SHARLSTON
Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



SHARLSTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

INTRODUCTION

It has certainly been another eventful year. At the time of publishing our last Annual Report, we had just finished celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of the late HRH Queen Elizabeth II. The following twelve months has seen us mark the passing of our beloved Monarch by following strict protocol to respectfully recognise the following period of mourning. At the time of finalising this report we have just enjoyed a more celebratory atmosphere as we help the village mark the Coronation of TM King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Closer to home, I have managed my first election preparation as Clerk, thankfully seeing all our current councillors elected to the Parish Council unopposed.

The 2023 Annual Report for Sharlston Parish Council once again brings you a round-up of all the projects and initiatives completed in the last year. Our new Monarch is keen to recognise and encourage volunteering and helping out in communities as part of his legacy and therefore it would be remiss of me not to thank our dedicated team of Parish Councillors who give their time voluntarily to realise this activity in direct response to what residents advise is important to them in Sharlston. They in turn are keen to thank the extended team of volunteers who support them in this and allow them to bring real impact and change to our local community.

This year marks an important milestone for Sharlston as we mark the 30th anniversary of the closure of Sharlston Colliery. We know what a huge impact this had on the local community and the Parish Council has long wanted to ensure the story of mining in Sharlston along with the context this brought to families, is not lost. As a result, we are pleased to bring to life an exhibition of mining in Sharlston, where your stories can be told and remembered.

Elsewhere, the Parish Council has continued to make progress in meeting the priorities set out in the Parish Plan. New land has been acquired on the Heather's and progress is being made in purchasing the land which once housed the Community Library. These acquisitions will help the Parish Council meet demand for additional social, leisure and community activities and help to tackle anti-social behaviour such as dog-fouling, fly-tipping and drug use.

We continue to be a listening Parish Council; due to an increase in residents attending our meetings, we have extended the time given to this important activity back to 30 minutes at the start of every monthly meeting. Our District Councillors continue to support us in hearing resident concerns and following these up swiftly and effectively to prevent issues from escalating. Our Facebook following has once again increased – we have gained a whopping 81 of you since last May! You said, we did….following a request by a resident at a meeting earlier this year, we now provide a round-up of our monthly meetings on Facebook and our website the day after and judging by the hits and views, this is proving popular!

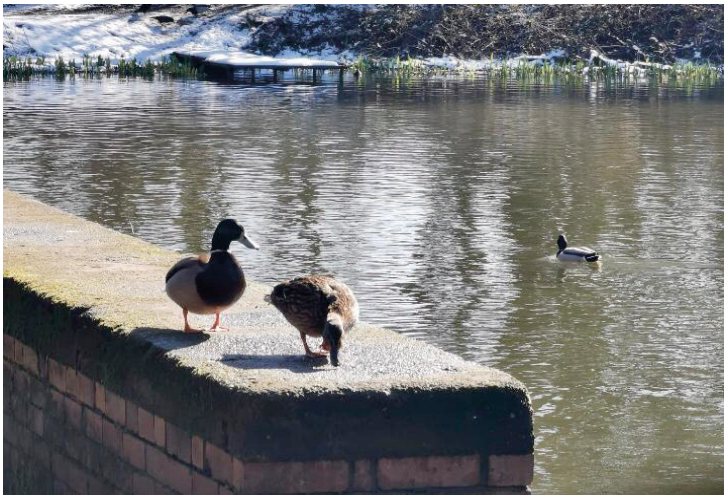
The Parish Council had to take the difficult decision to increase its precept in 2023 which was the first increase in four years. Through careful budgeting and protection of Community Infrastructure Levy funds in the last few years, the Parish Council had been able to cushion the effects of the building cost of living crisis but due to rising costs and to ensure its commitment to delivering the projects promised, this year the precept was raised by £2000. However, part of the decision making for this rise was the increase in electors as a result of the recent Community Governance Review. This meant that the average increase equated to just 65p per household (Band D). At the time of this report the final accounts for the financial year 2022/23 are being audited and an outline of these accounts is printed in this report.

Unfortunately, since our last report we have said goodbye to Councillors Barker, Mottram & Pollard who have left us to focus on new projects. All were thanked for their contribution to the Parish Council and we are pleased to still see them active in village life. Recently we have welcomed our newest recruit, Councillor Sam Moffatt. Sam has now attended a couple of meetings and is getting into the swing of things. We still have vacancies however and would welcome anyone who feels they can make a contribution by volunteering with the Parish Council.

As ever, I do hope that you find our report informative and useful. Please feel free to contact me with any queries you may have.

Thank you.

Emma King, Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
May 2023
Email: theclerk@sharlstonparishcouncil.gov.uk / Tel: 07379 653672
Address: 74 Thorntree Avenue, Crofton, Wakefield, WF4 1NT



THE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Councillors are available to be contacted with any village related queries/comments/feedback.

Name	*Postal address*	*Telephone*	*Email*
Councillor Trish Arnold	11 Church Close, Sharlston Common, Wakefield, WF4 1BJ	07742 039069	trisharnold@hotmail.co.uk
Councillor Paul Belbin	77 Snydale Villas, Wakefield Road, Streethouse Wakefield WF7 6BT	07712 779897	paulbelbin@btinternet.com
Councillor Phil Boyes	1 Weeland Avenue Sharlston Common Wakefield WF4 1AT	07720 081967	prboyes@hotmail.co.uk
Councillor Sam Moffatt	49 Weeland Road, Sharlston Wakefield WF4 1EB	07970 610294	samuelmoffatt90@gmail.com
Councillor Julie Nicholson	6 Northfield Road, Sharlston Wakefield, WF4 1AG	07519 182445	fairytreasuredesigns@gmail.com
Councillor Andy Palmer	5 Birkwood Avenue, Sharlston Common, Wakefield, WF4 1AE	07774 999107	Andyp2478@hotmail.com
Councillor Lei Wisdom	34 Long Row New Sharlston Wakefield WF4 1BH	01924 862560 / 07563 330974	lei-m@hotmail.co.uk
Councillor Leigh Young	9 West Lane, Sharlston Common, Wakefield, WF4 1AD	07980 380128	young.leigh@sky.com

Chair 2022/23
Councillor L Wisdom

Clerk
Emma King

The Parish Council holds up to eleven meetings a year (there is no meeting in August). Notices of meetings appear on the notice boards / website / Facebook and members of the public are always welcome to attend.

APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2022/23

Committees

Allotment Committee	Cllrs. Arnold, Belbin, Nicholson & Wisdom
Events Committee	Cllrs. Arnold, Wisdom (Chair)
Finance & Personnel Committee	Cllrs. Boyes, Belbin, Wisdom (Chair)
Heritage & Environment Committee	Cllrs. Belbin, Nicholson, Wisdom (Chair)
Highways Committee	Cllrs. Arnold, Boyes, Palmer & Young
Parish Plan Committee	All Councillors
Planning Committee	Cllrs. Palmer & Young

Outside Bodies

Community Centre Management	Cllrs. Boyes (Chair of Committee) & Cllr. Belbin (Council Representative)
Town & Parish Council Liaison	Chair & Clerk
YLCA Wakefield Branch	Cllr Wisdom (Chair)
	(One Cllr. To be non-voting)

STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

Sharlston Parish Council is a second-tier local government authority within the Wakefield District. Wakefield Council is the unitary authority for the area. There are some 2245 people registered as electors in Sharlston and New Sharlston[1].

The Parish Precept is collected on the Parish Council's behalf by Wakefield Council. For the fiscal year 2022/23 it was set at £35,000. This year (2023/24) the Council has voted to increase the precept to £37,000 to ensure it can meet its commitment to deliver projects that matter to you. This decision was based partly on the increase of electors as a result of the recent Community Governance Review, undertaken to ensure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient.

As part of this, an exercise was taken to alter some parish areas and the areas of parish wards. Sharlston gained a part of the parish area previously within Crofton Parish, namely properties on the Birkwood Estate at the Sharlston end of West Lane. This means an increase in the electoral base for Sharlston Parish (more residents entitled to vote).

The main responsibilities of the Parish Council are:

- Representing the Parish with the District Council, central government and various local, regional and national bodies
- Promoting local projects
- Dealing with residents' concerns
- Supporting local groups and organisations
- Maintaining the Weeland Road playing field
- Maintaining the footpath around Sharlston Dam and the Play Area
- Monitoring and commenting on planning applications and proposed developments
- Promoting the Parish Plan
- Acting in partnership with Wakefield Council to deliver services
- Improving the quality of life and the environment for residents
- Owning and administering allotment land on Fernside





[1] Source: Electoral Register Feb 2023.

The Municipal Year under Review - Statement by the Chair of the Parish Council

What a year of history we have witnessed. We've paid tribute to the sad passing of the late Her Majesty the Queen and witnessed the coronation of King Charles III. The Parish Council purchased bookmarks for the children at Sharlston Community School to commemorate the coronation. We also purchased the Kings Wardrobe trail, a free interactive story trail around Sharlston which once completed allowed participants to download the free digital book.

This year we are seeing our own piece of history for our village. This July is the 30-year anniversary of the pit closure. Mining has a strong root in our community, even to date. The closure of the pit changed the village and way of life for a lot of its residents. With this in mind the Parish Council are planning a commemorative way to mark the occasion. Details of this will be shared on Facebook, the website and notice boards.

Since our last report we have said goodbye to Councillors Susan Pollard, Jo Barker and Bee Mottram who were thanked for their service to the Parish Council and the community. We have also welcomed our new Councillor, Sam Moffatt, who is contributing and supporting council projects.

All our committees are active and driving our current projects.

We have several projects ongoing this year. Our litter group, Sharlston Against Litter is in its second year with 19 regular active members who so far have collected 148 bags of litter since January. A big thank you to all our volunteers who continually support this project.

Recently the gifted land from Taylor Wimpey has been finalised. These three pockets of land are to be used for the benefits of the community. The land next to Sharlston Sports Club has been leased to the club for them to utilise as an outdoor sitting area. Land near the Heathers is going to be a wild garden for our wildlife residents to help contribute to the ecology of our village. This will be maintained and tended to with help from the Sharlston Gardening & Ecology group and volunteers. Our third pocket of land near the Sharlston Sports Club Park will hopefully be an outdoor sports area for both young and old. We are looking into funding for this project.

The boundary review has now been completed and I'm pleased to say we have gained parts of our village west of West Lane once again from Crofton. To these residents; welcome to Sharlston Parish!

Unfortunately, this year, we did have to increase the precept. This decision wasn't taken lightly and was discussed at great length after which we unanimously voted to increase it to the smallest amount possible. With this in mind, we also continue to deliver the services we do whilst keeping the cost down to a minimum. I am pleased to report that none of the Councillors have used any of their personal allowance; we are all determined to provide value for money for our community.

Another year on and we have unfortunately still not been given a renewed lease for the Community Centre. We as a Council have done and provided everything we have needed to and it's down to the Church and solicitors to progress this now. Hopefully by next year this will be resolved. We will still continue to deliver services through the Centre while this draws on.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers and residents that have helped us to shape our community, your support is greatly appreciated and I have enjoyed meeting so many of you as Chair this year.

I would also like to thank the other Councillors for their teamwork, dedication and support this year – it's been a pleasure working alongside you all and I look forward to doing so in the near future.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank our Clerk Emma King, who continues to guide and support us all in our roles.

I look forward to continuing strengthening our community.

Cllr Lei Wisdom, Chairman Sharlston Parish Council

April 2023

Parish Council Achievement Statement 2022/23



Your Parish Council continues to listen to what's important to residents and strives to deliver real impact in the community to tackle issues and improve where we live. In the last 12 months we have:

- Installed a commemorative information plaque to mark the Platinum Jubilee of the late HRH Queen Elizabeth II and held a successful Platinum Jubilee celebration event, raising £435 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance
- Provided grants to Old Sharlston Cricket Club, Wakefield & District Swift Group & Sharlston Rovers Juniors to support local initiatives and sporting achievement
- Donated a commemorative wreath and attended the annual Remembrance Day Service at St Luke's Church
- Supported the Community Foundation Wakefield District with their Fuel Poverty Campaign for the 5th year running, donating £500 to support local residents
- Purchased an additional grit bin to replace one damaged in a car accident outside the Pharmacy and continued to ensure all bins were kept full during the recent bad weather
- Joined community PACT meetings to support community safety and support
- Re-planted the 16 planters around the village and ensured these are identifiable with new signage as well as completing the 5-year bulb planting initiative, keeping our 'village in bloom'
- Held quarterly Highways Walks addressing issues raised by residents and liaised with the Local Council for action on our roads as well as purchasing a mobile speed indicator device to support with addressing speeding issues in the village
- Coordinated regular litter-picks via the 'Sharlston Against Litter' Facebook Group
- Organised a new litter/dog-waste bin on the Heathers
- In partnership with local businesses and volunteers, provided another Christmas event including an afternoon tea, for our local older residents as well as hosting another great Christmas light display in the village for enjoyment by all
- Created a new partnership with the Youth Council at Sharlston Community School and have donated a Bug Hotel and new play equipment this year
- Supported local residents and businesses with queries and concerns including inconsiderate parking, environmental health, bus services, mobile library, speeding and trees
- Signed the Civility & Respect Pledge & committed to excellent standards in Local Council Administration
- Acquired new land in the village for further development in the interests of residents
- Created 5000 and 10000 step health walks in the village

Anyone seeing instances of antisocial behaviour are reminded to report it to Wakefield Council at https://myaccount.wakefield.gov.uk/ or via their Call Centre on 03458 506 506. This can also be reported to the Clerk.







Specific Projects and Achievements

Highways

The Highways Committee meet to 'walk the talk' quarterly and have regular discussions with the Highways Team at Wakefield Council to ensure strategic plans for the roads and paths in Sharlston are progressed.

In 2022, we saw new speed limit signage appear on Eastville Road following the measures taken on Wood Street earlier in the year. These are important steps in making our area safer for all users whether on foot or behind the wheel.

At the end of 2022, the Parish Council completed two years of research and surveys by purchasing a mobile Speed Indicator Device for use in speeding hot-spots around the village. Training for using the device has now been completed and a demonstration to residents is planned for our forthcoming Open Day. Following this, the device will be used on a monthly basis, around the village, to collect data on speeding that can be shared with the Highways Team at the local authority and the Neighbourhood Policing Team, to help us lobby for further speed calming measures in the village.

Our campaign to make our village safer continues with plans to improve lines and signs in the vicinity of the Community School, get double yellow lines at the approach to Grime Lane from Weeland Road and improve speed and road user signage on Middle Lane/The Green.

If you want to report potholes, damaged footpaths, street furniture etc. we would encourage you to log this through https://myaccount.wakefield.gov.uk/ You can also have your say about speeding and dangerous driving / parking at the monthly PACT meetings held in Featherstone.

Planters

The Parish Council now has a dedicated team of volunteers supporting with the twice-annual planting of the 16 community planters throughout the village. They also support with regular watering and general maintenance of these, ensuring our village remains 'in bloom' throughout the year.

Bulb Planting

2022 saw the culmination of the five-year plan to 'plant our village'. The annual bulb planting event took place in October with the final area, the repaired bunding at the top of the Green, being the focus. We were pleased to see volunteers around the village supporting this project by planting in other areas. We have loved seeing your photographs of the spring bulbs around the village and are thankful that you have allowed us to share some of these in this report!

Allotments

This year we have completed phase one of our new fencing to improve the look and security of the allotments. We have also successfully split one large plot into two, thereby reducing our waiting list further. The hedgerow alongside the plots continues to be maintained with careful consideration to nesting wildlife. Looking ahead to the following year, we have focused our inspection regime to help reduce the number of times we need to visit and therefore give more ownership to tenants to develop their plots.

Parish Plan

We continue to meet as a full Council to review and plan projects in line with our agreed Parish Plan. The Plan is closely aligned with our agreed budget to ensure we can financially realise projects and continue to deliver real value for money to residents. The main focus for this year will be the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Sharlston Colliery closing and developing our newly gifted land on the Heathers.

Annual Parish Open Day

We continue to listen to feedback from residents about what they want to see at our annual open day. In 2022 we had a record number of residents visit us to talk about issues as diverse as street lighting, mobile library service, speeding, bus services and seating in the village. We love to hear your suggestions and bring you information from local and district groups and initiatives – come along and find out more or just enjoy a cuppa and a piece of cake with your councillors.

District Councillors

The Parish Council continues to work closely with the District Councillors representing Ward 6. Representation is always good by Councillors at our monthly meetings and we can always rely on them to be in contact between meetings and support our ongoing projects and initiatives.

Sharlston Against Litter

Now in our second year of this successful group, we once again took part in the annual 'Spring Clean' held by Keep Britain Tidy. More and more of you continue to join this great cause, keeping our village clean and tidy! You can pick up your free litter picking kit from the Parish Council if you want to get involved!

Community Centre

The Parish Council continues to work closely with the Community Centre Management Committee to follow the progress of the Centre, monitor usage by local groups and assist with agreeing a long-term lease. A recent report given to the Parish Council indicates the Centre is well-used, receives good feedback and has a healthy budget to support it. However, we are aware that the lack of lease impacts on the development and refurbishment of the Centre which remains a concern.

Christmas

Sharlston Sports Club once again hosted our annual Christmas event for elderly and vulnerable residents. This year, our special guests were treated to an afternoon tea from Polly's which went down a storm! Entertainment was provided by Hannah Goodall who sang for the guests and then a good old-fashioned game of bingo topped off the day!

Our Christmas light display was once again enjoyed by all; three large Christmas trees with full decoration were placed at Cow Lane, High Street and Long Row, the small rooted Christmas tree and two red wheels were dressed and there were lights in the trees at the Rugby field. Our lovely local businesses once again hosted the smaller lit trees throughout the village creating our own version of the Blackpool illuminations.

In consultation with the local school, rather than providing individual gifts for the children this year, we worked with them to provide much needed new play equipment, chosen by the Youth Council and presented in an assembly by Parish Councillors earlier this year.

Grants to Local Groups

The Parish Council has continued this year with its policy of awarding grants.

Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Sharlston Rovers Juniors, Old Sharlston Cricket Club, the Royal British Legion, and the Community Foundation Wakefield all benefitted from donations from us this year.
Any local group can apply by completing an application form available from the Clerk or on our website.

Platinum Jubilee Celebration

On Sunday June 5th, to celebrate a special unique occasion, HRH Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee, we organised a community party with something for everyone. This was in three locations; the rugby field, The Sports Club and The Villa starting with mini-rugby - under 7's rugby tournament followed by picnics, afternoon tea for the seniors, games and entertainment for children indoors and out, ice creams, bouncy castle, rides and so much more. The Parish Council funded the day supported by the Sports Club and the Villa who hosted live bands, singers and evening disco events. The 'craft a crown' proved very popular with around 80 hand make crowns made and worn during the afternoon. Age was no barrier when creative talent and a competitive edge began to develop with lots of sticking and glitter involved. Face-painting is always popular with the young getting into character and it was proved again with over 75 children taking part. The afternoon tea provided handmade delicious sandwiches and cakes for 52 seniors followed by trays of extras shared around the customers in the Villa by our hard-working team of volunteers, from the community and the Parish Council. Our singer entertained the crowds whilst the bake-off brought out some talented skilled individuals with two sections; junior and adult and two prizes in each section for best tasting and best presentation. The judges from Polly's Mixtures had a hard task with a strong competition!
The party went on into the evening with the bands, a drag artist and disco. The weather was against us however this did not stop everyone enjoying spirit of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, gathered together as one community sharing food, drinks, balloons, music, games and laughter.
The biggest thank you ever to the Parish Council, volunteers and organisers for the planning, their time and efforts making the day a success for the community of Sharlston.

Grit Bins / Bad Weather

This year the Parish Council replaced a damaged grit bin outside the pharmacy following a car accident. This and all our other grit bins are replenished regularly throughout the months of bad weather with help from a local farm to ensure our residents can continue to get out and about safely.

School Partnership

Our working partnership with Sharlston Community School continues to develop. We have loved hearing about how the children have enjoyed learning about local wildlife by monitoring the donated bug hotel, how they are keeping fit and healthy with our donated play equipment and their stories of celebrating the Coronation of HM King Charles III when we presented them with commemorative bookmarks to mark the occasion. The children continue to learn about their local heritage with recent visits to Sharlston Dam and the War Horse in Featherstone and information from the National Coal Mining Museum.



Heathers

The Parish Council were pleased to be gifted three pockets of land this year from Taylor Wimpey. The land, on The Heathers, has been earmarked as additional seating for the Sports & Social Club who have kindly agreed to maintain this, a wild garden to encourage wildlife to thrive in our village and a Pétanque court to give a focus in the village for young and old residents to come together and enjoy this game, growing in popularity in the local area.

Health Walks

As we write this, we are putting the finishing touches to health walks in the village which will allow residents and visitors to take in 5000 or 10,000 steps around our beautiful village. The walks will be detailed with photographic keys, QR code markers to help navigate them and provide local history and interesting facts about different landmarks in Sharlston.

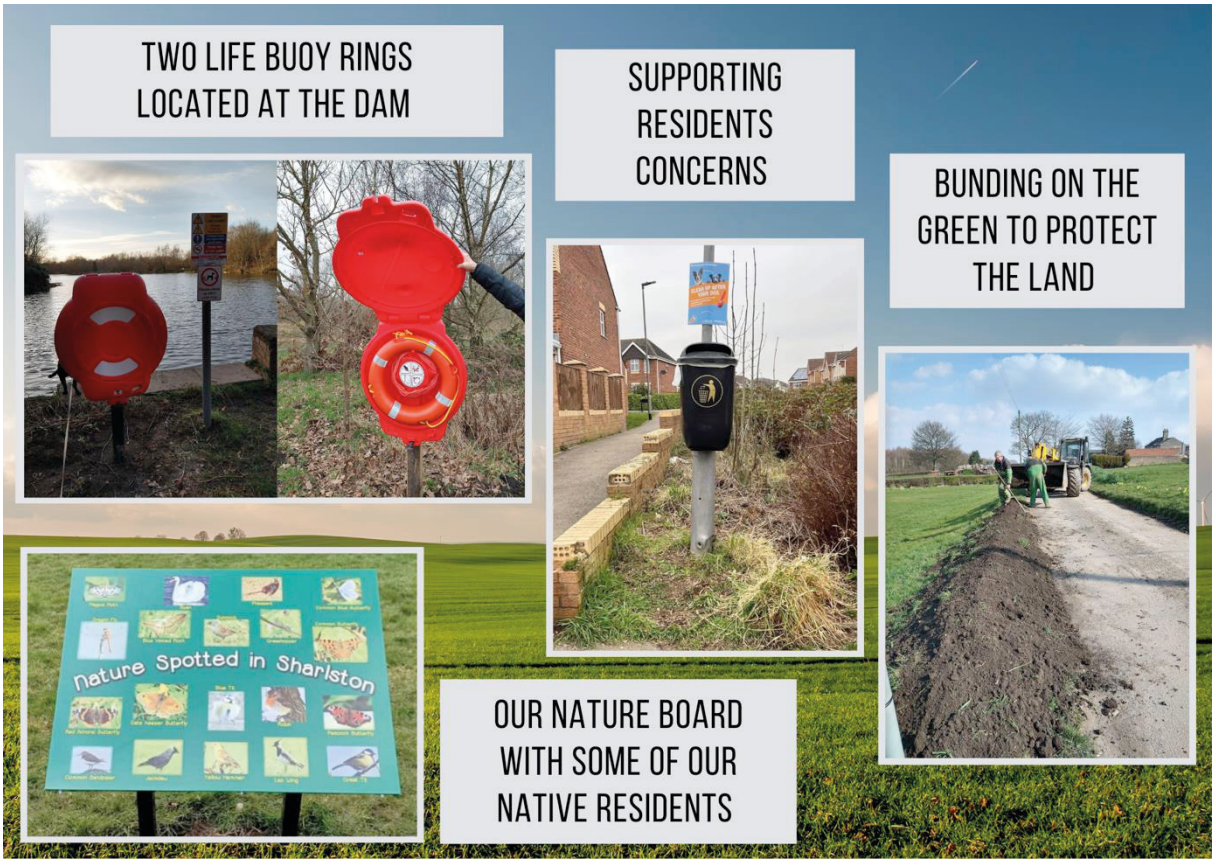
PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES 2022/23

The income we received:		**How we spent the money:**	
Precept	35,000	Salaries & expenses	11849
Allotment Rent	225	Fees & Subscription	3402
Donations for specific projects	1000	Office Costs & Administration	2307
Community funding	1114	Information & Publicity	3186
Interest	45	Grounds & Buildings	4299
		Flowers & Lights*	11777
		Grants	2162
		Projects & Contingencies	7708
TOTAL:	**37,384**	**TOTAL:**	**46,690**

- *Includes Christmas light provision for 2020, 2021, 2022*

Unaudited accounts for 2022/23 will be available to the public in July 2023

The audited figures will be available in late 2023



PRECEPT 2022/23 IN ORDER OF BAND D CHARGE

	Council	**Precept**	**Band D**
1	South Kirkby and Moorthorpe	802,930.00	279.62
2	Hemsworth	749,388.00	206.50
3	South Elmsall	365,500.00	189.77
4	Normanton	296,560.00	49.48
5	Upton and North Elmsall	245,287.00	120.83
6	Ackworth	209,358.00	74.06
7	Featherstone	138,000.00	26.74
8	Crigglestone	80,000.00	23.79
9	Crofton	78,635.00	40.68
10	Havercroft-with-Cold Hiendley	64,534.00	131.23
11	Sitlington	57,600.00	29.24
12	Ryhill	54,185.00	66.32
13	Walton	39,000.00	32.18
14	**Sharlston**	**35,000.00**	**44.59**
15	South Hiendley	34,160.00	63.03
16	Woolley	33,335.00	50.35
17	Warmfield-Cum-Heath	15,260.00	47.99
18	Darrington	13,044.02	22.88
19	Badsworth	11,000.00	30.99
20	Notton	10,000.00	27.84
21	Thorpe Audlin	9,898.00	33.90
22	West Bretton	5,250.00	24.19
23	Nostell (Hessle and Hilltop Huntwick with Foulby, Nostell and West Hardwick)	4,400.00	43.56
24	East Hardwick	979.00	8.31

With thanks to our team of Parish Councillors, Ben Roberts and Jean Thomas for their kind permission to reproduce the images included in this report.