

Annual Report by the Chairman of Turvey Parish Council

It is my pleasure as Chair to report on the activities of Turvey Parish Council over 2025-26.

1. Planning

As consultees, Turvey Parish Council consider all planning applications within the parish and respond as necessary to Bedford Borough Council.

Having taken over as Chairman in September, I relinquished my role as Head of the Planning Committee. It was agreed that in the interim that role would be taken over by Cllr Niblett whilst Cllrs Ludlow gained more experience.

51 applications have been raised for developments over the past year, but most notably is of course the speculative application for the development east of Newton Lane. Defending Turvey against this predatory application has demanded an exhausting and disproportionate effort from the parish council, solely because the proposal completely violates our Neighbourhood Development Plan. Having spent years working alongside residents to establish a legally binding framework for sustainable village growth, we are now forced to redirect significant time, energy, and community resources to protect it. Richborough's attempt to bypass our democratic local policies by exploiting the Borough's wider housing shortfall has required us to rapidly mobilise local opposition and mount policy defences just to stop this unallocated, out-of-scale development from destroying the character of our village. Unfortunately, this process has yet to reach a conclusion. Thanks to all councillors involved, particularly Cllrs Niblett and Ludlow.

A working group has been formed consisting of Cllrs Kirk, Niblett and Ludlow and myself to investigate reviewing the NDP and this process is now underway.

We encourage all residents to submit responses to planning applications via the Bedford Borough Council planning portal.

2. Highways and Footpaths

The Parish Council continues to monitor highways and footpaths and works to achieve improvements to general road safety.

The Parish Council agreed over a year ago to fund the new signage for the average speed cameras. This will replace the existing signage which was installed with the original two fixed cameras. Frustratingly we are still awaiting the Borough Council to confirm these have been obtained and are to be installed.

FPA4: The Parish Council continues to take an active interest in ensuring this remains safely open during the second phase of the construction of the Elderswell Village and beyond. Thanks to Cllr Niblett.

FP7: The parish Council has been actively involved since last November, with April Quinn, Team Leader Countryside & Access for the Borough Council to make this footpath accessible. More will be discussed on this in the later meeting. Many thanks to both Cllrs Bartoli and Ludlow for their work on this.

The Parish Council will continue to liaise with Bedford Borough Council and take an active interest in the walls along Carlton Road and their impact on the resurfacing of the road and the safety of pedestrians using the footpath. The Parish Council and the Borough Councillors have been monitoring cars obstructing pedestrian use of the footpath.

We encourage all residents to report any footpath, road (including potholes) problems to Bedford Borough Council as it has responsibility for highways issues and not the Parish Council.

3. Lancelot's Piece/Garages Church Terrace

Work has been undertaken over the past few months to clear the area of overgrowth and tidy up the gravel path. There was initially some concern about the condition of the Beech tree but following extensive investigation it was agreed to take no further action but to get it re-assessed annually. Following removal of the hedge, the state of the wall was revealed. A quotation was accepted from Keith Cockings to undertake remedial works. Thanks to Cllr Bartoli for overseeing this work.

4. Grants

The Parish Council gave out a grant of £300 to the Villager Minibus and a grant of £127 to Turvey Bloomers to cover insurance costs for its volunteers. Please note that there is both a grant application form as well as a grant criteria form on the website. Please consider applying.

5. Precept

It was agreed in January this year to hold the Band D charge at the same level as it was in 2025-26 (£58.93). A precept of £37,662 was requested from Bedford Borough Council.

6. Recreation Ground

Over a year ago, the Parish Council had contracted with a local contractor to refurbish the tennis courts and replace an item of play equipment which was passed its useful life and to undertake some other repairs. Unfortunately, that contractor let the Parish Council down. Subsequently, a quotation from Reids Playground Maintenance Ltd was accepted to undertake the removal of the old play equipment and in March a further quotation was accepted from Reids to supply a new Multiplay unit and rubber safety surface. It is expected this will be installed shortly.

With regards the refurbishment of the tennis court, the various quotes received were far more than the funds available from the parish council. A new quotation is being considered this evening which might be an option. Many thanks to Cllrs Kirk and Morris for all their hard work and commitment to try to find a satisfactory and financially viable solution.

The security fencing was completed at the Pavilion and a licence agreement with Turvey Football Club was signed.

And finally!

I would like to thank our Borough Councillors Robert Rigby and Dylan Simmons for their steadfast support of the residents of Turvey and Turvey Parish Council. I look forward to working with them over the coming year.

I would also like to thank my fellow parish councillors for all their support and hard work on behalf of the residents of Turvey as well as supporting me as Chairman over the last year.

In closing, I would like to encourage all Turvey residents to attend our bi-monthly meetings and actively engage with local democracy. Every parish council meeting begins with a public question session, offering a dedicated opportunity for residents to raise any concerns. Meeting dates are publicised on both our noticeboards and the website, with the latter also hosting copies of all agendas and minutes.

Edward Poll, Chair of Turvey Parish Council 28th May 2026