

Outgoing Chair of Harringworth Parish Council: Annual Report to Parish Meeting – 2024/25

The Parish Council (PC) held six scheduled meetings. Much of the business was routine although there are a few items that deserve highlighting in my annual report.

Dealing with the planning department at North Northants Council continued to be a frustrating and time-consuming process. Too often the PC are given short notice of applications and the associated deadline for response, whilst they then prevaricate for months or even a year or more before reaching a decision. For over 12 months the parish council have repeatedly been chasing the planning department for an update on the planning application relating to the White Swan, which was submitted in December 2023. Despite numerous requests for updates the planning department are now not even replying to emails from our Clerk. At the time of writing the Clerk is making a formal complaint about the performance of the planning department.

Highways are another area of frustration with road repairs only taking place once a pothole is considered sufficiently deep enough to call for an emergency repair. On the positive side Highways finally erected a Give Way sign at the end of Deene Road at the junction by the Cross; it only took 2 ½ years to achieve – result!

Work has now started to extend the burial ground, with clearance work already underway. Our thanks go to Rupert Conant for helping facilitate this clearance and to Councillor Keith Dove for his part in planning the necessary work.

The poor state of repair of Turtle Bridge has finally received some attention although more work is still required. The highways department have confirmed that they have secured funding for its repair and hope that work will start in the summer once planning consent had been received. The brick parapets will be reinstated, and the bridge will be repointed and repaired.

We were delighted when our new MP Mr Lee Barron agreed to attend our parish council meeting in September but were then disappointed that on the day of the meeting he cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Even more disappointing was that he did not inform the Police who unknowingly sent a PCSO along to the meeting – for no reason.

In December and January, the drain from the water trough at the bottom of Deene Road was reported as blocked causing the trough to overflow and cause a road hazard. The North Northants highways representative claimed that responsibility lay with the residents of the adjoining property but after intervention by the PC, highways accepted that they were responsible and finally carried out the necessary drain clearance.

In March there were several complaints from residents about rubbish bins being rejected or not being collected at all. In some cases, it was proven that no incorrect items had been put in the rejected bin. Whilst it is up to the individual householder to contact Waste Services if they have an issue with their bin collection, the PC nonetheless made a formal complaint about the service levels in our village.

At the March meeting of the PC, I along with three other councillors announced our intention to stand down and not seek re-election at the forthcoming local elections in May. I am delighted to report that four new parishioners, together with the three remaining PC members put themselves forward to stand for election to the PC. As this number matched the number of councillor vacancies for our parish all were elected unopposed. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all the previous councillors who contributed so much of their time in support of the council and our parishioners.

I finish my report with a plea. If you have a concern about what is happening in our village please do first look at the Parish Council section of the village website and read the minutes of the meetings; you may just find the answer there. If not then don't just grumble amongst your friends but contact one of the councillors and put your concern to them, or even better come along to a PC meeting where the first 10 minutes is dedicated to parishioners to raise any concerns they have.

It has been a privilege to serve our community first as a councillor and then as Chair. But it is important that the PC is refreshed every so often with fresh minds and energy. I will look back fondly on my time as a councillor and offer our new councillors my best wishes and support as they take on their new civic duties.

Andrew White
Chair Harringworth Parish Council
1st May 2025