

Fulford Parish Meeting
14 May 2024
The Old Library, Social Hall, School Lane, Fulford, 6.30 pm

Parish Council Chair's Report

This report refers to the period since the last Parish Meeting, held on 9 May 2023.

The Parish Council is responsible for a number of buildings, playing fields and other open spaces in the area, and owns and manages the Cemetery at Fordlands Road. The councillors are all volunteers, and in the recent elections were all formally accepted into the role as there were too few candidates to require elections. During the last year full meetings have taken place in person approximately every six weeks and occasionally more often, with additional less formal meetings online or in person, as required. Councillors participate in Working Groups between formal meetings to address ongoing responsibilities.

The Councillors are:

- Keith Aspden, Chair of the HR Panel
- Vivienne Clare, Chair of the Social Hall Working Group
- Juliet Koprowska, Chair of the Parish Council, Chair of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group
- Simon Marsh, Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, Chair of the Cemetery Working Group
- Mary Urmston, Chair of the Planning Working Group, which makes recommendations to City of York Council about planning applications in the Parish
- Andrew Vevers, Chair of the Open Spaces Working Group
- Geoffrey Walker, Member of the Planning Working Group and HR Panel.

There are vacancies for four councillors so please get in touch with the Clerk if you are interested.

Kate Ravilious, City of York Councillor for Fulford and Heslington, regularly attends Parish Council Meetings.

The Parish Council also employs **several staff**. The Parish Clerk, Rachel Robinson, plays a central role in managing the Parish Council's finances in the role of Responsible Financial Officer, and she manages many other areas of administration. She takes care of the website and the Facebook page, organises and produces minutes for Parish Council Meetings, liaises with contractors, and ensures that the Parish Council is properly managed. The remaining staff work at and manage the Cemetery, headed by the Cemetery Superintendent, Stuart McCabe.

Income

The Parish Council is funded through:

- the precept (the amount local people pay in their Council Tax which is allocated to the Parish Council)

- Cemetery fees
- Social Hall hire
- Allotment fees
- Sports Club fees paid for use of the School Lane Playing Field and for the land on which the Pavilion stands
- Grants

See the Clerk's Financial Report for more detail.

Principle areas of activity 2023-2024

Playing Fields

The plans for **School Lane playing fields** are still in process, with legal discussions between Persimmon and City of York ongoing to determine future ownership. The process is closer to reaching agreement. If the Parish field and the Persimmon land are to be joined, that will influence whether the land is levelled, how it is drained, its surface, and overall design as an amenity for both sport and other forms of recreation.

A new pumping station is envisaged at the edge of **Fordlands Road playing fields**, to protect local houses and streets being flooded. The City Council is responsible for this work, in consultation with local residents and the Parish Council. The Parish Council intends to plant more woodland and wildflowers, creating more shade in hot summers and enhancing the green space as a whole, while leaving areas free for play and biking.

Play equipment on both fields is monitored regularly, and repairs made as required. The resurfacing of the ground under the zip wire at School Lane to make it safe to use has been delayed by poor weather, but can now be done.

Social Hall

The Social Hall is a valuable community asset, and the Parish Council's intention to improve the building and enhance its value as a community resource is ongoing. The Parish Council is seeking assistance with applying for funding to begin a programme of improvement, and members of the community are invited to become members of a group seeing the project through.

Village Green and the Ings

The Village Green is part of an area along the river from Clifton Ings in the north to the Designer Outlet in the south designated as a 'green corridor'. St Nick's Centre for Nature and Green Living has been working with the Environment Agency and landowners such as the Parish Council to enhance this green space for people, the rare tansy beetles and other forms of wildlife. During recent months, sewage has been leaking into the Ings at various points within the Parish boundaries. Councillor Kate Ravilious has been active in bringing together Yorkshire Water, the Parish Council, local residents, Natural England and St Nicks to understand how this has happened. As the Ings are a Site of Special Scientific interest, this is not just an issue for people and pets using the them for recreation. Sewage damages the balance of their delicate ecosystem and Yorkshire Water has agreed to undertake works to restore that balance and prevent further spills.

Cemetery

The Cemetery provides an important service to the people of York and is also a tranquil place to visit, whether to visit a grave or simply to spend time in a green space. Some visitors have expressed a wish for public toilet facilities to be reinstated, but unfortunately the cost of doing this, and then maintaining them, is beyond the Parish's means at the present time.

Allotments

The Parish Council owns allotment land adjacent to the Cemetery that traditionally comprised 30 full size plots. There is high demand for a plot, and the Parish Council has decided that each time a plot becomes vacant, it will be divided into two halves. A full-sized allotment is a substantial challenge for many people and the Parish Council hopes that this approach will bring down the waiting list more rapidly and also offer plots that are more manageable. Allotmenters with a full-sized plot can also request to 'downsize', so one half of their plot can be offered to a new tenant. Fees have been raised with a view to bringing them closer to other allotment fees in the York area, as well as introducing reduced fees for people on defined forms of low income. Councillors hold two meetings a year with plot holders.

Other activities

The Parish Council or Parish Councillors attend meetings of the Sports Clubs and meetings about flood defences. They are members of the Germany Beck Liaison Committee, a group with representatives from Persimmon Homes, City of York Council, Fulford School, the Sports Clubs and Germany Beck residents. Several Councillors have become involved in York Climate Commission, in working groups concerning nature and wildlife, and transport. This allows us to link with larger endeavours affecting the whole city which also have significance in Fulford.

The Parish Council will continue to issue occasional newsletters, printed and delivered to every household in the area, as well as being published on the Parish Council website in an accessible format.

Ongoing maintenance and replacement work takes place, for example, repairing and replacing benches and bus shelters or working with City of York to do so. Overall, the Parish Council is well managed and is involved in both everyday matters and more farsighted plans, such as for the Social Hall and for the Playing Fields.

The Parish Council would benefit either from an increased number of councillors, or from residents involving themselves in specific Parish Council projects, without taking on a councillor role.

Juliet Koprowska

13 May 2024