



## **Brafferton & Helperby Parish Council**

### **Chairman's report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Welcome to the Annual Parishioners' Meeting. This is the Chairman's report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

#### **Events over the Last Year**

Last year was a momentous period in our country's history. We had the joyful occasion of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee, the death of Her Majesty and the Pronouncement of a new King, His Majesty King Charles III and the subsequent planning for Coronation celebrations.

Interspersed with these royal events, three different Prime Ministers led the Government, inflation and interest rates rose and remain at levels not seen for years and the war in Ukraine continues causing untold suffering, instability and underlying tensions across the globe.

Closer to home, preparations were being made for the winding down of North Yorkshire County Council and the associated District Councils. In our case Hambleton District Council which has quietly served our community well for many years. I'd like to thank former District Councillor Pippa James, our last Hambleton District Councillor, for her regular attendance at our Parish Council meetings and her efforts helping to address different matters that arose. Pippa's commitment and hard work was much appreciated.

Alyson Baker representing Hillside and Raskelf ward on the new North Yorkshire Council has been attending our meeting over the year and learning about the issues and concerns in the community. We welcome her input and commitment to serving the Parish and look forward to working with her in the future now the new North Yorkshire Council is fully operational.

#### **Platinum Jubilee**

I'd like to return to the Platinum Jubilee. It was a happy event involving a wide cross section of our community and involved a Parish Council Working Group led by Councillor Matt Boyle and comprised of volunteers from across the community. Over that long weekend, a family fun day and Treasure Hunt was held on the Friday, a village lunch was held at the village hall on the Saturday attended by around 200 people, and a well-attended church service was held on the Sunday.

In keeping with tradition, a commemorative jubilee mug was presented to each child in the village. Funding for the mugs came from the Parish Council and also a generous donation from Councillor Dierdre Brown in memory of her late father Eddie Brown. Thank you again, Dierdre, for this generous contribution.

To commemorate the Platinum Jubilee the Community Association funded a picnic bench which is now positioned on Swale Green to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee. I'm sure it will be appreciated by the community over the coming years.

The Parish Council agreed to fund the planting of two oak trees in the field next to the sports pitches as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. A symbolic planting was made over the jubilee weekend because the planting season had passed, but I can now report that the two oak trees,



named Elizabeth and Philip, have been planted. I'd like to thank Steve Laux for his work building the cattle guards and Tom Spilman for giving permission for the trees to be planted in his field.

### **The death of HM Queen Elizabeth and proclamation of HM King Charles III**

The death of the Queen was an historic milestone and represents the dawn of a new era. Her exceptional deep sense of duty, dedication to her role, wisdom and fortitude were an inspiration to us all, both within her realm and internationally.

Her Majesty was the one constant in all our lives, providing the continuity in times of both success, celebration and turbulence with a sense of grace and serenity which few can emulate. Each family will have their own memories of her spanning several generations.

The death of Her Majesty saw the immediate and seamless transfer of the crown to King Charles III. It was a process that nobody had seen or experienced for 70 years and gave us all a glimpse into the workings of state, elements of which filtered down to us here in the village. It was an honour for me as Chairman of the Parish Council to read the Proclamation announcing King Charles to the community from the steps of the church.

### **Planning for the Coronation**

Although the dust had barely settled on the celebrations for the jubilee last summer, in December the Parish Council set in train planning for the Coronation once again under direction of Councillor Matt Boyle. This all came to fruition earlier this month and will be reported on in more detail in next year's report, but it would be remiss not to thank everyone involved in planning a very successful village picnic and volunteer day over the long weekend. The Parish Council once again funded a coronation mug for every child in the village which I hope will have a place on mug racks across the community for many years to come. Lets hope there are no more mugs for years to come.

### **Flagpoles**

During the period of mourning for Her Majesty and the Proclamation of our new king, the temporary flagpole, which was in effect a piece of timber, was used to raise and lower the Union flag and the Ukrainian flag was temporarily taken down. I'd like to thank Stew Chambers for doing all the flag raising and lowering so well. However, it was clear that the village could and should do better than a piece of timber for a flagpole. People seemed to welcome the idea of having a flagpole in the village to fly the Union flag on national occasions and also to show support for the Ukrainians in their struggle for freedom.

It was decided that we should have 2 flagpoles. A large 6 metre flagpole to be positioned next to the war memorial for use as the village's main flagpole. The Council agreed to fund it and the War Memorial Committee provided funds for the Union and Canadian flags that will be flown from it.

The smaller flagpole was funded by donations from businesses, individuals and organisations in the community and now properly represents the community's support for the Ukrainian people. We can't do much about the war in Ukraine in Brafferton & Helperby, but we can show our support for the Ukrainians in their fight against tyranny and evil. The intention is to keep the flag flying until Ukraine has won the fight for its freedom and independence. We talked earlier about the seamless transfer of the Crown on the death of the Queen and in spite of everything the smooth working of the state. We must never take for granted our freedoms and support those who fight for theirs.



### **Cobbles**

At the beginning of last year the Parish Council applied for a £10,560 Making a Difference grant from Hambleton District Council and was successful in being awarded it. The purpose of the grant was to make repairs to the cobbles in front of Kirkholme and around the war memorial. This was completed by Rob Revely and his team just before the end of the financial year in a small window of reasonable weather.

The cobbles are now restored up to the cut off drain across the village hall driveway and the condition of the cobbles to the immediate south of the memorial are now much improved with minimal rain puddles forming.

We will continue to repair the cobbles as and when we are able to secure funding, but I would like to remind the community as I have done in previous years, that this is a long-term project and is dependant upon both external funding and developing the skills and knowledge within the community. I feel the work carried out by Rob Revely and his team is a good start in establishing and developing the necessary skills and I would like to provide opportunities to other businesses in the village who have the skills to undertake work in the future.

### **Trees**

The Parish Council has a duty to manage the trees on its property and Roger Clements our Clerk manages a programme of surveys and inspections to ensure the Council meets its duty of care for the safety of the public. During a survey of trees in allotments down the Raskelf Road essential tree work was identified to reduce an ash tree suffering from ash dieback and a requirement to fell a large conifer in a moderately dangerous condition next to the road. This later tree will require the road to be temporarily closed resulting in a higher cost than would otherwise be the case. The quote to undertake the work is in excess of £4000. This is an unforeseen sum which the Council will need to recover over time to replenish its reserves. The work was planned and booked at the end of this report period and will take place this month.

### **Allotment RR11**

On the same allotment as the conifer tree just mentioned is an old brick building which is covered by foliage. Sadly this building is unsafe and requires a partial demolition of one end and reroofing. The Council did apply to Hambleton DC for funding to make the building safe, clear the allotment and improve the access and fencing. This was accepted by Hambleton DC but has now been suspended pending a decision from North Yorkshire Council. We await an outcome before we are able to move forward with plans to bring this allotment back into public use.

### **Swing Bridge Repairs**

Some parishioners may be aware that a complaint about the difficulties of opening the bridge gates whilst mounted was made by a single horse rider last year. The previous North Yorkshire County Council, who own the bridleway and bridge proposed to remove both gates which had been in place for over 80+ years and were useful in preventing dogs and children from crossing the bridge unaccompanied. The Parish Council objected and looked for a solution.



Following useful discussions between horse riders and the Parish Council and correspondence with the team responsible for bridleways a site meeting was held facilitated by Councillor, Alison Baker. It was agreed that:

- The Parish Council would clear the ivy from around the gate nearest the village. This has been completed.
- North Yorkshire Council will:
  - Improve the approaches to each end of the bridge to make it safer for pedestrians and horses
  - Create 'mounting blocks' at each end of the bridge to enable riders to dismount and mount safely so that they can lead their horses across the bridge.

We understand that this work will be completed during this financial year. This worthwhile project is as a result of co-operation and discussion by the Parish Council with North Yorkshire Council and others, the assistance of our Councillor and our unwillingness to accept an imposed solution.

### **Developments and traffic**

The community is aware of the various developments that are in progress, planned or being applied for across the village. I'll not go into them in detail here, but I do want to mention that the Parish Council is concerned about some of them and the cumulative effect they may potentially have on the village's infrastructure. I would also like to emphasise that the Parish Council supports appropriate development that enhances the community and enables sustainable growth.

We continue to examine each proposal that arises on its individual merits but are acutely aware of needing to examine the quality of individual proposals closely and their effect on the community, in particular their traffic impact.

For instance I made it clear to Hambleton DC's planning committee of the Parish Council's concern about the additional traffic that will be generated by the 28 house development on the Boroughbridge Road and the exit onto the road. Our proposal for a chicane to slow the traffic down near the exit from the development was rejected on road safety grounds by the Highways department, but no alternative traffic calming measures have been proposed.

The Parish Council understands that the issue of speed and volume of traffic through the village remains a priority for many people in the village. The Parish Council has no powers in this area, but can make representations to North Yorkshire based on evidence. We believe that the vehicle activated sign which is now in place has an effect in slowing traffic coming into the village and it is believed to be more effective by moving it regularly so that drivers do not become familiar with it. In spite of rejection from North Yorkshire Highways we would like to explore additional methods of slowing traffic coming into the village and also request that the traffic calming measures that were put in place within the village some years ago are refurbished to restore it effectiveness.

### **Council Business**

During the period of the report, Councillor Ben Carter resigned. I'd like to thank Ben for his contribution. It is useful to have contributions of all ages to the Council and Ben's knowledge and expertise was very welcome. Ben has been replaced by Councillor Andy Gale, technically to be announced in next year's report, but welcome Andy and thank you for stepping forward.



We now have a new .gov email address and web address which continues progress in professionalising the business of the Council and providing a more official presence. I'd like to thank our clerk Roger Clements for his work in this area which has not been straightforward and also for all the other work which he undertakes on behalf of the community.

Finally I'd like to thank my fellow councillors for their contributions to the community over the last year and their support to the Council's business.