

HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

A look at the past year in the Holme Valley



■ Cllr Trevor Bellamy Chairman, Holme Valley Parish Council

As chairman of Holme Valley Parish Council, I present to you my report for the year 2019-20.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive description of the role of chair, but more of a picture of the work we do which has not been described in the reports below from the other committee chairmen.

My first thought would be to describe the period as one of change, - quite an understatement, - with a complete change of personnel within our administration/office team, bringing new names and new faces.

Our new officers have taken on - with great enthusiasm, I am glad to say - the very many challenges of the work of the council.

Perhaps the biggest change to the Parish Council is the number of new councillors representing our Valley's towns, villages, and hamlets.

At the last election in 2019, several councillors did not seek re-election; thus we found ourselves with some nine new members. On behalf of the Parish Council, we give our thanks to those who have left, and we wel-

come the new councillors.

Many challenges faced our new council with perhaps one matter taking priority at the outset. That was an independent external review of the financial governance of Holme Valley Parish Council. This review was triggered by the council itself. This review was duly completed and a report presented on 18th October 2019.

The review found that the finances and financial governance of the Parish Council had not been compromised and we were able to return to the regular business of the council.

The chairman's duties continued over the Council year with many events to attend such as civic receptions, services, meetings of local Trusts, Peak Park Parishes management meetings, village meetings, band competitions, concerts and shows. I also had great pleasure presenting awards to deserving local people, organisations and businesses through our Tidy Trader and Community Champion Awards.

Then came the pandemic.

On the 23 March it became

illegal for meetings and gatherings to take place. This, along with the many other restrictions,

meant we had to look at alternative ways of conducting our business.

We therefore in June started online meetings on the Zoom platform, and now have a full schedule of meetings up to May 2021. The meetings will continue via Zoom for the time being but hopefully we will return to face-to-face meetings when the situation allows.

I also look forward to the time when we can resume our meetings with the Tourism Forum, with Peak Park Tourism, and those between Kirklees and Town and Parish Councils, and get things rolling again.

In any case, we will continue to promote our wonderful valley, which I have had great pleasure in serving as Chairman of the Parish Council.

■ For my term of office of Chairman, I have decided to make donations from the Chairman's Charity Fund to two very different community groups. I wanted expressly to honour only local groups working across the Holme Valley.

The first community group I want to acknowledge is the Food Bank connected to the Full Life Church, Thongsbridge. One

of the worst side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been its economic impact. I have been especially concerned by headlines in the press regarding families, children and young people facing hardship, - even going without food, - during the schools summer holidays. With this in mind, I want to draw attention to the work of the Full Life Church Food Bank and Pastor Ian Gooch in assisting over 200 families through economic hardship brought on by the pandemic. I hate to think how these families would have survived without the interventions of the Food Bank. I hope my donation will help some families to get through these difficult times.

The second community project I wish to make a donation to is Square Peg. Square Peg is a social networking group that reaches out especially to people who are lonely, to those whose social interactions and opportunities are hampered by mental illness, anxiety, a physical or learning disability, but also to those who simply feel as if they don't 'fit in' to other local social groups.

Before the pandemic, the group met weekly in Holmbridge and engaged in activities like table top games, boccia, quizzes and bingo



CHAIRMAN: Cllr Trevor Bellamy and trips out. Square Peg also lobbied to make the Holme Valley a more accessible destination for people with disabilities.

I hope, once the pandemic is under control, that Square Peg and its founder Richard Ford, will be back to doing the important work they did before everything was derailed by COVID, and hope that my donation will do a little bit of good for some people in the Holme Valley.

'Affordable housing is a priority for councillors'

■ Cllr Judith Roberts, Chairman, Planning Committee

Hello, and welcome once again to my report on Planning. It has been a strange year with lockdown stopping building projects across the valley. Then, when construction was able to restart, materials were difficult to source! This brings me to the topic of the building of new homes within our villages and hamlets.

Whilst the government has committed to delivering new homes to meet the demands of the country's growing population, on the Planning Committee, we have always taken into consideration where housing developments are to be situated in our valley.

The small villages of the Holme Valley were created when horse-and-cart was the mode of transport -not motorised vehicles -and it was safe for children to walk to the local village school. But we have had to move with the times.

The expansion of our villages has put enormous strain on our centuries-old country roads, on sewers which were built many, many years ago, and on an ageing electricity infrastructure. These all need upgrading. Furthermore, we need to insure that internet provision is available to even our more isolated communities.

As the first tier of government, we on the Parish Council Planning Committee try to give validated reasons for either supporting or objecting to local planning applications.

As Parish Ward Councillors,

we endeavour to have a good knowledge of our area, to point out the potential pitfalls of projects through our local awareness, and hope that Kirklees Planning Officers will take our comments on board.

The safeguarding of our Green Belt land is paramount. However, it is slowly being eroded away.

Housing developments are getting larger, and housing scheme project managers don't always fully consider the impact of developments on local infrastructures, on schools, transport services, doctors and so on.

The wider impact must be factored in when we consider planning applications. Let us hope when we get our Neighbourhood Plan completed and up and running that it will let our Planning Committee have more say on what is built across the Holme Valley.

One thing that is particularly important to me and to Committee members is to insure we have adequate affordable housing being built in our local areas.

We also need to make sure that employment opportunities within the valley are promoted by our encouraging local business applications.

Otherwise, the positive benefits of having a home in lovely rural surroundings would be outweighed by having to commute to towns and cities outside of the Holme Valley for employment with the accompanying impact on the environment. We want people to have opportunities to live and work in our Holme Valley.

Committee is focused on moving forward in next year

■ Report from the Chairman of the Climate Emergency Committee Cllr Paul Davies

THE issue of the Climate Emergency has been one that the Parish Council has put a great deal of focus and work into over the last year. It was on 25th March 2019 that the Council passed a motion declaring the emergency and committing the Council to developing an action plan to move the Holme Valley to being carbon neutral by 2030. Shortly after this, a steering group was set up to drive this forward involving key partners and community groups in the Valley. In October 2019, we organised an event which gave residents of the Valley a chance to contribute to the

action plan. This was very successful and provided us with invaluable insights into how the local community felt about this issue. Following this event and the completion of the action plan the Council not only approved the plan but agreed to establish a Climate Emergency Standing Committee.

This committee is made of parish councillors and co-opted members of the community.

A budget was approved for the Committee to enable it to publish the Holme Valley Parish Council Climate Emergency Action Plan. This was done and this publication has been used to communicate the action plan to the wider community. A number

of subgroups were set up in order to move the action plan forward. These were: Climate Emergency Mobilisation, Energy, Transport and Travel, Agriculture and Food, Housing and Infrastructure, Economy and Business, Waste and Resources, Environment and Land Use. To help implement the plans in each of these areas it was agreed to recruit a Climate Emergency Coordinator.

However COVID-19 intervened but the Committee did not stand still and work continued in each of the subgroups and plans were agreed on how to progress during the lockdown period. The Committee is really focused on moving things forward over the year ahead.

Grants Awarded		Date of Award	Amount
Organisation / Body - Specific purpose of grant			
Holmfirth Artweek - general donation		Apr 2019	£20.00
St David's Church - clock service		Jun 2019	£225.00
Honley Church Organ Fund - renovation of organ		Sep 2019	£1000.00
Honley Village Community Trust - manufacture and installation of Honley WWI Memorial Seat		June 2019	£1714.50
Thongsbridge Cricket Club - development of pavillion		June 2019	£12,000.00
Honley Library - electrical survey		June 2019	£287.00
Honley Business Association - Honley Youth Club		Aug 2019	£1000.00
Honley Business Association - Honley Christmas Lights		Aug 2019	£1000.00
Sharing Memories - Museum of Curiosities Open Day		Sep 2019	£1000.00
Holmfirth Arts Festival - funding towards the festival parade		Nov 2019	£1000.00
Holmfirth Arts Festival - venue hire		Nov 2019	£500.00
Festival of Folk - parade road closure costs		Nov 2019	£1000.00
Holme Valley Lions - 'Message in a Bottle' scheme		Nov 2019	£1000.00
Holmfirth Civic Hall - Christmas Lights		Nov 2019	£500.00
Holmfirth Tech - towards purchase of the building and renovation works		Dec 2019	£25,000.00
Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust - office / toilets development		Dec 2019	£30,000.00
Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust - fire escape development		Dec 2019	£10,000.00
Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust - grant for architect's work		Dec 2019	£1350.00
Stott's Buses - Holme Valley Minibus Service		Monthly	£23205.00
Holme Valley Transport Scheme - Patient transport		Jan 2020	£1000.00
Holmepride - gardening/disabled access at Nabbs School		Jan 2020	£800.00
Holmfirth Scouts - training for adventure scout going to Canada		Jan 2020	£340.00
Holmfirth WI "Pratty Flowers" - VE Day Commemorations		Jan 2020	£90.00
Friends of Cliff Rec - VE Day Commemorations (held over)		Jan 2020	£200.00
Honley Village Community Trust - VE Day Commemorations (held over)		Jan 2020	£200.00
Netherthong Primary School - Tour De Yorkshire display (held over)		Jan 2020	£150.00
Hade Edge School - Tour De Yorkshire display (held over)		Jan 2020	£150.00
			£114,731.50

Councillor Contacts 2019-20			
Ward	Name	Email	Tel.
Brockholes	Michael Pogson	clrmichaelpogson@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07927 668327
Fulstone	Donald Firth	clrdonaldfirth@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 683735
Fulstone	Di Hall	clrdihall@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 686488
Hepworth	Thomas Dixon	clrtomdixon@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07725 698860
Holmfirth Central	Glyn Barker	clrglynbarker@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07962 461099
Holmfirth Central	Rachel Hogley	cllrachelhogley@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07970 475806
Honley Central & East	Pat Colling	cllrpatcolling@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 663214
Honley Central & East	Ben Lockley	cllrbenlockley@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07729 498385
Honley Central & East	Sarah Sheard	clrsarahsheard@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	
Honley South	Joe Sweeney	cllrjoesweeney@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	
Honley West	Charles Greaves	cllricharlesgreaves@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07888 698245
Honley West	Sean East	cllrseaneast@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07736 940326
Netherthong	Judith Roberts	cllrjudithroberts@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 684930
Netherthong	James Dalton		07784 284661
Scholes	Paul Dixon		01484 685928
Scholes	Mary Blacka	cllrmarylblacka@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07908 074167 / 01484 686799
Upper Holme Valley	Kath Bellamy	cllrkathbellamy@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 683147
Upper Holme Valley	Trevor Bellamy		01484 683147
Upperthong	Duggs Carré	cllrdduggscarre@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07973 961159
Upperthong	Bernie Feeney	cllrberniefeeney@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	07963 247054
Wooddale	Jason Brook	cllrjasonbrook@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01484 688790
Wooddale	Paul Davies	cllrpauldaves@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	
Wooddale	Darryl Gould	cllrdarrylgould@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	01543 016668

Businesses have been working hard to serve community

■ Report from the Chairman of the Publications and Communications Committee Cllr Rachel Hogley
THIS year has of course ended in a most unexpected way as our community has had to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our regular events and festivals which the Parish Council often has the pleasure to support have been postponed or cancelled.

Unfortunately events we supported to mark both Tour de Yorkshire and VE Day celebrations were unable to go ahead but we were pleased to hear of several celebrations moving on-line with the Women's Institute hosting a virtual tea-party for VE Day and Holmfirth Arts Festival planning on-line access to a range of events in September.

Earlier in the year, we enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate our excellent local businesses that take particular pride in their external appearance through our Tidy Trader Award.

Gold Awards winners were Taylors Foodstore in Honley and Devour in Thongsbridge with Silver Awards given to Brindon Addy's Butchers, Hade Edge; Aldi, Thongsbridge; Catch Seafood, Holmfirth; and Fair Trader in Holmfirth.

We know many businesses have worked particularly hard to serve the community over the recent months of lockdown and would like to thank them all and encourage you to shop local as they gradually return to normal business.

Another highlight is celebrating our Community Champions,

who are individuals or groups who selflessly work to make our valley a great place through a range of different activities.

The four worthy winners were: Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust, for their tireless work to secure the future of the Civic Hall and develop it into a sustainable community building; Honley Village Community Trust, for their considerable work over the last 26 years to help keep Honley special through a range of volunteer-led projects; New Mill Post Office, which despite the catastrophic impact of criminals blowing up their cash machine in May 2019, managed to reopen a temporary shop the next day ensuring that they could continue to offer their much valued service to the local community; and Ian Roberts & Sheila Sutton, who run The Nook pub, for their wonderful contribution to Holmfirth through their support of events including the Festival of Folk and Food & Drink Festival.

Both before and during the pandemic, the Valley has once again excelled itself with its community spirit with neighbours helping each other and volunteers coordinating local support for the most vulnerable.

The Committee hopes that our regular news column in the Holme Valley Review, Facebook page and website keeps residents informed on how the Parish Council is working with you to help our community go from strength to strength, whatever challenges it faces both now and in the future.

New clerks are settling in well

■ Report from the Chairman of the Staffing Committee Cllr Di Hall
THE Council said goodbye to their long-standing Clerk in early 2019 and also to their Administrative Assistant in February 2019.

The council would like to thank them both for their hard work and commitment to the council.

We started the new Council Year with a locum clerk for 6 months and then continued the rest of the year with a new Clerk and, soon after, a new Deputy Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

Both of these Clerks are new to this work, have survived a turbulent year, and at the same time reviewed and improved the financial and procedural workings of this large and busy council. My thanks go to them both for their hard work and dedication, enabling the Council to carry on as usual over the

past 10 months.

I would also like to thank the maintenance contractor and his team for their continuing work in looking after the council's assets, - its benches, shelters, phone boxes, war memorials and public toilets.

We look forward to appointing a new part-time Climate Emergency Co-ordinator in the next few months, to add to the staff team.

The clerks and councillors have all embraced the new webinar training from the Yorkshire Association for Local Councils (Y.L.C.A) as well as attending training days in person and receiving 'in-house', tailored training from the Y.L.C.A. in regard to policy and procedures.

The Council is in a good position going into the new year despite the hiatus caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and looks likely to be busier than ever in responding to the new conditions we all find ourselves in.

Prudence is keeping excessive spending to a limit

■ Report from the Chairman of the Finance and Management Committee Cllr RP Dixon
THE last year has been challenging to all. Until lockdown, the committee meetings were held every six weeks. But now, since June, all meetings are conducted virtually using Zoom. I feel that these are not as positive as live meetings, but it is the best we can do as circumstances allow.

We have appointed a new Deputy Clerk, Richard McGill, who is also our Responsible Finance Officer.

Various grants were

awarded during the first part of the year, though no grants were awarded during lockdown.

The Committee continues to support the valley and agreed to no uplift to the budget or charges to householders this year. I hope all Valley residents feel that prudence on my part helps to keep excessive spending to a limit, and hope that my successor will carry on down the same path.

With less spending during the COVID-19 pandemic, my hope is that we may be able to reduce the budget for next year.

Holme Valley Parish Council Income and Expenditure as of 31st March 2020		
	2018 - 19	2018 - 20
Opening Balances	£212,468.66	£224,724.04
Receipts		
Precept	£224,132.40	£274,970.00
Income	£37,041.77	£6,886.72
Total Receipts	£261,174.17	£281,856.72
TOTAL	£473,642.83	£506,580.76
Payments		
Civic Governance	£12,718.46	£16,584.27
Consultation and Communications	£17,324.18	£8,313.60
Civic Governance	£88,919.80	£71,575.13
Environment, Highways & Transport	£52,955.56	£50,848.69
Arts and Recreation	£77,068.22	£85,229.61
Planning	£0.00	£4,879.40
VAT reclaim	-£67.43	£0.00
Total Payments	£248,918.79	£237,430.70
Closing balances	£224,724.04	£269,150.06
Earmarked Reserves	£161,657.00	£161,657.00
General Reserves	£63,067.04	£107,493.06
	£224,724.04	£269,150.06

For ease of understanding, the Precept is money raised through local taxation. Other income is raised through tenancies, bank interest and from donations in the Holmfirth public toilets. With regard to money the Council spends, Civic Governance relates to costs to do with the election of Members. Consultation and Communications are costs relating to communicating with residents of the Holme Valley. Corporate Governance covers costs relating to administration and staffing. Environment, Highways and Transport are costs relating to the Holme Valley Minibus, bus shelters, and environmental projects (including the Holmfirth public toilets). Arts and Recreation are costs relating to community asset transfers, maintenance and support, play areas, grants and other art projects. Planning relates to costs concerned with the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The accounts are subject to audit, and are available for public view. Full details of the accounts are accessible from the homepage of the Parish Council's website and from the Council office. The website will be updated once the external audit has been completed. Financial information from previous years is also provided on the website.

New members have brought fresh ideas to council

■ Report from the Chairman of the Community Assets Support Committee Cllr Tom Dixon

The CASC committee has continued to support community assets throughout the Valley over the last council year. Substantial grants have been given to projects involving Thongsbridge Cricket Club, Holmfirth Tech, Wooldale Community Association, Upperthong Village Hall, River Holme Connections, Brockholes Village Hall and Holmbridge Cricket Club.

The grant towards Holmfirth Tech was to aid the purchase of the building from Kirklees College which has recently completed. I hope that CASC can continue to work with

the Tech in future years to make the building a big success and an asset to the valley.

Additionally, we have continued to work with Honley Library Trust regarding the community asset transfer of Honley Library from Kirklees to the Parish Council.

We are hopeful that the transfer will be complete in the coming months and that the library will be able to reopen safely. I have continued to be very impressed and inspired by the hard work put in by members of Honley Library Trust and wish them every success in the future.

The Committee continues to work with Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust and has provided funding towards

works planned on the hall. Before the current Covid-19 crisis the Civic Hall was busier than ever and very successful. I am hopeful that after the pandemic this will continue.

The public conveniences in Holmfirth continue to be managed by the committee and a tenant has been found for the space formerly occupied by the gentleman's toilets.

I feel this is a better use of the space and will provide better value for money for the valley residents in future.

The toilets were closed for a few months during the pandemic but have now partly reopened with covid-19 safe protocols in place. Please follow the advice in the toilets during the phased reopening.

In the year April 2019

to April 2020 CASC made grants totalling £77,000 out of a total of £111,000 given overall by the Parish Council.

At the beginning of this year (June 2020) CASC gave grants totalling £22,000 and is now planning ahead to help community groups, especially with the hardships that are likely, following the Covid-19 pandemic.

I would personally like to thank my vice chair Sean East, all members of the committee, council clerk and deputy clerk for their hard work and contributions to the meetings.

Many members were new to the committee at the beginning of the council year but have impressed with their new ways of thinking and fresh ideas for the committee.

Google map of council's assets will come in useful..

■ Report from the Chairman, Service Provision Committee, Cllr Michael Pogson
I AM sure we can all agree that the year 2019/2020 has been quite eventful for most people and that would also apply to the Service Provision Committee.

First, I would very much like to thank our previous Chair Cllr Kath Bellamy for all her help and support in handing over, and her continued support as Vice Chair. We also welcomed several new Councillors onto the Committee who along with the standing members have done a fantastic job.

We have had members of the public and representatives of local organisations attending and addressing several meetings and the Committee has received and responded to requests for grants for many diverse uses and activities. We were visited by a representative of West Yorkshire Metro who provided those present with a summary of

the local bus services and how the Parish Council's contribution goes to supporting the ongoing provision of the much-valued minibus service.

I would like to thank those Cllrs who went out of their way to survey the many assets including seat and shelters spread out across the parish area. I would also like to express special thanks to Keith Fermor for his work in creating a Google Map of the Parish Council's assets which I am sure will be a fantastic aid to the Council over future years. I would like to express our thanks to John Ford and his team for their continued work in maintaining the Council's Assets including benches, shelters, phone boxes and the public toilets in Holmfirth.

Grants for Christmas Provision and Christmas Trees continue to support the efforts of communities of the Holme Valley in making this a special time of year and last year included funds to illuminate both the Civic Hall and the Holmfirth

Tech Building which looked very impressive and festive. The committee made grants totalling over £32,000 last year.

Along with the above and all the other matters that this committee deals with I am most proud that at the last Council Budget the Service Provision Committee managed to secure an increase in the Youth Provision budget from £1,000 to £5,000. Unfortunately due to the Covid 19 crisis and associated restrictions the planned engagement with community groups working with young people has not progressed as much as I would have liked, however I am hoping to progress this over the next 6 months and hope to report back with some great outcomes for our young people. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Liz Bennett and Rich McGill for the support that they have provided this Committee over the last year it really is greatly appreciated.