



Annual Report 2025/ 2026

Chair's introduction

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. It has been a busy and productive year for the council.

Councillors:

Cllr Robert Langston – Chair – Robert.langston@coveneyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Naomi Laredo – Vice Chair – naomi.laredo@coveneyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Jane Doig – Councillor – Jane.doig@coveneyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Clare Hammond – Councillor – Clare.hammond@coveneyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Staff :

Miss Kendle Hanslip – Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

We still have three vacancies so if anyone would like to join the Council please let the Clerk or one of the Councillors know.

Meetings and Attendance

Number of meetings held : 11 Full Council meetings held (third Monday of the month) and 1 Parish Meeting of the Electorate (held this year in April)

Summary of other activities and achievements

We have appointed a new groundskeeper for this season – Glover Group who will maintain our green spaces between March and November.

And we have a regular programme of playground inspections in both Coveney and Wardy Hill, to identify any safety issues which might need dealing with.

Financial Report

Total income - £22,570

Total expenditure - £14,489.41

Financial challenges – None

Key budget allocations – Wardy Hill Play area and Pond regeneration

Grants received/ given – we donated £360 to the VH fireworks and £100 for Cambs Archives



Planning and development in 2025/26

The Parish Council reviewed six planning applications. The council remains committed to carefully considering each application, taking into account the views of residents and the potential impact on the local environment and infrastructure.

Our county and district councillors have kept us updated on the Local Government Reform process, which proposes combining district and county authorities into unitary authorities which will be larger than the existing district authority. Although many local residents work in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, we are a rural parish and we were concerned that a combination with Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire would impose priorities which were not appropriate. We therefore gave our support to the proposal which combines Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, and Fenland.

We have been receiving regular data from the new MVAS units to monitor traffic speed in the parish. Thanks to local resident Steven Winfield for taking over responsibility for this.

Environment and Community Initiatives

Community orchard: All but four of the orchard trees now have sponsors; contact the PC if you would like to sponsor a tree or dedicate it to a loved one. The fruit trees are doing well, thanks to regular maintenance by our volunteers. The hedges have been selectively trimmed, leaving some to produce berries, and the meadow mown in spring and autumn. The variety of wildflowers has reduced and we may need to resow some areas. Unfortunately, one of the birch trees by the picnic area was damaged by wood-boring beetles and had to be cut down; we hope the stump will regrow.

Allotments: The allotments are well kept and productive. The borehole pump and water tank are producing a reliable water supply, and the tank has been disguised by bamboo screening and climbing plants.

Village pond: The pond responded well to last year's dredging and is looking healthy. We pulled out some new reed growth this spring to keep it clear. Volunteers struggled to keep the newly planted shrubs and herbaceous plants weeded and then watered, during a wet spring and a hot, dry summer. This spring the disabled-access picnic bench has been installed, with path extensions to enable wheelchairs and buggies to reach it from the road. We also aim to repair the jetty this year, improve the path around the pond (pending funding for a boardwalk) and sow an area of wildflowers.

Coronation oak trees: The Coronation oaks planted in 2024 around the parish are all growing well. A map and guide to the "Coronation oaks trail" is in preparation.



Wardy Hill tree planting: A silver birch tree has been planted on the Green in memory of former parish councillor Joan Winters, and a midland hawthorn near the village sign in Jerusalem Drove, replacing a dead rowan.

Coveney play area: We successfully applied to the Woodland Trust for free tree packs to enhance the play area. A native hedge will be created along the east boundary and some small trees and shrubs planted to improve biodiversity, provide shelter and make the area more attractive.

Future Plans and Priorities

Some of our future plans include:

Making improvements to the MUGA, including renewal of the lighting

Ongoing repairs to and replacements of play equipment in Wardy Hill and Coveney

The Parish Council's major project for the coming year is the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan will set out our priorities for local development in the parish, alongside wider aims such as protecting and enhancing our environment. Many neighbouring parishes—Mepal, Sutton and Witchford—already have plans in place, and Witcham adopted theirs only a few months ago.

A Neighbourhood Plan carries real weight: decision-makers must take it into account when considering planning applications. Forthcoming local government reform makes this work even more urgent. A larger unitary authority is less likely to have detailed knowledge of local issues, and the future of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan is uncertain. Without a clear local framework, we risk losing our influence over how the parish develops. Now is the time to act.

Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed and structured process. This evening, our guest speaker will outline what is involved and how we can move forward. However, the plan can only succeed with the active involvement of local residents. We are therefore seeking volunteers to form a working group to lead this work.

If you care about the future of the parish—how it grows, what it protects, and what it becomes—please consider getting involved. Your contribution will make a real difference.



Acknowledgements and Thanks

As Chair, I would like to extend my thanks to the Parish Council and clerk for their dedication and hard work in keeping our parish functioning as well as it does.

I would also like to thank those who are not Councillor's but who provide support – including Miles Foster as our tree warden, and Chris Bullen who has been assisting us with the Wardy Hill Social Club.

Your time and commitment do not go unnoticed, and your efforts continue to make a real difference in the community.

Contact information

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