

Chairman's Report 2024

2023 was an election year for your parish council. The election was uncontested so no poll was held but there were three vacant seats left to be filled. Under these circumstances your parish council can fill the vacancies by co-option and this is the route taken. The vacancies were advertised in Outlook, on the council's website and on local social media. It was encouraging that five residents put their names forward to be considered and after the votes were counted the council welcomed Tim Sykes, Luara Softly and Angela Wills as councillors. I warmly welcome them to the council and thank them for their contribution to the work of the council already made and I look forward to continuing to work with them over the coming years.

Saturday 6th May 2023 saw their Majesty's King Charles and Queen Camilla crowned and your parish council offered a gift of a celebrational pin badge to mark the occasion to all children in the parish aged 18 and below. Around 250 were given out and joined previous gifts presented by your parish council to commemorate similar occasions. Once again Elizabeth Franklin and Alex Caley along with a team of volunteers organised and ran a coronation party at the village hall with face painting, china painting, colouring in, soft play and plenty of cake and tea! The event was funded by the parish council but it would not have happened without the tremendous help of Elizabeth and Alex and I thank them most sincerely for all the work they did, not forgetting their helpers in putting on a great event for the village to enjoy.

Thursday 6th June 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Your parish council has registered to light the village beacon as part of a national and international chain to mark the event. Church bells will also take part in the ringing out for Peace earlier in the evening. There was suggestion of some social event to take place over the following weekend but when asked there was very little support to go ahead with such an event so the decision was taken to only undertake the above.

Your parish council continues to work with Ward Councillor Alan Lamb and Leeds City Council Highways in trying to deliver safety improvements around Bramham Primary School. Councillor Lamb took over this task from previous Ward Councillor Linda Richards who had undertaken a great deal of background work on the project. LCC highway engineers have drawn up a plan which includes reopening the gate to the school playing field at the Clifford side of the school along with footpath upgrades. The stumbling block was funding but Councillor Lamb worked with officers at LCC to secure £64,000 to undertake the work with a planned start and completion time during the school summer holidays. The traffic management group made up of parish councillors and residents have also been spending a great deal of time looking at improving the safety of children who walk to the school. Sadly, very little can be done to the actual footways between Victoria Cottages and the school itself due to lack of land/verge but working with highways an improved crossing by the war memorial is planned to assist with crossing at this very busy junction.

This has been a long running project with several false starts and whilst we hold our breath, I am confident that the scheme will be delivered this year. Recently there has been an increase in the number of school buses travelling through the village. Coun Sykes has been working with the academy and even Wetherby High School to establish which school buses should be coming through the village and which are using the village as a short cut instead of using the approved routes. The bus operators have been spoken to by the schools to remind them which routes they should use. Monitoring of the school buses will continue to ensure only the correct buses travel through the village.

Councillor Lamb has also brought together a group consisting of himself, Parish Council Chairmen of both Clifford and Boston Spa, Planning Officers, Highway Officer's, and Boston Spa Academy managers to deliver highway improvements around that school entrance which will include widening the footpath, installing two new road crossings, one on Clifford Moor Road and one on Winnow Lane, and improved car parking on site. All these improvements will be funded by the school as part of the planning approval they gained for their new performing arts studio. Again, the highway improvements are planned to be undertaken during the school's summer holidays.

Several years ago, your parish council had agreed to purchase four fixed speed indicator devices (SID's) to be fixed to lamp posts around the village. These will record traffic details and speeds so providing information needed to press for action from Leeds City Council and the police. These must be purchased through LCC and due to several delays with the overseas manufacturers and change of staffing at LCC this project has been delayed but as I write this report the council has received the invoice for the SID's which has been paid with an installation date pencilled in for about 2 months' time. These will be installed on Clifford Moor Road, Boston Road, and the lower end of the High Street. Although they are classed as fixed, they can in fact be moved to other areas of the village once a suitable connection has been fitted to a lamp post. Your council has still been deploying the mobile SID and thanks go to Councillors Ryan Bray and Tony Blackmoor for undertaking this task and collecting the information from it. Speeding is one of the top subjects brought to the attention of the council and it does take the matter seriously, so much so that it agreed the £12500 funding for the SID's.

A working group has been established consisting of parish councillors, village hall trustees and a resident of the village to look at the possibility of replacing the playground equipment located to the rear of the village hall. The current playground has been in place since 2000 and is owned by the village hall but maintained by the parish council. The cost to maintain the playground is now getting to the stage where it makes sense to look at replacing it. Your parish council has been allocating some

funds towards a replacement in their annual budget for many years but other funding will be required to deliver a new playground. The group are looking at playground equipment suppliers, costings and funding streams and consultations will take place with residents before any final decision is taken.

Your council has very recently concluded the purchase of a piece of land formally used as an allotment garden to the side of the village hall community park. The council had previously looked to purchase the land but were unsuccessful. Last year the owner placed the land on the open market and after the first 'sale' fell through the council were able to bid on the site once again. Whilst a use of the site has not been finalised and will not be until views are sought from residents, your council thought it was important to secure the land so not to have a repeat of a situation similar to another plot of land in the village a few years ago. The main difference this time was that your council were in a position where it had funds available for purchase of land from the very generous legacy gifted to it by the late Richard Alan Dunnington. Having spoken to one of Alan's relatives about the purchase I am sure Alan would have approved of this.

The planning working group have had an extremely busy year considering many planning applications, attending plans panel meetings to speak up for the village on applications and dealing with several planning enforcement cases. LCC planning department is in the process of updating their local plan and several sites in the village have been put forward by landowners for possible development. Not all these sites will be acceptable to be included in the updated plan, but I can assure you that the planning group and your council will monitor and respond to any planning application which come forward.

My attention now turns to my fellow councillors and the clerk, Ms Nancy Fairbairn. I personally thank Nancy for all the work she has undertaken over the last year, it certainly makes my job as Chairman a lot easier and the running of your council so much smoother. Your councillors carry out a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes which largely goes unnoticed, this could be studying all the planning applications which are submitted in the parish, work on the traffic management plan, meetings with contractors to discuss planned or future work, attending seminars, training events, or representing your council on a wide range of outside bodies as well as the monthly meetings whose outcome seems always to increase their workloads. I wish to put on record my grateful thanks and appreciation to my fellow councillors for all the work they undertake and the support they have given to me during the year.

Also once again thank you to you the residents of Clifford for the support you also give to your parish council and councillors.

Thank you.

Councillor Nicholas P. P. Fawcett - Chairman of Clifford Parish Council 2023/2024