

# Annual Parish Meeting 2024



## Report

**Councillor Dr Kate Hill**  
**Chair**  
**Harewood Parish Council**

### Overview 2023 to 2024

Harewood Parish Council is a team and we work together for the benefit of our Parish residents. As Chair, I offer my sincere thanks to all members and former members of the Council for their sterling efforts and for the personal support they have given me. The Council officers and staff also play a key role in delivering the Council's services: our Parish Clerk, Mr Kevin Sedman, has supported Harewood Parish Council's operation and management for seventeen years. Councillors greatly appreciate his wealth of experience, good advice and guidance; his contribution to the work of the Council is invaluable. Our Cemetery Clerk (Phil Stephenson) and Caroline Dale (Recreation Area Caretaker) also play an important role in supporting the Parish Council's work.

Councillor Dan Suckall was a long serving member of Harewood Parish Council, only stepping down when he moved into residential care in 2023. It is with deep sadness that I have to report his passing in February 2024; his common sense and good humour are greatly missed. We have recruited a new member: Councillor Angela Lawton but there still remain three vacant seats on the Parish Council for the Wigton Ward. If you have an interest in serving your community as a councillor, please view our Code of Conduct on the website and get in touch with us by email: [contact@harewoodparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:contact@harewoodparishcouncil.gov.uk). Please submit a brief CV and a statement of your proposed contribution to the work of the council.

Councillors joining now would be co-opted members until the next elections, due in May 2027.

My belief is that Harewood Parish Council has developed into a strong, cohesive group. We are well managed with sound governance and good financial planning. During 2023, Harewood Parish Council has continued to work towards its three strategic aims:

communication and outreach; inclusivity and taking a proactive, forward looking approach. It is now timely for us to review these aims and identify areas for change.

Finally, it has been my privilege to serve as Chair of Harewood Parish Council for the last six years and, if I am elected as Chair for a further term, I will continue to forward Harewood Parish Council's mission to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our community.

## **Strategic Aims 2024**

### **1. Communication and outreach**

Over the last four years, Harewood Parish Council has modernised its communication and operating systems. We have extended our access to social media platforms by joining the Alwoodley Ward Residents' Group run by Councillor Dan Cohen. We will continue to reach out through other community platforms, particularly those that are most likely to reach our Wigton residents. We have not established our own social media channel but we maintain our website as a source of information and traditional notice boards in four areas of the Parish, although we acknowledge that the latter have limited reach.

Our aim for 2024 will be to work on developing our wider partnerships. Our councillors attend the two local Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings that cover our Parish: Alwoodley and Wetherby. We plan to collaborate with the Harewood PACT to deliver an anti-fraud briefing session for Harewood Parish and surrounding Parish Council residents in Summer 2024.

Harewood Parish Council is also part of the Wetherby Local Care Partnership (WLCP), which brings together health and social care and local third sector organisations. The Chair attends regular meetings of the group and is a member of the Dementia Sub-Group. The WLCP connection has linked the Parish Council with WiSE (Wetherby in Support of the Elderly <https://w-ise.org.uk/>) and Councillor Foreman remains our link to MAECARE (Moor Allerton Elderly Care: <https://maecare.org.uk/>), an organisation that provides services and support to older people in the Wigton Ward.

As Chair, I represent Harewood Parish Council on the Emmerdale Fund Panel. Over the last year we have supported projects in Harewood and surrounding Wards and Parishes, including applications from Harewood and East Keswick Village Halls and Harewood Estate.

**Harewood Parish Council has created a strong brand. We will work towards improving outreach by fostering partnerships with other community groups and extending our communication network. We strongly encourage Parish residents to register for our e-Newsletter and distribution list to ensure you receive timely information and updates.**

## **2. Inclusivity**

Harewood Parish Council has aimed to reduce bureaucracy and adopt a fair, friendly and approachable operational model. We believe we have achieved this aim and our Council is now both committed and collaborative. We already provide a public forum at every Parish Council meeting and at the Annual Parish Meeting but we can only be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and represent their views if we receive regular feedback and constructive criticism.

**There is still work to do in terms of strengthening public involvement in Council work and this will continue to work on increasing inclusivity in our 2024 strategic plan.**

## **3. Activity**

Our aim to be proactive and forward looking was achieved in 2023; over the last year we have worked towards maintaining and enhancing our assets to improve the quality of life for people in our Parish and encourage the development of an inclusive and vibrant community.

### **Key achievements in 2023**

a. Support for the work of Parish voluntary organisations through our parish grants;

- b. Provision of safe, healthy and timely opportunities for increasing physical activity by introducing free, weekly fitness sessions;
- c. Promotion of a safer community through liaison with our local Police partners in Wetherby and LCC Highways Dept including maintaining and monitoring our Speed Indicator Devices;
- d. Maintenance of our playground and public recreation area on Malt Kiln Lane providing leisure and recreation facilities for all ages;
- e. Maintenance of our cemetery and memorial garden;
- f. Replacement noticeboards installed in Slaid Hill, Wigton Moor and Wike;
- g. Provision of festive lights on the Harrogate Road and The Avenue in Harewood village and on High Ash Drive and Slaid Hill in Wigton Moor.

Harewood Parish precept remains one of the lowest in Leeds and we strive to keep it low for the benefit of residents. We always aim to achieve best value and are grateful to volunteers who help with maintenance, we also use income from Community Infrastructure Levies (arising from new development in our Parish) wisely and effectively, and seek to secure grant funding for major projects, like our recreation area, whenever possible. As a result we have managed to keep our increase in precept down to 4.99% for 2024-25.

#### **4. Our Vision for 2024**

We will define a new strategic plan for 2024 with the following aims:

- 1. Transparency**
- 2. Engagement**
- 3. Progressiveness**

To address these aims our objectives are:

To deliver our services and maintain community assets in a cost effective and efficient way, always seeking to achieve best value for our Parish residents.

To be open, transparent and accountable in all our activities.

To review our structures, governance and policies regularly and update them when necessary.

To be a fair and caring employer.

To represent the views of local residents, community groups and organisations in order to enhance our local services and environment.

To engage with residents to develop an inclusive, caring and cohesive community spirit.

To develop a sustainable and attractive environment for our Parish residents to enjoy.

Our future plans will include resurfacing Sleights Lane to improve access to the cemetery and improve the cemetery facilities by creating a new Garden of Remembrance and developing the outbuilding in the cemetery to form a shelter for visitors.