

Annual meeting of Cawthorne Parish Thursday 7th April at 7.30pm in the Parish Room

Chairman of the Parish Council's Report

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting, thank you for attending.

As Chairman of the Parish Council, I will give my annual report followed by that of the Clerk, Mrs Bashforth, who will cover financial matters.

During the past 12 months the Parish Council has thankfully been less impacted by Covid 19 than the previous year, however we held our last zoom meeting in May, just before the Government legislation prohibiting them. The Council then decided not to meet in person until July to give further time for the pandemic to subside we therefore held our first face to face meeting since March 2020 to which members of the public were invited. This meeting was held in our usual venue, however councillors were uncomfortable in the setting of the Moxon room and a decision was taken to meet for the foreseeable future in the Parish Room where social distancing is much easier to achieve.

Before continuing with my report, on behalf of the Parish council I would like to express our condolences to the families of parishioners who have sadly lost their lives to Covid.

The Parish council is a local authority, the first tier of local government, we represent the Parishioners and our purpose is to make decisions on behalf of the Parish, we have an overall responsibility for the well-being of our local community. As the authority closest to the people we are invariably the first port of call people go to with their concerns or ideas. For these reasons we are a vital part of the community. We welcome residents input, it is only by being made aware of issues that we have the opportunity to do something about them, I would encourage all residents to contact their councillors or the clerk with any relevant concerns they may have. It was disappointing to note that throughout the last year only 4 members of the public attended council meetings, I would encourage parishioners to attend these meetings.

The council has several committees, Budget and Finance, chaired by Cllr Walker with Cllrs Broadhead, Barron and Wilson. Planning, chaired by Cllr Barron with Cllrs Barr, Kilner and Sidebottom, Cllr Sidebottom has now replaced on the committee by Cllr Wilson following her resignation. Cemetery, with Cllrs Broadhead, Eyre, Kilner and Walker. The Chairman can also attend these committees.

We also have external representatives for Cawthorne Recreation Ground Trust, Cllr's Broadhead and Barr. The Village Hall Committee, Cllr Walker and Cannon Hall Parks for People Steering Group, Cllr Walker and Barr.

I would like to thank all the councillors, Mrs Bashforth the Clerk and Ken Arundel, the Internal Auditor for their tireless endeavours during the past 12 months. I would also like to thank the ward councillors for their support and attendance along with the Barnsley Chronicle reporter Sheila Weber, who has now retired and not been replaced.

I am pleased to report that the Cawthorne Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was accepted in the village referendum held on the 10th July 2021, 40% of eligible Parishioners voted and 93% of voters were in favour. Barnsley MBC have adopted the NDP which is now an official planning document effective up until 2033. You may remember that the Parish council set up a steering group to manage the complex and difficult process and special thanks are due to all members of that Steering group for their hard work and dedication in that regard.

The Council Planning Committee chaired by Cllr Barron has been very busy assessing some 25 planning applications submitted throughout the year. In May when it became clear that the government was not going to extend the emergency legislation which allowed remote meetings a decision was taken to delegate powers to the clerk to object or make comments to BMBC on any planning application that were received for a period of 6 months. In order to respond to BMBC within the required timeframe and not to delay planning decisions planning committee meetings are now held on a regular monthly basis rather than ad-hoc.

One particular application resulted in several objections raised by residents, this was the 20m high telecoms tower with associated street furniture on Lane Head Road. The council and BMBC objected to this intrusive development as it was detrimental to the visual amenity, it was rejected. This just shows the benefit of parishioners making their objections known to BMBC to add weight to the Parish Council's voice.

Careful attention was paid by the council to ongoing works in many areas of the village to ensure that planning approvals were adhered to and that where practicable there was minimal disruption to residents with contractor's vehicles and material deliveries. These problems have been exacerbated by material delays and employee absenteeism due to Covid.

Throughout the past 12 months councillors have held several on site meetings with Barnsley Highways Dept and our ward Councillors to discuss measures that could be taken to alleviate inconsiderate parking in the village. This problem has become much worse during and since Covid restrictions primarily caused by the attraction of Cannon Hall Park as an exercise area and the visitor attractions such as Cannon Hall Museum, Cannon Hall Farm and the Garden centre. Additionally the Parkland improvements, especially to the footpaths around the park have also encouraged more visitors. This is on top of the other village attractions and high profile Media exposure the village is getting.

One example of this was the televised '5 on the Farm' event which took place over the August Bank Holiday weekend, Cllr Barron liaised with the event organisers and Cannon Hall Farm to put forward the council's and villager's concerns about further parking and noise issues. The event was very well organised and traffic disruption was minimal.

The overriding limitation to what can be achieved by CPC to alleviate parking issues is a financial one, such measures are expensive, even quite modest ones if we are faced with objections. Nevertheless, with support from BMBC we were able to put forward a scheme with limited use of double yellow lines, white 'H' markings to protect resident's vehicular entrances and Bus Bay road markings. This scheme was put to the Parishioners in a public meeting in August 2021 for comment, many sensible suggestions for improvement were made and I am pleased to report that many of those were incorporated into the scheme. We are expecting the scheme to be implemented shortly.

In light of the increase in crime in the village, particularly burglaries, we arranged with South Yorkshire Police a 'pop up' police station on the village green. This took place on the 23rd June, residents were able to discuss their concerns with police and useful advice was given. We hope to repeat this initiative in the future. The incidence of house 'break ins' has thankfully subsided but parishioners must be on their guard especially now that the cost of living is rising sharply which may well result in increased criminal activity in the future.

The parish Council are responsible for the cemetery including burials. We hold original linen backed paper plans dating back to 1881 showing the outline of the cemetery and marked position of graves. These plans were becoming very fragile and in danger of disintegrating. The Clerk arranged with BMBC for them to be digitised and originals kept in BMBC archives, digitised copies to be given to the clerk. Maintenance of the cemetery and graveyard is an important Parish Council responsibility and costly. Regular meetings are held on site to assess health and safety issues and check on overgrowing vegetation and trees. A cemetery tidy up day has been organised for Saturday 7th May when members of the public have been asked to help clear ivy from headstones. This will be assisted by Twiggs, Penistone Area Clean, Green and Tidy team.

In January the PC held another Litter Pick event on a Saturday morning, again facilitated by Twiggs, this was a very well attended event when over 50 bags of rubbish was collected. There was an excellent response from volunteers, I would like to thank all the volunteers for their help in keeping our village and approaches clear of rubbish. A further litter pick is planned later in the year before the leaves fall in autumn.

We have replaced rotten benches at the bottom on Stanhope Avenue and at the school entrance. The dog waste bin at the end of Dark Lane has been replaced with a large general waste bin and we have arranged with BMBC to supply fencing and a pedestrian gate at no cost to the council on the cricket ground boundary with the Park.

The council is responsible for the Play equipment in the Orchard and for maintenance of the area. An ongoing problem has been the deterioration of wooden equipment, particularly the climbing frame. Several large timber pieces have been and some still require replacement. Whilst for now this is covered under warranty by the supplier, this is only for the replacement timber, we have to pay for installation. The play equipment will no doubt become more expensive to maintain as time goes by and the warranty ends. We are arranging for a covered waste bin to be installed in the Orchard.

Following a resident's complaint the council have persuaded BMBC to hard surface the lower part of Holling Lane as the current loose surface gets washed onto the pavement and Darton Road in heavy rain.

The Parish Council have been offered a gift of land from a Parishioner of approximately 0.7 hectares which includes a mature woodland and open spaces, it was intended that the PC would manage this land for the benefit of the community and particularly the school. It was suggested that the open spaces could be planted with trees as part of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

There would be initial as well as ongoing costs involved with this acquisition e.g. legal fees, fencing, insurance and maintenance. These issues are to be investigated in conjunction with the parishioner. The Council extend their thanks to the Parishioner for their generous offer.

To support the village in celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee it was agreed that the Council would provide grants to the Cawthorne Toddler and Baby Group for the purchase of commemorative medals and that the parish council would purchase medals to be presented to all children attending Cawthorne C of E Primary School. It was also agreed that a modest grant be made available to a group of Parishioners who are to organise village celebrations.

In January all councillors were invited to a mandatory training session in the Parish room covering Planning reforms and the new Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Clerk carried out the training, there were 8 councillors who attended.

In February one of our councillors resigned, the resignation was accepted and steps taken to fill the vacancy. In this event we must inform the Electoral Services Office at BMBC and the vacancy can now be filled by means of co-option. We will adopt a revised process for co-option which will give all councillors the opportunity to hear presentations from candidates.

During the past 12 months there were seven grant applications received and approved these were from:-

The Summer Fete Committee, 2 x Norcroft Disaster memorial Committee, The Village hall Committee, Cawthorne All Saints Church and The Cawthorne Toddler and Baby Group. Details of the amounts can be given in the Clerk's report to follow.

That concludes the Chairman's report, I now ask our Clerk to give her Report.

CAWTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORT AS AT 31.3.2022

The Parish Council continues to be on a sound financial footing.

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 were audited by both the internal and external auditors last summer and were found to be in good order. In accordance with legislation, the audit report was displayed on the Parish Council Notice Board for 14 days after receipt of it and are now displayed on the parish council website.

Bank balance as at 31st March 2022 was in the region of £46,793. Of this, £5,000 is earmarked for expenditure on the Traffic Regulation Order (installation of road markings including double yellow lines) and £400 towards the safety inspection of headstones due 2024.

Total receipts for 2021/22 were in the region of £33,109 which includes £1,476 VAT reclaimed from the previous financial year, and £3,182 hanging basket sponsorship, £1,676 being sponsorship for the summer 2021 baskets and £1,670 for summer 2022 baskets. It also includes a grant for the Neighbourhood Plan of £1,050.

Total payments for 2021/22 were in the region of £27,233

Expenditure for the Neighbourhood Plan was £339. This was covered by the grant from Groundwork UK. It is expected that the unspent £711 will have to be paid back soon.

A total of £3,065.20 was given out as grant aid in the financial year 2021/22.

The precept for 2021/22 was increased to £24,000, with the shortfall coming from reserves. BMBC passed on the Council Tax Support Grant which meant that Cawthorne Parish Council received the full £24,000 precept figure asked for.

Reserves are adequate for any unforeseen events.

Budgeted running costs for the next financial year 2022/23 are in the region of £30,292 including grant aid. The precept demand remains at £24,000.

In November 2021 HSBC changed its banking arrangements and no longer gave local authorities Community accounts, switching all such account to small business accounts. This meant that Cawthorne Parish Council now incurred monthly charges and charges each time cheques were cashed. The decision was made to switch to Unity Trust Bank at a lower monthly fee. The switch was made in March 2022. Payment can now also be made online.

The accounts for the year 2021/22 will be audited this summer. The notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 will be made available by 1st July. The audited accounts will be displayed on the parish council website by 1st September.

Also on the website there is a list of councillor responsibilities, details of land held by the Parish Council and minutes and agendas for all council meetings.

S. Maxine Bashforth, Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

31st March 2022