

Halton Holegate Parish Council

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 8th May 2025.

1 Introduction

The following report covers the period of 12 months since the last Chairman's report presented in May 2024.

The past 12 months have seen some significant issues affecting our community, none less significant than the ongoing recovery efforts from the devastating floods that hit us in October 2023 during Storm Babet.

The Council have spent much time and effort investigating the causes of the flooding, in preparing a fully documented report of the findings of those investigations and most importantly lobbying the relevant Lincolnshire and National Flood Risk Management Authorities to secure improved systems and operational management - all aimed at reducing the risks of flooding from future storms.

The Period has also seen no less than Four transmission line proposals from Renewable energy projects being identified that may all have impacts on our Parish Area. These include a single overhead Pylon proposal and 3 separate underground cable proposals. This Council has been consistent in their responses seeking to persuade the Government and Planning Inspectorate to take these works offshore through the Wash with the aim of minimising or removing the potential impacts on our community. We must all accept the realities though that these are very likely to occur in some form given the policies of the current government either here in Halton Holegate or elsewhere as they are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and future power sustainability is at stake.

The Council continues to actively address the potential impacts of major development planned for the outskirts of Spilsby.

I will now go on to describe how the Councillors have conducted the business of the Parish Council over the last year.

2 Councillor's and Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

I am delighted to be able to confirm that the Council continues to have a full complement of Councillor's who have all worked hard to oversee the matters of importance affecting our village and surrounding areas.

Our Clerk Jack Sargeant continues to serve the council efficiently and has instigated a number of modernising measures that have streamlined and updated our administration practices. We are grateful to Jack for his on-going service.

Our Clerk can be contacted by email; HHPCClerk@outlok.com or on 07872 753189.

3 Meetings

Meetings have taken place on a bi-monthly basis throughout the year mostly on the second Thursday of the months of May (AGM and annual Parish Meeting), July, September & November (Budget Setting) in 2024 and in January and March 2025.

An additional meeting in January 2025 and workshops were also held to address the ongoing recovery from the flooding caused by Storm Babet in 2023. These meetings were required to conduct urgent discussions and to consult the community on decisions required to ensure that recovery from the impacts could proceed.

I am delighted to report that all Councillor's attended all meetings throughout the period of this report or when unable to be present had their apologies accepted by the other councillor's present on each occasion.

Agendas and minutes of all Parish Council meetings together with details and dates for all forthcoming meetings can be found on the Parish Council website.

4 Finances

The main source of income for the Council is the Parish Precept which is levied on all properties within the parish and is collected via Council Tax to off-set the costs of delivering local parish council services.

At our November 2024 meeting the council scrutinised the financial position of the Council in the year to date (2024/25) and considered the volatile financial climate of ongoing high inflation and price increases which were at that point running at around 5% per annum. After weighing up all the external forces at work and the needs to deliver the activity of the Council including additional expenditure arising from the flooding in October 2023 within a balanced budget an Annual Precept of £4975 was fixed for Financial Year 2025/26. This represented an increase slightly below the rate of inflation current at the time of 5.0% when compared to the 2023/24 pre-cept of £4750.

Our budget forecasts for subsequent years look very favourable and we are optimistic that without further major incidents affecting national and international inflation we will be able to restrict pre-cept rises to around or below the prevailing future inflation rates.

The Council's budget and spending plans can be viewed on their website.

5 Planning Applications and Development Controls

Councillors continue to view, discuss, and comment on planning applications referred to them by ELDC and LCC Planning Departments. A total of 5 Applications including the Major Development in Spilsby have been scrutinised in the last year.

All applications have been supported except one on Plot South of 54 Station Road due to the potential encroachment onto the two main sewer outlets from Spilsby that pass through the plot. Unfortunately, in spite of this Council's concerns ELDC Granted Planning Consent. On all the others support was given but where appropriate with requests to the Planning Authorities that specific conditions be attached to Planning Permissions that preserve the amenity of adjacent properties (neighbours) and of the wider community.

The Council has also been notified on a small number of enforcement actions initiated by ELDC on Planning or Environmental Grounds. Comments where appropriate have been submitted.

6 Highways, Footpaths and Waste Disposal.

Supported by our County Councillor the Council has been successful in achieving resolution of several matters affecting the safety of road users and pedestrians including Potholes and road drainage grids and off-lets.

The Council is currently seeking to find solutions to safety matters in Station Road and especially the dangers posed by inappropriate or unnecessary vehicle parking around the Primary School and near the Peasgate Lane / Station Road junction.

7 Policies

The council has a number of Policies in place and continues a process of review, updating as necessary and periodic re-adoption.

The full list of current Policies can be found on our website.

8 Flooding October 2023 – Storm Babet and on-going Recovery

In October 2023 the village suffered serious flooding caused by extreme rainfall during Storm Babet. In all 18 Properties were affected by the flood waters with 11 of those suffering Internal flooding. This was devastating for those affected and the Council offered their sincere sympathy and has pledged their full support to aid recovery.

Immediately after the event the Council carried out a full investigation of the causes and impacts. In November 2023 a Full Report of findings was published (See Council Website) an Action Plan was agreed and implemented. This report was updated in February and March 2024 as new information emerged. The main thrust of this was aimed at lobbying all the various Flood Risk management Authorities of Lincolnshire to secure change and improvements to their Operational Management and Assets to reduce the likelihood (Risk) of reoccurrence.

In January 2025 LCC published their Statutory Section 19 report detailing causes and impacts of the flooding event. HHPC Councillors contributed significantly to the S19 Report process and were successful in influencing a comprehensive list of Recommendations for works by

RMA's in the final document. The Halton Council report is included as an Appendix to the S19 Report.

These partnership activities and investigations continue.

Most recently LCC have commissioned Stantec Consultants to carry out a Feasibility Study aimed at identifying the most sustainable works and activity options for implementation. This Council continues to play an active part in these discussions via a series of regular consultation meetings.

2025 has also seen the preparation of and implementation of a Community Emergency Plan which it is hoped will help raise awareness with parishioners of how they can prepare and respond to any future situations more effectively whilst providing lines of communication to seek Emergency Service support when required. This work has been led by Councillor Chris Edwards to whom we record our sincere thanks and appreciation.

9 Access / Communications with Council

All meetings of the Council are open to the public. Notices of meetings including venue, dates and times are published on the three council's notice boards and on our website. A public participation item is included on all agendas which is available for members of the community to bring any matters of concern to the attention of councillors.

Agendas and minutes of all Parish Council meetings together with details and dates for all forthcoming meetings can be found on the Parish Council website.

<https://halton-holegate.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk>

Type the above address into your search engine or alternatively Press "Ctrl" on your keyboard and mouse click on this link to navigate to the Home page.

In closing I wish to acknowledge the support of all our Parish Councillors and our Clerk.

And I also wish to give a special mention and thanks to our District and County Ward Councillor's Cllrs Terry Taylor and Cllr Wendy Bowkett respectively. They have both been ever present at our meetings throughout the year, offering their support and advice, giving freely of their time in support of your Parish Council in seeking resolution of matters affecting our community.

Councillors were especially saddened by the unexpected and defeat of our County Councillor Wendy Bowkett at the May 1st Elections. Wendy has without doubt been a true local champion who has worked tirelessly to help drive forward improvements to services for the benefit of the local communities in her ward. We are especially indebted to her for her unwavering support of the Parish Council's attempts to achieve improved flood protection in the wake of Storm Babet in 2023 and preceding storm events. We will all miss her, as a friend of our village and as our Ward Councillor.

Finally, I can advise that a copy of this report is available on request from the Clerk or it can be read on the Council's website.

David Sisson

Chairman

Halton Holegate Parish Council.

8th May 2025.