

## **Bradleys Both Parish Council**

### **Chairman's report 2024**

The last year has been dominated by two events: the adoption of the village's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in October and the proposed development of the site on Skipton Road for 24 homes. Both have taken up much of the Parish Council's time and effort. The NDP is, in fact, the outcome of much work over the last ten years or so by individual parish councillors both past and present. Thanks are due to them for all their efforts which have provided us with an NDP which ought to provide a framework for development in the village for the next eight years. Thanks are also due to our planning consultant, David Snelson, without whom it is unlikely we would have been able to surmount numerous technical and other hurdles to finalising the NDP. Presumably, if planning legislation remains unchanged, the process will then start again but the current NDP should provide a template for its successor so that, in future years, the process should be completed much more quickly.

Adoption of the NDP was rapidly followed by news of the proposed development on Skipton Road for 24 houses in November. Reviewing the developer's plans and meetings with both the developer, RN Wooler, and (so far on one occasion) a representative of North Yorkshire's planning department have been foremost of our concerns over the last six months. There are widely differing views about the development in the village: some are totally opposed, some believe it could be better and some welcome the provision of more housing in the village. However, the site was designated for development in the local plan formulated by Craven District Council and the Parish Council had to accept that designation when it formulated the NDP. The Parish Council has, therefore, accepted the principle that the site will be developed but has been anxious to ensure that the development will be as good as possible in terms of layout, design, environmental concerns and in all other respects.

The outcome remains to be seen but the Parish Council hopes that it will be possible to secure significant improvements to the original plans. That outcome will, inevitably, involve some compromise between the developers, the planners at NYC and the Parish Council. There are, however, enduring concerns about the impact of the development on the village infrastructure: drainage (both foul and run-off), road safety and school place provision in particular. The Parish Council will continue to monitor these issues and attempt to bring pressure to bear on the relevant service providers although, in reality, our powers in these areas are virtually non-existent.

The fate of the development on the old Coal Stray has also been prominent amongst the Parish Council's concerns. We seem to have arrived at a compromise solution for the re-routing of the overhead power lines which were too close to the new development and brought it to a grinding halt some years ago. Proposals advanced by the developers involved moving the overhead lines closer to dwellings in Ings Drive which the Parish Council opposed. The compromise solution involves replacing the overhead cables in the critical area with underground power lines. Work has yet to start, or re-start, but the Parish Council is cautiously optimistic that a compromise solution has been found for a long-running problem.

On a brighter note, thanks are also due to everyone in the village who has participated in community events. Thanks are due, in particular, to those who have organised the village show for many years past. Unsurprisingly, they now feel unable to continue the task (it involves a lot of organisation and hard work) so it is to be hoped that others will come

forward to take their place although they will need to do so quickly if we are to have a village show this year!

Thanks are also due to Bradley in Bloom and its volunteers who have organised the planting and landscaping of Sweet Croft, the original field name of the village burial ground, as well as the mowing and conservation of the roadside verges along with other work such as occasional litter-picks. They have also organised the raised beds and flower baskets at the village hall which have contributed greatly to its appearance – as well as the appearance of much of the village elsewhere.

Looking to the future, the Parish Council faces significant expenditure on the cricket pavilion following a burst pipe and flood over the winter and on a drainage scheme for the football pitch. It is hoped the drainage scheme will enable the football club to return to playing at the playing fields in Bradley – at the moment, and as a result of severe flooding of the pitch here, they are based elsewhere. The playing fields are owned by the Parish Council and were given to us by the Green family as a playing field and area of public recreation in perpetuity for the inhabitants of the village and the Parish Council are determined to ensure they discharge that trust.

Another significant project is the re-surfacing and landscaping of the car park adjoining the village hall. Unlike the village hall (which is owned by a separate group of trustees), this land is owned by the Parish Council. Bradley in Bloom have done much to reclaim and improve the land here with planting schemes and raised beds so that its appearance is greatly improved but more work will be needed in the future on the surfacing and also a retaining wall where the land slopes away downhill. Needless to say, this will come at a significant cost.

The Parish Council's most significant source of income is a precept from the rates which currently stands at just over £20,000 per annum. Thus the Parish Council have much work on their hands and only limited resources with which to complete it. They also have very limited, indeed almost no, powers when it comes to dealing with other bodies which have significant resources. We can, however, act as a voice for local concerns and our local ward councillor, Andy Brown, has proved to be very helpful in this regard and has secured funding for some relatively modest local projects such as the extension of the 20mph speed limit in the village. Traffic related issues are another area of local concern but where the Parish Council has no powers although we can act as an advocate for the community with, in this case, NYC's highways department.

The Parish Council would want to stress the importance of the involvement of the local community in these and other issues. Our powers are very limited but we can act as a mouthpiece for the community, sometimes with some effect although it is fair to say that is not always the case. However, we would like to stress that members of the village community should not hesitate to raise issues of concern with the Parish Council. We may not be able to solve them, indeed we are frequently unable to do so, but we can voice those concerns with the powers that be.

In closing, I should also welcome Sarah Scully to the Parish Council. She has been active on a number of local issues and significantly lowers the average age of the members of the Parish Council.