

Chairman's Report 13th May 2026

It's my pleasure to present my report and reflect on what has been another productive & purposeful year for our Parish Council, whose aim is to always work to maintain and improve our community. Thankfully it was a year free from flooding like we experienced in January 2025 that caused so much devastation and heartache.

The flooding of January 25 highlighted problems and deficits in our drainage systems and while there is still work to be done to fully address these, it's been amazing to see the progress that's already been made and continues to be made by Billingborough Flood Group (BFG) in addressing these issues. So thanks go to them for their dedication, continued hard work and commitment in liaising with the relevant agencies and authorities to address these problems. The flooding further highlighted the need for an Emergency Group to be formed to deal with such issues and I'm very pleased to say that we now have such a group, run by the village **NOT** the Council. The committee have recruited several volunteers but more are always welcome, so if you're interested please contact Rob on **07972 383257** or at hifivephoto@gmail.com.

We now also have three telemetry early warning devices, in three different locations around the village which monitor water levels in real time giving advance warning of any possible flooding. Although they do not prevent flooding, the alerts would allow our community to prepare, should a flood be a possibility.

Our total income for the year was **£37,310** including our precept of **£19,500** and our total expenditure was **£48,621 net of VAT**. Although our expenditure exceeded our income the Council's finances remain in a sound and stable position, as we have reserves, so there is no cause for concern. However; it remains important that we continue to manage public funds carefully and responsibly. With this in mind, we will continue to actively seek grant funding opportunities to support any future projects or refurbishments to help minimise the impact on the parish. I assure you that we will always do our utmost to ensure that the budget, i.e. **YOUR** money is used wisely and appropriately and that any expenditure offers best value. Our expenditure for the year was mainly on day to day running costs, which have escalated considerably and maintenance with our only capital spend being the necessary replacement of the

paving in the recreation ground. As usual our full accounts can be viewed on our website.

So what are the main things we've been doing? - Our principal focus has been on the proposed redevelopment of our recreation ground - "The Aveland Hub - Sports & Heritage Park" a project that represents a significant investment in its future and the wellbeing of all ages. Considerable time has gone into moving this project forward ready for consultation with you and I'd like to thank Ari for all his hard work in respect to this. The consultation is open until the end of June, so if you haven't already taken part PLEASE DO - as it's your opportunity to help ensure the development reflects **what the community wants** not the council.

Alongside this we have also continued to work towards the long awaited improvements to the cemetery entrance, which will provide a more fitting access. We anticipate that these improvements will be completed later this year. We've also installed the plaque in memory of Queen Elizabeth II & thanks to our persistence the complete boundary fence of Low St paddock was replaced. We facilitated The Flood Pod, which was a very informative event, carried out monument stability testing, developed our wild flower patch, which is currently in bloom & looking glorious & developed a new Councillor Induction Resource pack.

Outstanding matters unfortunately, we still have no date as to when our pavements will be updated, just assurances that they will. We've been advised that the pavement between Billingham & Sempringham will be renewed this year but no date as to when. We will of course continually chase these up. We & the school continued to endeavour to recruit a school traffic attendant but unfortunately still no one has applied for the role. It will be so sad if lack of interest results in the loss of this funding, as it took a lot of time & hard work to secure it. We are still awaiting the confirmation of the registration of our unregistered land and have been advised that this should be confirmed in June, we're still no further forward re the installation by SKDC of EVCP's in our village, though we will continue to pursue this aim.

Unfortunately the development of the old Aveland School site still remains at standstill, consequently, we still only have use of the land via a licence and our request to LCC re a possible refund for the cost of the grass cutting we paid

for over the 8 years prior to them taking over responsibility for cutting it, didn't get a response, despite us vigorously pursuing the matter.

Fortunately we don't really have any problems in the village apart from disrespectful, irresponsible dog walkers that just don't think it's necessary to clean up after their dog has done its business. All pleas to them to be considerate have had no effect. So I ask if you have any constructive suggestions on how this issue can be best addressed or resolved, then the Parish Council would love to hear from you.

As usual throughout the year Councillors and volunteers have worked diligently on behalf of the parish, always with the aim of improving and maintaining the area we call home, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank:-

Our five councillors - we should be a Council of nine - we started the year with seven but we are now five as Julie & Andy left 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 4 vacancies?** Mull it over - it's your opportunity to help shape your village!

Dave & Judith for looking after our village entry planters.

Dave - our unofficial odd job man.

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

To all that made poppies for or created our magnificent poppy display.

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.

Susan - for running **Village Pals**

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 guardian. All of whom do an incredible job! **Thank You!!**

Finally but certainly not least, I say thanks to our **Clerk and RFO Hayley** for her continued professionalism, dedication and hard work throughout the year. Her support, guidance and tireless efforts behind the scenes are invaluable to the smooth running of the council. She goes above and beyond her job description to ensure that the council runs smoothly and the village gets best value. **Thanks Hayley you're truly 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 very welcome!**

Chris Woodhead Chairman