

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT OF UPPER POPPLETON PARISH COUNCIL 2015/16

Yet again, this last twelve months has been very busy with usual activities combined with some exceptional projects which has put extra demands on the time of the Parish Councillors.

After years of trying to avoid yellow lines on the roads, the Council had to make the decision to get yellow lines on some parts of the roads, notably adjacent to the railway crossing to enhance pedestrian safety, and on Main Street to facilitate the easier passage of buses due to car owners parking on both sides of the road making it difficult and sometimes impossible for buses to proceed. CYC Highways department has recently installed these lines, which car owners seem to be respecting.

Following the closure of the post office, the Royal Mail was minded to permanently remove the Post Box from the centre of the village. Following strenuous and persistent representation by the Council, the post box was reinstalled on the Green adjacent to the Surgery. It was placed here to facilitate the ease of the collection vans to empty it without having to park in other areas. Also the telephone box adjacent to the Co-Op has been decommissioned as it had only been used three times in two years. The Parish Council has acquired this for £1, and wishes to sell it to anyone looking for a garden feature. Whilst dealing with acquisitions, it should be reported that following the sad demise of the Garden Guild, the Council has agreed to purchase the store hut on the Main Street allotments, also for £1, for the purpose of turning it into a Village Store for organisations looking to place impediments such a road closure signs, village show items, sports day items etc.

We are aware of the difficulties imposed by Yorkshire Water relaying main water pipes, necessary due to corrosion and complaints from residents about discoloured water. This has been a major project and UPPC have had conversations with Yorkshire Water who have promised to restore the grass verges and other disturbances. Whilst doing this, the company has developed an up to date map of the services in Poppleton, a necessity as the old maps were hopelessly out of date. Thus far the company have been excellent in dealing with the problems experienced by householders and the project should be finished early summer and they are on target. In this connection, the proposed resurfacing of Long Ridge Lane has been delayed until the waterworks are complete, and this resurfacing should take place early summer.

UPPC has been much exercised by the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, requiring seemingly endless meetings with a dedicated team of Councillors, namely Mrs Kathie Brydson, Mrs Vivien Crabb and Mr Roper Langford who have met with their Nether Poppleton counterparts, often on a weekly basis. The Plan is now complete and is for consideration by CYC. This is to maintain some control of development of the delightful environment in which we enjoy. The progress of this plan has been hindered by the lack of a Local Plan covering the whole of York. Nonetheless, we are very grateful for the conscientious and dedicated work of those three councillors involved.

Turning to finance, it has been a pleasure to award financial grants to all those who submitted applications, namely All Saints Church Grass cutting, Millennium Green's new board of trustees to help future development, Children's Sports Day, Railway Nursery, Luncheon Club, Under Five's Group, Village Show, Youth Action Group, Community Centre, Library and the Poppleton History Society. All are worthy recipients to assist cross section of ages in the village to enjoy the facilities on offer. Furthermore, we have been able to do this and manage all the other expenditure without raising the household precept and yet maintaining healthy reserves. In addition to these sums mentioned the Council has some section 106 money available from development sources, and £7,795 has been allocated to the development of an adventure playground adjacent to the football pitch, John Camplin being the

Councillor driving this project; and £3,972 as seed corn funding to the proposed start up of Poppleton Cricket Club (to be launched at a public meeting on July 6th).

The detailed annual financial statements are available on your chairs.

The Council has been involved in many other projects such as organising trimming of dangerous trees, the renovation of the footpath from opposite the library through to the Lord Nelson which was damaged during the flooding in January, having the white fencing opposite library renovated, and arranging for bollards soon to be erected in front of the White Horse public house (similar to those in front of the Co-op) to enhance safety due to 'near misses' from cars parked on the footpath. There is one further mystery which the Council is trying to unravel, namely the driveway between the Manse and the Surgery. Whilst this has always been supposed to be part of the Green, it does not appear on any maps as the documentation was inaccurate or incomplete. Currently, lawyers are working to establish UPPC ownership with the Land Registry office. This is important as this driveway may be of strategic importance in the not too distant future.

The Council has also actively supported the Village in Bloom competition again, and were pleased to be awarded a Silver Gilt award for the third year in succession, tinged with some regret that a Gold Award was narrowly missed. Again many thanks to Mr Mike Walker who fronted this working group, and he has been persuaded to run the project again in 2016, trying to obtain the coveted Gold Award.

The Council has been involved in other projects too numerous to note individually in this short report, but consideration of planning applications has been vital. Some of the deliberations of the planning group, Cllrs Brydson, Crabb and Buckle seem to bear fruit when considered by the ultimate planning arbitrator, the City of York Council, although sometimes the UPPC is puzzled by the outcome of other applications. However the Council was pleased that their objections to the proposed planning application for a large caravan site off Northfield Lane was noted and actioned.

I do want to end with a comment about the team of Councillors. We were sorry to lose Fiona Reilly due to family commitments, as she was our expert on social media, and a fund of innovative ideas. However, earlier in the year we were delighted to welcome back Mr John Pannell after an absence of several years with his accumulated wisdom, and much more recently Mr Alan Farnsworth which restores the Council to full strength for 2016. All the Councillors have contributed their talents in individual ways, and have bonded into an effective team, even when disagreements occur these are usually resolved in an amicable manner. In addition it would be remiss not to thank the Clerk for his administrative diligence. It is only when one is Chairman, does one realise the amount of work that the Clerk does, often behind the scenes including the necessary accurate financial management.

J. Stuart Robson
Chairman, Upper Poppleton Parish Council
9th May 2016