

22 Apr 18

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

### **FUTURE PLANS**

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

First, information on Councillors: Cllr Alison Hunt–Siwy was co-opted to the Parish Council in July last year. The Community will be aware that Cllr David Harris was taken seriously ill in 2017. I am now pleased to report that Cllr Harris has made a return to Council support, as and when his treatment allows. We continue to wish him well with his recovery. In the meantime, Cllr Helen Condliff has taken on the duties as Vice Chair. Finally, the Parish Council acknowledged the passing in November last year of ex-Councillor David Moyle.

Moving on to Council business: Following the increase in the annual precept for 2018/19, the Parish Council Financial Committee considered known Council commitments and current reserve funds and recommended a reduction in the precept for 2019/20 by £2000 to £40,000. The Committee further recommended that as the Parish Council continues to fulfil the conditions set by North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) with regard to the acceptance of their Council Tax Grant, that the Grant is accepted for 2019/20. The Full Parish Council adopted the Financial Committee’s recommendations. Also, this year, the Principal Authority increased the Community Charge by

2.99% and is expected to liquidate some reserves with the extra funds raised to be spent predominantly on community welfare, social issues and to make up for any gap caused by the lack of Government grant.

The Parish Council's workload has continued to increase over the past year. Planning matters, including enforcement reporting, Parish Land Management, general Parish maintenance management and issues raised by Parishioners continue to be dealt with on a day to day basis by the Parish Council Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the various Committees and Working Groups set up by the Council, which are described on the Parish Council website. Moreover, there continues to be significant Councillor representation at local and County organisations such as the Local Police Forums, Haxey Combined Charities and Endowed School Estates, the Governing Bodies of local Primary Schools and village amenities, the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association (ERNLLCA), Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the North East Bassetlaw Community Liaison Group, CPRE, Walkers are Welcome and in the governance as Sole Trustee of Westwoodside Playing Fields Association (WPFA).

Day to day communication with all elements of North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) has been maintained and in some areas increased and the benefit of one of our Ward Councillors also serving as a Parish Councillor has continued the improvement in relationships between NLC and the Parish and the reaction time to emerging issues. Major consultations/attendances have

included commenting on local area environmental and mineral plans and projects; Doncaster/Sheffield Airport Master Plan; Misterton Neighbourhood Plan; various National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Surveys; local Drainage Board activity on the Snow Sewer and Keadby Pumping Station; Rationalising the Main River Network by the Environment Agency (EA); various Humber and Wolds Rural Association (HWRA) events; the East Midlands Community Led Housing Event and the Lost Landscape of the Heroes Project. The Council has continued its involvement in potential Hydro Carbon activity in the Parish with a standing agenda item to ensure we are kept up to date on events. Activity has continued with exploratory drilling at the Misson area project and Cllr Fiddler continues to represent the Council on its' Community Liaison Group. Information on this issue is recorded in the minutes of the monthly Parish Council meetings and Information Updates section, which are published on the Parish Council website. The Parish Council has been addressed by the local "Frack Free Isle" organisation and representatives from iGAS recently gave the Council its' first presentation and participated in a Question and Answer session.

The Parish Council has maintained its' good working relationship with NLC Planning Members and Officers and whilst there has been some reduction in the "troublesome" list of planning issues discussed at monthly meetings, some still remain. Of particular note and disappointment has been the failure of the Appeal activity to halt the legal change of use of residences to so-called "Children's homes" from out of area organisations at houses in Haxey and

Low Burnham. There continues to be reports of incidents involving their Residents and the situation will continue to be monitored. This year, we have seen an increase in planning applications. During 2018/19 (May to April), the Parish Council considered a total of 70 Planning Applications of which 34 were passed with or without comment and the Parish Council objected to 36. The Principal Authority agreed with the Parish Council's objection on 12 applications, agreed with the Parish Council's "no objection" on 24 applications, overruled the Parish Council's objection in 13 cases and overruled the Parish Council's "no objection" in 4 cases. To date, 17 applications have yet to be decided. Last year, 6 applications went to appeal, resulting in 3 being dismissed and 3 being allowed. Of particular note this year has been the Planning Application to re-develop the Duke William Public House site into housing. Following the Public Meeting and public opinion pressure from Residents, the original application was withdrawn and an amendment to the application to retain the Pub building and convert it to a house coupled with other changes was submitted. The Parish Council objected to this Planning Application and the Planning Authority's Planning Committee refused permission unanimously. Last year, the Parish Council, concerned over the potential viability of local Public Houses, registered the Duke William, the Kings Arms and the Carpenters Arms as Assets of Community Value (ACV) with NLC and the Principal Authority supported this action which provides a "time out" of up to 6 months of any potential sale for the local community to make a bid to retain the pub. The Management of the Duke William objected to the registration, NLC dismissed the objection and

the issue has now gone to appeal at a General Regulatory Tribunal hearing to be held in July this year. There has been continued activity since August last year, including the provision of statements from the First and Second Respondents and the Appellant (NLC, the Haxey Parish Council and the Duke William), Witness evidence from all parties and a formal Tribunal Management Hearing was held in Sheffield in February, with all parties represented. The Parish Council has established an ACV Group which meets regularly with NLC and local Resident Representatives to ensure the Tribunal information requirements are provided to meet their timeline.

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 such as the Duke William development and the construction of a warehouse on Doncaster Road. The Parish Council Planning Working Group (PWG) Terms of Reference, the Rules for Public Participation and the ACV process have been raised as have the state of Haxey Turbary road and the location of Parish defibrillators. Presentations from “Frack Free Isle and iGas have also taken place prior to Council meetings. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to use these opportunities to express their views to the Council.

The Foreman Carter Centre and Parish Council Headquarters continues to function satisfactorily as a sports and cultural facility. This year, with the help of a grant from local businesses, the Centre has been fully re-decorated and

in the interests of cost saving, the Multi-Use Games area (MUGA) and the Centre have been converted to LED lighting; moreover, plans are in hand to replace the outside lights to LED and upgrade the current surveillance system. The Parish Council again wishes to thank 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.

The Council continues to be involved in investigations into solutions to the reduction of traffic/parking problems at Newbigg in Westwoodside and a new trial traffic system will be introduced in the next few weeks. Solutions to similar problems in Haxey's main thoroughfare are also being investigated. The new Parish signs have started to be installed and solutions to problems encountered last summer at Westwoodside Pond are also under investigation. Once again, the Council has provided more dog bins following requests from Residents. Through the Principal Authority, there has been improvement to the Haxey Turbary road and resurfacing work carried out on an uneven stretch of road on the A161 between Epworth and Low Burnham. Finally, the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner addressed the Parish Council and took part in a useful question and answer session.

Liaison with the Haxey Parish Allotment Association has continued over the last year and once again Cllr Rose and his Wife judged the Association's annual "best kept plot" competitions. Unfortunately, the Allotment Site was

broken into again; however, following the installation of electricity to the site, the Allotment Committee is now considering fitting a surveillance system. In the St Nicholas Closed Churchyard, the periodic tree survey has been completed and recommended remedial action will be taken in the coming months. A contract to carry out the periodic Memorial survey has recently been let and the report is awaited. The refurbishment of the Church Lychgate has been completed and negotiations continue with the Parochial Church Council on the potential provision of extra burial plots following the move of the Scouts to the newly opened Youth Hub in Haxey and the eventual demolition of the Scout Hut. The Parish Cemetery on Church Lane has continued to be maintained and new gates will be fitted in the next couple of months. The commissioning of the cemetery and raising of the necessary administrative paperwork will be completed when required. A successful first use of the Parish Beacon, attended by over 300 Residents, took place in November last year as part of the well attended 100 years Armistice Remembrance activities, which included the placement of "Soldier Silhouettes" around the Parish.

The Parish Council has continued to be actively involved in the nationally supported Isle of Axholme, Hatfield Chase Project, which aims to preserve the local heritage and natural assets of our area. We currently have several local schemes in the Project which is now nationally funded. We continue to make progress on the publication of the Parish Archive and the documents have recently been studied by a Post Graduate Student from the University of

Nottingham. Following the completion of the refurbishment of the East Lound Pinfold, attention has now turned to the Haxey Pinfold and finally the contract to clean and repair the 2 War Memorials in the Parish was completed to a very high standard in time for the 2018 Remembrance Services. The Parish Paths Working Group under the Chairmanship of Cllr Smedley and supported by the Clerk to the Council continued the successful management of its' third season's Paths and Bridleways maintenance and the Council has recently let the contract for the coming season's grass cutting and Parish Path maintenance; moreover, the Parish Council is continuing to support the NLC pilot scheme to manage elements of further grass cutting tasks in the Parish and we have again recently awarded the contract to a local firm. The Council Planting Group has continued its good work with its aim of improving the year round look of the Parish and there was a marked improvement last year in our placing in the CPRE Best kept Village Competition. The NLC "In Bloom" initiative continues which has enabled us to maintain the planting projects around the Parish and once again the Parish Council wishes to acknowledge the hard work of Mr Steve Coggan, who has taken on the setting up and maintenance of the Parish planting project displays. Finally, the Parish Council has indicated to the Principal Authority its support for the Community Speed Watch Project and has provided potential sites for speed surveillance to be set up. The next step is to identify "volunteers" to be trained in the use of equipment to enable the Speed Watch Scheme to be introduced.



The Parish Council was successful in our assessment for the award of Foundation Status in the NALC Local Awards Scheme and the Certificate, the first to be awarded to a North Lincolnshire Council, was presented to the Chairman and the Clerk at the Annual ERNLLCA Conference in November 2018. Last year the Clerk and some Councillors received training in Councillors Financial Responsibilities, Code of Conduct and attended the Local Council Association's Annual Conference. The Parish Council has continued to support the CPRE's Best Kept Village Competitions and this coming year will be submitting Haxey, Westwoodside, Low Burnham and East Lound as individual entrants.

During the last year, the Parish Council has provided financial support to the Royal British Legion, CPRE, Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, Westwoodside and Haxey Playing Fields, Haxey Tennis Club, Westwoodside Village Hall, Westwoodside Academy, East Lound Christmas Lights Committee, South Axholme Academy Music Department, St Nicholas Church, the Community Specialist Nursing Team and the Over 70s Party; moreover, the Parish Council paid NLC and various local contractors for work carried out on its behalf as well as to its internal and external auditors, Insurers, SLCC and ERNLLCA. 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 Parish Council will carry on the work with plans in progress, particularly with the Isle of Axholme, Hatfield Chase projects, the management of the Parish Paths and

Bridleways initiative and the continuing NLC pilot grass cutting project. We will continue with direct involvement with Residents and the Principal Authority on any planning applications and parking and traffic initiatives that emerge to remedy issues at several sites in the Parish. Finally, we will continue to develop our relationships with the Principal Authority on all fronts and also keep abreast of any developments in national legislation aimed at greater devolution.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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

### **QUESTIONS**