



**Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council**  
**Annual report – 2023-2024**

## **Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council – Report on activities 2023-24**

### **1. Council and Committees**

- 1.1 The Parish Council comprises 17 seats with all 17 being elected Councillors across 7 Parish Council Wards. The Full Council takes overall responsibility for all decisions but can choose to delegate authority to a committee or to a Council Officer but can never delegate authority to an individual Councillor. Elections for all 17 seats took place in May 2021. Further details relating to each councillor can be found on our website;  
<https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/councillors.html>
- 1.2 To be more effective, the Council has one committee (Performance, Review and Staffing) and three working groups (Newsletter, Projects, Climate Change) to spread the workload, review issues in more detail and operate more effectively.
- 1.3 In addition, several Councillors serve as the Parish Council's representatives on various Outside Bodies, Partnerships, Liaison Groups and regularly attend associated meetings. These include;
- Don Gorge Community Group
  - Parish Council Joint Consultative Committee
  - Yorkshire Local Council Association
  - Sprotbrough Community Library
- 1.4 The Parish Council owns and manages several assets within the Parish;
- The Goldsmith Community Centre, children's play area, basketball net and wider open space.
  - New Lane adventure playground and recreation area.
  - Anchorage Lane Park including children's play area, skate park, outdoor gym, football pitches and pavilion.
  - Newlands Park including basketball net, football pitches and pavilion.
  - Five Allotments at Windsor Walk, Scawsby.
  - Joint ownership of Scawsby Community Centre, Barnsley Road with Brodsworth Parish Council.
- 1.5 In addition, the Parish Council activities include;
- commenting on planning applications within the parish.
  - providing community grants to support local groups.
  - production of a Parish Newsletter.
  - liaising with relevant authorities regarding infrastructure /policing/community issues to represent your views and get the best advantage for the local area.
  - engaging with all interested parties regarding current and future shape of life in the local area

## **2. Clerk to the Council's report**

- 2.1 This year has seen the Parish Council extend its activities and services from previous years which is set out in our adopted Action Plan for 2023/24 which sets out the activities and projects prioritised for the year into three categories; people, place and provision. The Action Plan can be found on our website; <https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/the-council.html>
- 2.2 The Parish Council was awarded the Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme in January 2023. Receiving this award shows that the Parish Council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Furthermore, this award shows that the Parish Council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations and continuously seek opportunities to improve and develop even further. At present we are the only Parish Council in Doncaster and South Yorkshire to receive this award.
- 2.3 The Council maintains a General Reserve which it can use in case of emergency or for unbudgeted items of expenditure. It is very important to ensure the level of the General Reserve is maintained at an appropriate level whilst maintaining our assets and providing services to our residents. There have been significant increases in running costs for our buildings, specifically the Goldsmith Centre in relation to gas and electricity through the winter months together with maintenance costs for each of our recreation sites and play areas. To combat this and to maintain the level of activity provided the Parish Council decided to increase the precept for the first time in 3 years by 8.5% which equates to £52.14 per household in council tax D.

## **3. People**

### **3.1 Community Grants**

The Council is able to provide Grants, in certain circumstances, to Voluntary or Charitable Organisations that support the people of Sprotbrough and Cusworth. Each application must be made using the prescribed form which is available on our website which provides details of what the grant can be used for.

Below is a list of grants awarded between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

- Sprotbrough Scarecrow Festival - £400.
- Don Gorge Community Group- £400 . A grant of £500 was given to
- Sprotbrough Library - £500
- St Edmunds Scouts group - £1000
- Sprotbrough Crusaders under 7s team - £500
- Forget me not café, Sprotbrough - £500

## **4. Place**

### **4.1 Planning matters**

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications received by the Local Planning Authority (Doncaster Council). The Parish Council does not have power to approve or refuse applications, simply give an opinion based on material planning considerations. Doncaster Council determines planning applications.

61 planning applications have been considered by the Parish Council between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Full details of decisions and responses given are contained in the minutes and on the Parish Council website; <https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/planning-applications2.html>

The Sprotbrough Neighbourhood Plan was adopted on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 and continues to be used to determine planning applications in Sprotbrough and is proving to be a useful tool to support comments made by the Parish Council on applications to ensure the views of local residents are taken into account to determine planning applications within the Parish. The plan can be viewed on our website;

<https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>

For each planning application where the Neighbourhood Plan applies the Parish Council a checklist is completed to ensure the plans policies are taken into consideration when responding to planning applications.

#### 4.2 Tree/ site maintenance

The Parish Council own and manage four large sites within the parish which require regular maintenance. Play equipment at all sites requires routine maintenance and also repair due to wear and tear. Sadly, vandalism also occurs on all sites which requires parts to be replaced.

All sites have differing levels of trees located within them. Newlands Park being the largest site. A programme of tree maintenance at all sites started in 2021 and will continue each year to ensure our trees remain healthy and do not pose a risk to uses and neighbours of each site.

Bin emptying on our sites is now undertaken by Parish Council staff which has resulted in significant cost savings to the council and enables us to provide additional bins on our sites moving forward.

#### 4.3 Public Realm

The Parish Council sets aside a small budget to procure and provide litter picking equipment for local groups and residents to use to assist in improvement to the public realm within the Parish. This has been a successful project with several local groups and residents using the equipment throughout the year.

#### 4.4 Climate Change

The Parish Council's Climate Change work continued through the work of the Climate Change Working Group in line with the Parish Council's adopted Climate Change Action Plan. The Parish Council hosted carbon literacy training for parish councils across Doncaster and the Clerk and four Parish Councillors successfully completed the training showing the Parish Council's commitment to climate change. The training has provided an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis. The training will help to the Parish Council influence others to drive action regarding climate change.

In June 2023 the Parish Council held the first 'Eco Fest' at the Goldsmith Centre which brought together local groups, organisations and individuals to provide practical advice to residents on a range of climate related issues. The event was kindly sponsored by Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics and was this first of its kind in Doncaster. It was a very successful event and will be held again in June 2024.

The Parish Council obtained a grant from City of Doncaster Council's climate fund to purchase a thermal imaging camera which can be loaned to parish residents to look at where heat is escaping from their homes. The Parish Council also secured a grant from the warm spaces programme from Well Doncaster which provided materials and advice to residents on how to stay warm at home during the winter. Drop-in sessions were held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and a permanent display at the Goldsmith Centre with information through the winter months.

An electric bike charging point has been installed at the Goldsmith Centre at the main entrance. This is in addition to a new bike rack and bike repair station which were provided by Active Travel, Doncaster.

The Parish Council organised a meeting at the Goldsmith Centre with the Better Buses campaign where residents could raise concerns in the parish regarding bus services.

#### 4.5 Goldsmith Centre

Improvements to the Goldsmith Centre have continued this year following the refurbishment of all the toilets and new internal doors in 2022. The Parish Council obtained a grant from Well Doncaster to purchase a TV for the committee room at the centre to support groups using the space. A new projector and screen have also been purchased to facilitate the room being used for meetings/ conferences.

#### 4.6 Goldsmith Centre and New Lane play areas

Public consultation took place regarding planned improvements to the play areas at New Lane and the Goldsmith Centre in 2023. We had over 150 responses from residents which is fantastic and we are working with play area

providers on improvements to both sites which we are aiming to undertake in 2024/25.

## **5. Provision**

The Parish Council continued its programme of events this year. We had a full calendar through the year providing a variety of events for local residents. Through these events we were able to raise £1500.00 for the Parish Council's chosen charity for 2023-2024 'Sick Children's Trust' to support the incredible work they do which supports many residents within the Parish.

### **5.1. Christmas Trees and lights**

The Parish Council continues to support local residents with the Sprotbrough Christmas Light event which was as popular as ever in 2023 with more lights on display and a larger tree in the square. Trees were lit again at the Goldsmith Centre.

### **5.2. Pantomime**

The Parish Council held an Easter Pantomime, 'Little Mermaid' on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024, and Halloween Panto, 'Hocus Panto' on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The shows continue to be really popular with residents being sold out within hours. These will continue into 2024/5.

### **5.3 Kings Coronation 2023**

The Parish Council provided nine grants of £110 each to local community groups, schools and organisations to support their coronation events. Personalised leather bookmarks were procured and given to each primary school in the parish for children to commemorate the coronation.

### **5.4 Summer Festival**

We held a summer festival on 20<sup>th</sup> August with stalls, raffle, entertainment, children's activities, dog show and food and drink. It was a lovely hot day and a great day was enjoyed by all. A similar event is planned for 2024.

### **5.5 Christmas Festival**

We held a two-day festival at the Goldsmith Centre bringing together local business stalls, entertainment, ice skating, food and drink outlets and Santa's grotto in December 2023. Despite the weather changing the plans in the run up to the event we managed to still hold the event which was really popular. A similar event is planned for 2024.

### **5.6 Remembrance day poppies**

The Parish Council had ran for the first time a remembrance poppy campaign where residents and local businesses raised money to purchase poppies

which were displayed on lamp posts within the Parish. A total of £1000 was raised for the Royal British Legion which equated to 200 poppies which were on display in November 2023. This will now be an annual event and a huge thanks to the volunteers of the Don Gorge Community Group for supporting the project by hanging each poppy.

## **6. Financial matters**

The Parish Council is required to undertake rigorous financial controls given its size and scale. We have an internal audit by an external auditor twice a year and an annual audit by national auditors to ensure we are meeting our statutory requirements. Further information on these matters can be found on our website;

<https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/transparency-and-finance.html>

The total value of the Parish Council's fixed assets is approximately £1.5 million. We undertook up to date valuations of all our sites in 2021.

## **7. Training and development**

The Parish Council is committed to training and actively encourages Councillors and employees to attend regular training to raise awareness of responsibilities, improve skills and keep updated with legislation. Over the last year Councillors and staff have attended on-line training sessions provided by the Yorkshire Association of Local Councils (YLCA) and external training providers. The Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer completed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) in June 2020 which has enabled the Parish Council to confirm it can act under the general power of competence which provides greater scope in decision making. All staff undertake the requisite statutory training for each role including; health and safety, legionella and legionnaires disease awareness, safeguarding, mental health awareness, manual handling and play area inspection training for site staff. A full record of all training is kept.

## Council Services

In Sprotbrough and Cusworth the provision of services is split between Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council and City of Doncaster Council. A Parish Council is a corporate body - a legal entity separate from that of its individual members. Its decisions are the responsibility of the whole body. It is the first tier of local government and exists completely independently from City of Doncaster Council

<b>Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council</b>	<b>City of Doncaster Council</b>
➤ 5 allotments at Windsor Walk	➤ Adults and Children Social Care
➤ The management of the Goldsmith Centre, playground and recreation area	➤ Anti-social behaviour
➤ The management of Newlands Park and pavilion	➤ Benefits
➤ The management of Anchorage Park including; the children's play area, outdoor gym, skate park and Anchorage Pavilion	➤ Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships
➤ The management of New Lane recreation area and adventure playground	➤ Bus Pass Issue
➤ Joint ownership of Scawsby Community Centre with Brodsworth Parish Council	➤ Car parks and fines (Doncaster Council owned and operated)
	➤ CCTV
	➤ Council Tax
	➤ Housing Advice and homelessness
	➤ Disabled Parking (blue badges)
	➤ Emergency Planning
	➤ Fostering and Adoption
	➤ Highways – including gritting, maintaining, street and traffic lighting, traffic signs, pot holes, road markings, pedestrian crossing, road safety and verges.
	➤ Household Recycling and Waste Site
	➤ Licencing



	➤ On Street Parking Enforcement
	➤ Planning and Building Control
	➤ Public rights of way
	➤ School Admissions, Free School Meals and School Transport
	➤ Street cleaning and bins (including dog fouling enforcement)
	➤ Tourist Information
	➤ Trading Standards
	➤ Public Health
	➤ Waste collection

Please note that the Parish Council does not have any authority over services which City of Doncaster Council provides. If you wish to report an issue relating to City of Doncaster Council's services please contact their main switch board on 01302 760000 or use the relevant 'report it' form on their website; <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/report-it> . This includes;

- Dog fouling
- Road safety
- Parking enforcement
- Littering/ fly tipping
- Anti-social behaviour

In addition South Yorkshire Police should be contacted for issues relating to;

- Covid 19 breaches
- Criminal activity/ anti-social behaviour
- Speeding

They can be contacted using the information below;

<https://www.southyorks.police.uk/contact-us/report-something/>