

## **LINTON ON OUSE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING MAY 2025 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### **Council Members**

My thanks to all Council members for their work and dedication throughout 2024/2025 to present. It is noteworthy to mention that Council members offer their time freely to carry out their duties as a Cllr within the community, much of their hard work often goes unnoticed, but I aim to highlight some of their achievements and efforts within this report. I must also mention Megan our Clerk, although the only paid member of the Parish Council her work and efforts very often go above and beyond what is expected of a clerk and her dedication to our Parish is noteworthy, thank you Megan. As of May 2025 the Parish Council had no vacancies. A huge thank you to Cllr M Taylor, North Yorkshire County Council for his continued support to the Parish Council and the wider community. Malcolm makes every effort to attend our monthly Parish Council meetings and is always available to the PC and Parish, this is very much appreciated. Mrs H Kirby, although not officially a member of the Parish Council (although you did your time) deserves a mention under this heading for all the work she does throughout the year organising events in conjunction with the PC and making my job as Chair a lot less challenging.

### **Council Staff**

At the time of writing, the council employs 1 member of staff, this is a part time position: this being Clerk to the Council.

Megan Remmer has now been clerk to the Parish Council for almost 8 years. At the time of writing the PC has no staff vacancies.

### **Planning**

2024 was a slightly busier year in respect of planning applications that came before the Parish Council. Since the houses on Linton Meadows became available on the open market and subsequently sold the PC have seen multiple applications for extensions to the properties. No objections have been raised. The issues raised regarding the proposed development behind the Manor House B&B were resolved, however at the time of writing this report the PC understands that the development is on hold and have written to the environment agency to ask for an update. Just one application to carry out work to a tree carrying a TPO was received by the PC and objections were raised. The PC objected to proposed street naming for the new development to the rear of Manor House and submitted more appropriate names with significance to the history of the village and association with the RAF base. 2025 has started quietly with regard to planning applications.

### **Highways**

The Parish Council still operates a vehicle activated sign (VAS) and this was installed in July 2020. The VAS continues to operate as a deterrent to speeding motorists and is moved between the two authorised locations at either end of the village boundary by Cllr Kirby on a regular basis. The information that it captures is downloaded by the PC and monitored.

The road surface through the village continues to degrade and is a constant topic that is discussed by the Parish Council and Cllr Taylor (NYCC) at every monthly meeting. I reported last year that some progress had been made due to ours and Cllr Taylors efforts and that a visit from Area 2 Highways (NYCC) took place in June 2023. It has now been confirmed that the entire length of highway commonly referred to as Main Street, is to be fully resurfaced. This will not be simply a top dressing or hole repair; it will be a full scrape off and resurface of both the road and pathways. I must extend my thanks to Cllr Taylor for his perseverance on our behalf and I think the notable passion of Cllr Keegan in this area undoubtedly helped keep this subject high on all our agendas. September is the month that we have pencilled in for the works, however the PC will keep the parish updated with any information we receive regarding a fixed date for the works.

## **Finance**

At the time of writing the Council Accounts for 2024/2025 are being prepared for the auditor. The accounts show an overspend on the overall agreed budget of almost £2k (about half of that due to playground equipment expenditure and about half to underbudgeting for wages due to an unknown statutory wage increase). Actual income and expenditure were approximately £46,728.25 income and £52,518.30 expenditure (with over £30k attributable to grants for and expenditure on playground equipment) . The accounts remain healthy with a reserve of just over £20,000. The PC have this year invested it's reserves in a high interest deposit account which has meant it has accrued just over £800 in interest.

The precept was set this year at a 5.5% increase (from £18k to £18.5k), keeping it as low as possible but accounting for rising costs.

## **Environment**

The PC continues to monitor the traffic situation within the village and the data gathered from the vehicle activated sign. Speeding within the village continues not to be a major concern, despite the volume of traffic being back to normal following the re-opening of Aldwark Bridge. The cleanliness of the village and lack of litter is still notable, despite the increase in village population. I have very little doubt this is in the main due to volunteers such as Mr Scarbro monitoring, reporting and indeed picking. Thank you Naill.

Unfortunately, dog fouling of our streets and verges continues to be a problem, especially in the winter months. The PC invests heavily in waste receptacles, indeed for a village of our size, we have more than is reasonably expected, as such there is simply no excuse for dog fouling on our streets. We continue to monitor and report on the issue.

The front of the village hall and play park continues to be maintained by a mix of volunteers and contractors. Mr Brama, one of many volunteers that looks after the front of the village hall, made some suggestions as to how improvements could be made. He suggested that the village Hall sign, needed refurbishing, the benches needed maintenance, the cairn flagstones needed repointing and one of the cairns plaques needed a full refurb. The Parish Council was in full agreement and the necessary arrangements made for contractors to carry out the work. The village Hall plaque when removed by Cllr Drydon looked in such a state of disrepair that I was sure a new one would have to be purchased, losing a piece of the history of the hall. However, Mr S Orwell a villager, very kindly agreed to put his woodworking skills to the test and did an unbelievable job completely refurbishing the sign. Please take time to look at the sign next time you are passing the village hall. Thank you very much Steve. The village hall is the focal point of the village hosting important events such as Remembrance Sunday and VE day and a huge thank you to Andrew Brama for keeping the Cairns and plaques clean, to Julian our resident flag expert for always raising (or indeed lowering) the correct flag at the right time and to our contractors for ensuring the grass is cut regularly and especially just before important events, thank you Sam. As always, a huge thank you to Helen Kirby for ensuring special events and services are organised in a timely fashion with all T's crossed and I's dotted, I am extremely grateful to you all. This year is no exception with the VE day celebrations being held behind the village hall on the 10<sup>th</sup> May, as always, a huge thank you to Mike and Judith Keegan and Team Linton for organising this. Then on the 11<sup>th</sup> May we held a VE day remembrance service at the front of the village hall, organised meticulously, as always by Mrs Kirby. Thank you, Helen. At the time of writing I must thank everyone involved in helping with this years VE day celebrations on the Saturday and service on the Sunday. Thank you team Linton, Helen Kirby, Taff Morgan for his dedication and time devoted to our memorial service and Andrew Brama. It was a glorious weekend and testament to the hard work of our community.

The play park continues to receive regular maintenance and the PC managed to secure some funding and along with some reserved monies purchased several new play park pieces of equipment. A huge thank you to Cllr Dryden for all his efforts carrying out regular inspections of the park alongside our external contractors responsible for health and safety inspections. Thank you also to Cllr Drydon for his efforts in respect of park health and safety and risk assessments.

Those villagers with a keen eye (especially those of us who don't eat may carrots) may also have noticed a new streetlight at the bus stop at the end of Jauncey Way. Thank you, Cllr Hall, for your work to make this happen, a much-needed addition to our village lighting. Also, not content with enhancing our environment with a well-used book swap in our old phone box Cllr Hall also ensured the idea of a village plant swap came to fruition. The wheelbarrow at the entrance to Linton Meadows looks great and is being used by green fingered villagers, thank you Becky.

As the RAF base continues with its close down and withdrawal procedures, the PC is extremely grateful to Sqn Ldr Hicks for his continued regular communication with the PC, if Sqn Ldr Hicks cannot make it in person to the monthly PC meeting he always sends a comprehensive written report updating us as to progress, or sometimes, frustratingly for all (including Sqn Ldr Hicks), the lack of it. Annington homes have now taken back possession of much of the housing on the base and on Linton Place and we await communication from Annington as to the timeline for refurbishment and potential marketing of the properties. The PC continued throughout 2024 and 2025 to engage with the DIO (Defence infrastructure Organisation) as to their plans for the base once the RAF have handed the site to them. The DIO have been invited to attend the PC meeting in May, but information currently suggests that an agent has been engaged and that the base will be marketed in 2025 with the intention to sell.

NYCC announced to the PC in November of 2023 that houses on Linton Place had been selected by the MOD as suitable properties to use under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). In 2024 it was communicated to the PC that this was no longer the plan.

The PC continues to work closely with and support Linton on Ouse Primary School and looks forward to once again involving the children in village events and ceremonies.

The PC continues to work closely with Team Linton, to support their efforts with events, projects and of course our famous Christmas tree. The tree in December 2024 was magnificent as always, surrounding villages look on in envy I am told! Thank you Team Linton for making this happen with the PC, and your efforts getting Santa to visit in his newly refurbished sleigh do not go unnoticed by children and parents alike. Mike, Judith you must be very good all year to make that visit happen, thank you.

I would also like to highlight the work done by the village hall committee. Like the Christmas Tree, your coffee mornings are becoming legendary. The village Hall is a stunning village asset and the village hall committee work hard to ensure it remains viable. It has become a very well used venue and the feedback from users is incredibly positive.

### **Play Area**

The play area is inspected regularly by an outside contractor, Park Lane, reports submitted to the PC for consideration and review for recommendations for repair or maintenance. Cllr Dryden also carries out a weekly inspection to ensure the integrity of the equipment and reports are filed. The PC continues to carry out routine maintenance as highlighted in these reports.

In 2024 the PC secured some funding and matched this with reserves to replace much of the old equipment that was beyond repair. The chosen contractor did a fantastic job with minimal

disturbance erecting the new equipment and I am pleased to say the PC received many positive comments when we reopened the park. It is noteworthy to mention that since the addition of the new waste receptacles in 2023/24 the play park remains for the most part litter free, thank you to all our park users. Please remember, the play park remains a smoke free and dog free environment. CJ Kirby continues to provide contractual services to the PC providing ground maintenance, grass cutting services. We continue to leave a wild area at the bottom of the park. The PC are grateful for this continued service provision.

Sam Harris provides grass cutting, hedge cutting and external maintenance to the village hall and surrounding green areas. The PC thanks Sam for his continued hard work.

### **Concluding Remarks**

It has been another busy and varied year for the Parish Council, my thanks to Cllrs for their time and effort, hopefully our community is a better place for your dedication, I know from the comments I receive personally and those I read on the forum what you do is appreciated. What the Parish Council does and achieves, however, could not be done without help and support from the wider community. I have mentioned many of those people throughout this report, if I have forgotten anyone I am sorry, but you know who you are.

We have a wonderful village and community, we are very fortunate to have a pub, often the heart of any community, sadly missing in many rural settings, thank you Kevin. We have the most fantastic Primary School, with dedicated teaching staff, governors and PTA (Friends) and with the village demographic changing, houses being filled with permanent residents these assets and people are so important for our community to thrive. Our Parish Council meetings take place each month on a Monday at 7pm and anyone is welcome to attend. It would be lovely to see more of our residents at these meetings, please do come along if you can and join in or just sit and observe.

Marc Goddard

Chairman Linton on Ouse Parish Council