



Holme Valley Parish Council



**Annual Report
2025 - 2026**

Chair's Message



Cllr Glenn Kirkby HVPC Chair 2025-2026

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair this year and to see the positive impact Holme Valley Parish Council has across our community.

Our grants programme continues to support festivals, events, youth activities, community transport and local buildings — helping to strengthen community life throughout the Valley. We also remain committed to maintaining the three buildings we own: Holmfirth Civic Hall, Honley Library and Holmfirth Public Toilets.

A major piece of work this year has been reviewing the Civic Hall lease with Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust. The new lease will help us make the best use of public money and support the Trust's long-term improvement plans. We have also begun developing a shared vision for the future of the Civic and look forward to hearing residents' views in the coming year.

We have made improvements at Holmfirth Public Toilets, including installing solar panels as part of our climate-action commitments, and we are excited to see the planned extension at Honley Library progress this summer.

Councillors have also supported the Democracy-Friendly Schools initiative, helping young people learn about local democracy. I encourage all residents to take part in the Kirklees Community Governance Review, which is considering possible changes to the structure of the Parish Council. The consultation is open until 20 April 2026 at: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/kirkleesCGR>

We continue to monitor the Holmfirth Town Centre Works and understand the disruption they have caused. We are pressing for clarity on completion and hope you have seen the Council-funded videos encouraging people to keep supporting local businesses.

This year we also welcome a new councillor, Rob Butler (Netherthong Ward). I want to thank all councillors for their time and commitment, and to thank our officers — Jen McIntosh, Rich McGill and Gemma Sharp — along with our Maintenance Contractor, John Ford, for keeping the Council running smoothly.

*Cllr Glenn Kirkby
March 2026*

Working Groups

Working groups are the bedrock of the HVPC's activity as these are how the Council Committees' decisions are actioned and delivered. Working Groups cover a wide range of activity. Membership is voluntary and Councillors frequently contribute to several at the same time.

Communications and Engagement

The Communications and Engagement Working group was set up to expedite relevant actions which the Council has approved, the plan can be seen on our website.

Reporting directly to Full Council, its remit is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Council's communication with the electorate. The group is constantly reviewing the ways in which it can best do this, and what to prioritise. Recently its Website and Social media presence, including video, have been a focus of activity, lead by Cllrs Ransby, Holmes and Whitelaw.

The Annual Parish Meeting has also been a focus of attention since this is a yearly opportunity for the Council to showcase its work and inform the HVPC community of its impact, face to face, as well as via Councillors' reports.

Details of the Communications and Engagement Plan for 2023-2027 which the Working Group are seeking to deliver is regularly updated and published with Full Council agendas.

- Cllr Sarah Whitelaw

Big Community Celebration

The event was designed to facilitate a large number of community groups and the Council showcasing their work, and enabling networking and volunteer recruitment. This working group consisted of Councillors Blacka, Whitelaw, Holmes, Baylin, Bellamy and Stewart with considerable support from Assistant Clerk, Gemma Sharp. All the hard work over the preceding months paid off with hundreds of people attending a vibrant and celebratory day for the whole of the Holme Valley Community.

- Cllr Sarah Whitelaw

Community Governance Review

This has been a task-centred group, formed to coordinate and present the Parish Council's response to the Kirklees Community Governance Review of local government structure and arrangements. At the time of writing, this process by Kirklees Council continues through to 2027 and the Parish Council will continue to monitor and contribute to this process.

- Cllr Lawrence Baylin

Tourism

The Parish Council has chosen to exercise its legal powers to support the development and promotion of tourism in the Holme Valley, believing this to be in the best interests of our local economy and a means of preserving and taking pride in our outstanding local assets. We have undertaken various initiatives within a proactive Holme Valley Tourism Partnership and, in particular, played a key part in the success of the Holme Valley Heritage Week 2025. This is in addition to the extensive support that the Parish Council provides to local festivals and celebrations through numerous grants. In 2026 -27, as the Holmfirth Town Centre improvements are completed and the Kirklees Tourism Strategy is implemented, we look forward to many further opportunities and projects.

- Cllr Lawrence Baylin

Sustainable Transport

This group is concerned with developing and promoting transport and travel methods that reduce the use of cars in the Holme Valley. In addition to our annual financial support for the community bus service and maintenance of stone bus shelters, we have been pursuing opportunities such as providing better information about local bus routes, links with partner organisations such as EPIK and the Penistone Line Partnership and investigations into potential Park & Ride options.

- Cllr Lawrence Baylin

Reference Group on the Local Plan: Working in Partnership

The Kirklees Council Local Plan sets the framework within which decisions are made on planning matters, throughout Kirklees. Whilst it has a focus on housing, the Local Plan also affects many other aspects of everyday life. It is currently being updated.

The Reference Group was set up to try to ensure that the updated Local Plan will reflect the real needs of the Holme Valley. As well as parish councillors, the Reference Group has over twelve groups as active members.

We submitted a first response to the update of the Local Plan in February '25 and ever since, have been working on an extended second submission for April '26. Once we have completed our work on the Local Plan, the next challenge will be the updating of the Neighbourhood Development Plan!

We also responded, in March '26, to a central government consultation on changes to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). We organised two consultation events on the NPPF changes, in Holme Village and Brockholes, from which we gathered a wealth of ideas and opinions.

A pleasing feature of this project is the good relationship we have with the Kirklees Council team, working on the update of the Local Plan, led by Jo Scrutton. I am indebted to those members of local groups who have given a lot of time to this work and to Parish Councillors Steve Ransby, Sarah Whitelaw and Andy Wilson.

- Cllr Mary Blacka

Covid Memorials

The two Covid Memorials, at Honley Library and at Sands, Holmfirth, were formally opened on 5 April '25. These were lovely events in the spring sunshine. The Sands memorial was opened first by Duggs Carré, who initiated Holme Valley Covid Mutual Aid. Participants then moved on to Honley Library, where the memorial was opened by Asghar Khan, of Medicare Chemist, who was pivotal in organising the Covid vaccination programme. After the ceremony refreshments were served in Honley Library.

The Honley Library memorial is practically finished, though there is a little more planting to do. At Sands, we are still waiting for permission to erect a plinth, on which to mount the memorial plaque.

- Cllr Mary Blacka

Report on Holme Valley Parish Council Finances 2025-2026

This represents a report for the full year of Holme Valley Parish Council's finances, though the figures for March 2026 are, to an extent, projected.

	Accounting Statements	2024-2025	2025-2026* (Projected)
1	Balance Brought Forward	£221,342	£156,870
2	Precept	£327,934	£447,780
3	Other Income	£22,371	£27,607
4	Staff Costs	£91,574	£99,520
5	Loan Payments	£0	£0
6	All Other Payments	£323,203	£352,403
7	BALANCE OF RESERVES TO CARRY FORWARD (1+2+3-4-5-6)	£156,870	£180,334

* These 2025-26 figures represent a report for the full year of Holme Valley Parish Council's finances, though the figures for the months of March 2026 are, to an extent, projected. Finalised figures will be available after 22nd June and the publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26.

It can be noted from the table that Holme Valley Parish Council ended 2024-25 with reserves of £156,870, - significantly down from £221,342 at its start. This was due to some significant, unexpected expenditure. In the current year, the Parish Council has acted to redress this. The Parish Council's total reserves are predicted to have increased to around £180,334 by end March 2026.

In terms of its expenditure, two by-elections were paid for this financial year, and the Parish Council went a little over its £10,000 Elections budget. The Parish Council committed £30,000 to Honley Library over the year, £15,000 as running costs and £15,000 to develop the building. £60,000 was spent on The Civic in Holmfirth including an important visioning exercise on the future of the building. A further £37,284 was spent on works to the roof of Holmfirth public toilets including the installation of solar panels. It is also projected that £75,000 will have been spent by the Council on grants towards our community assets and projects and events. Staffing costs are likely to be around £3,000 over budget.

The projected income of the Parish Council for the year 2025-26 (Box 2 + Box 3) is £475,387 and the projected expenditure (Box 4 + Box 6) is £451,923. The surplus of £23,464 will put the Parish Council's levels of reserves in a much better position going forward to 2026/27. This follows a deficit of £64,472 in the previous year, so is indicative of more effective management of its finances by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council expects to carry forward reserves of £180,334, of which around £79,578 is expected to be ringfenced as earmarked reserves for specific projects; the rest constitutes general reserves as a contingency fund.

Many of the Parish Council's financial records are available to view on the Council's website www.holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk or electors can inspect them in person by appointment.

Finance and Management



Cllr Jenny Holmes *Vice-Chair of the Finance and Management Committee*

Cllr Pat Colling has been Chair of the Finance and Management Committee for 2025–26. As Vice Chair of the Committee I have been acting in the role while Pat has been unable to carry out her duties for a period. As the newly elected Vice Chair I have tried to step into her shoes. I would like to start this report by thanking Pat for all the work she has done during this Council year. She has been a strong and committed councillor and has been greatly missed. I would also like to thank our RFO, Rich McGill, for his guidance and fellow Committee members for their support. We have all worked together to ensure a successful year.

The regular work of the committee is to monitor all financial matters under the guidance of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO). Income and Expenditure is checked against budget. Schedules of payment and bank reconciliations are routinely monitored. The RFO has included a summary of the Parish Council's finances in this report.

All councillors are involved in setting the annual budget. Once the different committees have considered how much money they will need to achieve good outcomes for the community F&M have to set a precept to match. The precept is the amount of money the Parish Council requires from Council Tax payers in the Holme Valley. We are pleased that this year we have been able to reduce the precept by a very small amount!

Householders are charged an amount according to their Council Tax band. The average household payment in the Holme Valley is just £41 for the year. This is far less than the national average and represents amazing value for money. Importantly it gives the Parish Council £447,717 to spend locally on the things that are important to you. We ensure that your money is spent judiciously for the benefit of local people.

Some of this money is spent on maintaining our assets, notably Holmfirth Civic Hall, Honley Library, Holmfirth Toilets, over 200 public benches, stone bus shelters etc. We tend to take these community assets for granted but it is extremely important that they are looked after and meet the expectations of residents.

The two largest Parish Council owned buildings, Honley Library and Holmfirth Civic are overseen by the F&M Committee. Both are managed by Trustees, staff, friends and volunteers and I would like to thank all of them for their commitment. Honley Library hosts an impressive number of events and regular activities. This year they are focusing on a much needed extension and improvements to the entrance. This is largely possible because of a generous grant from Holme Valley Land Charity and others.

Holmfirth Civic has increased the number of regular users and has hosted some amazing events whilst also making much need structural repairs to the building. A Vision for the Civic's future was commissioned by the PC and there are exciting plans to make the building more attractive and more able to meet the needs and aspirations of our growing community. We will soon be inviting everyone to be actively involved in the Civic's future development.

A key part of our work is to award grants to the many different groups and organisations that make the Holme Valley such a special place to live. Twice yearly in February and September we look at applications from volunteer led groups and award grants for community assets (Village halls etc) and for projects and events. We are so fortunate to have so many groups who freely give their time and energy, but they often need extra money to either survive or achieve ambitious goals. With a limited budget it can be difficult to decide which groups should receive an award. A working group was set up to ensure that grants are fairly awarded according to certain criteria and the PC's priorities. We have to consider how effectively they will use the money, how many people will benefit, their track record of delivery, etc The Grants Policy, general information and guidance on how to apply for a grant is available on the PC website.

Honley Open Gardens – funding helped provide transport between gardens (June 2025)



Grants Awarded 2025-2026

In 2025-2026 HVPC gave grant awards to:

- Holmfirth Civic Hall Community Trust £40,000 - towards priority works on The Civic
- Friends of Honley Library - £15,000 towards library running costs
- Holmfirth Festival of Folk - £1,500 rolling grant towards traffic management and insurance
- Holmfirth Arts Festival - £1,500 rolling grant towards Flow arts project
- Friends of Cliff Rec - £500 rolling grant to Carols on the Cliff Christmas event
- Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership - £928 towards a local and vegetarian food event at the Food Festival
- Holmbridge Cricket Club - £1,300 towards picnic benches and seating
- Huddersfield Sailing Club - £4,418 towards toilet facilities at the clubhouse
- Uppershong Village Hall - £3,640 towards new steps at the Hall
- Friends of Honley - £1,500 rolling grant towards seasonal planting of outdoor spaces
- Hepworth Community Association - £2,000 towards an air-to-air heat pump
- Sharing Memories - £1,500 towards an arts project
- Full Life Church Food Bank - £1,200 towards food, toiletries and toys for the Christmas food bank
- Environmental Projects in Kirklees EPIKs - £748.50 towards an active travel project
- Holmfirth Film Festival - £1,500 rolling grant towards venue hire for the Film Festival
- Holme Valley Crystal Nest - £1,280 towards therapeutic sessions for the parents of SEND children
- Wooddale Warblers - £1,070 to set up a community choir
- Hepworth Hurricanes - £1,500 dresses for girls netball team
- The Nest Holmfirth CIC - £1,440 towards room hire for mum/baby group
- Past Truisms - £415 towards Yorkshire Dialect Classes
- Honley Village Community Trust - £380 towards Halloween and Christmas parties for children
- Friends of Honley Library - £15,000 towards development of the Library building
- Holme Valley Transport - rolling grant £1,000 towards patient transport scheme
- Holmfirth Harriers - £5,000 towards a heating system for the clubhouse
- Honley Business Association - £1,560 rolling grants towards the Honley CCTV system
- Brockholes Village Trust - £4,979 towards upgrading fire alarms at the Village Hall
- Honley Players - £5,000 towards replastering the meeting room at Southgate Theatre
- Holmepride - £637.97 towards Holmeside Memorial Gardens Project
- Holme Community Centre - £5,000 towards new flooring
- Honley Village Community Trust - £769 towards purchase of a kissing gate
- Holmfirth Tech - £4,826.13 for soundproofing and insulation of the dance studio
- Just Hoop CIC - £5,000 towards renovations to convert a disused hall into a basketball court
- Wooddale Community Group - £1,000 rolling grant towards rent for youth club and baby club
- Holmfirth Musical Festival - £1,500 Festival running costs
- Holmfirth Children's Book Festival - £1,500 Festival promotions
- Holmfirth Arts Festival - £1,500 Creative Confluences Arts Programme
- River Holme Connections - £1,500 Nature-themed guided walks programme
- Holmfirth Pride Event - £1,500 Towards Pride event
- Holmfirth Food and Drink Festival - £1,500 Towards Festival costs
- Honley Village Community Trust - £262.50 Easter party for children
- Honley Show Society Ltd - £1,500 Printing of show programme etc
- Communities United - £1,500 Man Alive- men's mental health project
- Holme Valley Climate Action Partnership - £1,370 Food event at Food Festival - local produce and vegetarian food
- Café 100 - £1,500 Programme of activities; engagement events
- Hepworth Hurricanes - £1,500 Walking netball project
- Holmfirth Conservation Group - £1,500 Social Media, print and video/reels advertising Holme Valley Heritage Open Days 2026

Grants Working Group

This year's review by the Working Group was recently concluded following the excellent earlier work by Cllr. Colling. Many changes were considered (and rejected) but the final recommendations F&M included:

- Updating the Council's priorities for grants.
- Drawing up a Grants Policy for the Parish Council.
- Proposal to update the Parish Council's website Grants section so that the structure is founded on the Grants policy
- Updating the grant application form
- Updating the Grant Evaluation Report to include the new branding.
- Moving to a single pot of grants money from 2026/27
- Standardising the process for the consideration of grants outside the February/September cycle.

Thanks to the members of the Working Group and in particular to the Deputy Clerk for both his expert knowledge and compilation of mine (and others) ramblings during the meetings.

- Cllr Andy Wilson



Basketball facilities at Just Hoop



Cllr Alison Morgan Chair of the Service Provision Committee

The past year has been a busy one for the Service Provision Committee. The committee has working groups developing several different projects.

The transport working group has looked at ways of promoting the local minibus services in the Holme Valley and their links to the West Yorkshire public transport system. We identified a lack of knowledge amongst local residents as to the actual routes of these useful local buses and have commissioned a local graphic artist to make a colourful schematic map of the valley showing all the routes and destinations. We hope that this will help locals and visitors alike. We have also developed good links with the Penistone Line Partnership which has persuaded Brockholes and Honley to adopt their stations and looked at schemes to encourage active travel.

A working group also commissioned a local architect to submit ideas for improvements to the public toilets in Holmfirth. A condition report showed that many elements could be improved such as a better ventilation system to stop the persistent problem of condensation, updating the plumbing and sanitary ware as well as re-siting the disabled toilet which, in its current position has poor accessibility. A member of the business community also highlighted that there was no public baby changing facility in the centre of Holmfirth. All this has been addressed in a design proposal for which we are continuing to look for funding streams.



Our Christmas tree and decorations grant scheme worked very well this year with the parish council sourcing locally grown trees and communities coming together to decorate their village centres.

Our trusty maintenance man and his team continue to maintain all the benches, bus shelters and telephone boxes and war memorials in the Holme Valley as well as looking after the toilets.

Honley Library built a new garden on the site of a tired collection of gloomy shrubs which also contains the Covid memorial fruits trees. The site is transformed and adds so much to the library.

The Covid memorial fruit trees planted at Sands have suffered a couple of casualties and they will be replaced but is still awaiting a plaque. A new working group has been set up to promote environmental actions by local residents.

Holme Valley Urban Nature reserve is promoting small actions as gardens gardened for nature can be as biodiverse as an actual designated nature reserve. This collective power can go a long way to improving the health of the natural world where we live. Our first project is to create a swift village in Netherthong where a swift colony already exists but with the help of residents it can grow. After an inspiring talk by Leeds Swift Conservation Group's Linda Jenkinson we have a list of residents and the school who want to put up swift boxes and the promise of Openreach engineers coming to put them up by the end of the month. The parish council have bought the swift boxes in readiness and the residents will make a donation to their cost. The next nature promotion will be a bat walk and talk.

Roof repairs and new solar panels installed at Holmfirth Public Toilets in October 2025



Cllr Andy Wilson *Chair of the Planning Committee*

As in previous years this has proved to be a busy time for the Planning committee.

Following the decision in the last council year we now only meet every other month with a virtual, online, meeting in between. Coupled with the policy only to review planning applications that fit our criteria, the workload of application reviews has significantly reduced.

This means we are still able to consider all applications from both Kirklees and the Peak District National Park within the allotted timescales.

The relevance of the committee can be seen from the interaction with members of the public regarding planning issues and similarly approaches regarding a variety of topics.

Of course there are many matters outside Planning Applications that are considered by the committee including:-

- Highways issues such as traffic calming, Speed Indicating Devices and Green Lane control
- Consultation responses including the Peak District National Park Local Plan and the 2025 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The completion of the Shopfront Design Guide – with thanks to the Civic Society and Cllr Ransby for progressing this item

The committee has faced several challenges this year; the reduced number of Councillors (6) compared to previous years coupled with less frequent meetings makes progress on many matters rather slow.

I hope that a better balance of Councillors amongst the three available committees can be achieved during the next council year.

As Chair, I am grateful to the committee members for their work in examining the large number of Planning Applications and other activities; my particular thanks go to the Vice Chair Cllr. Ransby and the Assistant Clerk, Gemma Sharp who has the unenviable task of clerking the committee and for the support and advice to keep me “on track” during the year.



The Planning Committee helps the public to have a voice in local planning, infrastructure, and development matters



Cllr Lawrence Baylin *Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee*

The Staffing Committee oversees our three employees and deals with any employment matters including training, support, performance and any new appointments as approved by Full Council. It meets at least three times a year with additional meetings when required. I temporarily took over the Chair responsibilities in December 2025 when Cllr Pat Colling had to take a period of absence.

In the past year, we have been pleased to note the achievement of the Certificate in Local Council Administration by Rich McGill, Deputy Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and we record our congratulations to him. This follows the same achievement earlier in 2025 by Jen McIntosh, Clerk, and is an indication of the expertise available to the Council as we carry out our duties. We are also hugely thankful to Assistant Clerk Gemma Sharp for her skilled support and breadth of knowledge in areas such as Communications and Planning.

Administrative support is a critical element of the service that we provide to the community and it represents a significant proportion of the Council's total annual expenditure. We, as well as the staff team, are ever mindful of this and the duty to ensure value for money. In the past year, we have been undertaking a lot of work to seek efficiencies with exploration of the deployment of staff hours, the use of AI, the structure of the committees and the allocation of tasks and responsibilities amongst the staff team. I wish to record my thanks to the entire staff team for their support and incessant commitment, to my fellow members of this committee and notably to the work undertaken by Cllr Mary Blacka as the Staff Performance and Development Lead.

For more information about Holme Valley Parish Council, the latest news and contact details for all 23 Parish Councillors please visit our website:

www.holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk



The Civic, Huddersfield Rd, Holmfirth, HD9 3AS
Office open to the public: Tuesday, Wednesday
and Thursday 9.30am - 2.30pm

Phone: 01484 687460

(leave a message outside office hours)



Jen McIntosh (Clerk) clerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Rich McGill (Deputy Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

deputyclerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Gemma Sharp (Assistant Clerk) assistantclerk@holmevalleyparishcouncil.gov.uk