

ALDWARK AREA PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2024/25

The last year has been busy for the Parish Council with the main activities centered around responding to and attending the Aldwark Bridge toll fee increase public inquiry, organizing new parish council noticeboards for Aldwark and Youlton, and purchasing a defibrillator for Youlton, as well as business as usual.

Following the formal application to increase the Aldwark Bridge toll fees in July 2024 by the owners of the bridge, the Parish Council re-established the Aldwark Bridge Working Group and, along with numerous private individuals, submitted an objection to the application. A public inquiry was held in mid-March 2025 at the Galtres Centre in Easingwold at which I, as Parish Council Chair, represented the objectors. Thanks go to Richard Bray and Steve Morrell who also attended and challenged the applicant's team. The Inspector committed to write his report by the end of April, which then goes to the Secretary of State for Transport for a final decision on the application. We await the result with baited breath.

In Flawith, development works have continued on the Chapel Farm site and works have made rapid progress on the new housing site between Drover's Lodge and Broadacres. The village phonebox, previously converted into a book exchange, was fully refurbished and repainted over the summer of 2024 and special thanks go to James Russell for doing most of the work.

Development works have continued at the Aldwark Manor Estate with the new fine dining facility opening in 2024 and works underway on the new leisure/spa facilities.

The Aldwark Play Area continues to be well used by local children, and families visiting The Aldwark Arms. Some renewal of timber posts is likely to be required this coming year.

New village noticeboards have been purchased for both Aldwark and Youlton, and thanks go to local residents for installing both.

The defibrillators in Aldwark and Flawith continue to be maintained and are registered with Yorkshire Ambulance Service. The Parish Council successfully applied for funding from North Yorkshire Council and Easingwold Lions to support the purchase and installation of a defibrillator for Youlton, which is now registered and fully operational.

Our local community police officer and North Yorkshire Council community safety officer attended the parish council meeting in November 2024 where rural crime and speeding was discussed. As a follow-up to the speeding concerns, the police undertook a mid-morning speed check in January 2025 in both Flawith and Aldwark (not the best time of day to catch speeding motorists) with no offending vehicles seen. We continue to push for a mobile camera van to carry out speed enforcement in both villages.

Litter picks have taken place by volunteers across the parish during the year with further events to be organized. We have also undertaken some specific grass verge cutting where poor visibility has been noted. This is, however, the responsibility of the North Yorkshire Council as the Parish Council can't accept any liabilities in this regard.

John Topliss
Chair of Aldwark Area PC
May 2025