

Chairperson's Report 2024 (produced by the Vice Chair)

In the interests of clarity, I need to say that I am presenting the report on behalf of the Chairman at his request, it is however my report.

In reviewing the events of the last year there are a number of issues that are regular items and constantly need attention or action to maintain the general standard and appearance of Auckley, mostly by putting pressure on the City of Doncaster Council to undertake their responsibilities.

We have ongoing issues with the condition of footpaths, potholes in the roads, street lighting, general maintenance of gutters and drains, excess weed growth being a particular issue, although I did spot the man on his quad bike spraying the gutters this morning, and without constant pressure by the Parish Council I do wonder what state the City of Doncaster Council would allow Auckley to be in. However, despite pressure from the Parish Council it is often difficult to get the City of Doncaster Council to carry out essential works, Mosham Road footpath being a case in point. It needs grubbing back on a regular basis and the trees require regular cutting back. It is used quite extensively by persons young and old and should really be maintained in a more usable state – a task CDC consistently defaults on.

Additionally, it is difficult to get adequate maintenance of the green footpaths around Auckley, some being almost not walkable due to areas of flooding.

Traffic issues remain a constant cause for concern, particularly speeding through Auckley; there are increased volumes due to developments both in our area and in the neighbouring areas. Hurst Lane has its own particular issues when the Wildlife Park have special events which attract increased numbers and they fail to manage the car park efficiently leading to significant traffic tailbacks.

We have ongoing issues with parking particularly around the schools where indiscriminate parking causes not only an inconvenience to other road users but danger to pupils attending the schools when cars park on pavements and cross or park on verges.

We will continue to raise these matters but are realistic in what we expect CDC will do to alleviate the issues.

On a more positive note, it seems as though the flooding issue at the traffic lights on the junction of Hayfield Lane and First Avenue may finally have been resolved as works have been carried out to improve the drainage, although only time will tell. Generally, however flooding is an issue in Auckley. Whether this is due to the changing climate or lack of maintenance in key areas is unclear but we have an ongoing issue with flooding in The Green and the area around the Ellers Lane shops, which never seems to be resolved despite efforts from the Parish Council and residents.

We also have our own issues at Riverside Park where over recent years the area has become wetter and parts that did not flood now do and those that would flood in the autumn and winter now seem to be wet most of the year. We are constantly being told that it has nothing to do with the river being at a higher level but that the area has always flooded. - Anyone who has lived in Auckley for a good few years knows the truth. However, it is noticeable that we seem to be having longer wetter periods in autumn and winter and this is causing the Parish Council some maintenance issues in respect of grass cutting and the overall tree condition near flooded areas. We cannot rule out in the future the need to consider how the area is utilised and maintained.

On the general subject of Riverside Park, the Parish Council has put further funding into improving the interior of the pavilion. This programme of works is the first major revamp of the pavilion since its build in the 1980s. although, there has been

ongoing maintenance, due mainly to vandalism and general wear and tear, over the years. Further works to the exterior are being considered to improve its overall appearance.

The building plays an important role in the annual Show, which has become a very popular event and attracts increasing numbers every year. The Parish Council continues to support the show through a donation and the free use of Riverside Park.

The Parish Council also owns the park off Hayfield Lane which although has not been in ownership for very long continues to need ongoing maintenance. The playing field is not in a usable condition and it is to be reseeded to try and bring it up to an acceptable standard. We also continue to have acts of vandalism. Despite having CCTV cameras installed the police seem unable to identify the perpetrators so the Parish Council finds itself having to pay for the replacement of fence panels, parts of the picnic table and clean up rubbish and broken glass. On a more positive note, we are seeking to install additional play equipment. This has necessitated a consultation exercise before CDC will release the funds.

There are other areas of Auckley that need a general spruce up. The area in front of the Ellers Lane shops is in need of particular attention and the Parish Council are doing what they can to influence the landowners as well as arranging for the refurbishment of the red telephone box. The condition of this has become increasingly poorer due partly to weathering and some vandalism. It had been suggested that the phone box could be utilised for a defibrillator as has been done in other areas however the reconnection of the electricity in addition to phone box refurbishment made the costs prohibitive. We have however been able to fund through joint arrangements a machine at the Eagle and Child and outside the New College taking the number in Auckley up to five. Our aspiration is to provide more but the practicalities of getting suitable electrical connections limits localities.

To pay for this, the maintenance of the green areas, Christmas decorations, the support of the British Legion poppy appeal, the provision and maintenance of defibrillators and all the other functions the Parish Council has requires the raising of revenue through the parish precept.

Due to increases in prices it was necessary to raise the level of the precept for 2024/25 however due to sound financial management we were able to keep this to under six percent which equates to an increase on the lowest band A of two pence per week and at the highest band H an increase of six and a half pence per week, which given the increases in maintenance costs is very reasonable.

It should also be acknowledged that Parish Council members give their time for free, attending not only the Parish Council meetings but also various others, representing Auckley Parish Council.

I wish to thank them all for the work they put in and the expertise they can give to these forums.

Finally, I would like to recognise the work the handyman does around Auckley to keep it tidy and to Emma who as Clerk has to keep everything running as it should.