

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

PRESENTED ON 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024

It is my privilege to give this short report on behalf of Neil Lawrence. It covers the activities of Upper Poppleton Parish Council which have taken place over the last 12 months. The minutes of all Parish Council meetings are available on the Upper Poppleton website.

First of all, changes to the personnel of the Parish Council in the last 12 months.

Stuart Robson, Roper Langford, Rae Youngman and Robin Garland all resigned in May last year. All four worked hard for the Parish Council and Stuart was the stalwart chairman for many years. Our thanks is given for all their efforts on behalf of the village.

Sadly, Rae passed away in late 2023 and our sympathies go out to his wife and family.

Four new members took the vacant seats and they bring new outlooks and ideas to Parish Council business. We have the full complement of nine councillors.

An overview of all Parish Councillors can be found on the website.

Whilst we are on the subject of people, I would like to give thanks to the clerk James Mackman for the work he does not only for the Parish Council, but also for the village. His hard work and phenomenal memory is a great asset. He has helped Neil to settle into the Chairman's role and he would like to thank him personally for that.

On to Parish business.

Our income for 23/24 was £40,811 of which approximately £39,400 was either spent or committed. The residual money is in the Parish bank account. Some of this will be used for future projects and some is held in reserve to ensure that any unexpected expenditure can be covered.

The largest percentage of income at £35,000 comes from the City of York precept. The rest is from various sources including grants, VAT refunds, etc.

The largest part of this last year's expenditure goes on village activities such as grass cutting, Maypole painting and a host of other items. All the details of expenditure can be found on the website.

The second largest group of expenditure items is on donations to worthy village causes. In 23/24 we donated almost £12,000 to recipients such as the Community Trust, the Youth Club and other organisations. Again, the details are on the website.

During the year we have carried out many activities to ensure that Parish Council responsibilities are fulfilled. This includes a tree survey which is carried out every five years to ensure that the trees in Upper Poppleton, which are the Parish Council's responsibility, are in good health and in a safe condition. It also provides advice on maintenance (or removal) of those trees which are in need. A tree policy is in preparation which will cover responsibilities, future plans, areas for new tree planting, etc. This should be published in the coming months.

We also ensure that the Green is kept in good condition and that our benches are well maintained and safe to sit on.

Parking remains a problem in the whole village. As well as being an eyesore, some of the parking increases risk to pedestrians and also can cause problems on the bus route. The Parish Council objected to the recent introduction of daily parking fee at the station car park on the grounds that it would encourage more people to park on Station Road.

Unfortunately, the rail company advises us that the area behind gates on the opposite side of the road to the current car park cannot be utilised for parking as the renovation and preparation costs would be excessive. The area around the Green and Old Forge surgery is regularly full of cars, which is understandable as there are insufficient parking spaces. However, parking partly on the pavement should be discouraged and Neil

wrote an article in the March Centrepiece magazine asking people to park fully on the road wherever possible to ensure pavement accessibility for everyone.

Just recently, the entrance to the car park at the Lord Collingwood was repaired and is now in good condition again. This car park is owned and maintained by the Parish Council.

The parking issues are intractable and until a workable and affordable solution can be found, it is up to residents to do their best to park correctly and considerately

One of the main activities both for Upper and Nether Poppleton is the plan to group together to form one Parish Council to represent the whole village. At two Parish Meetings held in January, the vote of the villagers was unanimously in favour. Representations have been made to the City of York Council as a result of the vote but as yet and despite many emails, no progress has been made. We are still waiting for some positive feedback from CYC.

Other activities include the excellent celebrations around the coronation of King Charles. This was a joint effort by both Parish Councils and the many volunteers who deserve our thanks. The Sports Day in June and the Village Show in August were a great success, although not organised by the Parish Council these are key events on the village green.

During the last year, the Parish Council reviewed around fifty planning applications. These include applications for private properties as well as those for tree maintenance/removal in areas covered either by a tree preservation order or individual trees covered by a conservation order.

It is important to note that the Parish Council is not the final arbiter of planning applications. York Council makes the final decisions. The Parish Council is a consultee and whilst our opinion may be taken into consideration, CYC has no obligation to do so. However, the Parish Council will maintain its vigilance particularly for applications which may be at odds with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Finally, prior to the March Parish Council meeting there was a very well attended public question and answer session with Professor Mike Homes who represents the Haxby Group. Most of the questions concerned levels of service provided both at the Old Forge Surgery and through the wider resources of the Haxby Group. This was a follow up to the first meeting which was held in January last year. Probably the most important question was the future of Old Forge Surgery. Professor Holmes guaranteed that the surgery will not be closing and in fact the upstairs is to be utilised in future as a teaching location, all of which is good news for the village. The Parish Council plans to organise another question-and-answer session in 2025.

That ends the report.  
Are there any questions?