

11 Apr 23

**HAXEY PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT AND
FUTURE PLANS – 2022/23**

1. The aim of this report is to provide a summary of the work carried out by Haxey Parish Council over the past financial year and highlight any plans for the coming year.
2. The COVID pandemic continued through 2022 and the Parish Council has continued to abide by Government direction to “live with the virus”. The Council remained vigilant and where practical and allowed, has used virtual means as well as face to face meetings. Despite continued lobbying, the Government has yet to legislate on the future routine use of virtual meetings for Parish and Town Councils. Throughout the last year, the Parish Council has met and continues to meet all its meeting, business and legislative commitments on time.
3. Moving on to Council business. First, finances, the Parish Council Finance Committee considered known and forecast Council commitments and current reserve funds and recommended that the precept for 2023/24 should again remain at £40,000. The Committee further recommended that as the Parish Council continues to fulfil the conditions set by North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) with regard to the acceptance of their Council Tax Grant, that the Grant is accepted for 2023/24. The Full Parish Council has adopted the Finance Committee’s recommendations. Also, this year, the Principal Authority has frozen the Council Tax in North Lincolnshire with the General Council Tax remaining the same as last year and the adult social care precept increasing by 1.75%.
4. As in previous years, the Parish Council’s workload has been maintained with fulfilling legislative requirements, planning matters, including enforcement reporting and monitoring, Parish Land Management, general Parish maintenance management and where appropriate, retention of local services. Issues raised by Parishioners continue to be dealt with on a day-to-day basis by the Parish Council Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the various Committees and Working Groups set up by the Council, which are all described on the Parish Council website. Moreover, there continues to be significant Councillor representation at local and County organisations such as the Local Police Forums, Haxey Combined and Endowed School Estates charities, the Governing bodies of local Primary Schools and village amenities, the East Riding and Northern Lincolnshire Local Councils Association (ERNLLCA), Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Haxey Parish Community Support Group, CPRE and in the governance as Sole Trustee of Westwoodside Playing Fields Association (WPFA).
5. Day to day communication with all elements of NLC has, in general been maintained, although some requests for action and clarification from the

Principal Authority have suffered from bureaucratic delay in responses. Parish consultations over the last year have included commenting on neighbouring area plans and projects; various National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Surveys; local Drainage Board activity in the area, traffic and highway issues in our area and monitoring the submission to the Planning Inspectorate of the NLC Local Plan, aimed at setting the building activity in the Parish for the next 15 years. The Council has continued to keep an eye on any local hydro-carbon activity.

6. The Parish Council has maintained its' good working relationship with NLC Planning Members and Officers; however, the list of "troublesome" areas and enforcement action continues to increase and planning regularisation problems in the Parish still remain, although the recent ownership change of the Duke William Public house, the success of one of its planning appeals and current refurbishment work appears to have stabilized that long-standing situation. Over the period, there has been an increase in planning applications in the Parish and a general overview of applications reveals that during 2022/23 (April to March), the Parish Council considered a total of 83 Planning Applications, of which 59 were passed with or without comment and the Parish Council objected to 24. The Principal Authority agreed with the Parish Council's objection on 8 applications, agreed with the Parish Council's "no objection" on 52 applications and over-ruled the Parish Council's objection in 13 cases. By 31 March 2023, 7 applications had yet to be decided by NLC, 3 applications had been sent to appeal, resulting in 2 being agreed and one being dismissed. Finally, after 5 years, the Asset of Community Value (ACV) restriction has recently been lifted on the Duke William Public House.

7. We have continued the practice of dedicating a period before each monthly Parish Council Meeting for the public to raise matters with the Council. Take up of these opportunities has again been limited and this last year mainly concerned with individual proposed developments, Planning Applications and safety issues on the A161. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to use these opportunities to express their views to the Council. On Parish Councillor changes, four Councillors who have completed a total of 66 years serving on Haxey P arish Council will not be standing for re-election on 4 May: Cllrs Condliff (6 years), Fiddler(10 years), Foreman(32 years) and Smedley(18 years). On behalf of the Community, the Council takes this opportunity to acknowledge their individual efforts and hard work over the many years each has served and wishes them well for the future.

8. The Foreman Carter (FC) Centre has resumed indoor and outdoor activities, although following the pandemic, customer take up has been disappointingly slow. The improvement and maintenance programme for the Centre and grounds has re-started, the sports container has been repainted and following a grant from NLC the surface of the children's play area has been renovated. The rubber chippings have been removed and disposed of in an environmentally-friendly way and replaced with a safe durable surface. The local MP, Andrew Percy presented the cheque on behalf of NLC to the

playing fields committee on 28 Oct 22 and reopened the play area. Local research continues to provide the Centre public rooms with a “streaming” capability to enable virtual meeting attendees to join face to face meetings. Finally, the Parish Council has recently received a grant for the installation of a solar panel system at the Centre and work is expected to begin shortly. The Parish Council again wishes to thank Richard Carter, his Management Committee and the Parish Council Clerk for their continued hard work and stewardship of the WPFA on their behalf as Sole Trustees.

9. The Council continues its involvement with the Principal Authority and the Community to improve traffic and parking problems in the Parish and there are currently several live issues: A161 speeding, frequent accidents at the Park Drain crossroads, traffic accidents at the A161/Akeferry Rd junction and speed limit changes on Akeferry Rd, plus the general state of the roads which should hopefully improve following recent resurfacing work. Unfortunately, and despite continued pressure from the Parish Council, the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Haxey High St, proposed by the Council and delayed by COVID has not been adopted after re-consideration by NLC Highways following a limited Resident consultation. The TRO will be reviewed by the Council later in the year. The provision of electricity and up-lighting to the Monument on Greenhill remains ongoing due to the current in force power supply regulations and the number of agencies needed to be involved, not to mention the considerable escalating cost. At present, the Prime Contractor for the installation is NLC and the Parish Council is currently applying for a grant to help cover the cost. The Council has also initiated a requirement for the provision of electricity/up-lighting at the War Memorial and the Haxey Pinfold once Greenhill is completed.

10. Haxey Library, staffed primarily by local volunteers who are delivering a commendable service to the community, continues to thrive and the mobile library continues to provide its visiting service to the Parish. The Parish Council has funded the replacement of the electricity supply to Westwoodside Pond and has also upgraded and replaced the aeration pump. The improvement to the pond drains and other drainage work to stop surface water polluting the pond from Uppertorpe Hill are planned into the NLC work programme; however, at present due to higher priority NLC tasking, no date has been fixed for the work to be completed. An informal Pond Working Group, including local Residents has been formed to provide a focal point for improvements to the pond. The group has met twice and expressed frustration at the ongoing delay to the drainage works which needs to be completed before the Parish Council can take the major project of the removal of the silt from the pond forward. NLC Engineers continue to carry out surveys into several drainage and flooding issues in the Parish with a view to making sure that drains and ditches remain clear and functioning. During the last year, a small number of sites in the Parish have experienced ongoing anti-social behaviour and in some cases damage, necessitating Police, NLC Social Services and Community involvement. Following the comprehensive review by NLC, replacement and updating of the waste bins in the Parish is

continuing and the pandemic delayed NLC resurfacing programme for local roads has been re-started. Finally, KCOM and potentially another fibre service provider are expected to start work in Westwoodside shortly to make the fibre capability available to Residents.

11. Liaison with the Haxey Parish Allotment Association has continued and the site is fully used and operating normally. In the St Nicholas Closed Churchyard, the tri-annual safety survey and memorial rectification has been completed and the Parish Cemetery on Church Lane has continued to be maintained. The Annual Armistice Remembrance Parades, supported by St Nicholas Church, Military Veteran organisations, local uniformed Groups, Schools and the Lions took place on 11 and 13 November 2022 and once again there was an excellent local turn-out of young and old for both events. The Military Memorial Working Group has continued its activity and the completed Halifax Memorial has been erected in the Haxey Pinfold; however, following a surprise resolution by the Parish Council objecting to the initial arrangements for the use and retention of the Memorial in the Pinfold negotiated with Haxey Townsman, further arbitration had to take place which was concluded satisfactorily in Feb 23. The Information Board stand is now in position ready for the information board to be fitted and the Memorial Group has met and proposed initial arrangements and attendees at the Dedication Ceremony for the Halifax Memorial scheduled to take place on Friday 22 Sep 23. More information will follow in due course.

12. The Parish Paths Working Group supported by the Clerk to the Council continued the successful management of its Paths and Bridleways maintenance and the Council has recently let the contract for the coming season's grass cutting and Parish Path maintenance. The Parish Council continues to support the NLC scheme to devolve and manage increasing elements of further grass cutting tasks in the Parish and beyond. The Parish Council has also continued with the additional NLC "pilot" grass cutting initiative and is responsible for the management of local Contractors to carry out the work. The scheme has been augmented to take on the responsibility for other neighbouring Town and Parish Council's grass cutting. Further devolution projects from the Principal Authority are currently under consideration. The Council Planting Group has continued its good work with the aim of improving the year-round look of the area with the help of the Parish Handyman. As a result, the Communes in the Parish, as well as looking good, have again seen successes in the CPRE Best Kept Village Competition: Low Burnham won the Small Village Group and Best Community Planting and East Lound was judged Best New Entrant. Haxey and Westwoodside achieved joint third in the Large Village Group. The Parish Council will again support the CPRE competition for the coming year. The NLC "In Bloom" initiative also continues, which has again, enabled us to maintain the planting projects around the Parish. The Jubilee Wood Project on parish land on Langholme Lane Westwoodside has now been completed.

13. On the training front, Councillors have attended virtual training courses on finance, Code of Conduct, planning and enforcement and also attended the re-vamped NLC virtual Town and Parish Council Liaison Meetings. The Chairman and Clerk have also attended monthly "Chairman and Clerk Chats" organised by ERNLLCA. The Haxey Parish Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, a mixture of Residents and Councillors, Chaired and Vice-Chaired by Residents, completed consultation events last Summer and following a review of progress and requirement, the Group has disbanded and the issue of Neighbourhood Planning will be re-visited by the new Parish Council later in the year.

14. During the last year, the Parish Council has provided financial support to the Royal British Legion, CPRE, Haxey Primary School, LIVES, the Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society, Westwoodside and Haxey Playing Fields, Haxey Tennis Club, South Axholme Academy Music Department, Epworth Choral Society, the We Live Here Haxey Local Group and St Nicholas PCC; moreover, the Parish Council has paid NLC and various local contractors for work carried out on its behalf as well as to its internal and external auditors, Insurers, SLCC and ERNLLCA. The Parish Council was involved with community celebrations in Jun 22 to mark the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth which included the Over 70's Party, community street parties, decorated House and Scarecrow Competitions, a WW2 Hurricane flypast of the Parish, the lighting of the Beacon and associated ceremony, a special Jubilee Church Service, a musical evening and a Choral Concert. Following the sad death of the Queen in Sep 22, the Parish Council fulfilled its public requirements during the dedicated period of mourning culminating in the national funeral.

15. The Parish Council will carry on the work with plans in progress, particularly with the remaining Isle of Axholme/Hatfield Chase projects, the management of the Parish Paths and Bridleways initiative and the continuing and expanding NLC pilot grass cutting project plus other NLC devolution projects, currently under consideration; moreover, the Council understands and is aware that the provision of broadband connectivity to the Parish is not universally satisfactory and will continue to liaise with NLC and communications Contractors to identify ways to improve the local service and the preparations that will be required when Community analogue telephone land lines are digitised by 2025. We will continue with direct involvement with Residents and the Principal Authority on any planning applications and parking and traffic initiatives that emerge to remedy issues at several sites in the Parish. We will continue to develop our relationships with the Principal Authority on all fronts and also keep abreast of any developments in national legislation aimed at greater devolution. Finally, the Parish Council is developing an updated website which will be introduced later in the year.

16. During the last 3 years when life was overtaken by the Coronavirus Pandemic situation, the Parish Council has contributed to the co-ordination of

the welfare and communication elements required for the Parish with St Nicholas Church and NLC which remain in place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

17. The Chairman would like to acknowledge the hard work of all Parish Councillors and to thank the Vice-Chair, Parish and Ward Councillors and the Parish Council Clerk for the first-rate support they have provided over the past year.