

PRIDE IN BURNHAM

Creating Vibrant Communities and Making a
Difference in the Community (World)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Burnham is a village with a large population and has more than its fair share of churches, societies, charities, organisations, community and voluntary sector groups. All these are dependent on numerous volunteers to carry out the work, giving their time and talents to make Burnham a better place to live. Most of these people do a tremendous work and rarely get recognised for the magnificent job they do.

They all take great pride in our village of Burnham and it was this reason the Pride in Burnham project was established. We thought it important to try to identify those special people who have 'made a difference' in our village of Burnham. It was important to ask as many organisations as possible to help us in our search and there was a great response.

This involved artist Rhonda Fenwick contacting various groups and organisations to invite them to identify and nominate those people who strive to make a difference in the community of Burnham. Who have worked tirelessly for many years to foster good relationships, build partnerships, and create a more vibrant community through their efforts to make Burnham a better place to live.

Each person was nominated by their own charity, school, organisation or Society. Rhonda met with each of the nominated candidates to discuss their work and how they felt 'made a difference' in the community. Through meetings and interviews with Rhonda the candidates gave an overview of what their work involved, and in their own words gave a biography. They were then photographed, each one enlarged and included in a display beginning in St Peter's church. It is anticipated the display will be shown in other community venues.



Sara Dennis nominated by Lesley Blount Headteacher and Parents Teacher Association at St Peter's Church of England Primary School Burnham.

I'm currently Chair of the PTA for St Peters Primary School and part of the Management Committee for Burnham Youth Club. I'm a full time working mum of two beautiful girls. I've been volunteering in the community for nearly 5 years, since my daughter started in Reception at St Peters. I took on the role of Chair when I found out no one else was stepping up, I also have trouble saying no at times! Plus I feel compelled to help when it benefits my children and especially their education.

This is the same reason I volunteered to be part of the new management committee at the Youth Club. The Club was on the brink of being closed and I felt sad that such a great place for our children might be shut permanently. Being part of the committee this year has been very rewarding. We've now managed to get the club open three nights a week, we've brought registration numbers back up and have a small bank of volunteers we can rely on to help us out on a regular basis. The Friday sessions for our Juniors at The Club are now oversubscribed! Being the face of the Club on Social Media.

I love being part of a community and feeling like I can actually help the children. Our school Summer Fair is now a large community event, with over 500 adults through the door at last year. Since chairing the PTA we have raised over £35,000 across more than 60 events! We've been lucky to be able to help the school purchase a new minibus, resurface the school playground, buy new playground equipment plus fund a multitude of other activities, all of which benefit the school.

I volunteer because I love helping out others. It's my chance to give something back.



Jenny Dobson nominated by
St Peter's Church Burnham

Jenny moved to Burnham from Dorset in 1988 after marrying her husband Steve. They quickly settled in to St Peter's and joined in with the activities of the church straight away, making new friends and enjoying the worship and social activities. Jenny transferred to Slough National Westminster Bank where she worked in the personnel and admin department until the birth of their first child in 1990. While she was expecting her baby Jenny approached the vicar and asked him whether he would like a Girls' Brigade company in the church. She had grown up through Girls Brigade and was a trained leader working in the nearest company which was based in Cippenham. To cut a long story short, the answer was yes and 1st Burnham Girls Brigade was born which is now in its 29th year. Jenny never returned to the bank but once her 2 children were at school she started working as a piano and music teacher in St Nicolas School in Taplow having volunteered there for a little while.

She first heard of Lesotho in 2007 when a missionary went to the school and encouraged some staff members to go and visit a new school that was being planned. It was like 'a voice in her head telling her she had to go' and she headed off there with a colleague and her older daughter who was by then 17. The new school was never built but she discovered Beautiful Gate, a new orphanage and care centre, which was in the process of being built in the capital city Maseru. Jenny speaks of her heart staying behind there when she came back home and 2 years later, taking her other daughter she returned. Rather than mend her heart, she found herself falling in love more and more with the country of Lesotho, its people and Beautiful Gate. She took on the role of British Ambassador and fund raiser for Beautiful Gate, hosting its founder on a couple of trips to England to raise awareness of the plight of this forgotten country ridden with HIV and one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2012 she returned alone and spent a month getting to know the country and how Beautiful Gate worked. Jenny has now been back every year since, sometimes alone and sometimes taking teams with

her. She raises around £6000 a year for them through church fundraising and through the school where she is a governor.

Jenny is chair of the social and fundraising team at St Peter's and for the last 15 years or so has organised the annual fete as well as overseeing many of the events that take place in St Peters social calendar including concerts, parties and meals.

Now a grandma, her heart is torn between her daughter and family in Canada and her beloved Africa, and, of course the rest of the family and friends at home here in Burnham. Most school holidays will find her jetting off either to the west or to the south but the rest of the time she devotes her energy to church activities. These include preaching and leading the teenage group, Tower Teens and her work with children either at school or at Girls' Brigade.



Viv Nicholas nominated by
Revd Bill Jackson in recognition
of Viv's work in Think! Burnham

The family moved to Burnham in 1978 and I would describe my attempts to contribute to living in this great village under three headings :-

A Concern for Young People. My three children all attended Dorney School and Burnham Grammar School. I served as parent governor and chairman of governors at Dorney School, and parent governor at Burnham Grammar School for all of their schooling, before becoming chairman of Burnham Youth Club's management committee for several years.

I also developed an interest in policing with a particular interest in its impact on young people for about 20 years from the early 1990's . I firstly became chairman of Slough and District's Police Community Consultative Group and did serve as a non-elected member of Thames Valley Police Authority for four years.

In the late 1990's I became very interested in the work of a remarkable youth group in Slough – Aik Saath – together as one – who are dedicated to reducing conflict between the many diverse cultures that thrive in our locale. I was chairman of trustees for many years and am still an active contributor to a sub-group titled Empowered who encourage its members to write and declaim spoken word. In early 2000's I built a strong relationship with SEGRO and opened a garage on the Trading Estate – titled Pitstop. This was staffed by qualified mechanics who transferred their knowledge and skills to Key Stage Four boys and girls, who were seeking more practical and vocational skills and were not enamoured with the then newly prescribed national curriculum.

I continue to maintain a deep interest in education – in part by observing the progress of my eight grandchildren but also am anxious to ensure that Burnham values and sustains its two secondary schools.

Fostering a Spirit of Collaboration We are blessed with many fine organisations and groups who all work hard to enhance the quality of life of all those who live, work or care about Burnham and its future. I helped to form the Think! Burnham Partnership and served as its chairman for all but one year of its life from 2008 to 2016. One of its primary aims was to provide a forum for all groups to come together and where appropriate collaborate more effectively.

Following the success of the 2012 Olympiad and its impact on our community – together with Les Stuart and Veronica White – we formed The Burnham Foundation. Its aim is to support sport and the arts within our community whilst also encouraging those who have also taken great benefit from living in Burnham to make a donation and/or leave a legacy to ensure that Burnham continues to thrive.

SEGRO will be celebrating its centenary and Burnham Grammar School its 60 year anniversary in 2020 and both will be fine opportunities to celebrate their success and impact on Burnham.

Maintaining a Sense of Purpose I have a strong interest in most sports and especially rugby. I played badly at Marlow RFC until the mid 1990's and then refereed maybe a little more competently for over 25 years in Bucks. I am now proud to be a vice president of Phoenix RFC.

I worship at St Peter's Burnham and was chair of the fund-raising committee to build Cornerstone which opened in 1986. We are extremely fortunate to have numerous and diverse faith groups close to Burnham and for many years I have visited and taken a keen interest in their missions.

Over the past 40 years I have been fortunate in having the opportunity to observe national and all three tiers of local government and grapple with where it works well and not so well! It is in my view vital that we all should develop the capacity to 'speak truth to power' and for the past few years I have arranged hustings in Burnham for all elections.



Paula Prince nominated by
Burnham Parish Council

Like many people, I often get frustrated with things not working the way I would like them to. Certain things in Burnham did, and still do really frustrate me so, when I saw an advert in the neighbourhood watch bulletin for Parish Councillors I thought I would find out more. Within two weeks I found myself being co-opted onto the Parish Council! By becoming a councillor, I felt I might stand a better chance of making a difference. I have quite a lot of experience working with different charities and organisations, and working with multi-disciplinary teams and the more I talked to people the more I realised I could make a difference, in and outside of the council.

One of my greatest achievements as a Councillor has been to set up the Great Burnham Sack Race, which so far has got the village together twice this year to clean up our streets. So far, just with the Sack Race, we have removed over 270 sacks of rubbish! We hope that this event will now continue every spring and autumn. Throughout the summer I also arranged a fortnightly Wednesday lunchtime litter pick and, with the help of some dedicated residents who came out even during the heatwave, we cleared an average of 5 sacks each time.

I am part of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, concentrating on a "cohesive village" and "recreations, facilities and footpaths" which believe me is not an easy task but, hopefully, will make a big difference to Burnham. I have just stepped down from the Burnham Patient Participation Group (PPG) that I helped restart. This group is the liaison between patients and staff at Burnham Health Centre, the only GP practice in Burnham. I am now a member of the Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) which the Police set up to "maximise the trust and confidence of the diverse Thames Valley communities through communication, exchanges of views and discussing police issues". As an IAG member I have the responsibility to "act as a 'critical friend' to scrutinise policing and policy decisions and debrief incidents and operations", which gives the community a way to feed back into

planning how our community is policed. I also co-founded LandWatch, a group that shares information about unauthorised land encampments, to warn landowners throughout Buckinghamshire if they need to “batten down the hatches” or how to work with the Police, County Councils, Waste Agencies and other groups to remove unauthorised encampments.

After nearly two years of working as a Councillor I now have contacts throughout Burnham and beyond. I am working with local housing associations, the Burnham Health Promotion Trust, the Local Area Forum (LAF) and other groups to deliver the services that Burnham needs, and, support our residents and people who work in Burnham. I could do none of this without the support of the dedicated staff at the Parish Council or the amazing people who live or work in Burnham.



Shirley Shaw nominated by
Burnham Health Promotion
Trust

My husband Watson and I moved down from Newcastle to Burnham in 1983. I worked as a social worker at Wexham Park Hospital until 1987 and then for Slough Social Services until my daughter was born in 1989.

In 1995 I saw a temporary job advertised with Burnham Community Association. The job sounded really interesting and the timing was perfect because my son was about to start school. I was employed part time for six months to undertake a study of needs in the Burnham community, particularly in relation to people who may be experiencing financial, physical, emotional or mobility problems. Of course, I had no idea then what this temporary role would lead to and how it would shape the rest of my working life. One thing led to another and once the study was completed and my report presented in 1996, I found myself well and truly involved with Burnham Community Association. I remained as a volunteer with the charity until 2015 and during the twenty years of my involvement took on a variety of roles including Secretary, Carnival Organiser and Information Point Co-ordinator. I loved being part of the Community Association and it was a privilege to work alongside so many hard-working volunteers who were dedicated to serving the community.

Very soon after I joined BCA, I was made aware of a potential source of national grant funding for setting up volunteer development agencies. From my initial research in Burnham it was clear that lack of volunteers was an issue for many of the local community groups and the idea of having a local volunteer bureau was very appealing. In conjunction with a member of staff from the County Council and another from the Bucks Council for Voluntary Service we made a successful application for funding and as a result South Bucks Volunteer Bureau was formed in 1996. I joined the Steering Group

as Secretary and continued in this role on the committee until 1999 when the Bureau was well established.

It was through my volunteering with South Bucks Volunteer Bureau that I was to find out in the summer of 1999 about a new charity that had recently been set up in Burnham following an extremely generous gift from a local couple. By chance I learnt that the charity was looking to employ someone on a temporary contract to organise an information event for older people. I think three months' work was suggested at the beginning but once again one thing led to another and here I am in 2018, having completed 19 years working for Burnham Health Promotion Trust! I have just been so lucky to work for BHPT and to have had the opportunity to meet and get to know so many amazing people, to help the charity develop and to be given the freedom to initiate and nurture so many different projects and activities. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this wonderful journey – as Dr Bev Daily would say, it has, above all, been great fun!



Paul Sherriff nominated by
Burnham Business Community

Paul Sherriff is Burnham born and bred! Having started life in Huntercombe Lane North he went to Heathlands School in Stomp Road and spent his early educational years locally before going away to boarding school. As a young man he joined his father George, working at Buckland and Sons, an Agricultural Estate Agent and Auctioneers in Gerrards Cross. By the age of 32 he had set up his own estate agency business Sherriff Mountford, in Burnham High Street.

Throughout his career, Paul has immersed himself in village life. His dedication and commitment to the community is second to none. His roles have included Chairman of the High Street Association, founder member of Burnham Beeches Round Table, Governor of St Peter's Junior School and former Parish Councillor. He was the instigator of the Wednesday Market and was also instrumental in the revival of the late night Christmas Shopping event. More recently Paul, along with a newly formed management team, has successfully relaunched the Burnham Youth Club.

Paul is married to Karen and has seven children, and three grandsons. He enjoys gardening and you may see him dog walking around Poyle Lane sporting his litter picker in hand! Paul and Karen are regular attenders of St. Mary's Hitcham and Our Lady of Peace Church.



Jackie Slater nominated by the Royal British Legion (Burnham Branch)

Jackie's motivation to take up voluntary work was due to after receiving full accreditation from the Member of the Institute Welfare Officers. During her 43 years as a career based civil servant with DWP, she found she had many transferable skills that could be used in the voluntary sector. It felt like a natural progression to take up voluntary work when she retired six years ago. Her main ambition was to serve the Village where she intended to live for the rest of her life.

She has done so much work organising the RAFA Centenary Concert and school exhibition, also the Ypres GP90 trip this year. She organises Remembrance Day and ensures that other Organisations are contacted so they may lay a wreath at the War Memorial.

Jackie organised the commemoration of the start of WW1 in 2014 and the Battle of the Somme and is currently in the process of arranging a celebration of the end of WW1 on 17 November at Burnham Park Hall.

In her many roles, she is a National committee member for Benenden Health, and a committee member for the following:- Burnham Village Twinning Association, Burnham Street Association, Patient Participation Group, Ambassador for Burnham Academy and a Parish Councillor.

She is the Welfare Officer and Secretary for the Royal British Legion and looks after Veteran's and their families in the Village. Ensuring their welfare and financial needs are met.



Steve Spencer nominated by The Lions Club

Having been involved in charity work all his adult life, mainly with St John Ambulance until late 1997, Steve was looking for other challenges in the voluntary sector when he was invited to help form a new Lions club in Burnham. After meeting for several months the club became part of Lions Clubs International in November 1999. Since then he has been actively involved with the club, serving in various offices including President and Secretary, as well as being involved in other roles in the wider District (60 clubs in the South Central area of England).

He has been very active in the various activities the club undertakes, and has been involved with the Burnham Carnival and of course the Burnham Lions Christmas Fayre, having managed the stalls on the High Street for several years. He has also been actively involved in the collection of used spectacles and hearing aids. These are refurbished as required and sent to developing countries, where the cost of a new pair can be as much as one year's earnings. These are issued free by the Lions and can say without any exaggeration that this is transforming lives.

Lately he has been the lead for the Lion club's partnership with the Rotary Club of Burnham in supporting PhysioNet, which supplies used mobility and living aids to developing countries. Many unwanted items have gathered in our area which once again improve the lives of the recipients. Since retiring Steve also works as a volunteer with the Citizens Advice.



Andrew Strathdee nominated by
Burnham Community Association

Andrew moved to Burnham 42 years ago to the house he still lives in with his wife, Wendy. In response to a number of problems, they both set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for their local area many years ago. They were asked by Thames Valley Police to take on the role of Area Coordinators for NHW for the whole of the Village. Which they have been doing since then, out of a concern to ensure that the Village remains as safe and crime free as possible.

This led to a number of other involvements and Andrew was asked by the Police to be the chairman of the Neighbourhood Action Group for the Village at a time when there were a lot of problems with anti-social behaviour. Over the five years of the NAG, this was reduced dramatically by the combined actions of the NAG working with the Police and other local partners. He also became a member of the Area Police Commander's Independent Advisory Group, a role he still fills along with membership of the South Bucks Police Forum. He has received several awards from the Police and South Bucks District Council for his work in the Community. Along with Wendy, for her work producing the authoritative weekly electronic Neighbourhood Watch Bulletin. This is distributed widely around the Village and on the Burnham Beacon Website.

One of his motivations is a concern to maintain the Village environment and sense of Community which has made Burnham a place where people can live happily. In addition to these works he has also served as a member of the Think Burnham Committee. This was set up to pull together various local groups with interests in the Village. He also served as a lay member on the Land Securities Committee of the Parish Council, which was set up to oversee the spending of the money given to the Village from the developer of the Bishop Centre. As part of this he organised the Clear Up Burnham campaign.

He was heavily involved in the campaign to save Burnham Library and subsequently became a member and latterly Chairman of the Friends of Burnham Library. The Friends are a Committee of Burnham Community Association and when BCA became a registered Charitable Company, Andrew became a Director and Trustee. Following the sad death of Marion Bunker, Andrew took on the role of organising a small Burnham Library Village Fete. This was to prevent the Carnival from disappearing, and has chaired the Village Fete Committee for the last few years and is now in the process of starting the organisation of the 2019 Village Fete.

The Friends of the Library raise funds to support Library activities and buy books and equipment to enable the Library to offer facilities to local users. This has included funding the annual Summer Reading Challenge in which hundreds of local children participate. Andrew also organised the Burnham Library 40th year celebration with an Arts Festival and works with Slough Writers to put on their Plays Nights, annually in the Library. He has also worked with Library staff and Burnham Health Promotion Trust to put on various Wellbeing events in recent years.

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Photography: Rhonda Fenwick

Facilitator: Bill Jackson