

Chair Report for Annual Parish Meeting  
Rawcliffe Parish Council  
9<sup>th</sup> April 2018

As my 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the chair of this council comes to an end I look back upon what I will describe as a transition year.

At the beginning of the year this council was seriously short of experienced councillors; however I am pleased to report the council now has a full complement of members and I look forward to the team growing in confidence and experience.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to two new councillors, Cllr Emma Thornton and Cllr Alex Benjamin. We are grateful for your enthusiasm to help the community and for helping to bring a more appropriate gender balance to the council. I wish you happiness in your service to the community.

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 is always helpful and informative. We are also grateful to City of York officers who, in general, remain supportive of our desires.

### **Financials**

The parish council remains in a positive financial position. Whilst the council was rebuilding its membership, the project activity of the council was lower than budgeted for; reserves set aside for cancelled or delayed projects have been re-tasked.

As a consequence, in our last budget, the council took the decision to dramatically reduce our precept demand from residents. Even with an average decrease of around 16%, this council will still proceed with its planned projects by spending existing reserves, rather than expanding reserves.

### **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. 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.

As such the Parish Council, the RRA and the Ward Committee have started a joint £60,000 project to refurbish the entire west wing of the building.

This scope of the project is now defined and the council will shortly publish a tender of works with the aim to see building work complete by Autumn of this year. The works 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 increasingly popular drop-in cafe organised by Alan Dawes. We thank Alan for his selfless efforts in making this happen and we look forward to the service continuing to grow.

### **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. The primary issues reported relate to inconsiderate parking, patchy bus service provision and the poor condition of the roads. Whilst this council has no powers in these areas, we will continue to represent residents on transport issues where we can. 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 apparent acceleration in the deterioration of our road infrastructure.

### **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 remains stopped, however we the reality is that policing and the resources available have changed dramatically over the past few years. We are however pleased to see the local police team seek input at Ward and Police Station meetings, we encourage more of these. The new Police Community messaging service has also proved informative.

### **Environment**

A crucial part of keeping the parish clean has been the Parish Litter Picker. The council is increasingly mindful that the service (which didn't exist 5 years ago) is now vital. The quantity of dog waste in particular now requires the council to consider options for expanding our investment in keeping the community clean.

Unfortunately, this meant that when Tony Gatenby resigned from the role after only a few weeks it left an extensive gap in this vital service.

We are however very pleased to welcome Phil Whitfield to the role. He has already proved most diligent and we wish Phil every success in his new role. I would also like to extend gratitude on behalf of us all to Cllr Ray Chapman and Cll Alan Dawes. They picked up duties of emptying the dog waste bins and helped keep a lid on litter until Phil Whitfield was recruited. Without their selfless efforts the community would have suffered greatly.

Finally, as we look forward to 2018/2019, 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 2017/2018**