

Haxey Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2011
Parish Council Chairman's Report

Introduction

My report covers the period from 28th April 2010 to 9th May 2011.

It has been a very busy year for this my second year as Chairman of Haxey Parish Council. I feel honoured and privileged to have been elected to this post and looking back at the past 12 months, I find it hard to believe just how much work the Council has done. The Council is constantly striving to make improvements and this is very much a team effort. We have been fortunate to have had a settled Council for the past year. Everyone has played a part and would like to thank the Vice Chairman and Councillors for the time and effort they put into their work for the Parish. I would also like to thank our Clerk, Deb Hotson, who has given me tremendous help and support throughout the year.

Meetings

During the period there have been 12 monthly meetings of the Council, plus several working party meetings of the Land Working Party, the majority dealing with the Allotment Project and Parish Land Revaluation, also the groups producing the Website, the Awards Map, Footpaths and the Community-Led Parish Plan Action Group.

Planning Matters

The Parish Council is consulted by NLC on all planning applications within the Parish. In total 48 planning applications were dealt with during the period. This represented a 10% reduction on the previous year

In the future NLC, to cut costs, are no longer issuing Parish Councils with the plans and the PC are investing in a projector to allow the public and members to view the plans at PC meetings

Representation by Councillors

The Parish Council is represented on Haxey Memorial Hall Committee, Westwoodside Village Hall Committee, Haxey and Westwoodside Playing Field Committees, Haxey C of E Primary School Governing Body, St Nicholas Church Parochial Church Council (closed churchyard), Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Committee, Neighbourhood Action Teams (NATS), ERNLLCA (East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association) on which Cllr Knowles is on the Executive Committee.

Trustees

The Parish Council is also represented by members who serve on the Haxey Combined Charity and Haxey Endowed School Estates.

Road Safety

The speed of traffic through Haxey and Westwoodside remains a cause for concern. North Lincolnshire Council have installed temporary flashing 30mph signs on the A161 and Akeferry Road during the year and the Parish Council also hired for 6 months, two flashing signs that were on Akeferry Road and Doncaster Road, Westwoodside. Data obtained from these signs will help the Police identify the times of persistent speeders.

State of Roads

The Parish Council has continued to press North Lincolnshire Council for major road improvements in the Parish and I am pleased to report that work on reconstruction of Akeferry Road has started at last. The major remaining road which needs considerable work to improve it is the B1396 from the western edge of Westwoodside to Levels Farm. The severe frost this past winter led to many potholes appearing and temporary repairs have been carried out on most of them

Flooding and Drainage Improvements

Cllr Allcock represented the Council on the Flood Forum Group set up by North Lincolnshire Council and is Vice-Chairman of the Isle of Axholme Internal Drainage Board. Following the floods of 2007 and 2008, the Parish has been fortunate that the Drainage Board acted on the need for improvements and over the past two years major works have been completed in Haxey Lane, the Haxey village is almost complete, and the Low Burnham Scheme has just started.

Environment Agency -Trent Catchment Flood Management Plan

There was strong opposition to the Policy which was proposed by the Environment Agency and the Parish Council, North Lincolnshire Council and the Isle of Axholme Drainage Board all protested about the initial suggestion that Policy 2 be adopted. Again Cllr Allcock has been instrumental in discussions with EA which has resulted in adoption of Policy 4 which will give the area significantly improved flood protection.

CPRE Best Kept Village

Haxey and Westwoodside entered the CPRE Best Kept Village Competition in the Past Winners Category having won in 2008. Again there was stiff competition and I extend our congratulations to Epworth who won for the first time.

However this has made us more determined than ever to win again this year and to this end we are planning to have a voluntary clear – up day around the Parish later in May.

Haxey Parish did win the Best Kept War Memorial prize and hope to do so again this year.

Thanks to all who take the trouble to make the villages look at their best. We will be putting up hanging baskets and flower troughs again this year, and also planting out flowers in 10 beds at the entrances to the villages.

We will be entering again this year in a past winners group.

Financial Support

Financial support is an important part of the Parish Councils remit and we have given support by way of grants under S137 of the Local government Act 1972, to a number of organisations including; Westwoodside Playing Fields Association, Westwoodside Village Hall, Westwoodside Pond Lights Committee, the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, Haxey and District Bowls Club, Haxey Tennis Club, St. Nicholas PCC, Haxey Playing Fields Association, Royal British Legion, Haxey Happy Circle, and we continue to support the very popular Over 70's Party.

Wherever it is within our remit we are always willing to give financial support to local organisations in accordance with S137.

Communications

The Parish Councils Website is continually being updated by the Website Working Group, comprising Cllrs Carlile, Knowles and Cooke, to include more and more information and has steadily increasing viewing numbers. Following last years Parish Meeting, a forum has been set up and this has been well used throughout the year by a number of residents.

We continue to place our monthly Newsletter in the Haxey and Westwoodside Arrow to keep residents informed of the work of the Parish Council.

Rent Review

The Parish Council owns approximately 73 acres of land with 16 tenants. Considerable time and effort has been devoted recently to reviewing these rents for the first time since 1994 and I am pleased to report that this has been completed successfully.

Power of Well-Being

All councillors have been trained in the Power of Well-Being which gives the Parish Council more powers to carry out works and improvements. As further details emerge about the Localism Bill, the Parish Council will be in a good position to take advantage of increased responsibilities, and we relish the challenges that this may bring.

Improvements

The Council has been proactive in promoting and completing a number of improvements in the Parish over the past year. These have included ;-

- Completion of the Community-Led Parish Plan
- Appointment of a Parish handyman,
- The completion of Allotments in Cove Road
- The purchase a new burial ground in Church Lane
- Carried out a Housing Needs Survey

During the next year, it is proposed to

- Commence work to commission the new Parish Cemetery and Memorial Garden
- Create a Parish Heritage Trail for which funding has just been received from LEADER,
- Complete a Community Emergency Plan and establish any infrastructure required
- Make a secure, safe storage unit for the Awards Map, Tithe map, and Tithe book
- Revise the Parish Directory.

Issues

Unfortunately, the Council has to react to issues arising in the Parish caused by third parties. We always do our best to support local residents when they are affected by these. Three major issues have arisen in the past year.

Caravan Sites at Burnham and Haxey Turbary. The Camping and Caravanning Club licensed these sites with no, or very little, consultation with local neighbours. It transpired that there is no legislation for them to consult with Parish Councils. We felt this was wrong and have tabled a Resolution through ERNLLCA up to national level to change the law in this respect.

Haxey Library. NLC have decided as part of their cost cutting exercise to cut their librarian from Haxey library and replace her with volunteers. The Council opposed this move and held several meetings with NLC to seek ways to change their ideas but in the end, this is to go ahead in the near future. Hopefully the proposal will work and at least the option of complete closure has been prevented.

Hood Field The issue of the quad bike track on the Hood Field is still unresolved. The Parish Council view is that this is a totally inappropriate activity for this historic, Greenfield site. It has been very active in trying to resolve this but to no avail. Meetings have been held with the NLC Planning Officers and with the owner of the field. We are awaiting the result of deliberations by the Planners who are still considering points that were put to them.

Thank you to Retiring Councillors – W. Lindley and J. Eckhardt

Wilf Lindley has just retired from the Council after completing 62 years service to the Parish as a Councillor. I congratulate him on this great achievement and all the work he has carried out in that time to help parishioners and improve the community.

Jennie Eckhardt has been a member of the Council for 8 years and has been the organiser of the very successful Over 70's party, funded each year by the Parish Council. I am pleased to say that Jennie has agreed to carry on with this role.

Wilf and Jennie will be sadly missed and we shall miss their experience and vast knowledge of the area.

Welcome New Councillor

I am pleased to welcome Cllr. James Orton as a new Parish Councillor. I am sure that he will make a valuable contribution to the Council. There is now a vacancy for one council member which is now being advertised.