



SHARLSTON

Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



SHARLSTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023/24

INTRODUCTION

As we approach our annual meeting and Parish Open Day, I'd like to reflect on what has been a challenging but rewarding year as Clerk. Since last summer, I have diligently supported the Parish Council in its efforts to recruit to our current vacancies following the resignation of Councillors Arnold, Moffat, Wisdom and Young. All councillors were thanked for their hard work and contribution to Parish Council projects including bringing the 2 village health walks to fruition and promoting these to residents as well as testing them out themselves, supporting with asset checks and ensuring our buildings and equipment remain in good working order, arranging litter picks around the village and overseeing the use of our Speed Indicator Device, Sharlston SID, on our village roads. We have since welcomed three 'new' councillors to join the team; Cllr Rachel Beacroft who brings a wealth of facilities management, health & safety expertise to the council, and Cllrs Julie Craig and Susan Pollard who are both returning for a second term with us and therefore bringing experience and knowledge to the role. I have also managed a due diligence process involving financial, legal and public relation support as the Parish Council purchases a new piece of land at the site of the former library off Clifton Road. As this project completes, I look forward to advising and guiding the Parish Council further as it plans the future use of this land.

The 2024 Annual Report for Sharlston Parish Council once again brings you a round-up of all the projects and initiatives completed in the previous 12 months. I hope you enjoy perusing this report and recognise the benefits being realised in our village as well as the important job that our public servants complete on your behalf.

The Parish Council is already making plans for the year ahead and this will have a real focus on the heritage of our village; following the popularity of our commemoration of the closure of Sharlston Colliery and celebration of our coal mining history in 2023, we now plan to research and celebrate the impact of our farms and farmers in Sharlston as well as creating a small working party to pull together other elements of history & heritage for future preservation. We also want to hone in on the environment and how we protect and enhance this. We have already drafted a Climate Change Action Plan and a Biodiversity Policy and reached out to make vital contacts with Wakefield Council's Climate Change Team to ensure we are well advised and that our Parish Plan is in line with our Districts wider strategic vision.

The Parish Council has also committed to regularly collecting the views and ideas of our residents. As this report is published, we are busy collating and scrutinising responses from our recent community survey which has been circulated to all residents. The Parish Council is keen to adopt a 'you said, we did' approach and hopes this survey will support them in making further progress in meeting the priorities set out in the Parish Plan including the demand for additional social, leisure and community activities whilst helping to tackle anti-social behaviour such as dog-fouling, fly-tipping and drug use.

Both councillors and myself as Proper Officer continue to access training and development opportunities through a range of methods including Wakefield Council's Town & Parish Council Liaison Group, our County Body the Yorkshire Local Councils' Association and the Society of Local Council Clerks. A full council training session was held early in the year and served as a good reminder to all of the proper processes, legislation, powers and policies that the Parish Council must consider and adhere to in its work. As Responsible Finance Officer, I am currently working with our newly appointed internal auditor to ensure our Annual Governance & Accountability Report is accurate, transparent and accessible and the Parish Council will also be subject to an independent, intermediate review by our external auditor. This robust scrutiny is welcomed by the Parish Council who takes its role as public servant seriously. At the time of this report the final accounts for the financial year 2023/24 are being audited and an outline of these accounts is printed in this report. The Parish Council is pleased to have been able to keep the precept static in 2024 through careful accounting in 2023/24, meaning the band D contribution to the Parish Council, per household, has effectively reduced by 16p.

And finally, it would be remiss of me to end this report without a huge thank you to our longstanding councillor and outgoing Chairman, Cllr Phil Boyes who leaves the Parish Council after many years. Phil has worked hard to lead a strong team, often having to use his mediation skills to manage conflicting views but encouraging positive action by the Parish Council. He has also been a great personal mentor to me in my early years as Clerk. We wish Phil all the best in his future endeavours.

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 2024

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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.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Postal address</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Email</i>
Councillor Rachel Beacroft	15 Clifton Road, Sharlston, Wakefield, WF4 1AR	07533 792440	rachelbeacroft71@gmail.com
Councillor Paul Belbin	77 Snyderdale Villas, Wakefield Road, Streethouse Wakefield WF7 6BT	07712 779897	paulbelbin@btinternet.com
Councillor Julie Craig	6 Heather View, Sharlston, Wakefield WF4 1TH	07800 656246	julie.craig6@btinternet.com
Councillor Julie Nicholson	6 Northfield Road, Sharlston Wakefield, WF4 1AG	07519 182445	cllrjnicholson@yahoo.com
Councillor Susan Pollard	7 Heather Croft, Sharlston, Wakefield WF4 1TJ	07985 494053	sipsharlston@gmail.com
Councillor Andy Palmer	5 Birkwood Avenue, Sharlston Common, Wakefield, WF4 1AE	07774 999107	Andyp2478@hotmail.com

Chair 2023/24

Councillor P Boyes

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 2023/24

Committees

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

Outside Bodies

Community Centre Management	Cllrs. Boyes (Chair of Committee) & Cllr. Belbin (Council Representative)
Town & Parish Council Liaison	Chair & Clerk
YLCA Wakefield Branch	Cllrs. Boyes & Nicholson (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 Sharlston¹.

The Parish Precept is collected on the Parish Council's behalf by Wakefield Council. For the fiscal year 2023/24 it was set at £37,000. This year (2024/25) the Council has voted to maintain the precept at £37,000 and due to a slight increase in the number of households (precept base) this has meant an actual reduction in the amount you pay (-16p at band D).

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 2024.

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

I find that it is always good to reflect on the past and be proud of things that have worked, but also reflect on things that perhaps weren't so successful and learn from them.

As I sat down to write this, I received the sad news that June Cliffe MBE has sadly passed away, condolences to Jack and the family.

This reminded me why I joined the council; it was because I heard that the Parish Council was looking at building a new community centre on the site of the old Library and clinic. The council had an option for a fifty-year lease on the land and had engaged a third-party contractor to deliver funding and other aspects of the project. I went along to the public section of the monthly council meeting in the junior school, I asked my questions and got some answers, which both interested me and frustrated me in equal measures. June was chair at the time, so I approached her, and she encouraged me to become involved. I put in my application for co-option and was accepted to the council. I very soon joined the management committee for the community centre as well.

The third party leading the project didn't like my scrutiny and as soon as the funding ran out so did he. This meant that the community centre project was put on the back burner.

June and I didn't always agree, but we always tried to disagree constructively and when June retired, I took the chair of the council, and just because something is on the back burner doesn't mean it's a bad idea or that it should be forgotten.

The option to lease the land had expired and when we approached the landowner, Wakefield District Council, they said they wouldn't look at leasing the land as they were looking to sell. We asked that they gave us first refusal, which they did, and we have just completed the purchase which will give us the opportunity in the future to develop this for the community.

I know we have the community centre but as many of you are aware we have been trying to renew the lease since before June retired, and it is still ongoing, the management committee committed around £8000.00 last year to cover legal costs for the church, but progress is slow. This highlights the importance of having a plan B and looking forward plan for our future community.

It has been my honour to serve on the Parish Council for the last seven or so years, I have worked with many councillors who have joined and left for various reasons, and now I must leave also for work reasons.

My dearest hope is that the Parish Council continue the good work with our clerk, Emma, who continues to deliver for the council, and one day we can see a new development in the centre of the village, owned by the village for the village.

I ask that you all be patient as these things take a long time to develop, we are a small community with a small precept that bats well above our weight, and we will achieve everything we plan over time.

It has been my honour to serve on the council, to serve the community of Sharlston.

Cllr Phil Boyes, Chairman Sharlston Parish Council

May 2024



Parish Council Achievement Statement 2023/24

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. Some of our achievements over the last year are listed below:

- All current parish councillors elected unopposed at the May 2023 all out elections
- Organised a virtual village trail for residents to take part in as part of the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III – 'The King's Wardrobe'
- Provided all pupils at the Community School with a commemorative bookmark as part of the Coronation as well as handing these out to residents at the Annual Open Day
- Worked with Sharlston Rovers and District Councillors to address the parking issues experienced by residents on match days
- Purchased additional land at the site of the old library on Clifton Road from Wakefield Council in order to address anti-social behaviour and support future redevelopment of the site
- Created two new allotment plots and successfully re-leased these, helping to reduce the waiting list for this amenity
- Continued the redevelopment of the allotment site including re-fencing one side, pruning trees on site and removing a hard standing to create more cultivation space
- Worked with Wakefield Council's Highways Department to support the progression of new Traffic Regulation Orders to address common issues around the village including yellow lines at the junction of Grime Lane and Weeland Road, ambiguous speed signs on the Green and revision of signs and lines at the Community School
- Demonstrated and used the new speed indicator device 'Sharlston SID' around the village in partnership with the Neighbourhood Police Team and in response to resident concerns of speeding. Data collected will now be used to lobby the relevant authorities for further speed calming in key areas
- Welcomed new councillors and engaged in whole council training as well as individual sessions to continue to up-skill
- Undertaken an independent website audit and begun updates to make information clearer and more accessible
- Created new committees to focus on parish events and items related to the local environment and heritage projects
- Held a well-attended and successful open day which resulted in great feedback and constructive points for the Parish Council to consider
- Provided a sponsorship opportunity to local businesses to sponsor a planter within the village
- Organised and held a commemoration event to mark the 30th anniversary of the closure of Sharlston Colliery including ex-miners and their families. Laid wreaths at both red wheels in the village.
- Met with local pétanque teams as part of an information gathering task regarding the creation of a court in the village
- Held another successful Christmas meal / event for local residents helping to combat loneliness and support new and old friendships
- Once again supported the Royal British Legion by donating and laying a wreath at the village Remembrance Day service
- Supported the Community School with a donation towards Mindful journals for all junior pupils and attended events at school to talk about the Parish Council's role in the community
- Once again, provided three decorated and lit Christmas trees as well as other lights throughout the village, in partnership with local businesses to help residents celebrate Christmas 2023
- Worked with the Neighbourhood Police Team and District Councillors to represent Sharlston at monthly PACT meetings and report any instances of crime or anti-social behaviour on behalf of residents
- Collected information about issues with local bus services, ready to lobby the West Yorkshire Mayor in mid-2024
- Helped keep our residents safe by coordinating the donation of winter grit to the village from Wakefield Council and ensuring grit bins remained full with the help of a local farmer (THANK YOU!)
- Explored new funding streams and created a partnership with Wakefield Council as a way of supporting future projects in the village
- Supported the Great British Spring Clean 2024 by holding two community litter picks in the village and researched / shared details of current 'Keep Britain Tidy' initiatives around anti-littering and anti-dog fouling. Requested anti-dog fouling signage around 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 regularly meet to 'walk the talk' and have discussions with the Highways Team at Wakefield Council to ensure strategic plans for the roads and paths in Sharlston are progressed. The Parish Council also continues to collect independent data via its mobile Speed Indicator Device on speeding hot-spots around the village. We now have a wealth of data to share 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 continues to make our village safer as we further push for the Traffic Regulation Orders at the Community School, the approach to Grime Lane from Weeland Road and 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 recently refreshed, maintained and replanted our community planters around the village. We are always looking for further volunteers and sponsors for our planters – if you are interested, please get in touch and help to make our village bloom!



Allotments

This year we have welcomed two new tenants who have made a great start to tending their plots. All tenants have expert advice on hand via the Parish Council and we have enjoyed building relationships and seeing huge improvements at the site through effectively working together. Recently, the large oak tree at the Fernside entrance has been pruned and waste & concrete removed to further enhance the allotments. Next on the list are improvements to internal pathways and the second stage of improving the boundary fence.

Sharlston History

Our newly formed Heritage & Environment Committee has made a great start in reaching out to local volunteers and residents to make a start on creating a history portal for the village. This builds on the success of recent projects around mining history in the village and we hope to meet in the next few weeks to further progress this.



Annual Parish Open Day & Village Survey

2024 saw a whopping 90 residents visit our annual open day. With refreshments, activities for children, freebie giveaways, lots of local groups and visitors including our friends at West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, a great day was had by all. We are now collating the comments passed to us on the day and adding these to the results of our recent village survey. This information will be used to inform our Parish Plan objectives going forward. Thank you!



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 third 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!



Anti-Dog Fouling

The Parish Council continues to work with Keep Britain Tidy and Wakefield Council to educate the public about the importance of picking up after your dog. We want to see a clean village where everyone can walk, play and enjoy their surroundings without the dangerous and unsociable activity of dog-fouling! This year we have shared lots of information and research about the problem and rearranged the anti-foul stencils around the village.



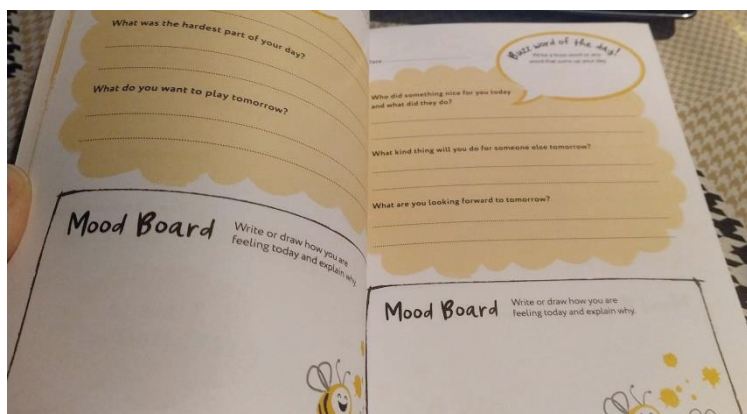
Christmas

Sharlston Sports Club once again hosted our annual Christmas event for elderly and vulnerable residents. This year, our special guests were treated to a Christmas meal sponsored by the Yorkshire Brasserie and entertainment from Johnny Evans! Thank you to all our community volunteers who continue to support this popular event and raise awareness of how dementia affects local families.



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 mindfulness journals for all children which were presented by Father Christmas himself!



Grants to Local Groups

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

Sharlston Community School, the Royal British Legion, and the Community Foundation Wakefield all benefitted from donations from us this year.

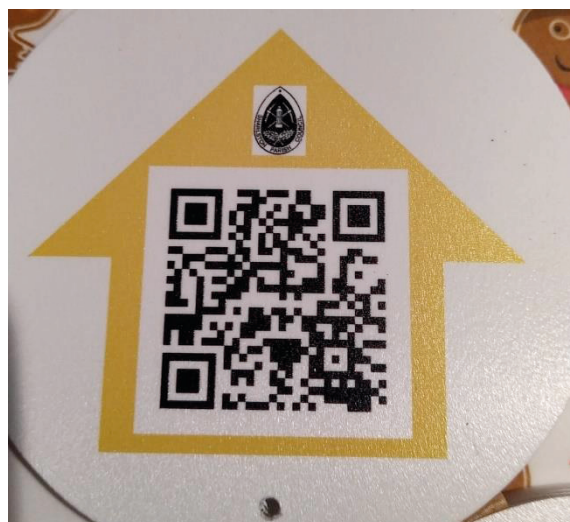
We also donated wool to support the Poppy Canopy Project to commemorate D-Day 80.



Any local group can apply by completing an application form available from the Clerk or on our website.

Health Walks

Our health walks in the village are now complete and we will be re-marketing these in the summer. They 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 2023/24

The income we received:		How we spent the money:	
Precept	37,000	Salaries & expenses	14029
Allotment Rent	380	Fees & Subscription	3056
Donations & Sponsorship	7726	Office Costs & Administration	3309
Community funding	421	Information & Publicity	1865
VAT Reclaim	7369	Grounds & Buildings	4700
Interest	246	Flowers & Lights	10145
		Grants	1400
		Projects & Contingencies	6820
TOTAL:	53142	TOTAL:	45324

Unaudited accounts for 2023/24 will be available to the public in June 2024

The audited figures will be available in late 2024

PRECEPT 2023/24 IN ORDER OF BAND D CHARGE

	Council	Precept £	Band D £
1	Hemsworth	803,968.00	212.69
2	South Kirkby and Moorthorpe	760,700.00	275.42
3	South Elmsall	410,000.00	179.59
4	Normanton	331,832.00	50.85
5	Ackworth	215,786.00	75.00
6	Upton and North Elmsall	212,050.00	120.83
7	Featherstone	138,000.00	34.61
8	Crofton	81,635.00	41.52
9	Crigglestone	79,799.00	23.98
10	Havercroft-with-Cold Hiendley	70,300.00	135.71
11	Sitlington	57,600.00	29.21
12	Ryhill	54,185.00	67.06
13	Walton	39,000.00	31.48
14	South Hiendley	37,576.00	68.95
15	Sharlston	37,000.00	45.23
16	Woolley	30,000.00	45.05
17	Darrington	16,500.68	27.69
18	Warmfield-Cum-Heath	15,260.00	46.95
19	Notton	13,000.00	30.59
20	Badsworth	11,000.00	30.22
21	Thorpe Audlin	9,184.00	34.92
22	West Bretton	5,750.00	25.67
23	Nostell (Huntwick with Foulby & Nostell Hesse & Hill top & West Hardwick)	4,400.00	42.72
24	East Hardwick	1,059.00	7.01
25	Winterset	-	
26	Wentbridge Parish Meeting	-	-

With thanks to our team of Parish Councillors, residents and Volunteers for their kind permission to reproduce the images included in this report.

