

Chair of Harringworth Parish Council: Annual Report to Parish Meeting – 2025/26

The Parish Council (PC) year started in May 25 with several new councillors following an uncontested election for the 7 positions. After the election we had 6 councillors- 3 existing myself, Frank Walsh and Keith Dove and three new ones Harry Boon, Phillippa Gasson and Tom Wade. During the year Richard Wade kindly agreed to be co-opted onto the council to bring us up to full strength of 7. As usual much of the business was routine but here are a few of the highlights.

I found myself back as Chair after a very successful innings over several years by Andy White. This year we continue with the benefits of several of the admin changes put in place under his stewardship.

We faced the usual challenges of dealing with both the Highways Dept. at NNC and their Planning Dept. This year we have been supported in our efforts to get any response from them by our new Oundle ward councillor for NNC, Simon Fairhall, who has regularly attended our PC meetings. However, on several occasions even Simon has failed to get replies from them.

“What are you doing about the potholes?” asked Tony one of our newer Harringworth residents the first time he met me. As a parish council we have spent a lot of time reporting potholes on either the Fix My Street website or directly on the NNC Highways site. But remember this is a game for all the family. Any resident can report bad potholes that need fixing not just councillors or the Clerk and I would encourage all of you to do so. It often helps if you also upload photos to show the severity of the problem and the exact location. Don't forget the more people who report the bad ones the greater the chance of something being done about them. For anyone needing help with this please contact our pothole guru Cllr Richard Wade.

New planning applications in the last 12 months have been relatively few in number and quite straightforward. Most of the applications have actually been for tree works. Two long running applications are still awaiting resolution. The first is the White Swan, submitted in December 2023. The parish council has enquired about progress on several occasions but it is only recently we have had any response. At the same time as informing us that he is actually leaving the relatively new senior planning officer at NNC told us on 16th March 26 NNC that *“The applicant is preparing amended information for our conservation officer to consider; the Council will then consider how best to proceed to a decision.”*

The other longstanding application which was also mentioned last year was the repair work required to Turtle Bridge. A comprehensive package of work has been agreed and received full planning permission. Although we believe funding is in place we are still waiting for the work to start. Fingers crossed for this summer.

As stated earlier, the Highways department continues to be a major area of frustration. Apart from the major snail's pace inactivity on potholes this year it is also their inability to fix things they have previously accepted as their responsibility and

have fixed before. For a second year in a row Highways have so far refused to act on the blocked overflow pipe from the water trough. Reported in October 25 we are still waiting for a replacement pipe to the storm drain to be fitted. Although no accidents occurred due to freezing over the winter months, the constant flow of water to the junction of Seaton Road and Wakerley Road has contributed greatly to the enlarged potholes near the junction.

On the positive side Highways did manage to clear the gullies under the Seaton Road in December. This has definitely improved the water flow under the road reducing the amount of flooding across the road as the water disperses more quickly. They have also now finally painted the give way markings on the Laxton Road junction.

As many of you will remember, last year there was a near fatal accident involving a Harringworth resident at the junction of Morcott Road and Seaton Road across the border in Rutland. Usually, Rutland Council are very quick to respond to comments from us but it was only after extensive lobbying by parish councillors, the clerk and various members of the village that white lines were eventually repainted to make the Give Way junction safer. "Well done" to everyone involved in making that happen.

Work is now nearly completed on the new extension to the burial ground with new boundary fencing in place and only some weed treatment and grass seed sowing outstanding. Thanks to Cllrs Dove, Walsh and Boon for making this happen so smoothly and within budget. Other work completed in the churchyard included the very careful removal of a large, and rather dead, silver birch tree without damaging the headstones below. At the same time several other churchyard trees were pruned and maintained.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow councillors for their support over the last 12 months and also to the excellent work undertaken by our parish clerk, Joey, who has kept us all on the straight and narrow.

Finally, I would like to remind all residents of the village that they are very welcome to attend our PC meetings where the first 10 minutes is dedicated to parishioners to address the council with any concerns or questions they may have.

Simon McLean
Chair Harringworth Parish Council
23rd April 2026