

AUCKLEY PARISH

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – MARCH 2026

It was a privilege to be nominated as chairman of the parish council following the retirement of both the former Chairman and Vice-Chairman and sadly one of my first tasks was to pay a tribute to the former Chairman and long serving councillor Steve Featherstone who had passed away in New Zealand with his family after a short illness. A message of appreciation was extended to retiring councillors for their valuable service particularly Ian Swainston who had served the council for over thirty years for many periods as Vice-Chairman and Chairman.

A welcome was extended to Catherine Thomson and Neil Slack as newly elected councillors along with Marjorie Caygill, Ronnie Dobson, Gary Warrender and myself who were re-elected. As only six councillors stood for election Jennifer Worthington, a long-standing councillor and Garry Taylor were coopted at the May meeting and Joe Smith co-opted at the June meeting to make a full complement. Regrettably due to a change of circumstances, both Garry and Joe recently tendered their resignations. Arrangements have been made to co-opt new councillors at the next parish council meeting.

The 85th anniversary of D Day was commemorated (just prior to the new council's first meeting) with a bonfire and lighting of a lamp of peace at the Scout Hut on Hurst Lane and residents enjoyed a special coffee morning/lunch at Auckley Parish Centre the following day. Grateful thanks are extended to the 4th Doncaster (Finningley) Scout Group and Auckley Parish Centre for their support with these events and to Laura Sydney who served on the parish council at the time and who provided the impetus for these events to take place. Appreciation is also extended to the Richard Metcalfe and Others Charity Committee particularly Ian Swainston, the longstanding Chairman who provide a free day outing for senior citizens of the parish and of course to Neil Woodward and the Auckley Show committee who work tirelessly to provide a wonderful free village show each year.

Other annual events arranged and funded as required by the parish council include:

- a poppy display on lampposts throughout the parish enhanced by a wonderful poppy display on the village green and seasonal postbox toppers provided by the Auckley WI.
- a carol singing event hosted by the Eagle and Child who provide a gazebo for the Armthorpe and Elmfield band along with excellent refreshments.
- festive lighting around the parish, unfortunately following a change in arrangements by the supplier for the erection and removal of suitable trees it was not possible to provide a tree at the Larch Avenue site, however following a request to South Yorkshire Housing to allow the parish council to arrange for the supply and planting of a permanent tree this will be undertaken later this year. Due to the planting of a suitable tree some years ago by residents in the Oak Tree Road area the tree was deemed suitable to support a lighting display and the Mulberry Park Association supported the council's proposal.

Grateful thanks are extended to Auckley WI and the Eagle and Child for their support with these very valued events.

The council has worked hard to improve the appearance of the parish and are grateful to residents who continually litter pick and it has been pleasing to see many areas litter free. It was also pleasing to note minor repairs to car parks both at the Ellers Lane and Hayfield Lane shops and the council continues to request improvements to the area in front of the Ellers Lane shops following the refurbishment of the telephone kiosk which now houses free books for residents' enjoyment. Special thanks to Councillor Warrender and resident Lee Thomson for fitting the new perspex inserts and painting the floor of the telephone box in order to minimise the cost of the refurbishment. The condition of seating on the village green has been raised with the City of Doncaster Council (CDC) with repairs/replacements urgently

requested. The council is aware that there are only a few seats around the parish and will discuss this later this year with a view to providing additional seating in suitable locations.

Following the release of over £50k worth of 'Section 106' funding by CDC which had originated from some of the first house building after the airport opened, an order has been placed to provide a set of swings, a roundabout and see-saw at Hayfield Park. Work should commence after the Easter break. Further improvements including new paths and areas of fencing at Hayfield Park will follow.

Following concerns of residents from Sandhill Rise an amount of work has been undertaken to remove vegetation that has grown adjacent to the boundaries of properties to create better access and assist the residents with the maintenance of boundary fences. Maintenance of areas of Riverside Park are ongoing including work to the copse adjacent to the car park to improve the appearance and enhance the biodiversity. The Richard Langton Memorial Garden has been restored to provide an attractive feature within the park.

There is continual communications with both the police and CDC to address concerns relating to speeding traffic which has resulted in visits from the police camera van and the issue of vehicles parking on pavements. Grateful thanks are extended to resident Ian Swainston for supporting the community speed watch initiative which finally commenced in September 2025, however in order for this to have a lasting impact further volunteers are needed to enable regular operations to be undertaken.

The new 20 mph speed limit on estate roads introduced by Doncaster Council has been welcomed. In addition, the parish council has requested the introduction of a one-way system on School Lane between its junctions with Mosham Road and Spey Drive in view of the number of cars parked outside residences along with additional vehicles at the beginning and end of the school day. Regrettably Doncaster Council is unwilling at the present time to agree to this in view of a need to prioritise areas that have a higher accident rate.

As a statutory consultee the parish council responds to all planning applications and whilst it is appreciated that new developments are often a cause for concern and individuals may not be personally in favour, the parish council has an obligation to respond objectively in accordance with planning law and the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan. The decision by CDC to refuse the application for around 350 houses off Mosham Road was welcomed as this clearly contravened both Doncaster's Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. On this basis it is hoped that there will be no appeal to the National Planning Inspectorate and if so that this will also be unsuccessful.

Any member of the public that wishes to raise any matter directly with the police can now do so at a monthly drop in at Auckley Parish Centre. The dates and times will be published in the Branton and Auckley Arrow and on the parish council's Facebook page.

The Council were delighted to have been successful in its nomination for Councillor Ronnie Dobson to attend the Royal Garden Party in recognition of her very valuable role in the production of the council's Neighbourhood Plan and for her work serving on local charity committees.

In order to ensure information is available to those that do not always have access to online communications new notice boards in both Auckley village and the Hayfield area are being sourced and liaison is taking place with CDC to agree suitable locations for free standing notice boards.

A thank you was extended to Ward councillors who have installed planters along Hayfield in order to deal with parking issues.

Finally, I would like to thank all the parish councillors for their valuable contributions over the past year for the benefit of residents, also to the Clerk who has ensured the council's decisions are fully implemented and the Site Supervisor whose role is vital in maintaining the condition of the council's parks and other land/community assets.

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| Julia Staniforth (Chairman of Auckley Parish Council)

