

ANNUAL REPORT FOR PARISH ASSEMBLY 5th MARCH 2024

This year's Report begins with Chairman Mr. Fred Keer continuing in his position as Chairman at the request of the Council. His term has been a big learning curve for him and he has taken on the role admirably. He has kept a tight rein on the budget.

Councillor Ms Donna Semmens became Vice- Chairperson. She is a very enthusiastic member of the Council and has worked with the Chairman and supported the clerk in many aspects of Council business.

At the AGM responsibilities allocated to individual councillors were as follows:

School Liaison Officer: - Councillors Mrs T. Rust and Mrs Georgina Greenwood.

Allotments: - Councillors Mr D. Boyce, Mr. D. Murfitt and Ms Andrea Alexander.

Planning: - Councillors Mr. J. Watts, Mrs J Gooch, Mr D. Boyce and Mr D. Murfitt.

Charities: - Councillors Mr D, Boyce, Mrs. J. Sutton and Mr D. Murfitt.

Drainage: - Councillor Mr D. Boyce and Mr. D. Murfitt.

Cemetery: - Councillors Mrs J. Sutton, Mr. D. Boyce and Ms Andrea Alexander

Playing Field: - Councillors Mrs T. Rust and Mrs. Georgina Greenwood.

Village Committee: - Councillors Mrs J. Sutton and Ms S. Arden.

Finance: - Councillors Mr. F. Keer and Ms D. Semmens.

Neighbourhood Planning:- Ms Andrea Alexander (she is to have an insight as to what this is about).

Police and Speed Watch :- Mrs J. Sutton and Ms Sarah Arden.

The public are invited to all meetings and are given a chance to bring any matters of concern to the meeting. The village cleaner, Mr M D Ellington, is keen to keep the village clean and reports any issues that crop up. He is an asset to the Council and the village. The Council would like to thank him. The cemetery is maintained by CGM. They had a few teething problems early on but have now tidied the cemetery and kept it under control. This is funded by the Parish Council. The Council are responsible for maintaining the infilled canal that runs between the A1122 and A1101. NCC gives a grant of £1,000.00 per annum. The balance of the costs, which in total amount to over £3,000 a year, is funded by the Parish Council. The Council also pays for the street lighting which includes and maintenance of the streetlights throughout the village apart from those in St. Andrews Road and Birdbeck Drive. There are 77 streetlights throughout the village.

The Council kept the precept for the year as low as possible. It was raised this year by 10% to cover the effects of inflation on the Council's expenditure. The Council works hard to keep expenditure to a minimum while considering all of the requirements of our parishioners. The Parish Council is continually being asked for donations and financial help from many organisations. It believes that in making donations local causes should be prioritised. One donation this year was to the Royal British Legion.

The Council now meets monthly at Upwell Village Hall. It did meet at the Crown Lodge for a few months before moving to Upwell village hall to save costs.

The Council buys and lays a wreath at the Remembrance Service in November. There is no service afterwards but there is always a parade from Beaupre School.

A new web site design was produced for the Council by Rob Shaw Designs. It is updated monthly. It is hoped that the new design is more user friendly. The Council is open to requests to post other information that is useful to the Parishioners on the web site.

Traffic and highway matters are problems that are reported on every month and the NCC endeavour to resolve these issues. During the past year the Parish Council has been concentrating on getting backing and finances to get safer crossings in the village on both the A1101 and A1122. In October 2023 a feasibility study funded with help from County Councillor Mr. Chris Dawson and the Parish

Partnership was carried out by NCC Highways. We are still awaiting the results. Speeding is a major problem throughout the village. There are three major housing developments proposed in the village. The Parish Council believes that money from these developments should be made available for the crossings.

The village hall continues to be a successful amenity in the village. The bookings are frequent and a number of fundraising events have been held including a successful Halloween fireworks evening. The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Hall Committee for running a successful hall without relying on support from others.

Several enforcement issues continue to make more work for the relevant authorities. The Parish Council endeavours to make sure that people act in the appropriate manner when planning applications are made.

The Council is in the process of discussing whether to try to find appropriate land and finance to provide a new burial ground for the village. The process is going to take a long time due to the bureaucracy involved. In 2022, the Cemetery Dissenters did inform the Council that there is more potential land available in the existing cemetery for burials. The Council awaits further updates.

In December 2023, there were Christmas lights put up in the village centre again. Once again this was organised by a group of hard working parishioners. The Council applauds the efforts of the individuals concerned. The lights were bought using donations from local businesses. In 2023 the committee was able to extend the lights to the boat basin with even more donations being received. It was good to see the village come together to enjoy the hard work put into organising this event.

At each Council meeting representatives from the various village committees report to the councillors on progress made in providing local amenities. Borough Councillors Mr Harry Humphrey and Mr Chris Crofts report each meeting on matters that are of interest to the Council.

County Councillor Mr Chris Dawson attends Parish Council meetings whenever possible. He does keep the Council informed at all times via emails if he cannot attend a meeting. He is working especially hard on supporting the safer crossings proposal and all things relating to highways in the village. The railings in Rectory Road are an awful state of repair due to vehicles hitting them and subsidence. Repairing or replacing them is going to be extremely expensive. It has not been possible to identify who is responsible for undertaking this work at this time. The Parish Council has agreed to take responsibility for the railings once they have been repaired or replaced. Funding for this will come from Parish Partnership, CIL and other sources.

Council considers that most issues raised by residents can and should be resolved. It continues to move forward with policies which, hopefully, have the approval of the local community. In 2024 the Council approved proposals made by the Chairman and the Clerk to make meetings more efficient and ensure that important matters are fully discussed. A council action log has been created to monitor progress on all matters requiring the Council's attention. It is hoped that this will help councillors become more involved in ensuring that necessary action is taken.

As Clerk I would like to thank all the Councillors for the help and support that is given when requested.