



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

This report aims to update you on some of the work we have been doing on your behalf over the past twelve months, future projects and useful information.



WHAT WE DO



Horsforth Town Council is the first tier of local government. The role of Horsforth Town Council is to represent the whole of the Horsforth community. It holds full council meetings every two months where it discusses local concerns and planned events, listens to any issues raised by residents and presentations on the work of community groups and ratifies spending decisions. All decisions are agreed and made by the whole Council, via democratic vote; no individual councillor can make decisions. Full council also oversees and ratifies decisions made by committees that were formed to focus on specific areas of council business.

Horsforth Town Council wants to ensure that all residents of Horsforth are represented by the council. It has elected representatives who attend community initiatives such as Dementia Friendly Horsforth and Horsforth Fair Trade, and has a Young People's Champion. The Town Council strives towards ever closer ties and works with the people of Horsforth and encourages interested residents to get involved.

The Town Council raises money for Horsforth through the Precept, collected with the council tax, which is invested back into Horsforth through local services to the area such as events, Christmas lights, street furniture, flowers and watering.

Information about the Town Council can be found at www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk. On the website you can find the dates of Town Council meetings including the agendas and minutes, latest issues news and information relevant to Horsforth and the Town Council.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Report by Councillor Dowling



As I come to the end of my second period as Chairman of Horsforth Town Council, I would like to thank all my fellow town councillors for the work they have done for the community over the past 12 months since the last Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

It would not be right of me to ignore the fact that at the elections in May 2023, many long serving councillors stepped down or were not re-elected to the council. The council therefore on that occasion had over 50% newly elected councillors. Since the elections last year, Cllr Harris and Cllr Connors have stepped down from their role as a councillor for the Brownberrie Ward and Victoria Ward. I want to thank them both for all the work they have done for the Town Council. We will be looking at co-opting two councillors on to the council by the end of July 2024.

Our town clerk, Becky Crabtree, has continued to work hard for the council. She has proved more than capable, and I thank her for all her hard work over the last year. She was ably assisted by Steph White who joined our team in 2023 as our admin assistant, completing the office team. Both Becky and Steph have worked hard this year to ensure the council is able to deliver on its commitment to the community. In the background they have worked hard for the council and supported it in achieving the foundation level of the Local Council Award and we have become a living wage employer through the living wage foundation. I also want to congratulate Steph on achieving her ILCA award. Finally, I want to thank both Steph and Becky for managing our move as a council from the Mechanics Institute to The Stables at the end of 2023.

The council spends its time and resources in a wide variety of ways to improve the lives of the people of Horsforth.



The big news from the council this last year has been the finalisation of plans for 3 The Green for community use. Over the next 12 months the work will start and hopefully be completed. This time next year we will be able to start using this venue to its full potential for the community.

The council has the following things already set in the pipeline for the next twelve months:

- Refurbishment of 3 The Green for community use
- D-DAY 80th Anniversary
- Walk of Art celebrations

COUNCILLORS

The Town Council has 22 councillors who are elected to represent one of the five wards in the town. Councillors are elected to serve a period of four years. The councillors serving from May 2023 until May 2027 are:



Councillors are elected by the Horsforth community to carry out three main roles. The first is to make decisions about things such as spending, community events and services. Secondly, councillors monitor all decisions taken, to ensure that they were effective. Thirdly, councillors commit themselves to staying informed about local issues and to listening to the range of opinions on those issues within Horsforth.

The Town Council holds regular advice surgeries to provide an opportunity for residents to discuss items of concern and/or interest with a town councillor. Two or more councillors attend each surgery. Surgeries are held before every full council meeting at 6.30pm. No booking is required.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report by Councillor Gains



The work of the Community and Environment Committee involves supporting, and celebrating the incredible work done in our community to make Horsforth the best place to live in Leeds.

I was elected Chair of the Community and Environment Committee in May last year and I am pleased to report on a busy and productive year for this committee. My first role as Chair was to thank previous members of the committee for their hard work last year. Since then we have met five times to oversee and administer grants to community organisations; take reports from Councillors working to organise events like the Christmas event and the Remembrance Service; administer the award scheme celebrating the outstanding community contribution made by individuals and groups in Horsforth; ensure the provision of floral displays in the public spaces around Horsforth; and work with councillors on the Editorial Group who produce the council's Newsletter keeping the public up to date with the work of the Council.

Organising Community Events

Working groups of councillors report to the Community and Environment Committee on their work to organise events like the Christmas Event, Remembrance Service and Annual Event. These occasions bring together members of the community of all ages and help foster a sense of local community pride.

The Christmas and Annual Event was hosted in collaboration with Horsforth Town Team representing local businesses and is a vital part of ensuring a vibrant and busy commercial environment in our Town Centre and maintaining the local shopping experience we all value.



Grants

The Town Council offers grants and sponsorship up to £500 to community organisations based in Horsforth in need of funding. This year, the Town Council awarded £4000 to:

- £200 to WW1 100 years towards electricity costs for the lights inside the perimeter walls of the Fink Hill Cenotaph site to illuminate the memorial.
- £500 to Woodside St James' PCC towards the construction of the Community Pantry.
- £500 to Walk of Art towards the event being held to celebrate the 10th year anniversary in 2024.
- £500 to Horsforth Shed towards a replacement router.
- £500 to Horsforth Community Garden, a project of Friends of Horsforth Hall Park towards raised beds for growing vegetables and herbs.
- £500 to 9th Airedale Scouts towards camping activities.
- £500 to Horsforth Churches Together towards the community Walk of Witness on Good Friday.
- £500 to Horsforth Central Methodist Church towards a boiler.
- £300 to Horsforth Hawks towards new rounders equipment.

Further information is available on the Town Council website which sets out the criteria for applications.

Floral Displays and Public Spaces

We also purchase and maintain the hanging baskets and planters across Horsforth. We work with, and are helped by, the dedicated Horsforth in Bloom volunteers. Their work was recognised this year as they won the Good Citizen Group Award.

We approved the provision of a new waste bin on the green space off Featherbank Lane.

We also worked with another marvellous group of volunteers - Horsforth Litter Pickers. We conducted litter picks in each of the five wards of Horsforth in October and collected a staggering 65 bags of litter.

We were also able to use these days to check on the state of footpaths around Horsforth reporting issues and problems to Leeds City Council.

We plan to do ward based litter picks again this October and use this time to check on the various assets of the Town Council in each ward. We have plans to carry on working with businesses and local schools to raise awareness and reduce the problem of litter across Horsforth going forward.



The Heart of Horsforth Awards

At our Christmas Event we distribute awards to recognise and celebrate the incredible hard work and dedication of members of our community.

A key agenda for the committee this year was to refresh our award scheme and develop the categories we want to recognise reflecting the wide range of ways in Horsforth benefits from our community champions. Our new awards will have five categories and we have renamed the awards scheme 'The Heart of Horsforth Award Scheme' – a fitting tribute to the kindness, creativity and selfless way in which people at the heart of Horsforth contribute to the community.

Further details can be found on page 8.

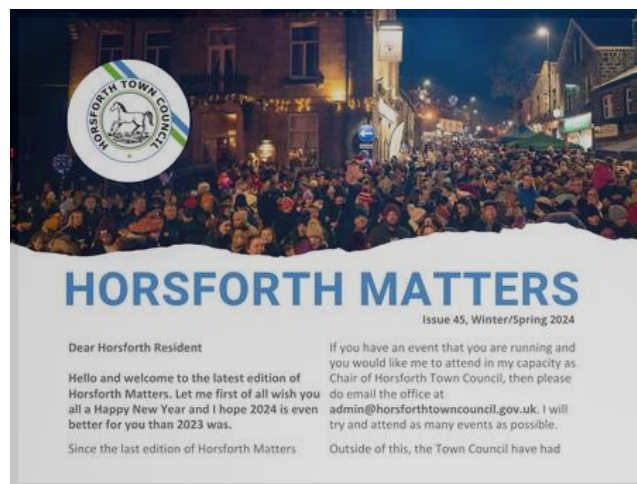
Horsforth Matters

The committee also received reports from councillors working on the Editorial Working Group to produce Horsforth Matters. To help reduce our printing, we decided to no longer produce two printed editions a year. Going forward, Horsforth Matters will be

predominantly published online (with some paper copies available to pick up from the Horsforth Community Hub and Library on Town Street, along with other key locations). Only our winter edition will be delivered to you by post and will also be available online too. We also set up a mailing list and you can sign up to this via the Town Council website, or via:

<http://eepurl.com/iwrWxl>

We have also consolidated councillors attending the Horsforth Farmers Market as a useful place to pick up feedback and issues around the work of the council.



Looking ahead

As the new council year begins I would like to end this year again with heartfelt thanks to councillors on this committee and its working groups for all their efforts to support the community and environment of Horsforth. We will be taking forward several initiatives and agendas next year around litter, provision for young people, supporting the local visual and commercial environment and the work of the many marvellous volunteers and community champion in our community.



Horsforth Town Council knows that it is important to recognise the hard work and successes of local people making a difference for Horsforth.

Each year we have acknowledged and highlighted these achievements through the Good Citizen and Young Achiever Awards.

A massive congratulations to our 2023 Good Citizen, Good Citizen Group and Young Achievers Award winners!

- Good Citizen Awards were presented to Paul Beal for his work in recruiting defibrillator guardians to monitor CPADs, and Barbara Buckley for helping to improve the lives of many elderly and lonely people in Horsforth through the Monday Lunch Club amongst other initiatives.
- Good Citizen Groups Awards went to Horsforth Sports Club Association Committee and Horsforth in Bloom in recognition of the community work they do in Horsforth.
- Finally, Finlay and Fergus Smith were both awarded the 2023 Young Achiever Award for their achievements representing the Junior GB squad at the IFMA World Muay Thai Championships.

Horsforth Town Council has reviewed the awards scheme and is launching a new scheme called "The Heart of Horsforth Award Scheme" to recognise and celebrate individuals and community groups who have made their mark on Horsforth. This could be someone who has worked selflessly for others in our community or someone who has brought credit to our town. There are five distinct awards now.

We welcome applications to recognise those who have gone above and beyond by 5th September 2024. The winners will be selected by the Community and Environment Committee and the awards will be presented at the Christmas Light Switch on event being held on Saturday 7th December 2024.

For further information, please visit the Town Council website.



EVENTS IN HORSFORTH

Annual Event

Horsforth Town Council in collaboration with the Horsforth Town Team proudly brought you the Coronation Event for Horsforth, to mark the investiture of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Horsforth Town Council provided funding to contribute generously to our shared event.

Horsforth Town Council were delighted to organise the community competitions and the celebratory parade, ensuring that the focus of the day remained on the Coronation itself.



Christmas Event

The Christmas Lights Switch-on event has been a Horsforth Town Council staple for many years.

In 2022, alongside the traditional Lights Switch-on event, there was a Christmas Market hosted by the Horsforth Town Team, a collective of local businesses. This year the two events were combined into one.

The event took place on Saturday, 2 December, and there were performances on the stage throughout the day alongside the market and the Christmas lights were switched on at 5pm.

It was an incredible event and was great to see so many people of Horsforth out enjoying entertainment, activities and market in the winter sunshine.



Remembrance Service

Horsforth Town Council worked collaboratively with Horsforth Royal British Legion to plan and deliver the Remembrance March and Cenotaph Service.

The Royal British Legion and Phil Maud of The Grove Methodist Church lead the service at the Cenotaph. Stephen Boardman - Deputy Lieutenant for West Yorkshire, RAF Air Cadets, the Scouts and Guide groups, Horsforth Town Council and City Councillors were in attendance.

The service started with a parade to the cenotaph where the Remembrance Service was held and we paid our respects to our fallen heroes from Horsforth. Guests from the service were then invited to the Willows for tea, coffee and biscuits.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer Bands in the Park:

- Sunday, 2nd June 2024 - Corpus Christi Brass Band
- Sunday, 7th July 2024 - Horsforth Music Centre Concert Band
- Sunday, 4th August 2024 - Otley Brass Band

D-Day 80th Anniversary

- 6th June 2024

Gala:

- 29th June 2024

Walk of Art:

- 6th and 7th July 2024

Remembrance Service:

- 10th November 2024

Christmas Light Switch On:

- Saturday, 7th December 2024



Horsforth Town Council receives the Foundation Award under the Local Council Award Scheme



We are delighted to announce that Horsforth Town Council has received the Foundation Award under the Local Council Award Scheme administered by the National Association of Local Councils.

This achievement recognises that Horsforth Town Council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Moreover, Horsforth Town Council goes above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their communities and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

The Local Council Award Scheme is a peer assessed programme that has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report by Councillor Hardcastle



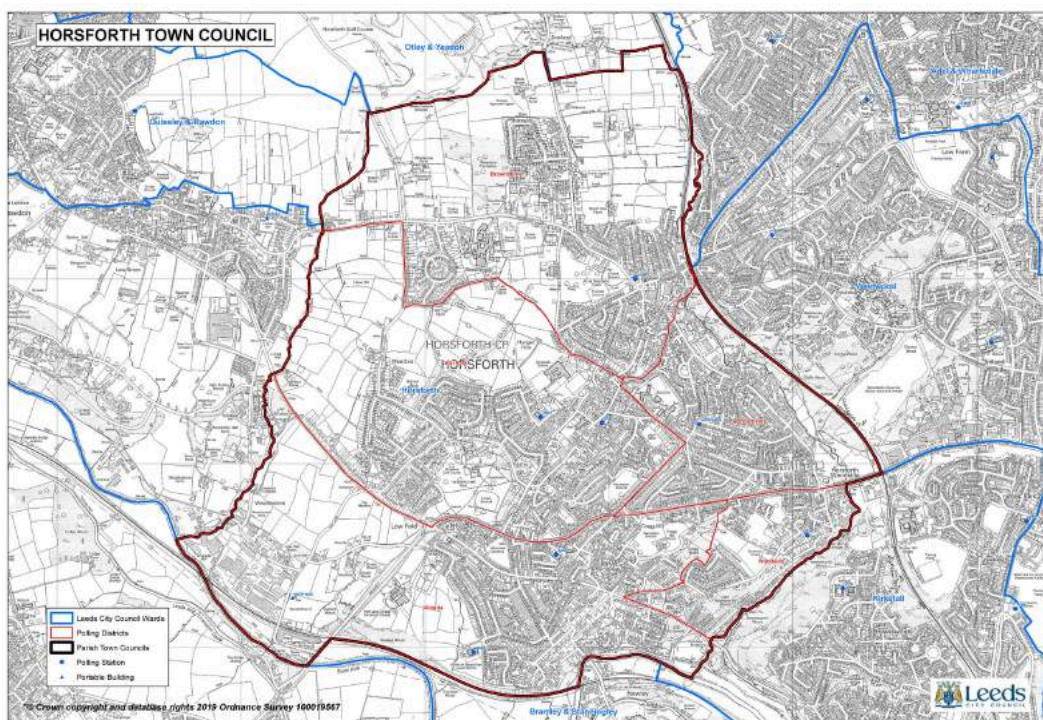
My report on the activities of the Planning, Licencing and Traffic committee covers the period from April 2023 until March 2024.

Below is a brief description of the activities of the committee. The committee's major duties are to examine and comment on planning applications including planning appeals, to note any licencing applications and note and comment on any traffic management proposals.

During the reporting period the committee has examined and commented on around 120 planning applications. We have also considered complaints from members of the public on planning and traffic issues and received presentations from major developers and others.

We have representation on the Leeds Bradford Airport Consultative Committee and maintain a close watch on airport developments. We have responsibility for the maintenance of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan.

Finally, I must thank my Vice Chairman, Martin Connors and all the committee members for their help and support during the last year, not forgetting our clerk, Becky Crabtree and our administration assistant, Steph White who have done so much to ensure the committee's smooth operation.



STAFFING & EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Report by Councillor J Garvani



After a difficult few months during 2022, when our previous clerk left the council, staffing issues have settled down and we are now expertly clerked by Becky Crabtree .

We took the decision to appoint an admin assistant and Steph White joined us on 7th February 2023. On her appointment, Steph was told that once she had completed her ILCA qualification, her pay would be increased by one point. I am pleased to say that she did this by Christmas and her pay has been increased accordingly.

I would like to thank Becky & Steph for their hard work this year.

COUNCIL OF SANCTUARY

Horsforth Town Council has started the process of being recognised as a Council of Sanctuary. This award is given by City of Sanctuary UK, a national charity that aims to foster greater understanding between the general public, refugees and people seeking asylum.

By joining City of Sanctuary UK's network of local authorities, we have become part of a nationwide movement of councils who share a commitment to welcoming people seeking sanctuary.

At a time when a great deal of public discourse about refugees and asylum seekers is characterised by smears and misinformation, Horsforth Town Council aims to create a culture of inclusivity and welcome in Horsforth for refugees and people seeking asylum in the town and surrounding area, and will work closely with the local Town of Sanctuary support group to achieve this.



MEETING DATES

Town Council meetings are held on a Thursday evening at 7pm on the following dates:

Full Council

25th July 2024, 26th September 2024, 28th November 2024, 30th January 2025 and 27th March 2025

Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee

20th June 2024, 18th July 2024, 22nd August 2024, 19th September 2024, 24th October 2024, 21st November 2024, 12th December 2024, 23rd January 2025, 20th February 2025 and 20th March 2025

Finance and General Purposes Committee

11th July 2024, 12th September 2024, 14th November 2024, 16th January 2025 and 13th March 2025

Community and Environment Committee

13th June 2024, 5th September 2024, 5th December 2024 and 6th March 2025

The agenda for each meeting is available three clear working days before the meeting and can be viewed on the Town Council website.

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

Where confidential matters are to be discussed, members of the press and public may be excluded.

The meeting venue can be found on the notice or agenda.



FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Report by Councillor S Dowling



The Finance and General Purposes Committee deals with the general business and procedural issues of the Town Council. It makes recommendations to the Full Council on any actions the full council may need to make.

The committee is also responsible for agreeing larger grants recommended to it by the Community and Environment Committee and authorising smaller items of expenditure.

The committee monitors the council's income and expenditure. From the budget proposals of each committee, the Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the total budget for the following year. It then advises the council on the figure that the council will need to pay for projects and items that will be part of the services that the council will provide for Horsforth. Once agreed, this amount then becomes the Precept for the following year.

The committee also considers recommendations from the Community Infrastructure Levy Advisory Group (CILAG). The Community Infrastructure Levy is money that the Town Council receives from Leeds City Council from a levy charged on larger developments in the Horsforth area. The council set up CILAG to look at how money from the Community Infrastructure Levy should be spent. Over the next year or so we hope to see some of the recommendations from the advisory group be agreed by council for works to be carried out in the community.

This past year the committee agreed to spend a large amount of CIL money on the following project and items:

- A waste bin at Newlaithes play area
- A waste bin on Featherbank Lane
- New paths around the bandstand in Hall Park
- Benches and picnic tables in Hall Park
- Goal posts on woodside rec (next to the Miller and Carter)
- Benches at the old ball roundabout

A major part of the Finance and General Purposes Committee's work in the coming year will be ensuring the smooth development of 3 & 5 The Green. The committee will also be working to ensure that Horsforth Town Council can continue to run all services and still deliver all it does with value for money.



FINANCE

Report by the Town Clerk, Becky Crabtree

The Town Council's income currently comes from a Precept which is added to the Council Tax levy set by the Principal Authority, Leeds City Council. In 2023-2024, the Precept was £126,035 and the Town Council received a Local Council Tax Support grant of £4927.

The precept for a Band D house remained at £16.96 for 2023-2024. This is substantially below that of surrounding areas and the average Band D Council Tax level set by Parish and Town Councils in England at £74.81.

The Town Council sets a budget every year and maintains adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation.

Below is a summary of the income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2024.

Income

Precept	£126,035
Council Tax Support Grant	£4927
Bank Interest	£4257
Other including grants and refunds.	£4365

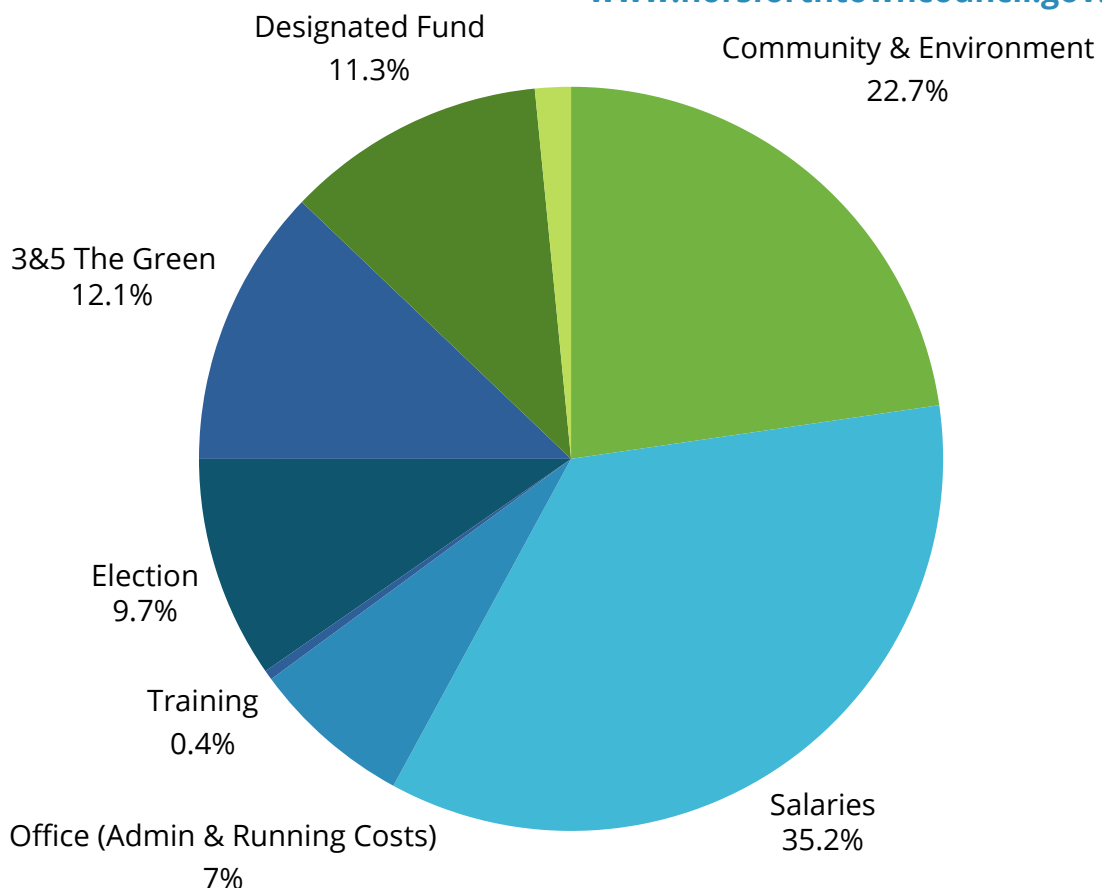
TOTAL £139,583

Expenditure

Community and Environment Committee	£40,784
Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee	£0
Salaries	£63,301
Office (General Admin and Running Costs)	£12,564
Training:	£759
Election:	£13,609
3&5 The Green:	£21,790
Designated Funds	£21,934
Restricted Funds:	-£1600

TOTAL £173,141

Full details about the Town Council accounts can be viewed at www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk



Precept 2024-2025

The Town Council's Finance & General Purposes Committee met in May 2024 to set the budget and to discuss the Precept for the financial year ending 31st March 2025.

The very difficult decision was reached to increase the Precept to an annual charge of £19.33 per Band D property and this was ratified by the Full Council at the meeting held on 25th January 2024. This equates to an increase of 20p per month per Band D property.

The decision to increase the Precept by this amount had support by the majority of councillors and was one that no one wanted to make. We realise that it will impact on everyone in our community including councillors.

The Precept has not been raised for the past three years but it has now become necessary due to rising costs, especially the huge increase in building costs for the refurbishment of 3 & 5 The Green. The money will be used by the Town Council to continue to provide events such as the Christmas lights switch on and market, the Remembrance Day Service, band concerts and annual events such as ones previously held for the Coronation and the Jubilee. The extra money is also important to allow the Town Council to continue to provide grants and sponsorship to a range of voluntary groups that enrich our community across Horsforth and projects such as play equipment.

The Town Council continues to look for other sources of funding to help ensure that in future the Precept rise will not be so large. In comparison to other Town Councils of a similar size, such as Otley, Wetherby and Morley, the Horsforth Precept is small. Your Horsforth Town Councillors are committed to providing value for money and have set the budget to reflect this.



PREMISES

Report by Councillor J Garvani



Over the past year, work on 3&5 The Green has stalled slightly but we have finalised the plans for the building and have been in negotiations with a contractor to carry out the work.

Unfortunately, there was a slight delay in the planning application for some of the changes being made to be submitted to the City Council. We will then need to apply for a license to make alterations from the City Council (as the freeholder) but it is hoped that this will be fairly quick and we can start the work as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we have held a drop-in session for residents and an update meeting for various community organisations alongside asking residents and organisations to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire results will be used by the council to help determine the uses the building is put to and are available to view on the Town Council website.

The council is also working with a Grant Finder to see if there are any funding pots that we can apply to to help with the costs of the refurbishments.

We have already been successful in gaining a grant of £5000 from the Leeds City Council Outer North-West Community Committee.

