

Chairman's Report 13th May 2025

Sadly the main event of the year was that our village flooded again in early January bringing devastation & heartache as it was far more ferocious than the flooding 2024. Water impacted badly on several of our roads and flooded 15 properties, 13 of which were in Folkingham Rd. This road was inaccessible by car or foot until the 8th. As in last year's flooding, the water came fast and furious and it was only thanks to the volunteers who braved the weather to help rescue those stranded that everyone was removed to safety & many houses were sandbagged to help keep out the water. Over the following days many volunteers helped clean & clear a flooded property, dig out ditches and clear drains. To those volunteers I say a massive **thank you!** I'd also like to thank Wayne who has since acquired a container on the WWL site to store sandbags & other equipment & recruited volunteers to help should such a tragedy occur again. Unfortunately our sandbags were stored on the farm on Folkingham Rd, so were inaccessible, our new supplies are now stored in the container. I'd also like to thank those that swiftly set up a flood committee to liaise with the various responsible authorities & organised an open meeting that was not only attended by our villagers but by many from adjoining villages & attracted TV & Newspaper coverage. They are still working with the various agencies to identify the cause of the flooding & look at ways to prevent a similar situation occurring again. We have just received the reports from the EA as to their findings & conclusions as to the cause of the flooding. These reports will be published in full on our website. The reports have also been given to the section 19 investigators, whose report should be out in late May. They flood committee are also working with SKDC to help identify the various drainage systems within our boundaries, to enable them to develop a map identifying which authority is responsible for which drain. This is something we've been trying to achieve for several years now, so it will brilliant if they can succeed in doing this. Though we took steps following the flooding of 2024 to set up an emergency response team, volunteers were thin on the ground, so unfortunately it never came to fruition. However; this is still our goal and to help us achieve this, we have organised a training event with Lincs Fire & Rescue on 11th June from 6pm to 8pm, in the village hall. So why not come along & see what it's all about? Our goal is to work collaboratively with adjoining villages' emergency response teams and Wayne's

group, which should ensure that we have a strong response system in place to deal with any future emergencies - which hopefully we will not have!

Our total income for the year was **£44,919.96** including our precept of **£17,750**. Our total expenditure was **£38,785.34 net of VAT**. As always we did our utmost to ensure that the budget, i.e. **YOUR** money was used wisely and appropriately and that any expenditure offered best value. Our expenditure for the year was mainly on day to day running costs and maintenance & our only capital expenditure was the purchase of a grit bin for the recreation ground. As usual our full accounts can be viewed on our website.

So what are the main things we've been doing? - We've continued to pressure LCC re the state of our footpaths - but despite reassurances that this would happen soon, to date we've received no indication as to when. We will of course continue to strive to achieve this goal. We acquired a free portrait of King Charles III, which can be viewed in our church, we've been liaising with Call Connect re the installation of two bus stops, we've continued to try to recruit a school traffic attendant but unfortunately no one has applied for the role. It will be so sad if we lost this funding, as it took a lot of time & hard work to secure it. In response to public opinion we decided not to cease the hardcopy of our newsletter. Following the successful registration of our Recreation Ground with Land Registry, we've initiated the registration of all our other land. As it was difficult to recruit volunteers for our community speed watch programme, we voted to cease the scheme & sell all our equipment, which gave us a return in the region of our initial outlay. We persistently liaised with Crown Estate (CE) re the abysmal & unsafe state of the boundary fencing around the paddock on Low/Chapel St, which eventually resulted in two thirds of it being repaired. We understand that the remainder will be repaired later this year. We commissioned a plaque to recognise our late Queen & the trees donated by CE; this should be in place very soon. We'd still like to see EVP's in our village, though despite initial conversation with SKDC to have them installed, to date we've not had any indication as to when this will be. We will of course continue to pursue this aim. In response to a public request we facilitated a public meeting to look at the future of the Fortescue Arms, from which a village committee was formed to look at registering it as a building of public interest. The volunteer labour we secured from LCC painted parts of the recreation ground & cleared weeds along Church St & the Scouts kindly washed our

recreation ground play equipment for us. Unfortunately our funding bid for a three day free pop up art event in the village in September 24 was unsuccessful. We did however successfully secure funding for a wild flower patch, which is situated in the far north eastern coned of the recreation ground.

Progress re the development of the old Aveland School site remains at a standstill, however; following discussions with LCC they have now taken over responsibility for cutting the Aveland field & we are currently in discussions with them via Cllr Martin Hill OBE, re a possible refund of the cost for all the grass cutting we have paid for over the last 8 years.

We have put plans to develop the rear cemetery field on hold for three years but we are still working towards changing the front gates & fencing during 25/26 and we are currently obtaining quotes for this work.

We are still exploring the viability of installing a five side facility at the recreation ground. Once we have any firm plans/quotes regarding this, we will seek your opinion & will look for funding.

Moving forward it is our intention to look for funding where possible for any future repairs/maintenance or capital expenditure.

Our biggest problem continues to be dog walkers who don't clean up after their dogs! As usual it's the irresponsible few who just don't care, unfortunately; pleading to their better nature or threatening sanctions just doesn't work. So we ask if you have any suggestion as how to address/resolve this please let us know.

We should be a Council of nine, though we started the year with only three which made tackling the work very hard at times and frustratingly meant having to cancel meetings when we weren't quorate. Fortunately we are now seven, as Judith, Helen, Julie & Andy have joined us. I'd like to take this opportunity to say a **big thank you** to them all for all their hard work and dedication and to you I say why not consider **joining us - as we have 2 vacancies?** Mull it over - it's your opportunity to help shape your village!

Lots of people kindly volunteer to make the village the wonderful place it is so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank:-

Andrew, Annette, Dave & Judith for looking after our village entry planters.

Mr Chapman – for storing our and bags.

Dave – our unofficial odd job man.

All those that help in our church **Trevor** for stepping up to be Church Warden, **Georgina** for looking after the finances, **Judith & Kim** for the brass cleaning, **Karen** for her amazing floral displays, **Rebecca** for winding up the clock, **Charlotte** for captaining the bell ringers, **Kevin** for odd jobs & churchyard tidying, **Rex & Angie** for looking after the boarders and anyone else that quietly contributes.

BAGS – for managing the allotments on our behalf.

The **Cricket Club** for providing a sporting opportunity within the village and lending a hand to the Council with odd jobs.

The **Village Hall Committee** for managing the hall and working diligently to raise funds to maintain and improve it and for organising events that foster community cohesion.

BATS – for keeping us entertained, while raising funds for the village hall.

The **Community Gym committee** for managing the gym and ensuring it's continued viability.

All that help deliver the weekly '**Pop in Too**' coffee/lunch session.

Linkwell – whose volunteers provide assistance to those who may at times need a little extra help.

The **Scouts** and the **Army Cadets** for providing the opportunity for our young people to explore and experience different things.

We are very fortunate to have so many amazing people that give their time for the benefit of our community? Truly unsung heroes!

My thanks and appreciation for all their hard work also goes to **Kim** our dedicated community village cleaner, **Mark** our recreation ground caretaker, to **Jane** and **Jon** our cemetery caretaking team and to **Karen** our Spring Wells angel. All of whom do an incredible job! **Thank You!!**

Finally but certainly not least, I pay tribute our **Clerk and RFO Hayley** who goes above and beyond her job description to ensure that the council runs smoothly

and the village gets best value. How she effortlessly deals with the increasing red tape that bombards her, is a miracle. **Thanks Hayley you're a star!**

My closing words are as always to remind you that this is your village so please do let us know what you'd like to see being developed or initiated, what we could do better or what we've done well. We are your representatives, here to serve you and will always endeavour to do our best for you. However; we can't change or do something if we don't know about it, so please do let us know your ideas and opinions. ***They are always welcome!***

Chris Woodhead Chairman