

**Burton Agnes Parish Council**  
**Annual Report**  
**2 June 2015**

1. 2014/15 has been a busy year for the Parish Council. At the beginning of the financial year the accounts for 2013/14 had not been prepared, financial records were incomplete and the Council had been without access to its bank accounts for a number of months. The Council was non-compliant with HMR&C procedures with respect to PAYE (a legal requirement) for the Clerk's salary and were in no position to have their finances audited, also a legal requirement. Councillors will recall that the Council's financial 'records' consisted of a large box full of assorted documents, bills (some unpaid) and receipts. The Treasurer has done a sterling job in retrieving a non-compliant situation, securing audit clearance and regularising the Council's position with the tax authorities. He has also recovered the Council's position with respect to VAT in successfully reclaiming the VAT paid by the Council in each of the previous 2 financial years, some £526.

2. During the current financial year the Council has met 6 times. We have dealt with

12 Planning applications  
9 individual cases from Parishioners  
Over 100 items of correspondence.

We have been consulted and offered opinions on issues ranging from the condition of verges in the Parish to embryo proposals for Travellers transit camps, and the possible re-routing of the National Cycle Route which runs through Burton Agnes as a result of the increased traffic likely to be generated by the relocation of the car park of Burton Agnes Hall.

We have secured £3000 of discretionary funding for which thanks are due to Christine Lee, which has paid for the supply and erection of new notice boards in all three villages.

3. In the Financial Year 2014/15 the Parish Council has been represented on:

Lissett Wind Farm Community Fund panel  
Caythorpe Gas Storage Facility fund  
Driffield and Bridlington Community Partnership

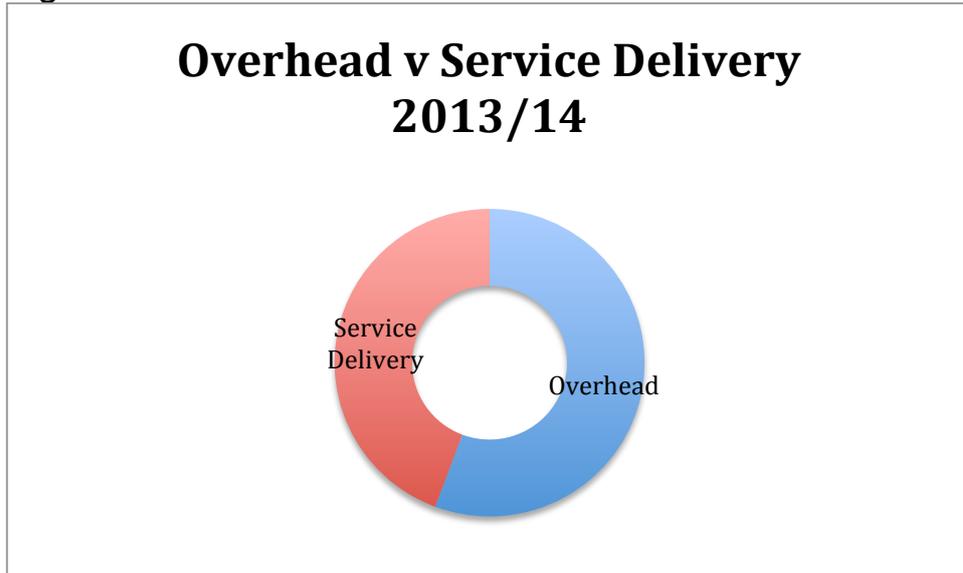
and has attended ad-hoc meetings on issues of relevance to the Parish, including one at Lissett and Ulrome Parish Council concerning an initiative for a new cycle route in the area.

4. This year saw the launch in March of the Parish Council website which will hopefully give us a further means of communicating with the Parish we

represent, and advertising activities in the Parish. I should like to record thanks to Stevan Sajkovic at East Riding for his help in setting up the website, and to Steve Hey of Image Creations who, with great patience, taught me how to populate it.

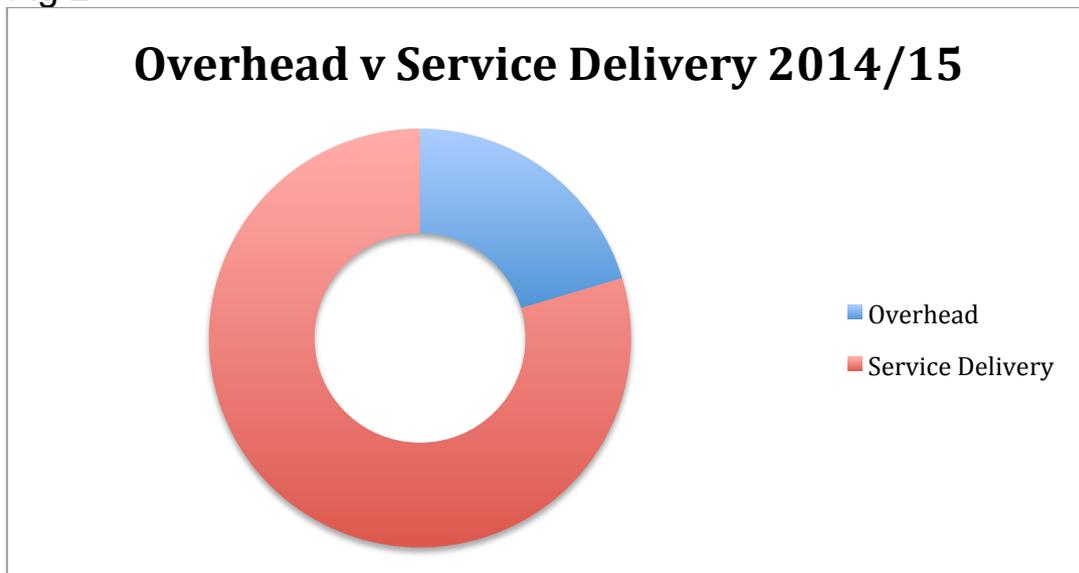
5. The shape of Parish spending has differed markedly in 2014/15 from that of 2013/14. Last year this Council spent more on administering itself – ie overhead (clerk’s salary, tax, insurance, fees) than on delivering services to the Parish (fig 1) below.

Fig 1



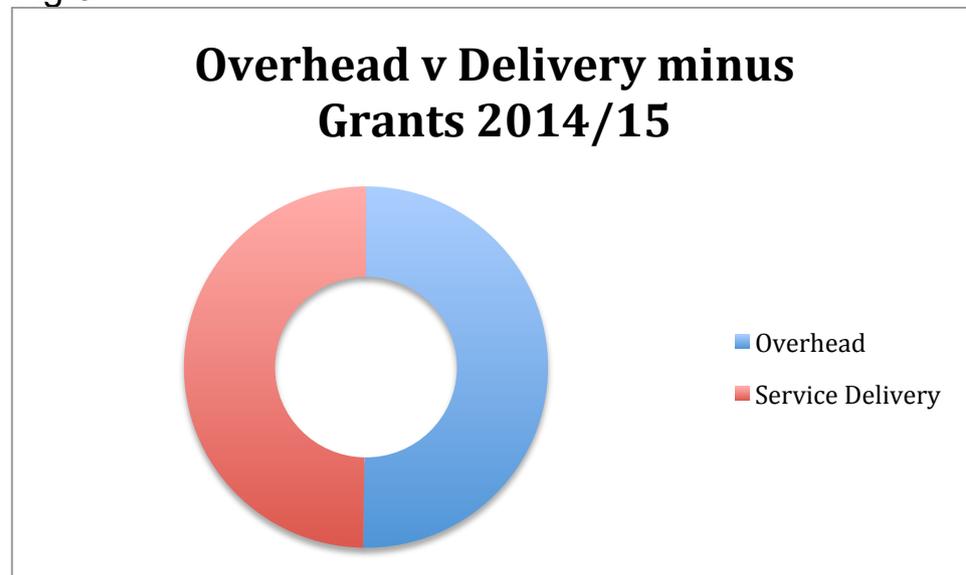
6. The position in 2014/15 has been markedly different (fig 2 below)

Fig 2



7. However, not to be complacent, if we remove the element of expenditure resulting from grants applied for by the Parish Council, the underlying picture, although improved, is not so encouraging (fig 3 below).

Fig 3



8. Fig 3 clearly shows that if we take no account of the grant element, we are spending almost exactly the same on administering ourselves as on delivering services to the Parish. If we further consider that over 50% of the expenditure on recurring services to the Parish (excluding expenditure on audit and insurance which would have to be paid whoever was running the show) consists of paying East Riding of Yorkshire Council, out of money they remit to us (the Precept) for services they deliver to us (the play park rental and maintenance and street lighting) over which we have absolutely no control, then it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that both they and we are acting as very expensive post boxes.

9. I appreciate that this does exaggerate the position a little. As listed above, we have done other things for the community which have a value beyond the monetary. But the question has to be asked: is there a better way of doing it? The message is, in my view, very clear: it is simply not a sustainable model for us to be consuming as much as we deliver, and, for much of the service we deliver, to be playing shops with East Riding. For the longer term it would be my contention that unless we are as a Council prepared to put effort into activities of benefit to the community or seeking funding for projects to benefit the Parish, or working with other Parishes to secure shared benefits, we are not delivering value and should consider either cutting out the middle men (us) or achieving economies of scale through merger with a neighbouring Parish or Parishes. Something for the future maybe.

10. On a positive note, already this year we have secured funding for the bus shelter in Burton Agnes, and have played a small part in facilitating funding for the School Science Project, which will keep our cost/benefit ratio positive for 2015/16. But it is clear that we will need to start thinking out of our customary box in terms of longer horizons if the Parish Council is to remain viable.

11. I was quite disappointed that this Parish Council, in common, I know, with many, perhaps most others, was re-elected without a contest and that we are carrying 3 vacancies. This is not because I have any issue with the current membership, but because it is indicative of a complete lack of interest in the local community. I see this partly as a failure on our part to engage with that community. I would be surprised if many knew who we are or what issues we deal with. I am not sure how it can be achieved – or even if it is possible - but it would be a personal ambition of mine to secure enough interest by the time the next set of elections come round to have new people putting themselves forward – which would, if nothing else, force us to look at what we are bringing to the table and justify our own presence here in terms of what we are delivering to the Parish. As in most sectors, competition helps to drive up standards.

12. Finally I would like to thank Jane and Jonathan for their stoicism/masochism in turning up to all of our meetings and offering their advice to us so freely.

Sue Burt  
Chair