

08 May 13

## **HAXEY PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT AND**

### **FUTURE PLANS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

My aim is to provide a brief report on the work carried out by the Parish Council over the past 12 months and highlight the priorities for the coming year.

I start off on a very sad note by acknowledging the passing of Cllr John Edward Maw in March. John was an exceptional and well known individual, who worked tirelessly for the Parish throughout his many years as a Councillor. He has been and will continue to be sorely missed. To mark the contribution John has made to the community (which he knew about before he died), the Cove Rd Allotment Site will be named after him and a ceremony to mark the dedication, attended by Barbara Maw, will be held at the Site at 3.00 PM on 28 May followed by a reception at the Carpenter’s Arms.

Following on from last year and considering the current economic climate the Parish Council has frozen the Precept for the fourth consecutive year.

The Parish Council’s workload has continued to increase over the past year as the effects of “localism” play their part on the 1<sup>st</sup> tier of local democracy.

Planning matters, Parish Land Management, general Parish maintenance management and issues raised by Parishioners are dealt with on a day to day basis by the Parish Council Clerk in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-

Chairman and the various Committees and Working Groups set up by the Council; moreover, there is significant Councillor's representation at local and County organisations such as the Haxey Combined Charities, Governing Body of Haxey Primary School, Haxey Endowed School Estates, local Police forums, Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association and the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

There is virtually constant communication with all elements of our Principal Authority, North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) and we continue to have the benefit of one of our Ward Councillors also serving as a Parish Councillor, which has continued to provide considerable improvement in the communication between NLC and the Parish. Major consultations have included commenting on local area environmental and drainage projects and the local development framework plans for neighbouring authorities. Details of results of these consultations are recorded in the minutes of the monthly Parish Council meetings which are published on the Parish Council website and Village Notice Boards.

The Parish Council has seen an increase in planning activity over the last year and we continue to develop our good relationship with NLC Planners and last year we agreed and adopted a new reporting procedure with NLC for planning applications. This has improved and clarified Parish Council recommendations. The Parish Council considered a total of 73 Planning Applications of which 35 were passed without comment and 38 were commented on. The Council objected to 21 The Principal Authority agreed

with the Parish Council on 7 applications, overruled the Parish Council recommendation in 7 cases; 2 applications were withdrawn, 2 are being considered by the NLC Planning Committee and 3 have yet to be decided. We have carried on the practice of dedicating a period before each monthly Council Meeting for the public to raise matters with the Parish Council. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to use these opportunities to express their views.

This last year has also seen the continued use of Open Meetings for particularly important issues that affect the Parish. The potential plans for Hallcroft Close were the subject of one such meeting when North Lincolnshire Homes, NLC and local residents discussed the issues and made their feelings known and whilst there is little evidence of any major change in view from the Housing Association, lines of communication have been established with the Parish Council and local community action groups.

The Parish Council is currently assessing the use of Westwoodside Playing Fields Pavilion Meeting Room for its monthly meetings and will continue to take action to come up with potential cost-effective solutions to enable it to keep pace with the Council's increased administrative demands.

Over the last year, issues the Council has dealt with have included major involvement in the Parish's successful Queen's Jubilee Celebrations, work on the Allotment Site to improve drainage and the taking on of responsibility for the judging of the Allotment Associations annual competition; maintenance work on St Nicholas Closed Churchyard; continued commissioning work on

the Parish Cemetery with the letting of the contract for the building of the Memorial Wall and the completion of the Parish Community Emergency Plan, which has been submitted to NLC. The Council is in the process of carrying out its periodic valuation of Parish land and has recently entered into consultations with Village Townsfolk with the aim of providing them with any administrative support they may require for the formal upkeep and public liability for the meres and pinfolds.

Following a request for assistance from the Westwoodside Playing Fields Association Management Committee and after a protracted period of advice seeking and due diligence, the Parish Council is in the final stages of taking on the Trusteeship of the Association. The Council's current plan is to seek funding to update and rejuvenate the domestic facilities supporting the Playing Fields and also increase the use of the facilities by the local community. The Parish Council has also been approached by the Westwoodside Reading Room/Billiard Room to provide representation on their Management Committee, which has been approved, but will not be implemented at this time. Unfortunately, once again, our Parish Handyman has had to resign due to poor health; however, we have managed to identify a Contractor who will take on his duties for an initial period until we either employ a new handyman or enter into a longer standing contractual arrangement.

The Council has consulted with NLC and supported the reduction of the speed limits on Doncaster Rd and the A161; moreover, following another spate of

accidents on Doncaster Rd, further consultation has taken place with NLC with the result that there will now be a re-design of the crossroads at the Park Drain in this financial year. The Parish Council has also consulted with NLC on the location of Bus Stops in the Parish.

This last year has seen the introduction and implementation of a new Code of Conduct for Councillors which has required a training session and training has also been provided to Councillors in Localism, Neighbourhood Planning, and Advanced Chairmanship. The Council has also been represented at the Local Council's Association Conferences to take advantage of the updating of topical and important issues. The Council has produced an updated Parish Directory, which is available on the Council website and in hard copy in public places around the Parish. The Parish Council has continued to support the CPRE Best Kept Village Competitions and lessons identified from last year's assessment have resulted in a Contractor being employed this year to provide and maintain the floral displays around the Villages. A resident has also volunteered to redesign and renovate Dr Dyson's garden in High Street, Haxey.

During the last year the Parish Council has provided financial support to the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, Low Burnham Village Centre, Westwoodside Village Hall, Westwoodside and Haxey Playing Fields, South Axholme Academy, Haxey Cricket Club and the Axholme Raiders and Westwoodside Rangers football teams. Moreover, the Council has once

again fully supported the annual Over 70's party, which continues to be ably organised by Jennie Ekhardt, to whom the Council passes on their thanks. The Council marked the annual Remembrance Day commemoration with a well attended "parade" at the Haxey Memorial followed by the Church Service. Both events were supported for the second year by a Bugler from South Axholme Academy. Finally, the Council continues to support the Axholme Camera Club and the annual competition results will be announced during this meeting.

For the coming year the Parish Council will carry on the work on ongoing projects, continue to develop it's relationship with the Principal Authority and looking to the medium term future, the main aim of the Council will be on the development of a strategy for Localism in the Parish and ultimately for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan to complement the Parish Plan produced in 2010.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of all Parish Councillors and to thank Councillors, the Vice Chairman and the Parish Council Clerk for the first-rate support they have provided me with over the past year.

### **QUESTIONS**