

29 May 15

HAXEY PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT AND

FUTURE PLANS

The aim of this report is to provide a brief summary of the work carried out by the Parish Council over the past financial year and highlight plans for the coming year.

First, on a very sad note, the Council acknowledges with regret the passing of Wilf Lindley in Jul 2014. Wilf was a well-respected member of the Parish and a Parish Councillor for 60 years. The Parish Council will recognise Wilf’s considerable contribution to the community with the provision and dedication of a memorial bench, which will be located at Haxey Memorial Hall

Next, the annual precept: Residents will recall the Council has provided a running commentary on its website and in it’s monthly article in the Arrow on Government and Principal Authority Policy and the relevant calculations for the setting of the Parish precept. Following 5 years of no increase, the Parish Council has reluctantly had to raise the precept from £35000 to £40,000 for 2015/16, which reflects an increase of just over £3 per Band D household per year. This action will enable the Council to replenish its reserves and contingencies for the future.

The Parish Council's workload has continued at a good pace over the past year. Planning matters, including enforcement, 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 continues to be significant Councillor representation at local and County organisations such as the Haxey Combined Charities, the Governing Bodies of local Primary Schools, Haxey Endowed School Estates, local Police forums, the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the North East Bassetlaw Community Liaison Group, CPRE and in the governance of Westwoodside Playing Fields Association.

There is virtually constant communication with all elements of 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 maintained the improvement in communication between NLC and the Parish. Major consultations have included commenting on local area environmental and drainage projects, updates on the NLC Local Development Plan, which is currently undergoing scrutiny prior to acceptance by national authorities and the North Lincolnshire Definitive Map. The Nottingham County Council, Central Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire Lakes local plans, the Nottinghamshire Mineral Plan and the Lincolnshire Mineral and Waste Local Plan. The Council

has continued to be involved in the dialogue about abandoned horses and “fly grazing” and the effects of flooding in our local area and is pleased to recognise the Government financing of a 6 year capital plan for the alleviation of flooding risks. Recently, the Council has been actively involved in the consultation on the future of both local Post Offices, which are expected to be moved to local stores. The Council has continued its involvement in potential “fracking” issues. It was represented at a local briefing on the issue and we currently have 2 representatives on the North East Bassetlaw Community Liaison Group, which has a primary interest in local “fracking”. Details and results of these consultations, briefings and advisory notices are recorded in the minutes of the monthly Parish Council meetings, which are published on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council has continued to develop its relationship with NLC Planners and we have seen a smaller volume of planning applications to the previous year. Planning Applications which have caused significant local concern during the last year include the request for a change of use of a dwelling in Low Burnham to C3b use. Whilst this request is not a direct planning issue, local Residents and the Parish Council oppose the change on the basis that a Company will be providing the services to the occupants, not a family and that the location in a small hamlet with few facilities is completely inappropriate. This matter continues to be monitored and is still under consideration by NLC. Another local issue is the continuing proposed business development of a site in Haxey Carr, which has been opposed by

local Residents and the Parish Council and is currently the subject of a further planning application following the recent dismissal of a previous appeal. .

During 2014/15 (April to March), the Parish Council considered a total of 52 Planning Applications of which 33 were passed with or without comment and the Council objected to 19. The Principal Authority agreed with the Parish Council on 37 applications, overruled the Parish Council's recommendation in 7 cases and 2 applications were withdrawn. Six have yet to be decided. Last year saw 7 applications go to appeal, resulting in 1 being allowed and 6 being dismissed. The Council has also introduced a standing agenda item into its meeting to report on progress with enforcement on local planning issues and there are currently 6 applications that the Council is working with NLC to bring to a satisfactory conclusion. We have continued the practice of dedicating a period before each monthly Council Meeting for the public to raise matters with the Parish Council. Subjects this last year have included specific Planning Applications, the Doncaster Rd drainage plan, "fracking" and the Gollands Lane traffic issues. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to use these opportunities to express their views.

The Parish Council has completed the refurbishment works at Westwoodside Playing Fields, the Pavilion has been renamed the Foreman Carter Centre and was reopened by the local MP in July 2014. Use of the facilities is continuing to increase and the finances of the Association are in a satisfactory condition. The Council has completed the move of the administrative hub of the Parish to the Centre and has authorised the funding of the installation of a

phone line which, when operational, will enable the setting up of a WIFI system and become part of the NLC Broadband initiative. The Centre and grounds hosted a major Charity event in January this year attended by 400 guests and celebrities, which, despite a few problems, which might have been expected from such a large function at that time of year, proved to be a success. It is expected that the event will be repeated in 2016. The Parish Council wishes to thank Mr Richard Carter, his Management Committee and the Parish Clerk for their continued hard work and stewardship of the Westwoodside Playing Fields Association on their behalf as Sole Trustees. Further work will continue over the coming years to improve and consolidate the Centre and sports facilities. On infrastructure issues, the Council has successfully applied to NLC for a partial grant towards the replacement of the 2 Parish Notice Boards, which were in need of refurbishment. Again, the Council wishes to express its appreciation to the Parish Clerk for her efforts in securing the funding.

Liaison with the Haxey Parish Allotment Association has continued over the last year and Cllrs Boor and Whitehead continue to judge the Associations annual "best kept plot" competition. Following the completion of the survey of St Nicholas Closed Churchyard, a contract has now been placed for 2 phases of work to make the memorials, identified as problematic, safe. Phase 1 was completed in February and Phase 2 is due for completion over the next 2 months. Work has continued to maintain the Parish Cemetery on Church Lane following the completion of the Memorial Wall and work to commission

the cemetery and raise the necessary administrative paperwork should commence this year. Last year was the centenary of the Great War and the Parish Council supported St Nicholas Church and the Heritage Society in their commemorative events; moreover, following the successful Heritage Society event, the Council arranged for Cllr Fiddler to give his presentation to local schools with the aim of increasing knowledge of the First World War and its effects locally. The War Memorial on the A161 in Haxey is again in need of some refurbishment and the Council is looking to identify funding for this project. Additionally, the Council has been actively involved with the Isle of Axholme/Hatfield Chase Partnership and has submitted 5 heritage projects for funding to the organisation. These include restoration and conservation of the Greenhill site, the local Pinfolds and the Parish Awards historic documentation. Following the valuation of Parish land, Tenants had their rent increased to reflect the revaluation in October 2014. Work continues to bring the Westwoodside Playing Fields owned and leased land up to date with the Land Registry and this should be completed in the next 3 months. Consultation with Parish Townsfolk has continued, in particular over the state of the Pinfolds and it is hoped that funding from the Isle of Axholme/Hatfield Chase Partnership will help sort the problems out. The Parish Council is pleased to announce that it has recently appointed a local Resident, Mr Stuart Livingstone, as the Parish Handyman.

The Council has continued to be consulted by NLC on changes to various speed limits around the Parish. Severn Trent Water has continued the work

on the updated system to alleviate the long-standing foul water flooding on Doncaster Rd and once this is completed in the next 2 months, NLC will resurface Doncaster Rd.

Training has been provided to all Councillors on the responsibilities of being a Trustee and one Councillor has received comprehensive training on Hydraulic Fracturing Technology. During the next year, the Council will receive further training on Local Government and will also participate in the recently established national Local Council Awards Scheme. 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 Parish Council has continued to support the CPRE's Best Kept Village Competitions and the Contractor employed last year to provide and maintain the floral displays around the Villages has been reappointed. Following a disappointing result in the 2014 Best Kept Village Competition, the Council has established a "Planting Group" to oversee the floral displays in the Parish and it is hoped that this initiative will improve the look of the Villages during the Best Kept Village season. Finally, the Parish Council has established a Local Volunteer Awards Group, which has made recommendations for annual awards to individuals and groups who have benefited the Parish. The scheme will be rolled out at this Meeting and an article will be published in the June edition of the Arrow.

During the last year the Parish Council has provided financial support to the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, Westwoodside Academy, Westwoodside and Haxey Playing Fields, Haxey Cricket Club, Haxey Bowls Club and the Axholme Raiders and Westwoodside Rangers football teams and on personnel issues, the Parish Clerk has had her contract of employment updated. 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 once again passes on their sincere thanks. The Council marked the annual Remembrance Day commemoration with a well attended "parade" at the Haxey Memorial on 11th of the 11th 2014 and attendance at the Church Service on the previous Sunday. Both events were supported for the fourth year by a local Bugler. Finally, the Council continues to support the Axholme Camera Club and the annual competition results will be announced after this meeting.

Moving on to general items for the coming year: the Parish Council will carry on the work with ongoing projects; continue to develop its relationship with the Principal Authority; will be actively pursuing the preservation of the Parish War Memorials, the Greenhill Site and Pinfolds as well as improving local footpaths. The Council will also continue to look to improve its E-communications and has recently let a contract to a local Company to update and maintain the Parish Council website.

Next a few words on the recent election as it affected the Parish Council.

There were 15 nominations for the positions of Parish Councillor submitted to the NLC Returning Officer by the due date. This meant that the election at Parish level was uncontested and the 15 nominations, the current 15 Members of the Council, were re-appointed as Parish Councillors for the next 4 years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, I would like 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