

CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Covid 19 continued to restrict activities within the Council however over the course of the year, as restrictions were lifted, groups and events began returning to normal.

Parish Council meetings continued to be held remotely until June 2021 when face to face meetings resumed.

I would like to welcome Cllr Stephen Parker to the Parish Council. Mr Parker was elected in March 2022 following the resignation of John Hardman.

Wakefield Council is currently undertaking a Community Governance Review, which will review the Parish boundaries. The Parish Council submitted suggestions and the first stage for the review is now complete. The second stage is underway, further information and updates can be found on the Parish Council website.

Village Amenities

A new defibrillator has been purchased for Brackenhill. This means there are now four public access defibrillators in the village.

A new bookstore has been sited at Low Ackworth play area. This is now the permanent location for the free library setup by resident Clare Wilkinson. A new planter and seats will be installed over the coming months.

New "Ackworth" signs have been installed on the millstones at the entrances to the village. New "Welcome to Ackworth" signs are currently on order from Wakefield Council.

A colliery tub has been purchased and will be sited adjacent to Carr Bridge. This will be planted with flowers.

The installation of two additional benches for Carr Bridge playing field has been approved and they will be in place before the summer.

Local sports teams continue to use the facilities at Carr Bridge and Low Ackworth.

A Tree Hazard Assessment has been carried out on all Parish Council owned trees.

We were disappointed about acts of vandalism; we continue to work the Police, District Councillors and the community on this issue.

Village Events

It was with regret that most of the usual annual events had to be cancelled due to ongoing Covid 19 restrictions and for the safety of the community, Parish Councillors and staff.

Sunflower seeds were made available for residents to plant in their gardens.

The wildflower planting proved popular, the areas planted up did look lovely over the summer months. Additional locations have been identified for the forthcoming year.

Road Safety

The Parish Council continues to work with District Councillors, Officers of Wakefield Council and Police on road safety issues in Ackworth. As a result of this joint work, safety improvements at A628 Castlesyke Hill are scheduled although we cannot control or prevent drivers who are determined to drive dangerously.

The Parish Council continue to lobby for a safe crossing(s) on Wakefield Road and supported the recent petition submitted to Wakefield Council by a local resident.

Councillors met with Highway's Officers of Wakefield Council to review road safety issues in Ackworth.

Ackworth Cemetery

The memorial testing work has now been completed and ground anchor systems have been installed on headstones suitable for the system.

Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL)

Residents were asked to submit suggestions for projects to spend the funding on. Councillors considered the suggestions and approved a list of priorities. The Parish Council are in the process of recruiting a project and events manager to organise and deliver the various projects. Further information can be found on the Parish Council website.

Other Actions

The Parish Council has again given a donation to Boar Cottage Charity and Ackworth Pram Race.

Councillors are currently working with Wakefield Council's Youth Services and Ackworth residents to provide activities for the young people in the village.

A memorial tree was planted at Carr Bridge for retired Councillor John Evans who sadly passed away in October 2020.

The community litter pickers continue to do an amazing job keeping the village clear of litter. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated team of volunteers.

We continue to work in partnership with our District Councillors, Wakefield Council Officers, the local police, and other agencies for the benefit of the community that we represent.

Finally, I would like to thank the Councillors who put in a lot of unseen and unrecognised time in meetings and other activities for the Parish Council along with the committed team of Parish Council staff.

Sarah Balfour, Chair of Ackworth Parish Council

11 April 2022