

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF
UPPER POPPLETON PARISH COUNCIL,**

2017-18.

It is my pleasure to report a synopsis of the main events that the Upper Poppleton Parish Council discussed and indeed actioned in the past 12 months. The detail of these and other more minor topics can be accessed in the Council's minutes, available on our website.

The Council has met 11 times this year, usually only 10 meetings as we do not normally meet in August or December but due to urgent planning applications we added an extra meeting this year. We are appreciative that the West Ward Councillors of the City of York usually attend, and we are grateful for the time committed by both Cllr Ian Gillies and Cllr Chris Steward. We were delighted that Ian was recently elected as leader of the City of York Council.

The Parish Councillors provide a wide spread range of abilities and enthusiasms to help keep this village in good heart, none more so than my Vice-Chairman, Vivien Crabb, Kathie Brydson and Roper Langford who, with their opposite numbers from Nether Poppleton Parish Council, have again, for at least the third consecutive year, devoted many hours in finally formulating the Neighbourhood Plan which, following consultation and a village referendum, resulted in approval by 91% of the voters, has now been accepted, thereby giving protection to future developments in this village. This team has also submitted a closely worded 4-page response to the City of York Local Plan, covering proposals in our adjacent area for the future of the British Sugar Site, the old Manor School site, Northminster Business Park, the former Civil Service sports field and the Wyevale site. This Plan is currently being considered by the City Council. We await their deliberations.

During the past year we have undertaken remedial action in the village, including repainting the maypole and renovating the wooden housing on the pumps and repairing benches. Other remedial actions will be necessary in the near future following the felling of a lime tree last September on Chantry Green which crushed a parked vehicle. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. Although not part of our remit two other trees were felled adjacent to the medical practice as they were deemed unsafe. As a consequence, we instigated a survey of all the trees within our responsibilities and, disturbingly, five were deemed unsafe or diseased. Following a second opinion to be discussed at the meeting following this meeting, future actions will be undertaken in the interest of public safety.

Many residents have brought to our attention problems they are experiencing, including the increased car parking on Station Road adjacent to the level crossing. The station car park is inadequate for railway passengers to park their cars so they leave them, quite legally, on the road. However, this causes congestion and some days reduces this road to single file traffic. Following discussions we are trying to get a piece of land, opposite the current car park (formerly, in days of steam trains it was a coal bunker and has since been unused) released by the railways to create more parking. This problem is urgent as we understand that the York-Harrogate line is to have an improved service with more trains. Whilst mentioning railways we were disappointed that the wooden level crossing gates were replaced by inferior recycled metal gates which are dirty and less visible in the dark, and we have taken this up with the railway authorities responsible with a view to obtaining some improvement.

Other activities include tackling the problem of mole hills on the Greens, and numerous complaints about potholes on the roads which we have taken up with the City of York Highways Department. The Parish Council also instigated two working parties, one in the Autumn and one recently to 'tidy up' the village of litter, leaves, broken branches, discarded bottles and the like.

Throughout the year our Clerk, James Mackman and Mr Peter Hindle have volunteered diligently most weeks to clear litter. May I say a heartfelt appreciation for all those who were involved. Many other activities have been undertaken, including an up-to-date mapping definition of the village greens which is important in the context of consideration of planning applications.

The Council has registered the library, the Poppleton Ousebank primary school, Blairgowrie, the Poppleton Centre, and the Collingwood public house as Assets of Community Value.

I want to pass a few comments on finances. A copy of the end of year balance sheets are on your chairs. In the last financial year we overspent our budget due to various extra expenditure including the urgent necessity of repainting the maypole at a cost of £3,700, but this was partially offset by a grant of £1,000 from the CYC West Ward fund ensuring a net cost of £2,700 and also, following representations from Poppleton Play who are to regenerate the playground at the Poppleton Centre, we awarded them a grant of £7,500. Various other grants were made within our budget including £5,000 to the Poppleton Centre, £1,500 to the Youth Club as their grants from the City Council had terminated due to CYC lack of funds and £500 to the Bowls Club. Our reserves were, and are healthy, and despite spending over the intended budget, we were able to restrict increase the precept for 2018-19 by the CPR index of 2.7% as defined in October, an index commonly used by many other organisations.

Finally, I do want to pay tribute to the Councillors, all of whom are unpaid volunteers, and who have been diligent in their work and who have again been determined to try to do their best to preserve the ambience of this delightful village with its unique atmosphere. Through their efforts we have a splendid working relationship with many of the other community organisations, the Poppleton Centre, the churches, Youth Centre, the developing cricket club, our sister organisation, Nether Poppleton Parish Council, and others too many to mention individually in a short report.

Sadly, we lost Cllr Nigel Evans who had to resign due to frequent clashes of dates with his thespian activities, and I thank him for his work, and frequent advice often quietly behind the scenes. This report would not be complete without a word of appreciation for the Clerk, James Mackman, who is extremely diligent in keeping our paper work and our finances in splendid order. I should point out that he is the longest serving person associated with this Council, and that the Council's meeting following this Annual Meeting will be his 200th meeting as Clerk to Upper Poppleton Parish Council. James, we thank you.

Stuart Robson
Chairman
Upper Poppleton Parish Council.
10th April 2018.