

CAWTHORNE PARISH MEETING REPORTS

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 those of the Chairmen of the Finance and Planning Committees, the Clerk, Mrs Bashforth, will cover financial matters.

Before continuing with my report, I wish to put on record the Parish council's gratitude for the service to the Cawthorne community that Councillors Eric Ellis and Robert Barr have given, both are not standing for re-election. Councillor Ellis has served the council for 50 years and Councillor Barr for 40 years, I am sure you will agree, a tremendous achievement in this day and age. I would also like to thank Cllr Jim McNally who is standing down due to health issues. Also, it would be remiss of me not to thank all the councillors, Mrs Bashforth the Clerk and Ken Arundel, the Internal Auditor for their tireless endeavours during the past 12 mths.

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 wellbeing of our local community and Environment. As the authority closest to the people we are invariably the first port of call people can 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. Whilst our powers are somewhat limited we are able to engage with BMBC on issues that are their responsibility and ensure that they are fulfilled.

I am pleased to report that the TRO which the council had been working on since before the Pandemic was finally installed last summer, there are still one or two outstanding issues to be finalised but, in general, feedback from residents has been extremely positive, The measures have cleared sight lines around the junction of Tivydale with The Park and Tivydale Close, have protected residents driveways with white 'H' marks and kept clear from parked cars all the bus stops which has also reduced bottlenecks. Unfortunately the council were unable to persuade BMBC to take action on Darton Road to alleviate the danger of being unable to see if it's clear to proceed passed the line of parked cars. We have not given up on trying to improve this difficult problem and have reserved some funds in order to have another go at fixing this issue in the future.

Speeding has been a constant problem both in and around the village, the Council support the reduction of speed on Lane Head Road but again met with a brick wall with Barnsley Highways because there have not been enough fatalities in the last 5 years and they have to prioritise more urgent schemes. Not only would a reduction in speed prevent accidents but would also cut vehicle pollution.

The Council met residents from North Lane who are concerned with that road having a derestricted speed limit and vehicles being driven at dangerous speeds. They have formed the North lane Speeding Steering Group. The council facilitated a meeting with the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Billings, Barnsley Highways, Police, Naylors and Ward councillors to discuss what, if any options were available to reduce speed and make the 'Naylors' junction safer. Again the accident history over 5 years showed that there were no fatalities and as such BMBC would not consider a speed reduction. A number of measure were agreed upon such as traffic speed and volume monitoring, improving 'SLOW'

markings and the possibility of parishioners being trained to use hand held speed guns. This is work in progress.

The Parish Council are responsible for the cemetery and Churchyard including burials. Maintenance of the cemetery and Churchyard is an important and costly Parish Council responsibility, regular meetings are held on site to assess health and safety issues and check on overgrowing vegetation and trees. Normal maintenance is carried out by contractors and is limited to grass cutting, strimming and tree safety work. During the year two cemetery tidy up days were organised I am pleased to report a healthy turnout of volunteers on both occasions removed ivy from gravestones, cut back overgrown vegetation and trimmed back bushes and trees. This is work in progress and more dates are planned. Volunteers have made a huge difference to the churchyard, the council thanks them for their endeavours.

In the past year three Litter Pick events took place on Saturday mornings, facilitated by Twiggs Green and Clean Team, two of these events were not well attended but the 3rd most recent event was very well attended. In total over 75 bags of rubbish was collected plus assorted parts of cars that have been involved in accidents. A further litter pick is planned later in the year before the leaves fall in autumn. Again a big thankyou to those volunteers who gave up there time to care for our village environment.

Dog fouling continues to be problematic throughout the village, surprisingly and disgracefully, not just from dog walking visitors. This is not only unpleasant but a health hazard. The council have purchased some 'No Fouling' signage.

The cost of living crisis has affected everyone, especially the most vulnerable in our community. The council obtained some free 'Winter warmer' packs to alleviate high energy costs, these were delivered to residents that Parishioners and councillors had identified as being at risk. The council also ensured that under the current circumstances any increase to the Parish precept for 23/24 was kept as low as possible. We will attempt to secure Ward Alliance funding for projects that qualify.

Last year I reported that the Parish Council had been offered a gift of land of approximately 0.7 hectares which includes a mature woodland and open spaces, it was intended that the PC would manage this land, planting more trees for the benefit of the environment and community, particularly the school. This proposal is work in progress.

Climate change is a major issue affecting all of us, the Council will work with the Yorkshire and Humberside Climate Commission who have identified how local councils can embrace the challenge of alleviating climate change. We will work towards adopting climate friendly practices and encourage Parishioners to engage with us in this regard. Examples of what the council can do include objecting to unsustainable development, encourage the use of public transport, put our case to BMBC for speed restrictions, promote green spaces and act as a community voice in lobbying organisations. Climate and the environment should be at the heart of our decision making process.

The council are responsible for the Orchard and play equipment. We continually monitor such equipment to ensure the safety of users. Unfortunately this equipment is aging and requires frequent repairs, at present the woodwork is covered by a guarantee although the cost of replacement is not and this is where things start to get expensive. There will inevitably come a time when all the equipment will need replacing or removing.

Last year the council supported the provision of commemorative medals to the Baby and Toddler Group and the school celebrating the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Medals for the school children were presented in person by the Chair and vice chair of the council. The council also supported a community group organising Jubilee celebrations on the village green.

Last year the council proposed planting a tree to commemorate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, several sites were looked at and one finalised which unfortunately was turned down by BMBC, a new location has now been found on the Village Green and the tree will hopefully be planted in the Autumn.

To support the village in celebrating the Kings Coronation it was agreed that the Council would provide grants to the Cawthorne Toddler and Baby Group and Cawthorne C of E Primary school for the purchase of commemorative medals. It was also agreed that a modest grant be made available to a group of Parishioners who are to organise village celebrations.

That concludes the Chairman's report, I now ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee to give their report followed by the Chairman of the Finance committee and then our Clerk to give their reports.

Report from Cawthorne Parish Council Planning Committee

The committee considered 22 planning applications. There were no real issues. Some builds in the village that had been delayed due to Covid were now coming to an end, so hopefully there will be less construction traffic.

Report from Cawthorne Parish Council Budget and Finance Committee

The committee met on 7th December 2022. The appointment of contractors was considered; the council's assets were reviewed; grant aid of £4,000 was to be recommended to the full council, as was the amended draft budget and an increase in the precept to £25,600.

Financial report as at 31.3.2023

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

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 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 2023 was in the region of £47,524. Of this, £5,000 is earmarked for expenditure on the Traffic Regulation Order (installation of road markings including double yellow lines), £8,000 towards expenditure if the parish council decide to take over an area of woodland and £800 towards the safety inspection of headstones due 2024. It also includes the sponsorship money for the hanging baskets for summer 2023, £1,810, which will be paid out in the next financial year.

Total receipts for 2022/23 were in the region of £30,075 which includes £1,523 VAT reclaimed from the previous financial year, and £1,810 hanging basket sponsorship.

Total payments for 2022/23 were in the region of £28,987. This is £1,905 less than anticipated.

A total of £1,335 was given out as grant aid in the financial year 2022/23.

The precept for 2022/23 remained at £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 2023/24 are in the region of £46,381 including grant aid, £3,000 for possible TRO for Darton Road, £1,000 for Coronation celebrations, £8,500 for the woodland and £800 towards future headstone safety inspection. The precept demand has been increased to £25,600.

The accounts for the year 2022/23 will be audited this summer. The notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023 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.

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission Statement

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission is an independent advisory body set up to bring actors from the public, private and third sectors together to support and guide ambitious climate actions across the region.

The Commission has four inter-related aims:

- to foster climate resilience and adaptation to climate risks and impacts
- to support rapid progress towards net zero carbon emissions
- to encourage a just and inclusive transition and climate actions that leave no-one and nowhere behind
- to promote sustainability and climate actions that also protect nature and biodiversity.

The Commission will work towards its goals by enabling engagement, supporting constructive debate, strengthening the evidence base, promoting best practice, helping to build capacities for financing and delivery and regularly reviewing progress