

Dear Emma, Dear Bob,

I believe there is still a vacancy on the Burwash Parish Council, and I am writing to apply to be considered for the post.

I moved to Burwash Weald three years ago after living 34 years abroad. Returning to the area where I was born and bred, and still have family, has been a joy and I have been amazed how welcoming people in the village have been. It has encouraged me to take a real interest in the three communities and their local environment, and a year ago I joined the team of the fledgling Wild about Burwash. It has been inspiring to work on this project and to see how many people do take an interest in preserving our beautiful piece of the High Weald. In the six months before lockdown we organised, as you know, quite a few successful events to raise awareness of the environment, culminating in the Stargazing evening at the Village Hall.

More recently I have joined the Environment and Maintenance Working Party of the Parish Council, which has given me a better insight as to the work expected of a Parish Councillor. My final questions were answered in a recent zoom meeting with Councillors Newson, Kenny, Hoesin and Stemp!

At the start of my working life, I worked in London and then in Paris as a personal assistant at, amongst others, the French Chamber of Commerce in London, Sony and Lee Cooper, before moving to the accountancy firm Dixon Wilson to study for an ACCA qualification. My children appeared on the scene before I could complete my 3 years of study, and while I have a reasonably high capacity for work; a full-time job, plus accountancy exams, plus babies proved a little too much! I took time off to raise my children and was involved with voluntary work, fund raising for their school for many years, notably 7 years of running a book fair with an average turnover over 2 days each year of 15,000 Euros. The success of it was mainly due to inviting prestigious writers to sign their books at the fair, but this required a lot of work over the six months running up to the event.

I have spent many years teaching English conversation to French students and when I moved to Brussels in 2013, I set up a business with a friend helping French and Belgian school leavers to choose university courses in Europe, the UK, Canada and the US, and giving assistance with admission documents and personal statements. Given the current uncertainty around university admissions due to Covid-19 and the upcoming Brexit negotiations, I have preferred to set this activity to one side for the foreseeable future. This will of course enable me to focus more attention on my work as a Parish Councillor if I am accepted for this role.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Antonia Stapylton-Smith