

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

I have the pleasure in presenting this, my first, annual report covering the work and activities of the Parish Council in the twelve months to the end of March.

I inherited the Chair following the retirement of our previous, very long standing Chairman, Peter Rhodes and I take this opportunity of recording our thanks to him for his many years of service to the Parish. Peter's retirement and the sad loss of Steve Ashton meant two vacancies for parish Councillors and I am pleased that these vacancies were filled in May last year by Dayalan Parapen and Simon Jones who have both proven to be excellent recruits. I thank them for joining us and for their work with us and I thank too the remaining members of the Council. My special thanks go to Carol Stevens both for agreeing to take on the role of Vice Chair and for undertaking the role so diligently. Our previous clerk, David Cornmell, retired during the year and I take this opportunity formally to record our thanks to him for all his hard work during his time with us. David is much missed but in his place we have been able to welcome Yvonne Eggleston into the role. I am personally very grateful to Yvonne for being willing to take us on as she brings a great deal of experience with her, experience I have already leaned upon and will doubtless continue to do so. The handover from David to Yvonne has been made much more difficult than it should have been because of the failure of Barclays Bank to respond to numerous requests to delete David's details and add Yvonne's. We have made a formal complaint which has been upheld by the bank and we have been given £25.00 by way of compensation. However, that decision, addressed to me, was sent to David's address which demonstrates that we have yet to persuade the bank of our changed circumstances. A further complaint has been made.

Turning to the work of the Parish Council, the last year has been relatively quiet in terms of contentious planning applications and while we have had concerns about how much influence the Parish Council has with the Planning Authority it is pleasing to note that more often than not the views of this Council are accepted East Riding. It is my belief that we fulfill our role in scrutinising planning applications thoroughly and voicing the views of the community we represent.

I have referred to our working relationship with East Riding and in this context I should refer to and applaud the willingness of all three of our county councillors to attend one of our meetings this year to discuss our concerns about the prolonged closure for repair of Hagg Bridge. We are well served by Councillor Leo Hammond who has taken a special interest in this parish and has proven to be very approachable when we have felt the need to involve him in parish matters. The prolonged closure of Hagg Bridge brought to sharp focus the failure of East Riding to communicate with us generally but in particular about this bridge which lies within our parish. We were dismayed to discover, repeatedly, that colleagues in neighbouring parishes were learning of news about the

bridge long before we were told. We made our views known and hopefully East Riding will now communicate directly with us about matters within our parish boundary.

Having expressed some criticism of East Riding I should, at least for balance, applaud them for the way in which we were informed about the drainage works which ran from The Elms to beyond Manor Farm and took nine weeks to complete. Officers from the Council and representatives of the contractors met with me and Carol on site and walked us through everything that they planned to do. This was helpful and much appreciated.

The only other issue of note to report is the imminent arrival of a new website for the Parish Council and new .gov.uk e-mail addresses for all councillors and our clerk. Although we are not there yet thanks must go to Simon for taking the lead on this and putting in so much time and effort in taking this forward. The new website is something we can look forward to.

Finally I will make short comment on the financial position of the Council. The approved budget and precept demand was agreed at a meeting of the Parish Council earlier this year and for the third year running we were able, through good housekeeping and financial management maintain the precept at £8800.

The major items of expenditure remain, as ever, the cost of grass cutting, our Clerk's salary, the donation to the Village Hall, insurance, maintenance of the street lighting and the cost of electricity for those street lights and the defibrillator. Credit goes to our previous Clerk for his work in reducing our electricity and insurance costs which has enabled us to weather what might otherwise have been a financial storm without putting too much pressure on our reserves. Our financial position remains healthy and I believe that we remain good custodians of what public money is entrusted to us.