

Cottingham Parish Council Chair's Report 2024 - 2025

April 2025

Welcome to the 2024/25 Chair's report, which provides a summary of the work carried out by our parish councillors, clerks, officers and volunteers during the year.

During the year Cottingham Parish Council has continued to provide a range of services and support to Cottingham residents, promoting the welfare and development of the village whilst aiming to protect and enhance its historic and cultural identity.

The Parish Council comprises 11 members, with the following serving during 2024-2025

Castle Ward

A Duke (resigned 11/10/24)
R Jump
N Porteus (co-opted 17/12/24)
M Stather (co-opted 26/11/24)
J Stubbs (resigned 21/11/24)

Croxby Ward

T Booth (resigned 7/1/25)
C Cantrell (resigned 18/7/24)
S Kind (elected 3/10/24)
A Larkin (elected 20/3/25)

Millbeck Ward

K Casson
J Marten

Priory Ward

D Graves
L Kemp
D Longbottom
M Ward

Parish Council Meetings

During the year the Parish Council has continued to meet on the third Thursday of every month apart from August and December. There have also been four extraordinary meetings to deal with matters that emerged between scheduled meetings. The Parish Council has considered a number of consultation papers on governance issues, such as Standards and Conduct, Remote Attendance and Audit as well as a review of East Riding ward boundaries, and has considered a range of issues raised by residents and ongoing proposals to improve parish services and facilities.

The Council has worked closely with other agencies including ERYC, HEY Hospitals, Wastewise, National Rail and Humberside Police to seek solutions to local issues such as concerns about road safety, speeding and parking, foul odours, anti-social behaviour and flooding. The Council has been pleased to support the Shopwatch scheme which has resulted in a significant reduction in shop crime.

The Parish Council has also welcomed the contribution of Ward Councillors who provide an extremely useful conduit between the parish and ERYC and ensure that parish issues are represented and considered by the unitary authority.

Committees

Cottingham Parish Council operates through a number of committees and working groups which focus on particular issues.

Planning Committee

This Committee comprises the whole membership of the Parish Council and meets regularly to consider planning applications and submit comments to the Planning Authority. A key role of this Committee is to ensure that applications are in accordance with the agreed Neighbourhood Plan and that proposals are not detrimental to the environment, appearance or character of the parish and do not contribute to traffic management issues. In addition to considering planning applications, the Planning Committee has undertaken resident surveys to try to address the parking issues arising from Castle Hill Hospital, the outcome of speed surveys and the impact of odours from Biowise, as well as feeding into consultation on EV recharging spaces in the village. Through the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group the Parish Council has also responded to a number of national and local consultation exercises:

NALC – Reform of the National Planning Policy Framework

ERYC – Draft Design Code

ERYC – Local Plan modifications and post hearing notes

National Grid Upgrade

Natural England – Proposed New Yorkshire Wolds area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

EV Charging

Conservation Area rules and regulations

Allotments Committee

During 2024-25 the Allotments Committee has focused on maintaining the allotment site and investing in facilities. A number of allotments have become available during the year, but demand still outstrips supply and the Parish Council continues to investigate options for an additional site.

Finance Committee

The Parish Council's Finance Committee is responsible for budget monitoring and ensuring the Council complies with both internal and external audit requirements. The Committee has been charged with reviewing the Council's grant scheme and will also investigate opportunities to obtain additional funding through grants and other funding opportunities to help the Council meet its objectives.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee has undertaken a review of HR policies and procedures to ensure the Council is compliant with current legislation and good practice and have provided support to staff in their employment with the Parish Council

Council Priorities

The Parish Council identified a number of priorities for 2024-25 including environmental improvements, further development of events, the establishment of a Town Centre project, improvements to recreational facilities and investment in administrative systems.

Environmental/highways projects

During 2024-25 the Parish Council has made significant improvements to the Memorial Gardens, working with volunteers to improve the planting and tidy up beds. The railings have been painted ready for VE day and memorial plaques are to be inscriptions are to be renovated. The Parish Council and Friends of the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden have also spent

considerable time developing the Beck Bank garden as a community facility and have planted hundreds of spring bulbs and started to look at the tree works required. Bulb planting has also taken place in Grandad's Park and the Parish Council has partnered with the Working for Health CIC, who have adopted Cottingham Station and are working to reinvigorate Cottingham in Bloom.

Council assets have been reviewed and repaired or improved where necessary. We have replaced two of the village entrance planters and signs and have updated the village maps in noticeboards across the village. To help local businesses keep their premises accessible for customers and visitors we have also provided each local business with access to a bag of rock salt during the winter months.

The Parish Council has also launched a blue plaque scheme with the aim of recognising the contribution of former Cottingham residents to a range of developments and achievements. Two nominations are currently under consideration and the Council would welcome other suggestions.

The Parish Council has worked closely with ERYC to address highways and road safety concerns and continues to press for action at accident hotspots, crossings and areas near schools. We applied for funding to extend the 20mph zone in the village centre and for a new bus shelter on King Street near Hallgarth Residential Home

Recreation

ERYC has offered the opportunity through committed sums to invest in multi-use games areas and/or multi-gym equipment in the village, and to help collect evidence of demand the Parish Council reissued its recreation survey to find out what facilities residents currently use and what they would like to see. The Council is working with ERYC to develop provision at KGV and determine the future of the BMX track and also identify other suitable sites for investment.

Town Centre Project

The Parish Council appointed a Town Centre Officer in June 2024. Their role is to work with the Parish Council, local businesses and community organisations to develop and implement the Town Centre Action Plan and support the delivery of a range of events in Cottingham to help promote what the village has to offer. During 2024/25 we have helped relaunch the Cottingham Business Forum and supported events including D Day 80, VE Day 80, a Teddy Bear's Picnic, the Celebration of Older People, scarecrow and Halloween trails, a late night shopping event in the run up to Christmas, and a 'Green Scene' event which aimed to support environmental activities and businesses.

Events

As in previous years we have held the highly successful Cottingham Day and Christmas Festival events each of which have generated approximately 20,000 visitors who have enjoyed a variety of food and drink, fairground rides and attractions and been entertained by local musical groups and artists. We are planning to repeat these events in 2025-26 and are also looking at working with partners to hold other events to promote the village.

Administrative systems

During 2024 – 25 we have continued to review processes and procedures and update policies. We have introduced new .gov.uk email addresses for staff and councillors to promote a more professional image and will be reviewing and upgrading the website in 2025-26.

Strategic Plan

During the year the Parish Council has developed and adopted a Strategic Plan which will cover the period 2024 -2027 . We have agreed a vision for Cottingham to be

“a strong and vibrant community where residents, businesses and voluntary organisations thrive”

and have set out a series of aims and aspirations to deliver this vision and an action plan for 2025 - 2026. Our aspirations are for Cottingham to be:

- A resilient community with a good quality of life, working towards a sustainable, greener future.
- A thriving village centre.
- Attractive and clean public realm.
- A population that is healthy and feels safe.
- Green spaces that are accessible to the whole community.
- A vibrant community and voluntary sector.
- An effective and well-run Council.

Copies of the Strategic Plan can be found on our website. We review progress against our Action Plan regularly and update it to reflect proposed actions for future years.

Increase in the precept

In order to achieve the aims of our Strategic Plan we have identified a number of areas where we need to increase spending. The majority of the Parish Council's budget is funded from a precept included in Council Tax bills and collected on our behalf by ERYC. This year we have made a modest increase in our precept demand which equates to approximately £5.71 per year for a Band D property. This increased budget will support further investment in Parish Council assets such as seating, planters, bins, the Memorial Gardens and the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden as well as the Blue Plaque scheme and recreational facilities.

Grants

The Council has continued to support local groups and organisations through its grant funding. In 2024 - 25 we have supported:

A small grant of £50 for the Halloween House Hunt maps

Larger grants to

Cottingham Christmas Lights

Cottingham Lawn Tennis Club

Cottingham Village Trust – Operation of Public Toilets

Cottingham Memorial Club

Working for Health - Growing Together – Cottingham in Bloom

Overall the Parish Council has had a very successful and productive year and looks forward to building on this work in 2025-26.

Councillor Kevin Casson, Chairman