



Annual Report 2020-21

A look at the past year in the Holme Valley

Report from the Chairman 2020-21 – Cllr Rachel Hogley

“A Year Like No Other”

Alongside our community, the Parish Council has experienced a tumultuous last year as we have faced operating during the coronavirus pandemic. I was honoured to lead the Council during this difficult period as we embraced remote working, grappled with Zoom meetings and sought to support local people as best we could. One of the great strengths of the Holme Valley is its sense of community and we were pleased to be able to contribute funds to the Holme Valley COVID Mutual Aid network which rapidly developed to help those in need across our area. I would like to extend my thanks to all those volunteers, including parish councillors, who put in so much energy and effort to assist their neighbours as we all faced the challenges of lockdown. On the positive side, I, like many, have appreciated our beautiful environment even more and been grateful for our excellent local businesses that have gone above and beyond in providing for us over the last year. Thankfully we are now gradually emerging from this strange and challenging period and I am confident that our community will be stronger as we recognise and embrace opportunities together in the future.

Reflecting on the year as Chair, it's been a different experience from my predecessors with few events or functions to attend on behalf of the Parish but I have still kept very busy working closely with other councillors and the clerk team to deliver positive change in our community. My one 'opening event' was marking the new Boules court at Brockholes Village Hall: a great example of local people and groups working together to bring a new facility for all ages to the valley.



Earlier in the year, I proposed five strategic priorities for the council to help coordinate and clarify everything that we do to help local people understand how we spend their money on local priorities. Each of the Chair reports below reflect their committees' activities but I would like to highlight a few key elements within each priority which show how we are delivering for our local community, economy and environment.

Value community assets & services: We have awarded £24,000 in grants to help secure the future of important local facilities both old and new including village halls, Thongsbridge Wild Space through River Holme Connections, Hepworth Band Room and Holmfirth Bowling Club.

Build community resilience: We have committed to boosting local youth provision and are working with local business associations to support better CCTV in Honley and Holmfirth as well as continuing to subsidise local minibuses and fund dog waste bag dispensers throughout the valley.

Support the local economy: Our Holmfirth public toilets remained open throughout COVID and continue to provide a key service for residents and visitors. We are delighted to have secured a tenant in the unit next door, bringing an income stream and a new retail offer to the town. Our grants for community events and projects has increased to £20,000 to allow us to support the return of the wonderful range of events organised locally.

Champion local democracy: The Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan, which has been led by HVPC but written by the community for the community, successfully completed its Independent Examination and will go to local referendum in the autumn. If adopted, its locally specific policies will formally be considered in planning applications helping give our residents a stronger voice in local development.

Improve our environment: We recruited a Climate Emergency Coordinator to help drive forward our Climate Emergency Action Plan including installing a drinking water dispenser on Holmfirth public toilets, completing an energy audit of Holmfirth Civic Hall and Honley Library and developing a range of other projects to drive us to net zero by 2030. More details are on our dedicated website: <https://holmevalleyclimateaction.co.uk/>

Whilst I have not had the opportunity to meet as many local people as I would have liked through this last lockdown year, I would like to thank all those who work so hard to make our community thrive and make the Holme Valley such a great place to live. The Parish Council seeks to represent our community and works in partnership with others to serve our community of nearly 30,000 people. It has been a pleasure to lead the Parish Council and I wish my successor, Cllr Michael Pogson, the best of luck for his year as Chair.

Cllr Rachel Hogley

Chairman, Holme Valley Parish Council

Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee – Cllr Mary Blacka

This is my first report as Chair of the Planning Committee as I took over from Cllr Judith Roberts after the Annual General Meeting in September 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Cllr Roberts' years of service as Chair of the Planning Committee and her detailed local knowledge.

The work of the Committee, as for the Council as a whole, was disrupted by Covid 19. However, we managed to cope with the intricacies of Zoom and run efficient and productive meetings on-line. We have now returned to meeting in person. Because the Planning Committee often attracts several members of the public, wishing to raise issues in the open session at the beginning of the meeting, we have had to move recent meetings to venues larger than the Exhibition Room in the Civic Hall to allow for social distancing.

The Committee is very pleased that the passage of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) through its various stages has been relatively smooth. There are still some stages to complete, including a public referendum. Once the plan is fully 'made' we will be able to use its locally focused requirements when assessing planning applications. Our heartfelt thanks are due to Cllr Rachel Hogley who has steered the NDP through its many stages and continues to do so.

Considering proposed developments is always a balancing act. We wish to preserve and enhance the special built environment of the Holme Valley but know that economic development is also needed. We are all aware that there is a great need for sustainable and affordable housing in the Holme Valley and that, unfortunately, developers prefer to build large, expensive houses.

One recent initiative is to promote the Parish Council's Climate Emergency agenda by making positive comments on any planning applications which address green issues and to object to larger developments when these issues have been poorly addressed.

I would like to thank all members of the Planning Committee and the Deputy Clerk, Rich McGill, for their support for

me as a new chair. This is a demanding committee in terms of time, meeting much more frequently than other committees, to stay in step with Kirklees Council's planning cycles. Collectively, committee members have a wealth of local knowledge and experience and we do try hard to come to balanced judgements on planning applications and on wider issues.

Cllr Mary Blacka

Chairman, Planning Committee

Report from the Chairman of the Publications and Communications Committee – Cllr D Carré

This was another challenging year for the Parish and all of its Committees as we had to live with impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of our regular events and festivals which the Parish Council often has the pleasure to support have been cancelled and it was not until late July 2021 that a cautious start was made to open up community activity once more.

Many of the events and projects the Parish Council had given grants out to had to be cancelled due to COVID. The Tour de Yorkshire and VE Day commemorations are but two examples.

A decision was taken not to award our awards last year for Tidy Trader Awards and Community Champions. We know many traders had a tough year and we would have found it difficult to choose from the many in our community that stepped up this year. It is still unresolved about the awards for the year ahead.

But it's not all "doom & gloom" we still met as planned and many things were done.

Behind the scenes we have been working on a few projects to promote positive news and information in the valley. The following list is just some of them:

- Purchase of new noticeboard for Holmfirth Toilets to promote local events and services that the Parish Council supports.
- Update of the noticeboard by the Civic Hall.
- Purchase of new pavement sign for the maintenance contractor so people know some of the work we fund - especially the maintenance of the 150 parish benches.
- Purchase of hi-vis vests for use by community volunteers.

The Parish Council is becoming more proactive in regard to commemorating local events that reach milestones (like the Honley Show Centenary) by creating an annual checklist of upcoming milestones in regard to big events of the past that could/should be marked.

The Parish Council held all meetings via Zoom and videos of these meetings were uploaded to YouTube for members of the public to view. As we saw from the viral interest in the Handforth Parish Council these meetings can be of interest to many and what is now said in every future meeting will be available to view to everyone in the world. We think this level of transparency is good thing. Now we are back to face-to-face meetings that the public can attend we are routinely uploading audio recordings of all meetings.

To support this the Parish Council recently agreed the purchase of video and audio recording equipment, projector etc to trial improved recordings of hybrid meetings, streaming Council meetings and recording for YouTube.

As more Councillors now use laptops to look at papers for meetings and with the new trend of uploading content to the web the Council Offices were upgraded to fibre broadband to facilitate meetings in future. The Committee will consider recording options in the year ahead.

We are committed to promoting our work using various avenues including our monthly column in the Holme Valley Review free newspaper. We also have our own Facebook page and website. All are used to keep people informed on key work programmes such as the Neighbourhood Development Plan, Climate Emergency and the granting of awards. The Climate Emergency Committee has also set up its own website and social media pages.

On a personal note it was my first time holding office on a formal committee and I thank my fellow councillors for their support and ideas. I also want to give special thanks in recognition of the sterling work done by Richard, the Deputy Clerk who serviced our Committee and actioned most of the work throughout this difficult year.

Cllr Duggs Carré

Chair, Publications & Communications Committee

Report from the Chairman of the Finance and Management Committee – Cllr Michael Pogson

Carrying on from last year, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on the Council with meetings of the Finance and Management Committee continuing to be held via Zoom. Whilst this proved difficult at first, I believe that my fellow committee members adapted well, and this enabled the Finance and Management Committee to continue its business without too much disruption. However, both the income and expenditure of the Parish Council have been affected by the pandemic with some of the services that the Council funds, - toilets and buses, for example, - closing during the lockdown period and there was a reduction in the number grant applications received by the committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members and especially our RFO Rich McGill for their hard work, support and commitment. I am pleased to report that the Council has again agreed a budget that means there will be no uplift in charges to householders this year. Continued financial prudence has enabled the Council to choose to maintain charges to allotment holders and garage tenants at the same rates as 2019/20. A tenant has taken on the commercial premises adjoining the toilets in Holmfirth and we wish them well. A new Internal auditor has been appointed and I am happy to report that the Audit went well with no major concerns. The RFO has informed me that the Council has successfully moved over to a new accounting system which has been of great assistance in managing the Council's accounts and we now upload the Council's Financial Records to the website monthly for residents to view.

The Parish Council is proud to have provided grants to Honley Community Growers, Honley Library Children's Book Festival, Honley Cricket Club, Holme Valley Country Markets, Holmfirth Arts Festival (Art in the Woods) and Random Acts of Kindness.

Over the last year the Council has streamlined its Grants application process. Furthermore, one of our Committees, - the Community Assets Support Committee, - has been disbanded and a number of its functions passed to the Finance and Management Committee. This will mean that the Finance and Management Committee will have oversight of the majority of grant applications going forward.

Cllr Michael Pogson

Chairman, Finance and Management Committee

Report from the Chairman of the Staffing Committee – Cllr Trevor Bellamy

There have been many unavoidable changes to our normal work routines over this past year.

Covid led to officers working from home and setting up all Council and Committee meetings by Zoom. Councillors and staff working from a home environment led to varied reactions from all involved with much debate as to the merits of the scope and the duration of the changes and activities involved.

Covid has given lots of opportunities for training as there have been a lot of excellent and varied online classes for officers (and councillors) through our Yorkshire Local Councils Association membership with its much-used and appreciated support and advice facilities.

The Committee commissioned a review of staff workloads and Council is looking into how workloads can be better managed.

There are some changes in names and faces to report. We created and appointed to a new post – that of Climate Emergency Coordinator. We said goodbye to Liz Bennett as Clerk (many thanks, Liz!) and appointed Jen McIntosh as new Clerk (welcome, Jen).

We must also offer our thanks to our Deputy Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for his commitment and hard work. Many thanks also to our Maintenance Contractor. Though working to a contract rather than being employed he is a real part of the team.

Much appreciation and thanks to all involved with this Committee over the past year and looking forward to welcoming the forthcoming changes and challenges.

Cllr Trevor Bellamy

Chair, Staffing Committee

Report from the Chairman of the Community Assets Support Committee – Cllr Pat Colling

Despite Covid 19, the CASC committee continued to meet (via Zoom) and to support community assets throughout the valley. Unsurprisingly, the number of applications was down on a normal year, and the total amount spent was down too: our budget for the year was £85,091, and we spent £23,897. The projects we awarded grants to include fencing a boules court in Brockholes and several facility improvements including Holmfirth Bowling Club, Wooldale Community Association, and Upperthong Village Hall.

Our work with the Friends of Honley Library Trust regarding the community asset transfer of Honley Library from Kirklees to the Parish Council has gone on longer than we had hoped, but, at the time of writing, the final documents are with lawyers. We are hopeful that we will complete in time to take over in the autumn of 2021. This process has proved MUCH lengthier than any of us anticipated and I continue to be inspired by the Friends of Honley Library Trust team and look forward to our continued partnership in the future.

In Holmfirth the committee continued to work with Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust and has provided funding towards works now started on the hall. The Holmfirth public conveniences continued to be managed by the committee. Our tenants, Monty's Loft, have had a tough year in the shop space next door to the toilets. The pandemic struck the month they took it on, then there was flooding. They have now been properly open for several months and we wish them every success.

I would personally like to thank all members of the committee and our past council clerk and current deputy for their hard work and contributions to the meetings. We have had to be adaptable, and everyone has rallied to make the year successful.

Some of you will know that the CASC committee has been disbanded. It was agreed by councillors, staff, and an outside assessor that we had too many committees and too many meetings. There was some overlap of CASC'S responsibilities with the Service Provision and the Finance and Management committees so they will be divided between them with the toilets and shop, Honley Library, and the Civic Hall overseen by Service Provision and all grants now awarded by Finance and Management.

Councillor Pat Colling

Chairman, Community Assets Support Committee.

Report from the interim Chairman of the Service Provision Committee – Cllr Michael Pogson

Following on from my report from last year, 2020/2021 has been another eventful year for the Service Provision Committee. Cllr Jason Brook was elected chair of this committee at the start of the Council year in 2020 but was not able to take up this role due to ill health. The Vice Chair, Cllr Cath Bellamy, was then herself struck with ill health and also could not take on the Chair's role. Therefore it was agreed that I would step in as interim Chair of this Committee until they were both recovered.

For much of the year, meetings have been held via Zoom rather than in person and I can report that the committee members and Council staff have adapted well to this way of working and ensured that the business of this committee has been able to continue.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on some of the services that the committee oversees such as Holme Valley minibus service, and its benches, shelters, churchyard, and phone box maintenance. However, I am happy to report that these are getting back to normal.

The committee has been more than happy to continue to provide grants for Christmas festivities and Christmas trees and we have continued to support the efforts of communities of the Holme Valley in making this a special time of year. Going forward we are hoping to provide sustainable living trees where appropriate as recommended by the Council's Climate Emergency Committee.

We have had members of the public and representatives of local organisations attending and addressing several meetings and the Committee has received and responded to requests for grants for many diverse uses and activities.

I am also pleased to report that the Committee continues to focus on youth provision with Grants to Friends of Honley and they have appointed two youth workers to give young Honley people more opportunities of things to do. I really hope going forward that we can support such initiatives throughout the whole of the Valley.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Keith Fermor and John Ford for their help and hard work in digitally mapping all of the Parish Council Assets (benches, shelters etc). You can find the location of all our assets from the home page of the Parish Council website. Thanks also to all the volunteers who continue to refill the dog mess bag dispensers, the Council would not be able to continue to provide this service without their help.

Finally, I would to express my thanks to the outgoing Parish Clerk, Liz Bennett, wishing her well with her retirement, and to Deputy Clerk and RFO Rich McGill for the support that they have both provided this Committee over the last year. It really has been greatly appreciated.

Councillor Michael Pogson

Interim Chairman, Service Provision Committee

The last 12 months as we all know has presented many challenges within our communities in the Holme Valley. COVID - and the resultant health and economic impacts on our residents - has dominated our actions and thoughts in this period. We have seen how our communities have pulled together and supported each other during these difficult times. I am sure that this community cohesion and resilience in the valley will prove to be invaluable in developing an inclusive and green future for our residents.

The work of the Climate Emergency Committee continued during this period and the Parish Council demonstrated its commitment to delivering its Climate Emergency Action Plan by appointing our Climate Emergency Co-ordinator, Michelle Brown, to co-ordinate the work on the action plan. She has helped ensure the delivery of the following outcomes:

- Ran a week-long online community engagement event with videos and streaming of events.
- Set up of a standalone website. Increased use of bite-size videos.
- Installed the water bottle re-filling station in Holmfirth town centre.
- Implemented an energy audit of Parish Council buildings, with resultant action plan to reduce energy use
- Progressed the land-use mapping initiative in the valley through partnership working with Huddersfield University.
- Worked on active transport initiatives - cycling, walking etc - including identifying sites for bike racks. 'If it's not far, leave the car' scheme also in process.
- Home Energy Savings Booklet completed.
- Ensured that the subgroup's work continued through the use of zoom meetings.
- More partnership-building with community groups (HOTT, River Holme Connections, schools) and individuals (local farmers).
- Supported the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.
- Supported newly co-opted members who have brought new experience, skills and a fresh outlook.
- Working on a plan to do more with local allotment/growing space provision

All of the above provides a great base from which to build on and I am sure that the new Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee – Cllr Rachel Hogley - together with Michelle will continue to drive the implementation of the action plan in both a collaborative and positive manner.

Councillor Paul Davies

Chairman, Climate Emergency Committee

ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2021-22

	Year Ending	
	31st March 2020	21st March 2021
1. Balances brought forward	£224,724	£269,150
2. Precept	£274,970	£275,871
3. Total other receipts	£6,887	£8,123
4. Staff costs	£37,122	£58,700
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0
6. All other payments	£200,308	£147,343
7. Balances carried forward	£269,150	£347,101
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	£266,670	£337,368
9. Total fixed assets plus longterm investments and assets	£5,266,353	£5,271,894
10. Total borrowings	0	0

For ease of understanding, the Precept is money raised through local taxation.

Other income, here as **Total other receipts**, is raised through things like tenancies, bank interest and from donations in the Holmfirth public toilets.

Staff costs have increased because we have recruited new staff between the two terms, - a Deputy Clerk/RFO and a Climate Emergency Co-ordinator.

You will note that payments by the Parish Council have gone down significantly. Under the pandemic, lots of services were curtailed. Grant applications reduced markedly. This has meant that the Parish Council has more reserves than anticipated and will need to make adjustments in next year's budgets calculations.

The accounts are subject to audit, and are available for public view. Some accounting records are accessible from the homepage of the Parish Council's website or residents can review the accounts at the Council offices. The website will be updated once the external audit has been completed.

Grants Awarded:

Organisation/body specific purpose of grant	Date of Award	Amount
Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust (HCHCT) - Covid-19 aid (staffing)	APR 2020	£4,000
Holme Valley Covid Mutual Aid Group - R2 Distillers bulk hand sanitiser	APR 2020	£240
Full Life Church Food Bank – to food parcels	APR 2020	£6,300
Holme Valley Covid Mutual Aid - Expenses for volunteers (<i>returned unused</i>)	MAY 2020	£2,000
Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust - deep clean before re-opening after lockdown	JUN 2020	£1000
Holmfirth Bowling Club – Towards new Toilet block	JUN 2020	£5,000
Wooldale Community Association – towards resurface children’s playground	JUN 2020	£2,000
Upperthong Village Hall - repair of village hall	JUN 2020	£2,000
River Holme Connections - creation of riverside path, Thongsbridge	JUN 2020	£ 4,994
Brockholes Village Trust - fencing for Boules Court	JUN 2020	£2,000
Holmbridge Cricket Club - accessible Path to pavilion	JUN 2020	£5,000
Valley Minibuses	Paid in monthly amounts	£25,000
Christmas trees (x 6)	SEP 2020	£250
4 large Christmas trees provided by Kirklees Council	SEP 2020	£2873
Holmfirth Christmas lights (<i>not applied for</i>)	SEP 2020	
Honley Christmas lights	SEP 2020	£1000
Holme Valley (patient transport scheme	SEP 2020	£2000
Honley Youth Club	SEP 2020	£1000
Honley Library Children’s - events throughout the year	OCT 2020	£1000
Honley Growers – for planting around Honley library	OCT 2020	<i>deferred</i>
Honley Cricket Club – towards sight screens	OCT 2020	£200
Holmfirth Country Markets - perspex screen (COVID-19)	NOV 2020	£207
Holmfirth Tech Random Acts of Kindness - gift boxes of cheer	NOV 2020	£1000
Holmfirth Arts Festival	NOV 2020	£1000
Honley Village Trust – towards youth workers	NOV 2020	£4000
Hepworth Band Room - building repair	DEC 2020	£2000
Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership CIO - Grant for Land Use Mapping	DEC 2020	£5000
Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership CIO - energy audit of Council buildings	DEC 2020	£2500
Honley Business Association - towards CCTV equipment	FEB 2021	£5,000
	TOTAL	£86564

Councillor Contacts 2019-20

Ward	Name	Telephone
Brockholes	Michael Pogson	cllrnicholapogson@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07927 668327
Fulstone	Donald Firth	cllrdonaldfirth@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 683735
Fulstone	Di Hall	cllrldihall@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 686488
Hepworth	Thomas Dixon	cllrtdmixon@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07725 698860
Holmfirth Central	Mark Bustard	cllrmarkbustard@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk
Holmfirth Central	Rachel Hogley	cllrrachelhogley@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07970 475806
Honley Central & East	Pat Colling	cllrpatcolling@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 663214
Honley Central & East	Ben Lockley	cllrbenlockley@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07729 498385
Honley Central & East	Sarah Sheard	cllrsarahsheard@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk
Honley South	Joe Sweeney	cllrjoesweeney@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk
Honley West	Charles Greaves	cllrcharlesgreaves@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07888 698245
Honley West	Sean East	cllrseaneast@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07736 940326
Netherthong	Judith Roberts	cllrjudithroberts@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 684930 <i>NB. temporarily on leave from the Council</i>
Netherthong	James Dalton	07784 284661
Scholes	Paul Dixon	01484 685928
Scholes	Mary Blacka	cllrmariyblacka@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07908 074167 / 01484 686799
Upper Holme Valley	Kath Bellamy	cllrkathbellamy@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 683147 <i>NB. temporarily on leave from the Council</i>
Upper Holme Valley	Trevor Bellamy	01484 683147
Upperthong	Duggs Carré	cllrduggscarre@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07973 961159
Upperthong	Andy Wilson	cllrandywilson@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07802 892091
Wooldale	Jason Brook	cllrjasonbrook@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 01484 688790
Wooldale	Paul Davies	cllrpauldavies@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk
Wooldale	Darryl Gould	cllrdarrylgould@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk 07543 016668

Office contact details

Holme Valley Parish Council

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Deputy Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Council: Richard McGill
Email: deputyclerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Climate Emergency Co-ordinator: Michelle Brown Email: cec@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Office open: Tuesdays and Thursdays - 10.00am to 3.00pm.

Holme Valley Parish Council 2021-2022

Councillors: 23 representing 11 wards, and a population 27,000

Officers and staff: Clerk (3.5 days), Deputy Clerk & RFO (3.5 days), Climate Emergency Co-ordinator (18hrs). We also work with a regular maintenance contractor and his team.

Community Assets: Holmfirth Civic Hall, Holmfirth Public Toilets, Honley Library (in process), allotments at Holme, garage plots, nearly 200 public benches across the Valley, 35 stone bus shelters and 5 adopted Phone boxes.