

Rudby Parish Council: Chairman's Report to Annual Assembly – April 2025

This is my Chairman's report on the third year of the current council's five years term of office which started from the May 2022 elections. It is my 4th annual report as Chairman.

I am pleased to be able to report that currently the council is at full strength with no vacancies. At the time of the last annual assembly, the council had one vacancy which was filled shortly afterwards by the co-option of Cllr Bragg. During the year Cllrs Horvath and Titterton resigned and were replaced by Cllrs Bury and Webster.

I would like to start by thanking the retiring councillors for their service, to welcome the new members to the council, and to thank everyone who expressed interest when there have been vacancies. The council cannot co-opt more candidates than there are vacancies, but the willingness of members of this community to come forward and offer their time and skills is greatly appreciated.

Our Parish Clerk, Hilary Cope-Graham, joined the council shortly before the last annual assembly, so she has only recently reached the end of her first full annual cycle of council business. The clerk is at the heart of everything the council does, and it is a varied and challenging role. On behalf of the council, I would like to thank Hilary for her excellent service to the council. There was a seamless transition between Emma and Hilary, and Hilary has successfully completed various administrative improvements initiated by her predecessor. Following the resignation of Cllr Horvath, Hilary accepted the additional responsibilities of being the council's RFO. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to particularly thank Hilary for stepping up at a time of need.

The council's finances remained in good order throughout the year. Improvements to budgeting and financial monitoring processes initiated by Cllr Horvath have been progressed further since her resignation. These give the council a clearer view on its current situation and future financial needs. While the council has healthy financial reserves, these are mostly allocated to projects which the Parish Council intends to move forward, so it was not considered sustainable to absorb inflation and there is once again an increase in the precept for 2025/26.

The council is grateful to the many volunteers who have worked with the council on a variety of activities and projects including organising the village event, providing help and equipment needed to put up the Christmas tree and lights, participation in the litter pick, and for work on footpaths and environmental projects.

Once again, a full programme of activities was carried out. A successful but slightly damp Village Event was attended this year by our MP, Rishi Sunak (prime minister at the time). The fireworks event continues to be very popular and generous donations from the community collected at the gate have once again covered all the costs of the event. I would like to thank the cricket club and the cricket club bar staff for their help in hosting and running the event.

Unfortunately, there is still no sign of substantive progress on the approved development for 25 homes on the north side of Garbutt Lane. The site was recently put up for sale by Broadacres who hold the development rights.

The long running saga of the planning application for 50 homes at Paddocks End moved forward in October 2024 when a North Yorkshire Council planning committee decided that it was "minded to approve" the application. The decision is subject to various planning conditions being incorporated into a Section 106 agreement. Permission will not take effect until the S106 agreement is completed.

The Parish Council spoke at the meeting taking the position of opposing the proposal mainly on the grounds that the Parish Council's preference was for a similar but smaller development on the site. However, the Parish Council, is pleased that a decision has finally been made because it means that the "road block" on progressing the Neighbourhood Plan has cleared.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan has restarted. The Parish Council hopes to make substantial progress and complete it before the next Annual Assembly. The new North Yorkshire Local Plan being in preparation gives an added incentive to complete the Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

As we enter the 2025/26 council year, the boundary review for North Yorkshire Council is well under way. The purpose of the review is to create new arrangements of divisions such that each North Yorkshire Councillor serves approximately the same number of electors. The Parish Council made a submission aimed at ensuring that the new boundaries kept all of our Parish within one division (submissions from NYC and others proposed splitting our Parish across two divisions). I am pleased to report that the Boundary Commission has supported our proposal in preference to NYC's proposed arrangement. There is still one more stage of the process to be completed.

The routine work of the Parish Council includes dealing with issues raised through correspondence and at meetings, and the care and maintenance of public land in the village. Please write to the council via the clerk or come and share your views at a meeting if there is something you think the Parish Council could or should be doing. Parish Council meetings are open to the public, and there is always an agenda item where residents can raise issues they want to bring to the council's attention.

In the last year hundreds of items of correspondence were considered and the council commented on dozens of planning applications. Recently, the Parish Council spoke a licensing hearing to ensure that residents' concerns about the proposed late opening hours were given proper consideration in the decision.

Finally, I want to thank all my fellow Councillors for being available, responsive, and willing to lead or participate in a range of recurring and one-off project activities to support the parish over the year. The council could not operate effectively without their commitment of time, energy, and enthusiasm for trying to make the Parish a better place for us all.

Kind Regards and a safe and prosperous 2025/26 to all residents of our Parish.

Allan Mortimer
Chairman