



Blockley Parish Council - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Chair Jonathon Bryan, Report 2024-25

Welcome all.

The benefit of taking minutes serves to not only hold us accountable but also remind one what's happened and been said, so rather than simply producing a carbon copy of last year's report structure, it's served to demonstrate not only where we have had continued challenges but, as importantly made steps forward whilst simultaneously considering what we can be grateful for from the year that has passed.

I personally reflect on the last year immensely grateful to have served a second year as first amongst equals in the capacity of Chair of the council. It's an immense privilege and honour I hold dearly as I also continued in the capacity of finance lead. Along side me has been District Councillor Clare Turner serving as Vice Chair, our Clerk and RFO Nikki Holt, Maintenance Officer Steven Woods and Councillors Eleanor Thorneycroft, Chris Leach and Tom Bradley.

I must pause here to pass on our thanks to Tom for his near 7 years' service to the parish in councillor capacity and chair of the St Georges Hall Management Committee, as he steps down in the wake of a successful County election campaign. I look forward to your continued support and collaboration in the years to come.

We pass on also our thanks to Lynden Stow who now steps away from County Council, noting here his contributions in securing significant funding for the Parish over the years, including this years' extensive road resurfacing in Blockley, to follow on from prior schemes from Northwick to Broad Campden and throughout Paxford, which is to name only a few of the significant schemes and support offered to both ourselves and neighbouring parishes over the years.

We welcome also new councillors Andy Turton & Jez John from Paxford and Chris Palengat from Blockley who sadly could not join us here this evening due to prior travel commitments made before being co-opted to council. Tackling the gauntlet of Planning, Communications and Personnel respectively for all, is both fortunate and encouraging that we were able to find them all such pivotal roles within the council so soon after them joining!

We take a moment also to thank Councillors Charlie McKinnon Little, James Pargeter for the time on Council serving the Parish wishing them and their families all the best for the future.

Special thanks as always go to Clare for her support in District capacity, Steven Woods for his continued commitment as our Maintenance officer and to Nikki for keeping council on the straight and narrow, working tirelessly to do so. Of note the staffing consultation this past year has externally verified the need for additional resource and investment amongst our employee base. I'm delighted that as a result of Councils action following this report that we can welcome Charlotte Bullock in Adminsitration Assistant capacity to help ease the burden upon Nikki. I look forward to working with the Personnel committee this coming year in further support of our team from a finance perspective, to address pension reviews and other commitments required to look after and retain the team who deliver the resolutions of council so diligently.



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Chair Jonathon Bryan, Report 2024-25 Continued

Financially the year has been a positive one, prudent planning and pragmatic decisions for the year ahead I feel gives us agility to adapt to the needs of our '10th Largest Parish in the country'. If it often hard to 'zoom out' and consider the scope of the size of task we have in front of us each year.

Significant bodies of work are underway to preserve and maintain our churchyard memorials, best look after our people and deliver a seemingly evermore important Neighbourhood plan as the country and this county's increasing development needs will undoubtedly impact our parish in the not-so-distant future.

Whilst we continue to face the need for a new Cemetery, increasing requirements and costs to maintain listed monuments in the churchyard, the issue of aged dry-stone walls (even with having an expert dry-stone waller within our ranks!) We have made strides in terms of deeper understanding and increasing knowledge base with procured local expert services to advance our endeavours in these fields.

To also note is the successful transition of Youth club provider to Stow Active, our thanks go to Ria and the team for stepping into the fray and delivering not only a great service that parishioners enjoy but also great engagement with us to continue to best shape the service.

We continue to hope parishioners see and experience the good work we can achieve for our community. I feel it's a great honour to give back and help shape, protect and maintain our Parish. So much so that we hope others may feel inspired and honoured themselves to join our ranks and bring their relevant expertise and passion to the community to help us do more, with more.

Whilst this call to action always extends to all corners of the Parish, it would be of particular delight to welcome councillors for co-option from Ditchford, Aston Magna and Draycott

Councillors are all volunteers. There is so much we can achieve when we are united in service to our community and to support our neighbours.

I thank everyone here for your continued efforts and service, while council are a group of people tasked with delivering for our people, it takes engagement and commitment from the broader community and we're always working to broaden that reach, step by step.

I look forward to us working together alongside parishioners to deliver on more objectives and projects, further driving engagement and developing our community for the next 12 months and beyond.

Cllr Jonathon Bryan, 15th May 2025



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Finance Report 2024-25

With a frozen precept the key budget impact of the year turned to an external staffing review which highlighted the need for additional resources to operate more efficiently and best support both existing employees and parishioners alike. Cost centre deficits helped account for investments out with of approved reserves expenditure, but the end of year closed with approve expenditure yet to be billed which should be factored into budget tracking for the FY 25-26.

Income Summary for 24-25 shows a surplus of 9% vs budget totalling £11,804.87 owing to Deposit account interest, higher than budgeted Father Brown income, Cil Monies and Burial income (always unbudgeted).

Administration had and will continue to see ` . Surplus of members expenses due to lower elected membership plus a previously secured 3 year website management and fewer meetings requiring hall rental offset other excess spend on cost centres relating to subscriptions (early payment for GAPTC 25-26), stationary (procuring offer on printed cartridges) & phone and broadband (inclusive of contract overcharge refund allocation to office reordering to accommodate assistant clerk).

Parish Grounds services closed with a surplus on additional grounds care & grounds contract owing to FYE billing overlap.

Youth & Recreation carried a surplus due to non-requirement of playgrounds maintenance for the year noting the spring still pending replacement for Churchill close rocking springer with insurance payout received, discount on play area inspection due to early award incentive, overlap of Youth providers and lack of senior session attendance resulting in limited billing and a £3.5k surplus on ad-hoc events due to scheduling conflicts preventing additional term break sessions from running.

Burial Grounds repairs and maintenance ran a 17% surplus due to FYE billing overlap.

Grants despite a carry-over from PFY and adopting prepayment in required cases, a 27% surplus was the end position with open grants yet to award. Further evidence to more closely monitor awards/approved spends in advance of Q4, if fully allocated budget would only run

Staff & Training - following a much-needed staffing review and the adoption of assistant clerk resources, despite a 33% excess on pay, the £15k reserves allocation was not required and resulted in deposit funds accruing further interest with the additional resource budgeted for FY 25-26 and precept request. Continued YOY surplus in training for members continued while staff training exceed budget by £832 resulted from the staffing review and 121 consultations for the proper officer/clerk/RFO.

Financial year end saw a net surplus of £13,600.16 inclusive of a net positive VAT position of £5,438.87 owing to refund phasing.



Blockley Parish Council -ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Finance Report 2024-25 Continued.

Whilst the statement of accounts demonstrate the opening balance and receipts matching payments and closing balances totalling cashflow of £308,828.67, the current account balance as of 31st March totalling £35,658.82 still represented a further unpaid £20-£25k of approved expenditure. This encompasses Parking consultation fees, approved Churchyard Ground works and Parish-wide tree survey quoted works. The latter had quotations approved for payment from a £16k reserves transfer not yet required owing to the positive current account closing balance. With this in mind council may consider a prudent £10k reserves transfer for proposal at June's meeting.

Reserves Position. Noting a potential £10k transfer and unspent pre-approved Personnel pot of £15k, future consideration to retain Personnel reserves for staffing & pension review and surplus funds transfer into Tree survey approved works with unallocated balances being considered in June accordingly, earmarked reserves and deposit account balances are as follows:

Churchyard Wall re-build £20,000
 Land Acquisition for new Cemetery £50,000
 Churchyard Monuments £20,000
 Personnel £15,000
 CiL £1,406
Total: £106,406
Deposit Account balance: £149,431.00
Additional Surplus to allocate: £43,025.29

Moving into FY 25-26 with a strong commitment to invest into projects and personnel, the precept sees an 11% increase to mark a commitment to the people serving the Parish, facilitate increased grants expenditure and administrative costs whilst continuing provision of our youth club service, ad-hoc recreational events and maintenance of parish grounds and assets.

13 April 2025 (2024-2025)

Blockley Parish Council Summary of Receipts and Payments Summary - Cost Centres Only

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments			Net Position +/- Under/over spend
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	
01 Income	122,085.00	133,889.57	11,804.87 (9%)			0.00 (N/A)	11,804.87
02 Administration		1,944.49	1,944.49 (19444%)	13,516.09	14,332.36	-816.27 (-6%)	1,128.22
03 Parish Grounds Services			0.00 (N/A)	37,096.00	36,018.41	2,077.59 (5%)	2,077.59
04 Youth & Recreation		570.83	570.83 (57083%)	20,700.00	15,566.55	5,133.15 (24%)	5,703.98
05 Burial Grounds			0.00 (N/A)	6,000.00	4,958.80	1,041.20 (17%)	1,041.20
06 S137 Grants			0.00 (N/A)	4,000.00	2,893.55	1,106.45 (27%)	1,106.45
07 Staff & Training			0.00 (N/A)	33,475.75	44,595.19	-11,120.44 (-33%)	-11,120.44
NET TOTAL	122,085.00	136,405.19	14,320.19 (11%)	114,787.84	117,366.16	-2,578.32 (-2%)	11,741.87
Total for ALL Cost Centres		136,405.19			117,366.16		
V.A.T.		5,163.82			10,602.89		
GROSS TOTAL		141,569.01			127,969.05		

Cllr Jonathon Bryan, 15th May 2025



Blockley Parish Council

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Youth and Recreation Report 2024-25

Finances

The Youth and Recreation budget for last year was £20,700 and actual expenditure was £15,556, £5703 under budget, which leaves some scope to expand our Youth Activities. This will be explored in more depth this year.

Youth Club

Our previous provider Aspire to Aspire ceased youth club provisions in July 24.

We publicised our invitation to tender and after our selection process we acquired our present provider Younity Youth.

They provide junior session (yr 3-6) and a senior session (yr7-).

The Juniors are going from strength to strength, with a weekly average last September of 14, to a healthy average of 28 in March, with over 30 children on the register.

Unfortunately, there are only two seniors at present, who usually attend the junior session to help out.

Therefore, the aim is to maintain continuity as the juniors progress to build up the senior section

Summer Camps

We ran 5 days of subsidised summer camp last year run by Cotswold Active, which were attended by around 30 children from the parish per day.

We have another camp booked for the end of this month. run on the same basis and anticipate arranging another summer camp again this year.

ROSPA

Playground safety checks are carried out in April by ROSPA who provide very detailed information.

Their findings were then checked by our contractor Greenfields who did not advise any work requirement at the time. An ongoing maintenance contract is an option being explored.

Cllr Chris Leach, 13th May 2025



Blockley Parish Council

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Burials Report 2024-25

Maintenance

The composting/recycling area in the cemetery has been cleared to facilitate more efficient disposal of waste material. Waste bin arrangements have been improved in both the cemetery and graveyard.

Other work in the cemetery includes, the installation of a new maintenance gate, a pedestrian gate with fence surround and repair of two sections of dry stone wall. Additional tree and clearance work has also been carried out by Thomas Fox our grounds contractor.

A survey of the graveyard monuments has been carried out and there is a significant amount of work required. The next phase is completing a faculty application with the Diocese with the help of Rev. Dana Delap, a Stone Mason and Surveyor. The emphasis will be on safety, rather than full restoration. In the meantime we have liased with our insurance provider and warning signs have been erected.

Annual Tilt Test

This was carried out on 19th June 24. One cross needed to be laid down and edging stones on 48 other graves were removed or laid down.

Burials Income

24/25	23/24
£4745	£1535

Burials Expenditure

24/25	23/24
£4958	£450

The burial income has increased significantly because a price review was carried out the previous year to bring our prices in line with other parishes. The amount of maintenance tasks carried out is reflected in the increase in costs.

Burial Capacity

Burial plots remaining	4
Cremation plots remaining	10

The acquisition of a new burial ground continues to be a very high priority for the council and investigations are ongoing with input from a Chartered Surveyor with a view to acquiring a new burial ground.

Burial Applications

We are still facing some problems with applications being outside the memorial policy and artificial flowers continue to be placed on graves. However, such sensitive issues are still being policed very carefully.

Personnel Report for Annual Meeting by Clare Turner

Councillors

We started the year with Councillor Mackinnon-Little chairing the Personnel Committee, but I took over as an interim chair after he stepped down from BPC. I'm pleased to say we recently acquired a new Chair for the Personnel Committee in the form of Cllr Chris Palengat who, unfortunately, can't be with us today. During the year we also gained two new Councillors (Andy Turton and Jez John, both based in Paxford) and said farewell to Councillor James Pargetter. More recently we have lost Cllr Tom Bradley, following his election as a County Councillor on 1st May.

We currently have 4 vacancies and would be delighted to recruit councillors living in Northwick, Draycott and Aston Magna, so those areas can have better representation.

Staffing Review

There has been lots of activity around Personnel across the year linked to a staffing review. Prompted by the realisation that the Committee was not really functioning effectively and that our Clerk was routinely working unpaid hours and not taking holiday, the Council commissioned an independent staffing review. Upon completion the review made some recommendations, most of which have either been implemented or are in progress.

Recommendations implemented:

- a. To increase the Clerks hours from 24 to 28 hours per week.
- b. Recruitment of an Assistant Clerk (9 hours p/w).
- c. To provide mentoring and training for the Clerk
- d. To outsource to professional project managers to ensure that identified projects are delivered in a timely manner, (note CIL money can be used to pay for this).
- e. To work towards becoming a paperless office, which will improve efficiency and be more environmentally responsible.

Recommendations still to implement or in progress:

- a) the Clerk should undertake the Ilica and Filca qualifications as soon as is practicably possible.
- b) For the Council Members to undergo training and to adopt a Training Policy, to cover Staff and Council Members.
- c) To ensure that procedures are put into place for Staff Welfare, including a structural appraisal system.
- d) To engage with the Community and develop a Parish/Strategic Plan.

Charlotte Bullock has been in post as an assistant for a few months now and is a very welcome addition to the team.

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the hard work put in by our three members of staff: Nikki Holt, Charlotte Bullock and Steve Woods.

PC Annual Parish Meeting: Planning update

Forty-six parish planning applications were made during the 24/25 year. Most were small projects, including tree management, repairs to listed buildings, and extensions. A few larger-scale projects were also considered, including a home's subdivision into flats and conversion of a formerly agricultural building to a residential dwelling. Thirty-eight applications were approved, one was withdrawn, and one was refused. The balance is still under consideration.

We start the 25/26 year with substantial reorganization to local government expected, and with Westminster pushing a new home-building agenda. We face a challenging and uncertain future. Given this context, we intend to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) with the first step, a Neighbourhood Priority Statement, completed by the year's end. NDPs have legal status and must be considered by whatever organization replaces the CDC when considering planning matters, and they start and end with extensive community engagement; we will shortly send a survey to everyone in the parish, the results of which will form the bedrock of our Neighbourhood Priority Statement. We will also ask for volunteers to get involved in the NDP process. We very much hope that you'll take this opportunity to get involved. There has never been a better opportunity to shape our Parish's future.



St George's Hall

Annual Report 2024/25

St George's Hall
Park Road, Blockley, Gloucestershire GL56 9BY
www.stgeorghallblockley.org.uk

Charity no: 292415



Overview

2024/25 saw a programme of minor works undertaken to maintain and improve the Hall's decorative state and state of repair, which were met with positive feedback from all hall users. Bookings for the period remained consistent. A new Hall Manager was appointed in December 2024.

Administration

There were minor changes to the Management Committee during the above period. The Blockley Brass Band appointed a new representative to the Management Committee and Blockley Parish Council approved the appointment of Councillor Clare Turner to the Management Committee.

Councillor Thomas Bradley was re-elected as Chairman of the Management Committee at the AGM held in May 2024.

The Management Committee met in-person, normally in the Robinson Room at St George's Hall, with online facilities available for those who were unable to join in-person. Meetings continued to take place every other month.

Councillor Bradley provided a regular update on the management of St George's Hall to Blockley Parish Council, St George's Hall's corporate trustees. All Management Committee meeting agendas, minutes and finance reports are shared with Parish councillors.

December 2024 saw the appointment of a new Hall Manager, Sarah Barnett, following the resignation of the previous Hall Manager, Mike Gunn, and a competitive recruitment process. Recruitment was overseen by Cllr Bradley, Hilary Thornborough (Blockley School) and Jane Scott-Henderson (Blockley Horticultural Society). The Committee thanked Mike for his work and welcomed Sarah to her new role.

Stephen Woods continued in his role as caretaker, and the Committee are grateful for all the work he does for St George's Hall. Given some concerns around cleaning of the hall, a trial period of new increased hours for the caretaker was undertaken from March 2025, with a view to being made permanent at the May 2025 Management Committee meeting.

Repair, Maintenance & Renewal

Maintenance of St George's Hall continued throughout 2024/25. In addition, a major project to replace the Hall's lighting with new energy efficient lighting was also undertaken, to reduce the Hall's energy costs and its carbon footprint. Grant funding was successfully secured for this project from Cotswold District Council and Blockley Parish Council.

The Management Committee decided there was no pressing need for the creation of further storage, and so this project was not taken forward. Further major works did not take place, in order for the Hall to build up its finances to enable them in future years. The Committee are looking at undertaking a major renovation of toilet and bathroom facilities in the Hall and the Hall Manager is currently researching potential grant funding to enable these works.

St George's Hall
Park Road, Blockley, Gloucestershire GL56 9BY
www.stgeorghallblockley.org.uk

Charity no: 292415



Hire Charges

New hire charges were introduced on 1st April 2024 and no further hire charge increases were introduced in the following period. The school's rental increased as per their contract.

Finances

The hall continued to make a small operating surplus in the 2024/25 financial year. However, additional expenditure was spent on maintenance and refurbishment, and this is reflected in the accounts. Energy and staff costs continued to be the largest items of day-to-day expenditure for the Hall.

A copy of St George's Hall's accounts for 2024/25 and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report are available for Trustees and on the Charity Commission's website.

*This report has been approved by the Chairman of St George's Hall Management Committee,
Councillor Thomas Bradley.*

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