

Chair Report for Annual Parish Meeting  
Rawcliffe Parish Council  
3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

I was honoured to be asked to take the chair again for the parish council last May however as the end of my term comes to a close I look back on rather more difficult year.

Over the past 12 months I've received resignations from 6 of our nine members, mostly due to people moving away and other commitments taking precedent however I am very sad to report the recent death of Cllr John Ballotine. John was a lovely, joyful man who was full of life, for whom unfortunately time ran out waiting for a transplant. Our thoughts are with his family and friends who, as we also, will miss his vigor for helping the parish and his neighbours. His funeral is tomorrow; 10:20am at Bishopthorpe Creamatorium.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the remaining Councillors, the Clerk and our employees for all the hard work and professionalism they have shown in taking on the extra burden the team shortage has required.

I am however very pleased to welcome three new councillors to the team Cllr John Cleaver, Cllr Steven Phillips and Cllr Ray Thompson. We are fortunate to receive your enthusiasm and passion to help the parish. I wish you joy and success in your service to the community, we look forward to working with you.

This council however still has two vacancies. I would encourage anyone interested in helping us serve the needs and improve the quality of life of residents to talk to us about coming on board as a councillor. We would be especially interested in serving with female members again, for too long we have had no representation from ladies in the parish.

I would also like to thank our three ward councillors, Stuart Rawlings, Sam Lisle and Peter Dew. Despite very busy schedules, their attendance at our meetings has been outstanding and the advice and insights they offer us are extremely helpful. We are also grateful to City of York officers who, in general, remain supportive of our desires.

### **Financials**

Whilst the city council continues to respond to the impact of funding cutbacks and austerity plans, the parish council remains in a positive financial position. Delays in our project schedule during the past 12 months have however meant that anticipated expenditure was lower than forecast.

Therefore, in our last budget, the council was able to reduce our precept demand from residents. We are sure the decrease of just under 3% will be welcomed by residents especially as it still allows this council to deliver its core activities and deliver the previously delayed projects.

### **Rawcliffe Recreation Ground and Pavilion**

The Rawcliffe Recreation Association volunteers have continued to do an excellent job in providing and managing the recreation ground and the Bob Eccles pavilion. A most worthy mention goes to Mr Bob Winspear, who has invested decades supporting the Recreation facility, as Mr Winspear nears retirement we extend our thanks and best wishes to him.

Both the parish council and the RRA remain committed to what is an important resource and valuable facility that lies at the heart of the community. The parish council has therefore negotiated a 15-year lease with the RRA which we expect will be agreed shortly by the City council. The lease will provide surety of tenure for the RRA, provide confidence and open new funding streams to secure the long term future of the facility.

As such the Parish Council, the RRA and the Ward Committee have agreed a joint £60,000 project to refurbish the entire west wing of the building. This will provide a brand new meeting and function room, completely refurbish toilet facilities together with new windows and doors to service the new layout. In addition, the parish council will fit out a new office space at the Recreation building which will give the parish council a new home and base of operations within the parish. We look forward to the project and the opportunities for new services to be developed.

We encourage residents to get involved. We cite the example of the recent creation of a morning drop-inn cafe organised by Alan Dawes. We thank Alan for his selfless efforts in making this happen and we look forward to the service growing further in the future.

### **Planning**

Activity has increased over the year. All applications are thoroughly scrutinised and comments made to the local planning authority. When necessary Parish Councillors have ensured a presence at or spoken at the determination meetings, to ensure that local views are heard. All new councillors are supported with planning training from the YLCA in order to help them become efficient and effective elements of the planning process.

### **Roads and Transport**

The parish continues to experience an increase in issues regarding the highways. Whether this is inconsiderate parking, damage to verges, fly-posting or a lack of investment in the road infrastructure itself. Whilst this council has no powers in this area, we have created a new Transport Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr's Derek Paterson and Alan Dawes for their help in driving forward the committee which will continue to represent residents on transport issues. We have seen good responses from the City Council in certain areas (especially when city councillors have been present when issues are raised) however we remain disappointed at the bus service provision for the area and the increased disruption from inconsiderate parking.

### **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

We are fortunate to live in an area of low crime and anti-social behaviour. However it's important to continue monitoring the situation. We remain disappointed that liaison with and appearances from the local PCSO's at our meetings has stopped, however the reality is that policing and the resources available have changed dramatically over the past few years. We are however pleased to see input from the local police team at Ward meetings, something we believe is important in keeping the parish relatively trouble free.

### **Environment**

A crucial part of keeping the parish clean has been the Parish Litter Picker. Unfortunately, after nearly two years in the role, John North is no longer able to continue serving us, as such we have recruited a new litter picker Tony Gatenby who



started a couple of weeks ago. We wish Tony joy and success in his new role and we extend our warmest thanks and best wishes to John for all he has done for Rawcliffe.

During the year we have also been able to make a number of improvements to several dog waste and litter bins which with the kind assistance of the City Council and Cllr Stuart Rawlings have been replaced with new bins and support for keeping them emptied.

### **Waste Water Treatment Works**

Last summer also saw some activity with respect to the horrendous smells from the local water treatment works. Following intervention from our MP Julian Sturdy we were pleased to receive engagement and action from Yorkshire Water. Whilst meetings between the MP, this council, Yorkshire Water and residents have been encouraging we remain to be convinced that the problems will not return. As such we are continuing efforts to realise a public meeting between Yorkshire Water and residents.

Finally, as we look forward to 2017/2018, I would like to put on record the councils thanks to every member of the Parish council for their time and dedication, Council officers who continue to go beyond their job description to support and advise members, City of York Councillors who work hard to represent the area, all the local support groups who work hard to improve the quality of life in Rawcliffe and the local residents who continue to give us their support, help and advice.

**Nicholas J Case**  
**Chairman**  
**Rawcliffe Parish Council 2016/2017**