



## **BISHOP MIDDLEHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Chairperson's Annual report 2022 / 2023**

Presented by Cllr Neve to the Annual Meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023

I am pleased to present the annual report for Bishop Middleham Parish Council. As Chair of the Council, I would like to thank Cllr Geoff Turner, Vice Chair of the Council for the support he has provided throughout the year and all the councillors for their commitment and support during 2022/2023.

Changes during the year. This year has been influenced by changes to the Parish Council's staff. In 2022 we received the resignations of our Acting Clerk, Mr John Robinson. John's experience and commitment were very welcome. Of course, this meant changes and periods without a Clerk. However, we welcomed Anne Hall in September 2022 covering the role as Acting Parish Clerk

We already had 2 vacancies within the Council at the start of 2022 and unfortunately Councillor Elaine Peeke also left during the year. Following a successful co-option process, we welcomed Cllr Paula Maddison Green and Councillor Jonathan Burrows towards the end of 2022. We still have 1 vacancy within the Parish Council and we are hoping to fill this in 2023/2024.

It has been a year of celebration and sadness. In June 2022 we celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with a wonderful coming together of our community in the Park. We also planted a number of trees on the brewery field to commemorate this event as did a lot of Council's around the country, called the Queen's Canopy. In contrast, in September 2022 we were all affected by her death. The Parish Council performed the required civic duties to both recognise the loss and to accession to the throne of the new King. We hope that the Queen's Canopy will be a lasting commemoration of the Queen's reign.

Even with all of the changes in 2022/23, we are proud to have brought a number of successful events to our Parish. From the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in June, the Michaelmas Fayre (if somewhat different this year) in October 2022, a very successful Fireworks Display in November and our Christmas celebrations in December when John Robinson (exiting Parish Clerk) switched on the lights.

The Michaelmas Fayre this year was supported by Discover Brightwater Project. This is a programme of events, projects and activities to restore, reveal and celebration life around the River Skerne. The area covered by the project is in South Durham and stretches north from Darlington and includes towns and villages of Newton Aycliffe, Sedgfield, Fishburn the Timdons and of course Bishop Middleham, up to Hurworth Burn reservoir. The Fayre and Brightwater brought enactments and traditional activities, including a Viking longboat which is in the process of being built by volunteers.

The annual Railway Exhibition took place in the village hall and, as always, was a great success.

### **Projects**

One of the major changes in the Parish has been Phase 1 of our long awaited Park project. We are delighted with the new equipment. Speaking to a number of children using the park, the zip wire

has been very popular. We are hoping that 2023/24 will see the completion of the Park project, with new equipment for the younger members of our community.

We have, throughout the year, been making repairs to our Wildlife Garden. Sadly, we have seen quite a lot of vandalism in this area and it becomes quite costly to keep making repairs. This is an area of the village we are looking at moving forward into 2023/24.

We are pleased to support the Community Makers project being established in our Parish, which looks at volunteering opportunities in the community, be it litter picking, putting up bunting, supporting community events, supporting our elderly community or even just being a friend. We look forward to seeing how this project grows in the future.

I would like to thank the following people in addition to the thanks I have already made in this report:

The wonderful band of litter pickers

All volunteers who help with events / activities

Cllr. Elaine Peeke (County Councillor) for her continued contribution and support throughout the year

John Robinson – for the service and support to the Parish Council

Joanna at the Post Office

Jane and the staff and volunteers at the Village Hall

Anne Hall for stepping into the role of Parish Clerk and hit the ground running

We are all looking forward to the new year ahead and what it will bring.

*H Neve*

Cllr. Harvey Neve

**Chair of Bishop Middleham Parish Council**

**10<sup>th</sup> May 2023**