



Horden Parish Council Annual Report 2023/24

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN.....

I was proud to be elected by my fellow councillors as Chairman for 2023/2024. My year started with a celebration as our King, Charles III was crowned. We had a fabulous celebration in the Welfare Park, with a range of activities being enjoyed by all.



Winner of
Coronation cake
competition



Cllr Isabel Roberts

Councillors Janet Brown left the Council, Thomas Baldasera and Paula Wood joined as councillors during the year. It was with great sadness that in February Isabel Roberts, a former Chairman of the Council and a Durham County Councillor lost her battle with cancer and sadly passed away, she is greatly missed by all of her colleagues.

Colin Jackson joined our staff team in October as Deputy Clerk; while our two apprentices Brooke Howarth and Callum Lamb both progressed to full time employment with the Council. We were very proud of Brooke who completed her NVQ level 2 in Customer Service, whilst Callum is still working through his horticulture qualification.

As an Ex-Serviceman, November's annual Remembrance Day Parade and Service was a poignant moment in my year. The event was as usual, well attended by the residents of Horden. I was pleased to see the new gates were installed in Memorial Park just in time for the service.

In December we held the annual Xmas Tree Lighting Service where we worked again with Creative Youth Opportunities on a lantern parade, the Salvation Army band and Fr Kyle McNeil who lead the carol service. We were also joined by Disney characters Elsa and Olaf from the Frozen movie!

Day to day, I continue to get my hands dirty, often sorting tasks at our cemetery, including laying additional water pipes.

I hold a monthly surgery for any resident to attend on the first Wednesday of the month between 1.30 and 2.30pm in the Social Welfare Centre. You do not need an appointment, just turn up and have a chat!

I would like to thank all members and staff of the council for their support during the year. As a team we work with dedication to the council to serve the residents of Horden.

Cllr Frank Leadbitter

Chairman of The Council 2023/2024

ABOUT US

Horden Parish Council is made up of 15 Councillors and usually meets the first Thursday of every month, with the exception of August. In January we move to the second Thursday.

Your Councillors are:-

Cllr Rodie Bagnall	
Cllr Thomas Baldasera	
Cllr Chris Cain	
Cllr Denise Gregory	
Cllr Eileen Laing	
Cllr Frank Leadbitter	Chairman of Horden Parish Council
Cllr William Morrow	
Cllr William Smith	
Cllr David Tait	Chairman of Horden Recreation Ground
Cllr Alison Turner	
Cllr Jackie Ward	
Cllr Laurence Williams	
Cllr Francis Winrow	Vice-Chairman of Horden Recreation Ground
Cllr Paula Wood	
VACANT	

The Parish Council employ the following Staff:-

Samantha Shippen	Clerk to the Council & RFO
Colin Jackson	Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer
Michelle Hannant	Administration and Finance Officer
Brooke Howarth	Administration Officer
Angela Lee	SWC Operations & Events Manager
Richard Hepworth	Outdoor Team Leader
David Lamb	Cemetery Team Leader
Allan Roberts	Gardener / Gravedigger
Joe Hall	Gardener / Gravedigger
Kyle Bagnall	Gardener / Gravedigger
Callum Lamb	Gardener / Gravedigger
Richard Welsh	Gardener / Gravedigger (Weekend)
Sharon Atchinson	SWC Cleaner
VACANT	SWC Cleaner

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Parish Council. This report has been produced and made available prior to the Annual Assembly to be held on Thursday 23rd May 2024 at 6pm in the Social Welfare Centre.

The Annual Assembly is a meeting of the electors of the Parish of Horden and gives an opportunity for any registered elector of the parish to discuss the information provided and to question the Council on its activities during the past year. Any member of the public is welcome to attend this meeting, although only registered electors are able to participate.

Horden Parish Council deliver many services in the village, including the provision of parks, playing fields and recreation areas. The Council also manage Thorpe Road Cemetery and the Social Welfare Centre.

The Council's aim is to give the residents of Horden information about the Parish Council and the services it delivers in the village, to outline how it deals with current challenges and highlight plans to meet community needs and deliver quality services in the next year and beyond.

Meetings of the Parish Council are normally held on the first Thursday of every month, except August when Council is in recess. Meetings start at 6pm in the Social Welfare Centre. The Agenda for Council meetings is prepared on the Friday prior to the meeting and displayed on the Parish notice board in the foyer of the Social Welfare Centre and on its website for the public to view.

All meetings of the Council are open for the public (although certain exempt items may be held in private session). If you wish to attend a meeting, just turn up. The Council is happy for the public to give their views or comments during Public Participation but ask that you notify the Clerk prior to the meeting of the topic on which you wish to speak.

Minutes of meetings are available for public inspection at the Social Welfare Centre and via our website. Any member of the public is entitled by law to obtain printed copies of the minutes at reasonable cost. These can be obtained from the Parish Council Offices at the Social Welfare Centre.

REVIEW OF 2023/24

Welfare Park (Registered Charity Horden Recreation Ground 520826)

The Council is sole Trustee of the Charity.

A range of events and activities organised within the Welfare Park continue to be popular with the residents of Horden and the surrounding villages. Details of events can be found displayed in park noticeboards, in the window at the Social Welfare Centre and on our Facebook page (Horden Parish Council). In summer 2023 we continued to provide a number of "Summer Holiday" and other events, supported by our partners at Creative Youth Opportunities.

A number of local partners and organisations have used the Welfare Park to host their events and activities over the course of 2023. Creative Youth Opportunities were finally able to open in their new base at Park House thanks to a grant from our Durham County Councillors via the AAP. HCW Football and Cricket Clubs continue to grow their sports within the park particularly for young people. The Council look forward to continued successful partnership working to provide activities for residents, whilst fully utilising facilities.

The Vintage Tea Room and Heritage Centre, run by volunteers, continues to be a popular attraction in the park. The Tea Room and Heritage Centre are open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am – 3pm in the months of March – October. New flooring was laid over the winter and the tearoom was redecorated, leaving it fresh and even more beautiful, if you haven't sampled the beautiful cakes, savouries and sandwiches, you are missing out!

Parish Council staff have continued to deliver a great service in their upkeep and maintenance of the park and sporting facilities. The dedication and commitment to excellence ensure that users of the Welfare Park continue to enjoy the amenities at the quality they expect. A special thank you therefore must go to the staff for their efforts, we are sure you notice the beautiful shrub and flower beds, but also appreciate the relatively litter-free environment.

Memorial Park

2023/24 has been a year of general ongoing maintenance at Memorial Park. Those of you who both visit the Park on a regular basis or pass by will notice the new gates that were installed following a car accident. The gates were manufactured to reflect the original gates from the 1930's with the arch over the top. The staff continue to achieve excellent standards at the park.

True to village tradition, the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony and Tree Lighting Service were held in the Park in 2023. The attendance for both events was once again excellent.

Cotsford Park

The grassed area in the centre of the inner ring of houses on the Cotsford Park Estate is a registered village green for which the Parish Council has management responsibility.

Church Green

Church Green is the area of grass at the bottom of the Memorial Park opposite St Mary's Church. It provides walkways from Sixth and Seventh Streets to Blackhills Terrace and has a number of seating areas, litter bins and dog bins.

This area was registered by the Parish Council as a village green in 2014, protecting the green from future development.

Maritime Crescent

The grassed play area at Maritime Crescent in Grants Houses is owned by Durham County Council. The play equipment and mini goals are however, the property of Horden Parish Council.

Sunderland Road Playing Fields

A number of football teams continue to use the football pitches at Sunderland Road. If you have a team that would like to use our facilities, you need to book with us, we will then make sure our car parking and changing rooms are available. Any organised use of the facilities requires the Council's permission.

Whippet racing also takes place on the fields on a Saturday morning, in keeping with the tradition of the village.

The playing fields also cater for more informal activities such as an outdoor gym, five-a-side football, permanent mini goals are provided on the fields alongside a small play area for children.

Thorpe Road Cemetery

During 2023/24 a total of 63 burials took place as follows

	Total	Horden	%	Others	%
All Burials	63	41	65%	22	35%
Full Burials	43	29	67%	14	33%
Ashes	20	12	60%	8	40%

In addition to the sixty three burials, memorial plaques were sold for display on the memorial wall. The Parish Council will consider donations of seats, trees, rose bushes and other items, space permitting.

The cemetery rules of management were revised in 2022 following a public consultation. Families should make themselves familiar with the rules and regulations, details of which are on the Council website.

We make regular inspections of headstones, if any are identified as unstable, they will be laid flat. All rights holders are contacted at the last known address, although the majority of letters get returned as unknown. We remind families that older graves may require the permission to be renewed, at a fee and that we require any change of address to be notified so we can contact you if there are any issues.

We have made another extension to the water supply, down to the Garden D ashes area. We owe our thanks to Councillor Frank Leadbitter and the team from Station Road Allotments for their assistance in completing this project.

Social Welfare Centre

The Social Welfare Centre continues to be used by many residents and community groups. Activities include Horden Girl Guides, Horden Residents' Association, Horden Regeneration Partnership, Andy's Man Club and Horden Banner Committee to name a few.

The Social Welfare Centre continues to provide office space for Durham Deafened Support and Durham County Council - Horden Together who occupy the first floor of the Social Welfare Centre.

Horden Together has a team of staff who are supporting vulnerable residents and helping to improve the environment in Horden in both practical ways and using their powers of enforcement where necessary. For further information about the work of Horden Together they can be contacted on 03000 263 387.

Station Road Allotments

The allotments are situated at the end of Acacia Avenue and are on both sides of the railway bridge. The land is part owned by the Parish Council and part owned by Castle Eden Estates and the whole site is rented to Station Road Allotment Association who manage the site on our behalf. We are grateful to the Committee for their work.

Planning Applications

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications submitted to Durham County Council for Horden. This means that the Parish Council has the opportunity to support or object to any application submitted from within the village. During 2023/24 there were no applications considered to require a response by the Parish Council.

Finance

During 2023/24, the Council set a budget of £1,023,517. It is estimated that the Council spent £639,463 during the year. The reason for the difference is that planned capital projects did not go ahead due to staffing changes. Details of the Council Budget can be found on the Council's website.

Publicity & Communications

The Parish Council has changed its website at the end of March 2024 following the withdrawal of support by Durham County Council at short notice. The new website address is <https://horden-pc.gov.uk> we are still working on updating the site which provides details of meeting dates and times, details of upcoming events and recent publications, there is also a section for agendas and minutes of meetings. The Parish Council also continue to use Facebook and noticeboards as a means of communicating with the local community.

Events and activities organised by the Council are advertised in the noticeboards at the Welfare Park and Social Welfare Centre, on the website and also social media sites.

Grant Funding

The Parish Council give many grants and donations to local groups and charitable organisations during the year. Some of the grants are in the form of free or reduced rental for the use of Parish Council facilities, particularly the Social Welfare Centre. Other grants are in the form of monetary donations. All requests for grants are considered by the Council a total of £10,200.22 was granted. Listed below are the groups and organisations who received financial assistance in 2023/24:-

Andy's Man Club - £1,780
CISWO Ladies Group - £1,495
Creative Youth Opportunities - £1,970
Durham Deafened Support - £1,200
Horden Banner Committee £80
Horden Girl Guides - £870

Horden Recreation Ground * £395.37 (in addition to the £50,000 operational grant)
Horden Residents Association - £185
Horden Together - £1,200
Patchwork Quilters - £824.85
Salvation Army - £200

Members Attendance at Meetings 2023/24

	Rodie Bagnall	Thomas Baldasera	Janet Brown	Chris Cain	Denise Gregory	Eileen Laing	Frank Leadbitter	William Morrow	Isabel Roberts	Bill Smith	David Tait	Alison Turner	Jackie Ward	Laurence Williams	Francis Winrow	Paula Wood
HPC 04/05/23			✓	✓	Aa	✓	✓	✓	✓	Aa	Aa	✓	✓	Aa	✓	
HPC 01/06/23	✓		Aa	Ar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
HPC 06/07/23	Ar			Ar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Ar	✓	Ar	✓	✓	
HPC 03/08/23	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
HPC 07/09/23		✓		✓	Ar	✓	✓	✓	✓		Ar	✓	✓		✓	
HPC 05/10/23					✓	Aa	✓	✓	✓	Aa	Aa		✓		✓	Aa
HPC 02/11/23	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Aa	✓	✓	✓		✓	Aa
HPC 07/12/23		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	Aa	✓	Aa	Aa	✓		✓	✓
HPC 11/01/24		✓		Ar	✓	✓	✓	✓	Aa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HPC 01/02/24		✓				✓	✓	✓	Ar	✓	Ar	✓	✓		✓	✓
HPC 07/03/24		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Ar	✓		✓	✓
HPC 04/04/24	✓	Ar		Ar		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		Aa	✓

Aa = Apologies accepted

Ar = Apologies Received

Blank = No apologies

Members Allowances and Expenses Claims 2023/24

Listed below for public disclosure is the allowances and other expenses claimed by the Parish Council's elected Members during the financial year 2022/23.

Surname	Forename	Allowance £	Total Payment £
Bagnall	Rodie	571.93	571.93
Baldasera	Thomas	Not eligible	0.00
Brown	Janet	Not eligible	0.00
Cain	Chris	571.93	571.93
Gregory	Denise	571.93	571.93
Laing	Eileen	571.93	571.93
Leadbitter	Francis	571.93	571.93
Morrow	William	571.93	571.93
Roberts	Isabella	571.93	571.93
Smith	William	571.93	571.93
Tait	David	No Claim	0.00
Turner	Alison	571.93	571.93
Ward	Jackie	Not eligible	0.00
Williams	Laurence	571.93	571.93
Winrow	Francis	571.93	571.93
Wood	Paula	Not eligible	0.00