



Brafferton & Helperby Parish Council

Chairman's report for the year ending 31st March 2026

Welcome to the Annual Parishioners' Meeting. This is the Chairman's report for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Bridge Street Upgrade

Residents will remember that the parking and access situation in Bridge Street had created multiple problems for residents. This issue has featured in previous Chairman's reports. Delivery failures (e.g. oil deliveries) due to parked cars blocking access at the end of Bridge Street was becoming problematic. There was damage being caused to vehicles, and the unadopted road had a deteriorating road surface that was only getting worse.

The Parish Council came up with a plan to improve the road surface and widen the road by approximately 1m to create better parking spaces and to improve access. To achieve this objective The Friends of Bridge Street was formed by Cllr Peter Mitchell who raised donations from nearly all households in Bridge Street and the Maltings to enable the road resurfacing. The Parish Council, plus grant money from North Yorkshire Council's Inspire Fund paid for the reshaping of the bank. This enabled the road to be widened and parking arrangements to be improved. I have only heard positive feedback from residents about the improvement. It is a prime example of what this community can do when working together.

Repairs to Fencing on Swale Green.

Last May part of the Parish Council's fence bordering Swale Green and the bridleway collapsed and was repaired. Unfortunately, the other half of the fence has now collapsed, and the Parish Council is in the process of getting it fixed. Routine maintenance and repair such as this is one of the tasks undertaken by the Parish Council to keep our village looking attractive.

Cobbles on Drury Lane

The Council also continued its approach to improving access around the village by repairing and reinstating the cobbles at the entrance to Drury Lane, and by extending the concrete path. These repairs and improvements have substantially improved the ability of people with different levels of mobility to use Drury Lane as an access between Main Street and Back Lane and therefore to get about the village. By focussing the use of our limited funds, the Parish Council hopes to maximise the benefit for as many people as possible. We'll continue to improve and repair cobbles around the village when we have the funds and can secure Rob Revley who is currently our preferred contractor.

Allotments

We continue the improvements to the allotment fencing on Back Lane and we'll do some more work in this financial year. Letting some allotments on Raskelf Road remains challenging and we will explore options that have been suggested by the community to get benefit from them. Ideas suggested include a community orchard and an environment that encourages wildlife. We'll update the community if these ideas are able to be taken forward.



Trees

The Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure that trees owned by the Council are safe and when work is needed it is undertaken according to the relevant risk rating. The Council's trees were inspected in January this year. One willow by the river was identified as being a significant risk, but by the time floodwater had receded it had been swept away. There is another tree on an unused allotment with a broken branch overhanging. This will be removed shortly.

Tree inspections are an important health & safety function which reduces the risk of injury to members of the public. It is important that organisations carry out these tree risk assessments at regular intervals and take action with identified risks. The Parish Council will include the Sports Association and Recreational Trust in its next tree survey in 14 month's time to save them the cost of doing an equivalent survey. The organisations would address any risks that are identified. The Parish Council sees this as a practical way to help both these organisations to manage risk to the public up at the sports field.

Dog Poo

The Parish Council has now purchased a dog poo bag dispenser and located it at the end of the swing bridge bridleway. I mentioned the subject of dog poo last year and I think things have improved but there remain some who don't pick up. It is profoundly antisocial not to clear up after your dog, especially within the village and anywhere where people and children may walk. Dog poo has recently had to be cleared from the churchyard and even in front of the war memorial near the lychgate. To the person or persons who don't pick up – "don't be anti-social! Pick it up! There really is no excuse".

Liaison with North Yorkshire Council

Engaging and working constructively with North Yorkshire Council is an essential part of the Parish Council's role. We are fortunate in having an engaged and responsive local councillor, Alyson Baker who supports our plans and activities as much as she is able, including with grants from her locality budget. It appears that our Parish will remain in the new Hillside & Raskelf Constituency. I'd like to thank Alyson on behalf of the Parish Council for her ongoing support.

Lampposts. Sometimes getting things done by North Yorkshire Council can take a while, but your Parish Council will persevere. For example, after many years, we managed to get the unpainted lampposts at the centre of the Conservation Area on Main Street painted. An improvement to the appearance on Main Street.

Access Arrangements. We have followed up our request to North Yorkshire Highways for dropped curbs at points around the village to improve access for wheelchair users, and families with pushchairs. We'll keep pushing to get them installed.

Bridleway and Swing bridge access. Although the bridleway is not owned by the Parish Council, we would like to see the removal of the Sycamore trees from the bridleway, and we have clearance by the Bridleway team at North Yorkshire Council to do this. North Yorkshire Council Bridleway team have plans to enhance the approaches at each end of the footbridge. We were assured that these works to the swing bridge would be carried out last year. We have asked North Yorkshire Council for a date when the work will be undertaken.



Highway Matters. The Parish Council has been in regular touch with North Yorkshire Highways about surface water flooding particularly on the Raskelf and York Roads, potholes, dangerous roads and traffic issues in general. We note and understand that the Highways' budget is extremely stretched, and we take care with what we report to ensure it is only substantive issues that are raised.

Surface water flooding is a particular problem which we notify to Highways as soon as issues are identified. A jetting team recently attended to the pipes on Raskelf Road, and more work is expected to a damaged gully and also the installation of a non-return valve on the surface water pipe where it meets the ditch near the chicken farm. The Parish Council will continue to raise Highways issues directly whenever they are identified. I'll mention shortly what the Parish Council is doing to try and improve the traffic situation in the village.

Footpath to the Sports Field. There has been a great deal of development in the village for a community of our size. Our Parish Council only receives 15% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (known as CIL) which is paid by developers to North Yorkshire Council. The remaining funds are retained by North Yorkshire Council. How the balance of monies is spent by North Yorkshire Council in our area is not clear to us at Parish Council level. Your Parish Council's view is that because we have taken the burden of development in our parish, we should benefit more from the CIL monies that North Yorkshire Council retains. One of the projects we would like some North Yorkshire CIL monies to be spent on is a footpath that enables families to walk through the woods from York Road to the sports field without having to walk in the middle of the flooded road.

Representatives of the Parish Council attended a meeting to discuss a footpath through the woods to the sports field and also to the site of the proposed Recreation area from York Road earlier this year. The Estate have now agreed this project in principle. The Sports Association's lease needs to be amended, and Highways have been engaged to create a footpath on the verge. Agreement from Highways has yet to be obtained. We'll keep the community updated as to progress.

Traffic

Speeding traffic is a continuing concern in the village, but the size and proximity of vehicles is perhaps more concerning. It is important to understand that the Parish Council has limited powers to do anything about traffic as this is a Police and Highways matter, but we do constantly monitor issues.

We have recently witnessed an incident where a delivery van collided with a telegraph pole on Raskelf Road because it was going too fast and failed to give way at the chicane. There have also been a number of what can only be described as road rage incidents on Raskelf Road where drivers fail to give way and show basic courtesy. Part of the problem is vehicles parking sometimes nearly up to the Boroughbridge Road junction and opposite the Back Lane junction which does not enable vehicles travelling towards Raskelf to give way. This generates incidents. Having had a site visit with Highways the Parish Council has agreed that a short stretch of double yellow lines on the north side of Raskelf Road would mitigate the situation and reinforce the Highway Code as it relates to parking near junctions. We await Highways' plans.

We have also had complaints of speeding traffic and poor driver behaviour on Back Lane, particularly from delivery drivers. The Parish Council is in the process of monitoring speeds and driver behaviour



on Back Lane with the Council's speed gun to identify if there may be measures that can be taken to improve the situation. Findings will be reported in due course.

Vehicle Activated Signs

The Parish Council has noted that the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) does reduce the speed of vehicles entering the village by a small amount. It causes drivers to slow down. It also enables us to measure vehicle speeds, the time at which vehicles are travelling and how many vehicles are measured. This is useful data to enable a deeper understanding of traffic patterns in the village. The Parish Council thought that as traffic speed was a local priority, a second VAS sign should be purchased so that two out of the three entrances to the village would be monitored. The sign cost over £4,000 and was paid for out of CIL monies. The second sign will be delivered next week.

Volunteers

Having just spoken about VAS, it brings to mind the importance of volunteers and people doing their bit for the community in whatever shape or form that may be, and I'd like to thank all volunteers in the Parish for what they do. The village is rather like an ecosystem, and we get better outcomes and a stronger community the more people and groups cooperate, and people do their bit.

For the Parish Council, I'd like to thank Kevin Heard and David Bennett for volunteering to change over the VAS and recharge its batteries every month and for producing data for the council on traffic speeds. We need this data to be able to make meaningful interventions with North Yorkshire Highways or the Police. I'd also like to thank Paul Considine for fixing the Parish noticeboards which were in a worse state than had first been realised and also making the Christmas tree hole safe. I'd like to thank Tom Spilman for help with cutting the grass on Swale Green. Then there are others, such as the people who keep the village hall running, the Community Association and the activities that they do, both the Sports Association and the Recreational Trust for significant fundraising that they are undertaking which will produce facilities for the benefit of the whole community. The PCC for keeping the church going. The coffee morning ladies. Then there is the Golden Lion Pub & Hub Group which has made great strides in being formed into a Community Benefit Society and raising over £100K to create a Community Pub. We wait for more news on that front.

I won't go through every volunteer or group; suffice to say I'd like to thank every one of them and each group on behalf of the community as it is these people who makes this village tick. The more we can find people from within the community who are willing to help out and volunteer the better our environment and facilities will be and the more resilient we become.

I put out a call for two new sets of volunteers for the forthcoming year:

1. It would be good for fresh volunteers to garden or maintain the three entrance signs to the village. The people who used to do it have moved away. Please let Tony, our Clerk, know if you're interested.
2. I'd like to kickstart something that didn't happen last year - strimming the bridleway to the swing bridge and removing the sycamore saplings.

Asset of Community Value (ACV) - The Golden Lion

The Golden Lion was registered as an Asset of Community Value by the Parish Council in 2020. This meant that when Admiral Taverns, the owners of The Golden Lion put the pub on the market in



February 2025 it triggered a moratorium period designed to give any relevant community group the opportunity to form and raise the necessary funds to purchase the business before the pub could be offered for sale to any other party. Also, when the registration of the Asset of Community Value came up for renewal in January the Parish Council was given the opportunity to renew the designation which was accepted and the opportunity for a further moratorium was provided but not taken by the Golden Lion Pub & Hub Group.

Recreation Trust

Parishioners will know that the purpose of the annual beer festival has been to raise money for a recreation area to be constructed in the field adjacent to the sports field subject to the securing of a lease from the Estate. The Estate agrees with the project and a draft lease has been prepared, however, for assurance purposes, the Estate wanted the involvement of the Parish Council. The Council has taken advice, and we are unable to be a party to the lease. However, we provided assurance to the estate that the Parish Council would continue to show a close interest and commitment to the success of the Recreation Trust and its compliance with all relevant regulations by providing a Councillor to be a trustee of the Trust. By showing the commitment of the Parish Council to the Recreation Trust we have enabled negotiations on the signing of the lease to proceed. Cllr Angela Horner will be our first Parish Council trustee for the Trust.

Village Christmas Tree

The Parish Council purchased the village Christmas tree which was switched on in early December coinciding with the Annual Tractor Run. It was an enjoyable event for everyone. I'd like to thank everyone who made it possible including the Mooreys for collecting and delivering the tree, John Fox for providing the power for the lights, volunteers for decorating it and the Community Association and church for running the event on the day.

The feedback is that the village should continue to have a Christmas tree.

Funding

We have put together what we believe is a prudent budget requiring a precept of £18,600. This represents an increase of 4.54% from the previous year. We have had to make the balance between ensuring the Council keeps pace with inflation and the things it needs to provide with the absolute need to keep precept rises to a minimum and to be as efficient as we can. I believe we have achieved this and we will enhance infrastructure within the Parish by using our allocated CIL money.

Council business and thanks

We have had one change to the Councillors over the past 12 months. I'd like to publicly thank Deirdre Brown for her contribution as a Councillor for several years. Deirdre took an active role and played an important part in ensuring the Council's finances were in order. In Deirdre's place we welcome Councillor Stephen Vaughan to his first meeting today. I'd like to thank Stephen for stepping forward.

I'd like to thank all my fellow councillors for their contributions over the last year and their support of the Council's business. Having councillors who volunteer to 'do their bit' is very important to both the Council and the community as I mentioned earlier in my report.



Finally, I'd also like to thank our former parish clerk, Roger Clements, for his work on behalf of the Council. Roger finally retired during the report year, and we welcomed Tony Whiting to the role. Tony brings a wealth of journalistic and local government experience and although he has now been in post for a number of months I'd like to say again, welcome Tony, and thank you for undertaking the role of Parish Clerk.