supporting local projects, or simply taking an interest in what happens here. Your involvement makes a real difference.

1. Parish Council Overview

This year has brought several changes to the Parish Council.

We said goodbye to three long-serving councillors:

- Paul Kitley, who stepped down in April 2025. Paul played a key role — alongside Michael Green — in negotiating the purchase of the now BAWT-owned section of Buckenham Wood for public enjoyment. His contribution will be appreciated for many years to come.
- Will Faulkner, who resigned in January 2026. Will chaired the Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group, dedicating many hours to guiding the plan through its review. Thanks to his leadership, we now look ahead to the neighbourhood plan referendum on 7 May, and we do hope you will turn out to vote.
- Michael Green, who stepped down at the end of March 2026. Michael worked closely with Paul on the Buckenham Wood negotiations and was instrumental in establishing the Buckenham and Associated Woodlands Trust (BAWT), where he served as the Parish Council-appointed trustee. His work in securing this important community asset and shaping its long-term stewardship leaves a lasting legacy.

In August, we welcomed Brian Jones, who has already brought thoughtful insight to our discussions. With these recent departures, we are now seeking two new volunteers to join the Parish Council. If you are interested in supporting your community or would like to learn more about the role, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Acknowledging Our Current Councillors

My thanks also go to our current councillors, who oversee a range of parish responsibilities throughout the year — from the allotments to our section of Buckenham Wood, and other areas requiring regular liaison and attention.

Councillors also support the Community Hall, maintaining close links with the Hall Committee and helping to ensure the hall continues to operate effectively.

2. Volunteers & Community Partners

Strumpshaw benefits enormously from the time and effort of volunteers who support the parish in many different ways.

Community Hall Committee

Our sincere thanks go to the volunteers who manage the Community Hall on behalf of the Parish Council. They oversee bookings, maintain the building and grounds, and organise social events that bring people together. Their work ensures the hall remains a well-used and valued community space.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Alongside Will Faulkner and Michael Green, we would like to thank:

- Jenny Hill
- Bob Hunt
- Simon Rump

for their commitment throughout the two-year review process. Their hard work has brought the neighbourhood plan to its final stage, with the referendum now set for 7 May. We are extremely grateful for the time, care, and expertise they have contributed, and we hope residents will support the culmination of this important community project.

We also appreciate the guidance of our consultant, Rachel Leggett, whose support has been invaluable.

SAM2 Speed Awareness Message Sign

We are grateful to Bob Hunt, who continues to manage the SAM2 speed awareness sign — relocating it, downloading data, and analysing trends to support our road safety work. We are very pleased that Carlos Inacio has stepped forward to support Bob.

Environmental Volunteers

Our thanks also go to:

- BADCOG and Alasdair Fraser, who help us maintain the parish-owned part of Buckenham Wood.
- Bob Cameron and his team at The Shoulder of Mutton, who look after the Community Orchard on our behalf.

Their work keeps these important green spaces well cared for and accessible.

Local Business Support

We appreciate the continued support of Pages Garage, who sponsor the emptying of the dog waste bin on Mill Lane and generously disposing of old tyres removed from Buckenham Wood.

Brundall Men's Shed

We are also grateful to Brundall Men's Shed, who have supported several community action projects this year with their practical skills and willingness to help.

3. Community Action Projects

The Parish Council has continued to progress several community action projects, many of which have been long-standing aims.

Community Use Noticeboard – Mill Road

We were delighted that the trustees of the Strumpshaw Trust awarded a full grant to fund the new community noticeboard on Mill Road. Our thanks also go to Brundall Men's Shed, who constructed the noticeboard for us.

Reinstatement of the Long Lane Trod

This long-awaited project has been completed thanks to grants from:

- Broadland District Council
- The Adnams Community Trust
- County Councillor Andrew Proctor

These contributions covered the Parish Council's £7,000 share of the £14,000 total cost, enabling the scheme to progress and improving safety for pedestrians.

Village Gateways

We are preparing to install two sets of village gateways to support our efforts to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian safety. We are grateful to Brundall Men's Shed for agreeing to make the gateways, and to County Councillor Andrew Proctor for contributing £1,500 towards the Parish Council's share of the costs (£2,850).

Buckenham Wood – Working Group and Future Vision

This year, we formed a Buckenham Wood Working Group to review the proposed woodland management plan and develop a shared vision for our section of Buckenham Wood. We are grateful that BADCOG, Alasdair Fraser, and Cheryl Grace from Lingwood & Burlingham Parish Council have kindly agreed to support councillors in this work. Their ecological knowledge and practical experience will be invaluable as we help shape the long-term stewardship of this important local habitat.

Closing Remarks

This past year has shown the value of working together — councillors, volunteers, community groups, and residents alike. Thank you for your support, your time, and your continued interest in the life of our village.

We look forward to the year ahead and to continuing our work on behalf of the community.

And now, I'm pleased to hand over to our local community groups and district councillors for their updates.