



BANWELL PARISH
COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Banwell Parish Council – Who We Are

Parish and Town Councils are the level of local government closest to the needs of local people. A Parish Council is the first tier of local government in England and as an elected body we are responsible and responsive to our electorate, (that's you!).

Laws give the Parish Council a wide remit to improve the lives of their local community. The Council collects a precept each year (a sum collected with the council tax each year from the householders in the parish) to maintain and improve facilities and services for local people. Our work falls into three categories:

- **Representing the community**
- **Delivering services to meet local needs**
- **Striving to improve quality of life in the Parish.**

You can see from the table below what your Parish Council is responsible for – and also what North Somerset Council has to do. It's helpful to know who to go to when you have a question or a problem. See our website for a more comprehensive list of who to contact when you have a problem.

https://www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk/content/large/documents/parish_council_information/services_provided_by_other_bodies.pdf

BANWELL PARISH COUNCIL	NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
Riverside Play Area and Recreation Ground	Overgrown hedges/trees (not on Rec or Riverside)
Youth & Community Centre	Abandoned vehicles.
Youth Club	Dog fouling
Cemetery	Fly tipping
Food Club initiatives	Lorries breaking weight limits.
Banwell Food Bank	Noise pollution
Community Picnic	Potholes
Dog Bins	Roads and pavements, incl. obstructions
Bus shelters	Streetlights (main roads)
Streetlights (some side roads)	Street signs and street furniture damage
Speed reduction initiatives	Recycling and waste
	Street cleaning
	Footpaths

Banwell Parish Councillors & Staff

Banwell Parish Council is made up of 12 Councillors - all of whom are volunteers. The period of office of a Councillor is normally 4 years, but if they have been co-opted or elected at a by-election, they will serve until the next normal election.

You can learn more about your councilors on Banwell Parish Council's YouTube Channel or visit www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk/parish-council/your-councillors/

Banwell Parish Council currently employ three members of staff: The Clerk – Liz Shayler, The Communications Officer – Sally-Ann Marks and Administration Officer – Gerry Cronin.

Banwell Parish Council Chairman's Report 2023-24 (Paul Blatchford)

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council with not one but two elephants in the room in the shape of the Bypass and the Local Plan, more of which later.

I am pleased to say that we have two new councillors, Steve Voller and Kelly Smith which brings us up to 12 so that currently there are no vacancies.

During the year we have seen the village grow with new houses at Knightcott, Jubilee Gardens and the ongoing development at Churchlands. As the village grows, we need greater staffing capacity, and I am pleased to announce that we have appointed two permanent, part-time posts, Gerry Cronin as an Administrative Officer and Sally Marks as Communication and Marketing Officer. This is also an opportunity to thank David Murphy and Dani Wolfegang-James for their contributions during the past year.

One of the major problems for the village over recent years has been the absence of a lollipop person at the school crossing or to give it its correct title a Zebra Crossing Escort person. In their wisdom North Somerset Council thought it too dangerous to employ someone to do this. May I thank Jonathan MacMillan for volunteering to do this.

Also, during the year, we worked with the Scouts to have shared solar panels installed. Thanks to the support of the North Somerset Business Fund, the Parish Council secured funding for solar panels serving both the Youth & Community Centre and the Scout Building. We are thrilled with this initiative, which will help make our community buildings more sustainable and environmentally friendly. A big thank you goes out to the Scouts for allowing us to utilise their roof space for the solar panels. Their cooperation has been invaluable in making this project a reality. With the installation of these solar panels, we're taking a step forward in reducing both our carbon footprint and embracing renewable energy. It's a small but important change that aligns with the Parish Council commitment to caring for our environment.

Soup and Roll - With a grant from North Somerset Council, we launched the 'Soup and a Roll Initiative' as part of our Public Living Room. Thanks to the grant, we maintained costs at a voluntary contribution of £1 per serving. Running until March 2024, the initiative provided soup to 565 individuals and raised £795 in voluntary contributions. Due to its overwhelming success, we're extending the program beyond March 2024, with a slight price increase to £2. Additionally, as weather warms, we'll introduce alternative offerings alongside soup.

Alongside the activities already mentioned we have also offered:

- Tea and Tech / You Can Do I.T.
- Village Cleans
- Continued live streaming of our meetings.
- The Youth Club, which has increased numbers and has summer holiday events planned.
- Lobbied against the discontinuation of the 126 bus route which has been reinstated.
- Putting on another very successful Christmas Market
- 'Back to Basics' and 'Fun for One' Cookery Courses.
- And finally, increased and renovated play equipment at Riverside and the Recreation Ground thanks to grants from North Somerset Play Innovation Fund, Section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

Back to the elephants, both of which have the potential to change the village forever.

Firstly, the Bypass, I will not go back over the fine detail but as I am sure you are aware the construction has been delayed because, (Tarmac the parent company of Griffiths), pulled the plug at the last moment. We believe this was because the project did not deliver high enough profits. We have been assured by the Bypass team that several other contractors immediately contacted them on hearing the news and it is hoped that work can start later this year. In the

meantime, you may be aware that the sub-contractors have continued with the enabling environmental works and this gives us some confidence.

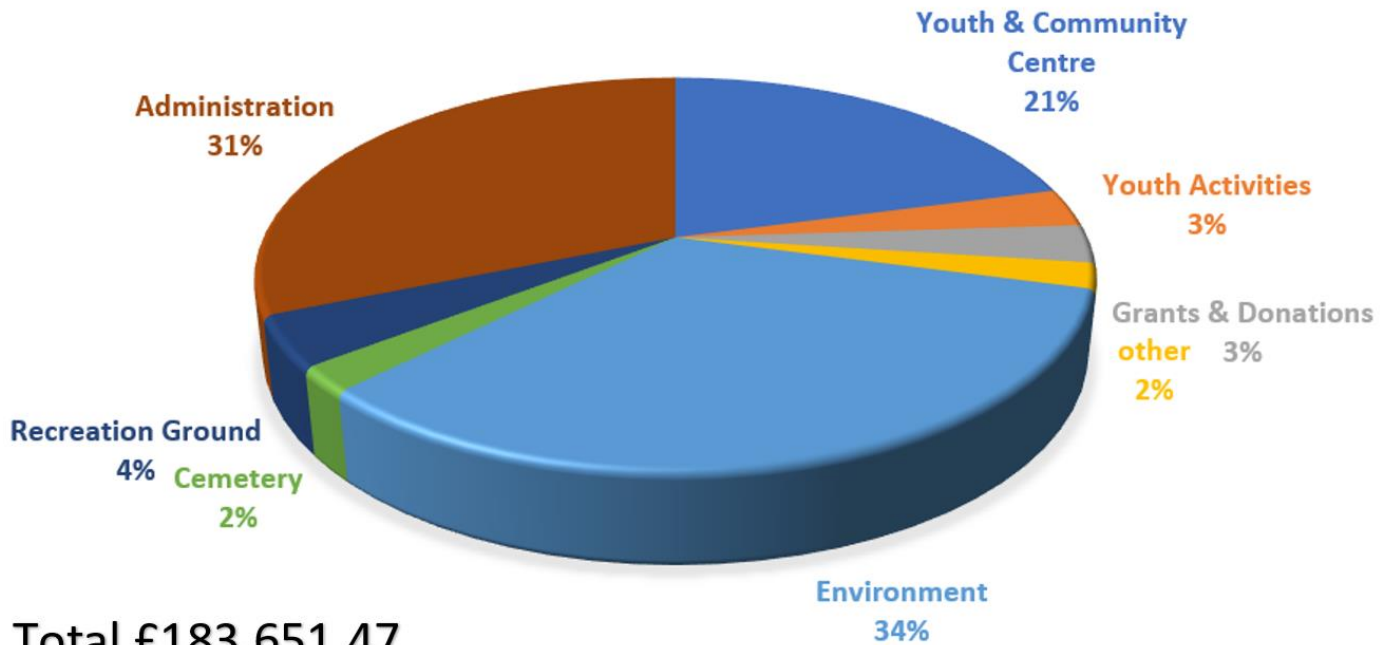
Elephant number Two is the Local Plan, currently in its draft stage. It includes the planning for a new settlement in the Wolvershill area to the north of the planned Bypass. This has been mooted for many years as can be seen by the number of fields in the area that have been offered up for development by their owners. It has always been our understanding that some level of development would take place here regardless of there being a bypass or not. The Local Plan anticipates 2,800 dwellings in the area which would treble the size of Banwell. Three national developers have been working with North Somerset to plan the new settlement and the Parish has set up a Working Party to act as a conduit between our Parishioners, North Somerset and the consortium of Developers.

This process has started and is ongoing, please visit our website for further information.

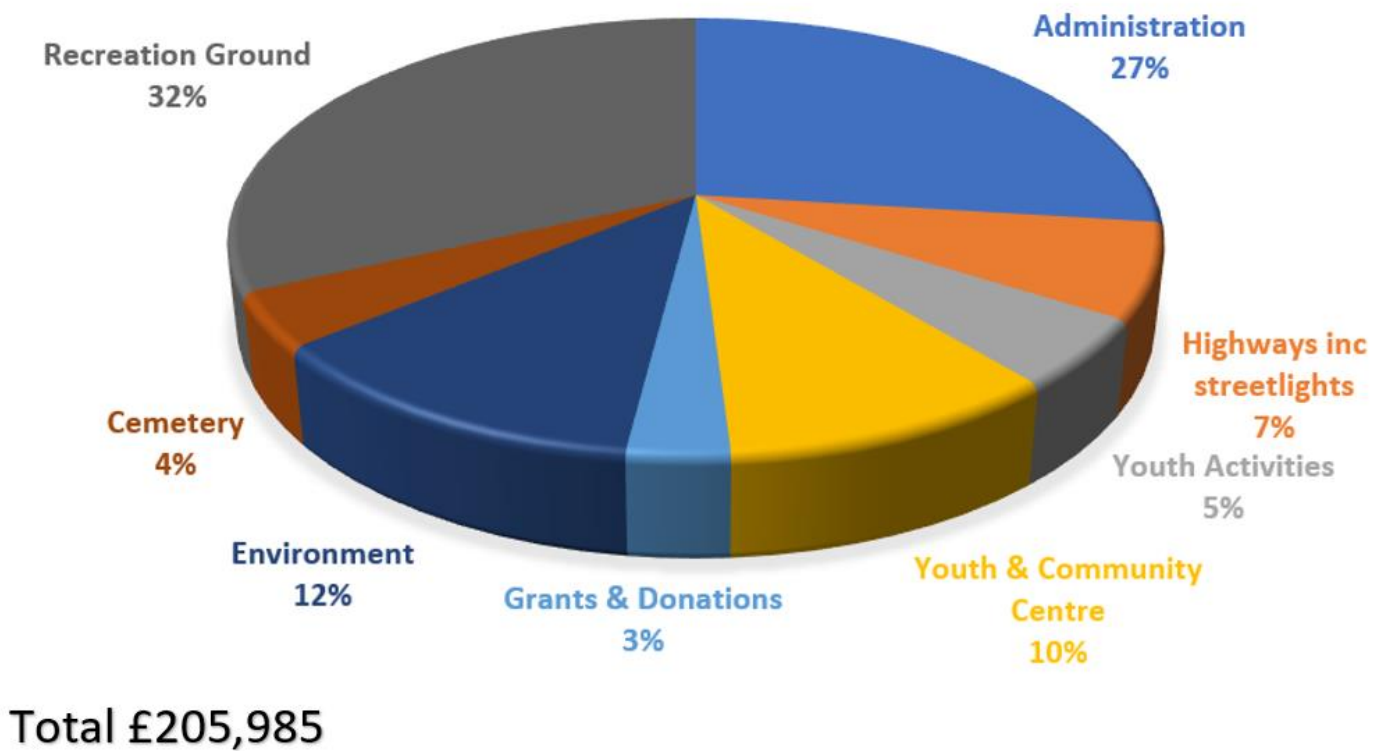
Finally, this will be my last report as Chair and I would like to thank our Volunteers, Councillors (past and present) and the Council Staff for all their good work that makes Banwell such a good place to live in. However, my special thanks must go to our Clerk Liz not just for the sheer energy she puts into the roll but for keeping me and the Council on the straight and narrow during my time as Chair.

Accounts

2023/24 COUNCIL EXPENDITURE



2024/25 BUDGET



Your Council Tax Precept 2024/25 Explained

The primary source of income for most Parish Councils comes from the Precept, part of the Council Tax.

WHAT IS A PRECEPT?

The Parish Council receives a small proportion of the local Council Tax. It does not receive any direct funding from Central Government. The funding collected pays for the running of the Council and the services it provides.

HOW IS IT CALCULATED?

The Parish Council makes an estimate of income and expenditure for the next financial year, including some for future planned projects and/or unexpected events. It is then calculated as an amount per Council Tax Band D Property and added to the Council Tax Bill for all the dwellings within the Parish area.

HOW IS IT RAISED?

North Somerset Council collects your Council Tax on behalf of themselves, Police, Fire and the precepts for any Parish/Town Councils in their district. It is important to note that Banwell Parish Council's precept is just a small percentage of your overall Council Tax Bill.

HOW IS IT SPENT?

Your precept is spent on maintaining the facilities and services the Parish Council offers.

Banwell Recreation Ground
Riverside Play Area



Council Office
Staff/Admin
Grants & Donations
Village Insurance

Youth & Community Centre
Banwell Cemetery
Streetlights



Christmas Market
Tea & Tech / You Can Do IT
Zebra Crossing Escort
Public Living Room / Soup & a Roll

Grass Cutting
Dog Bins
Waste Removal
Bus Shelters



£85.97
per Band D household per year

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

During the next year (2023/24) Banwell Parish Council are investing in the following:

- An all-weather path around the Recreation Ground which can be used all year round.
- Running top up Youth Club related activities
- Continuing the Public Living Room with the 'Soup and a Roll' initiative and other Parish Council Events throughout the year

We hope to continue to maintain our village to the highest standards, whilst keeping costs as low as possible.

'Soup and a Roll' in the Public Living Room

As the weather took a cold turn and the cost of living sky rocketed in 2022, Banwell Parish Council set up a Public Living Room. Whilst it doubles as a warm space, its main function is to provide a space for people to work, socialise, use free WiFi or simply to come along and get to know your neighbours. It continues throughout the year at Banwell Youth and Community Centre, **Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-1pm**. Refreshments are available and now you can join us for lunch between **12:30 and 1:30pm**.



You Can Do I.T & Tea & Tech



'You Can Do I.T.' and "Tea & Tech" were launched by the Parish Council to support people of all ages improve their I.T. skills over a cup of tea. Sessions have been and continue to be held three times a month at Banwell Youth & Community Centre, fortnightly Thursdays 2-4pm and one Tuesday a month 2-4pm.

Sessions are free for all. Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped run the sessions although we are looking for more. We look forward to helping more people enhance their I.T. skills in 2024 and beyond!

Banwell Christmas Market

For Christmas 2023, the community gathered for a wonderful day of Christmas stalls, refreshments and to visit Santa's Grotto. The Parish Council teamed up with local stall holders and volunteers to run the market whilst gift donations were taken by Santa for those in need.

After overwhelmingly positive feedback we will be holding another market on December 7th 2024. We hope to continue to help support local businesses and promote #BuyInBanwell.



Window Wander



In December, Banwell held its fourth Window Art Trail: Twinned with the Churches Christmas Tree festival, a huge thank you to all those who created windows, making a stunning art trail.

The streets of Banwell were transformed into galleries for everyone to enjoy. The event was completely free and organised for the community by Banwell Parish Council. The displays were incredible, and the organisers were blown away by the creativity of the Banwell community.



Banwell Youth Club is open and being run by YMCA Dulverton who have been running a series of fun activities on **Tuesdays** between **6:30pm and 8:30pm**. Activities over the last year have included Halloween parties, pancake races, cooking, sports, games, music and more. New members are always welcome. See the Banwell Youth Club Facebook page for more details: www.facebook.com/banwellyouthclub.

Back to Basics / Fun for One Cookery course

The Parish Council secured funding to run in-person cooking clubs. We had two very successful 'Back to Basics' courses. Followed by the even more popular 'Fun for One' course.

Thank you to the West of England Rural Network and North Somerset for funding these initiatives and to Neil Merrick who ran them.



Banwell Food Bank

Banwell Parish Council continue to run a foodbank on behalf of Weston Foodbank from the Youth and Community Centre, West Street. We would like to thank members of the community for the donations we continue to receive. Non-perishable food items are still being accepted and can be dropped between 10 and 12 Tuesday and Thursday morning to the Youth & Community Centre or by phoning Liz 01934 820442 to arrange a more convenient time.

Walking Buddies Scheme

May is National Walking Month and Banwell Parish Council is in full support. In 2020, the council started the walking buddy program which still operates although it has dwindled significantly. The scheme was set up to help pair residents up with a walking buddy. If you do not want to walk alone, we will be by your side. We have also been signing up 'Walking Buddy Volunteers' to help people in Banwell to get out and about for a stroll around the village. You can contact the Clerk to sign up as requiring a buddy or volunteering as a buddy.



Banwell Great British Spring Clean

Thank you to the amazing volunteers (some who are pictured here) who came last year. We were litter picking, sweeping, and cleaning the village ready for Spring.

This year it is April 27th. Meet at the Youth and Community Centre at the bottom of the West Street carpark on **Saturday 27th of April 10am - 12pm**. All equipment and refreshments will be supplied – just bring weather appropriate clothing and a can-do attitude. See you there!

Wash & Squash: Recycling 101



Thank you to all our residents who are recycling everything they can! Don't forget to "Wash and Squash" your recycling. Washing your recycling not only reduces contamination at the recycling plant but could also save our wildlife and pets. Animals like hedgehogs, cats, foxes, and badgers are attracted to leftover food residue in your recycling. This can lead to cuts, injuries and even death. Squashing your recycling saves precious space in both your recycling boxes and on the recycling lorries. Squashing means we can recycle even more! Want to learn more about recycling in Banwell? Head to the [North Somerset Council recycling page](#) or contact us.

Banwell Book Swap



Looking for something new to read? Come along to the *Banwell Book Borrow / Swap!* The Banwell Book Swap runs from 10am to 1pm every Thursday and alternate Tuesdays at the Banwell Youth & Community Centre. Everyone is welcome to pop in and pick up a book to take home – and, if you like, grab a free cup of tea or coffee and biscuit whilst you sit and read!

Nature and Sustainability in Banwell



BANWELL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Your Parish Council have been going wild for nature this year with the following:

Communications: we have been sharing nature and sustainability information all over our social media and newsletter. We are, and will continue to, run monthly themes from 'No Mo May' to green energy support. We hope the posts will help you engage with nature and the environment.

Banwell Sustainability Group: We started a new Sustainability Group but due to staff shortages have not met since the new Action Plan was approved by the Parish Council. If you want to join in or share your ideas, contact clerk@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk

Biodiversity and Sustainability Action Plan: We have drafted created a Biodiversity and Sustainability Action Plan to reduce the carbon footprint of the Parish Council, reduce waste and help nature thrive in the village. The plan is available on www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk/parish-council/parish-council-information/

Grants Awarded to The Parish Council in 2023/24

- £10,000 awarded by North Somerset Council for Solar Panels to service the YCC and Sount Building.
- £500 awarded by North Somerset Council to serve food as part of the Public Living Room initiative.
- West of England Rural Network paid for a chef to give cookery lessons.
- £250 from the Kathleen Jones Trust for Banwell Food Bank contributing towards the Christmas Food Parcels.
- £1,000 from Winscombe Parish Council to support activities in Banwell Y.C.C.

Grants Given Out by the Parish Council

Did you know that local community groups and organisations can apply for a grant through the parish council? The following grants have been awarded to the following groups during the last 12 months:

- Minibus society: £1000
- Citizens Advice £3616 to enable an outreach service for the Parish.
- Air Ambulance £200
- Banwell Scouts: Free Solar Panels

News

Going Green: Solar Panels for our Community Buildings

Thanks to the support of the North Somerset Business Fund, the Parish Council has secured funding for solar panels which will service both the Youth & Community Centre and the Scout Building. We're thrilled to announce this initiative, which will help make our community buildings more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

A big thank you goes out to the Scouts for allowing us to utilise their roof space for the solar panels. Their cooperation has been invaluable in making this project a reality. With the installation of these solar panels, we're taking a step forward in reducing both our carbon footprint and embracing renewable energy. It's a small but important change that aligns with our commitment to caring for our environment.

Unveiling Our Vision: Introducing our New Strategic Plan

We're excited to share with you the launch of our Parish Council's latest strategic plan and its resulting action plan! This plan is the Parish Council's roadmap for the future, outlining our goals and priorities in a clear and accessible way.

Inside, you'll find our plans for improving parish council owned infrastructure, caring for the environment, engaging with our community, and supporting local businesses. These are the areas we've identified as crucial for our growth and well-being. We encourage you to take a look at the plan and get familiar with our goals. Your thoughts and ideas are always welcome as we work together to make our community the best it can be.

You can find a copy online <https://www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk/parish-council/strategic-plan-2024-2029> alternatively contact the Clerk for a copy. Let's journey toward a brighter future together!

Banwell E-Newsletter

As well as the Parish Council's update in the parish magazine, we have a digital E-Newsletter to keep you up to date on Banwell news. To sign up, head to www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk and fill in the pop-up form. We always welcome feedback, so do let us know what you think of the newsletter.

Keeping You in The Know

As a Parish Council we are always looking to ensure our parishioners are kept up to date with the latest decisions by the Council and are aware of the wider issues impacting those who reside and work within our Parish. There are multiple ways you can contact your Parish Council:

- Call us on 01934 820442.
- Email us on comms@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk / clerk@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk
- Website www.banwellparishcouncil.org.uk
- Visit us at Banwell Youth & Community Centre Tues & Thurs 10am-12noon
- Follow Banwell Parish Council's Facebook (@banwellparishcouncil)
- Follow Banwell Parish Council on X (@banwellpc)
- Follow Banwell Parish Council on Instagram (@banwellparishcouncil)
- Send us a letter to Banwell Parish Council Youth and Community Centre, West Street, Banwell, BS29 6BD.
- Attend a Council meeting online or in person (watch on Facebook live)
- View the village noticeboards (entrance to West Street Carpark and the Rec)
- Subscribe to our YouTube Channel

Parish Office

The Parish Office is located at the Youth & Community Centre (at the bottom of West Street Carpark adjacent to the Scout Hut) and is open to parishioners on **Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am until 12 noon** – no appointment needed. The Clerk or Administration Officer is more than happy to see you by prior arrangement if this is not convenient. Call (01934) 820442, email clerk@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk or admin@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk