CAWOOD PARISH COUNCIL CLERK’S ANNUAL REPORT, MAY 2024

The year has been busy for the Parish Council, and the village. It has seen the planting of new trees on the Garth, in particular an Oak Tree ceremony to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III, which was attended by residents young and old, and conducted with assistance from the children at school, and members of All Saints Church. The tree destroyed during the previous Garth cut has been replaced, and a Horse Chestnut, grown from seed by a resident has replaced one that was removed due to health and safety concerns.

Ron Wharmby resigned from his position on the council after many years. His knowledge, experience and hard work has been a huge loss to the Parish Council, and we wish him the very best in the future.

Following her third year in post, Mrs. Gowlett has now completed finance and budgeting training. The start of the CILCA training has been postponed to next year, at her request. Mrs. Gowlett continues to manage the cemetery, and Old Boys’ School bookings.

The Parish Council continues to use online banking for all transactions, and Autela Payroll Services Ltd to produce all payslips, and deal with tax and National Insurance payments. The Lloyds bank account continues to be used, and the HSBC account is now closed.

The donation of £500 made to the village last year by Two Brothers Pictures has now been spent on beautiful new Christmas lights for the village, displayed on the estate fence at the banqueting hall and a large ‘Merry Christmas’ light above the Thorpe Lane entrance to the Garth.

The planned Deed of Dedication to preserve the Playing Fields has now been completed, through Fields in Trust, which is in addition to the Garth deed that was completed last year. Plans are still ongoing to add a deed to preserve Gill Green.

Throughout the year, the village continues to be ably looked after by our Handyman, Martin Bates, with grass cutting, work to trees owned by the PC and general maintenance undertaken. The Parish Council values the hard work he completes on behalf of the village and thanks him for doing such a brilliant job. The Parish Council have recently purchased a new lawn mower and strimmer to assist Martin in his work around the village.

Tree works throughout the village continue, with permission sought from North Yorkshire Council where necessary. A recent tree survey report has shown that the Parish Council are managing the trees well, and work is being undertaken where necessary.

On the Garth, recent additions of additional bird and bug houses, along with a new nature panel are ensuring the wildlife are cared for and that there is plenty for children to see and do when visiting the area. To coincide with our Garth management plan, the Parish Council allowed sheep grazing on the Garth again throughout the winter months, and thanks goes to the shepherd who organized an owl nesting box to be placed on the Lime tree in the Garth.

There have been a small number of reports of anti-social behaviour and crimes in the village in the year, including youths drinking and drug use on the Playing Fields, graffiti on the Skate Park and safety concerns over the use of the Foreshore. The monthly police report has now been reinstated and the new local PCSO has proved to be very helpful and supportive, and keen to be involved with the community as much as she can.

The three village defibrillators are still in good condition and inspected regularly by Mrs. Gowlett. This year the Parish Council have removed the outdated and no longer used reference numbers on the cabinets and replaced them with What.3. Words, which is widely used now by the emergency services.

Dog fouling continues to be a concern, with the Parish Council still providing dog waste bags and bins in an attempt to encourage people to be responsible and clean up after their animals but bins cannot be placed along lanes which bin wagons can’t access. Dog faeces in the Garth continues to pose a problem, and an increase in dog waste at the play area is frustrating for the Council, and residents. The Garth is an officially designated “Site of Interest for Nature Conservation” and the grass has to be cut and removed annually as part of its maintenance. The use of the grass as fodder is jeopardised by faeces, and thus proving costly to manage.

The refurbishment of the Old Boys’ School is still in the early stages, with the Feoffees working to finalise plans. The Feoffees are invited to the Old Boys’ School Management Committee meetings and have sent a representative when they are able to.

Cawood Grows Together continues, although repairs to planters will not be completed as regrettably, a number of the planters remain uncared for or unadopted. The ongoing bulb planting last year has meant that the village looks beautiful as the flowers bloom. Thanks go to Councillor Dennon and Councillor Shepherd who continue to work tirelessly to help to keep the village looking lovely.