

ARMTHORPE PARISH MEETING — CHAIR'S REPORT May 5th, 2026

Councillor Christine Brodhurst Brown, Chair of Armthorpe Parish Council

Welcome to our Annual Parish meeting, I will provide an overview of the work of the Parish Council during the last year.

Further detailed information is available within the Appendix to this report which is attached.

As Chair of Armthorpe Parish Council, it is my privilege to present this report on the work of the Council over the past year. I want to begin by offering my sincere thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors, our staff team, our partners our Ward members and, most importantly, our Parishioners. The support, goodwill and commitment shown across the year have once again demonstrated the strength of our community. Armthorpe continues to be a village with a strong identity and a deep sense of belonging. We are a growing community and with that growth comes both opportunity and responsibility. What has stood out this year is the willingness of local people to get involved, to support one another and to take pride in the place we call home. That spirit has shaped much of the work carried out by the Parish Council. We know that no community is without its challenges. Issues arise, concerns are raised and there are always things that need attention. But alongside those challenges there is a great deal to celebrate. There is energy, resilience, and a determination to keep improving. I encourage anyone who feels discouraged about our village to look again at the many positive things happening here and to consider how they might contribute to the ongoing work of making Armthorpe the best it can be. The Parish Council remains committed to supporting local groups, developing new opportunities, and working with partners to enhance provision for residents. With that in mind, here is my summary of the Council's work during the past year.

1. Sports and Recreation Activities

The Parish Council continues to employ Carl Hughes as our Sports and Recreation Worker. Carl delivers a wide range of activities for Parishioners of all ages, both within the Community Centre and out in the wider village. He also works closely with local schools to support physical activity and community engagement. Some highlights from the past year include a full programme of school sports competitions, a varied schedule of fitness activities for older residents at the Community Centre and at Rose House, continued development of Carl's intergenerational project with schoolchildren visiting the Tuesday Tea Dance, expansion of school holiday provision with well attended activity camps during Summer, Christmas and Easter, organisation of the Christmas Lights Switch On involving nominated children from all Armthorpe schools, securing Anticipate funding to deliver diversionary activities during Bonfire Night week and significant work towards the planning and opening of the Parish Council's new Youth Club facility. This new space gives children and young people a place of their own within the Community Centre and represents a major development for the Parish Council this year. The Youth Club is staffed by Carl with the support of a team of qualified Youthwork staff commissioned via Flying Futures (CIC) The former

food room has been transformed into an impressive Youth Space supported by funding from the Better Spaces Youth Fund.

2. The Community Cleanup Champion

The Parish Council continues to employ Lea Pedley as our Community Cleanup Champion. Lea, working alongside Armthorpe's fantastic volunteers, plays a vital role in keeping our village clean, tidy, and welcoming. She works closely with Doncaster Council's Street scene team and with local organisations to ensure that litter, fly tipping, and environmental issues are dealt with promptly. Throughout the year Lea has promoted a range of community-based activities and environmental projects, including Armthorpe's contribution to the Great British Spring Clean. Her work, supported by many dedicated volunteers, helps ensure that Armthorpe remains one of the tidiest villages in Doncaster.

3. Events and Activities

The Parish Council has delivered and supported a wide range of events and activities throughout the year. Everything we have organised has been well attended and warmly received, and our commitment to the Choose Kindness ethos adopted in 2025 continues to guide our approach. Highlights include the Senior Citizens Teas on 12 and 13 December where more than 250 older Parishioners enjoyed a full Christmas dinner, entertainment and a free raffle, the Children's Christmas Party at the Community Centre, the Civic Carol Service in partnership with St Leonard and St Mary's Parish Church, the Christmas Fayre and Light Switch On 22 November which attracted hundreds of residents and offered free Santa visits for all children, the Festival of Remembrance on 8 and 9 November supported by Markham Main Colliery Band and Armthorpe Elmfield Band, the Fireworks Display at Briar Road field on 4 November attended by thousands, the Children's Halloween Party at the Community Centre and community tree planting on the new park grounds on 14 March.

Events and Activities Delivered in Partnership

The Parish Council continues to work closely with partners to expand the range of opportunities available to residents. The Pride of Armthorpe Awards, delivered with Shaw Wood Academy, once again recognised individuals and groups who contribute positively to our community. Shaw Wood also facilitated popular Street Food events at the Community Centre. Armthorpe Community Theatre delivered two packed performances of Cinderella. The Armthorpe Community Cafe, led by Linda Monks and her volunteers, continues to provide a lively and welcoming drop in three mornings a week and will soon expand to five days. All proceeds are donated to the Firefly charity. The Parish Council continued to support Armthorpe Food Support until its closure at Christmas. SUPPORT, the mental health support group, continues to meet at the Community Centre.

South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster City Council

The Parish Council continues to work closely with South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster City Council. The Parish Council provides premises for Police and Community Engagement Meetings and continues to host the Acorn Hub, which allows officers and support staff to work directly from Armthorpe rather than travelling from Thorne. This ensures quicker access to local policing and community safety services. Crime levels in Armthorpe remain comparatively low, placing us among the safest

areas in the city. The Community Centre also continues to host a full schedule of community based and lettings-based activities throughout the week.

Infrastructure Responsibilities

The Parish Council remains responsible for the Community Centre, Rands Lane Burial Ground, Mercel Avenue Allotments, green spaces at Briar Road and Cow House Lane and the long-term leased land to the rear of the Community Centre. The Community Centre has seen continued improvement work this year including sustainability measures such as LED lighting, electrical upgrades and preparations for solar panel installation supported by grant funding secured by the Clerk. A detailed disability access audit has been completed with a full action plan. Lettings remain strong and continue to generate income for Parish Council initiatives. Heating issues have arisen but are being addressed. At Rands Lane Burial Ground digital record keeping is fully embedded and the appointment of a new gatekeeper has resolved previous opening and closing issues. At Cow House Lane the extension of the Scouts lease is progressing, and additional land has been agreed to expand their compound. The Parish Council has also donated a surplus container which is now in place. The new planning gain allotments at Mercel Avenue are now fully occupied by Parishioners from the waiting list.

Communication

The Parish Council can be contacted via email, telephone, post, the website, and the Messenger app. Our Facebook page has 3,274 followers and around 60,000 views over the last 4 weeks. At peak times such as Remembrance and Christmas our reach can rise to more than 350,000 views. Noticeboards across the village are updated regularly for residents who do not use social media.

The Parish Council is in the process of commissioning a new website and branding package. The current website is out of date and non-compliant. This will come online this year and will make information much easier to access.

The Parish Precept for 2026 to 2027

The year before last the Precept was held below inflation rates, last year the Parish Council held the precept at 0 percent, meaning no increase for residents. After careful consideration, this year the Parish Council has approved a 16.75 percent increase for 2026 to 2027. For a Band D household, the highest Band in the village, this represents an annual increase of £13.06, around 25 pence per week. The additional funding will support the installation of solar panels at the Community Centre, the recruitment of a new Estates Maintenance Officer, the continuation and expansion of the twice weekly youth club for 7- to 12-year-olds, a full programme of community events and weekly activities for older residents. Our new state of the art play park has been delivered entirely through long term investment at no additional cost to residents.

Parish Council Vacancies

There is currently 1 vacancy on the Parish Council following the resignation of a Councillor who is moving house.

Future Projects

The Parish Council has several important projects planned for the coming year. These include further development of provision for children and young people, continued work on the Heart of the Village Park project, which is awaiting planning permission from Doncaster City Council, preparation for all our usual major annual events and activities, a full programme of sports and recreation activities and significant changes to the way grounds maintenance is delivered. Grounds maintenance will now be brought in house with a dedicated member of staff responsible for grass cutting, landscaping and the upkeep of parks and equipment. Work will also begin on refreshing the Armthorpe Neighbourhood Plan which runs from 2018 to 2028. This will involve extensive community consultation, and the resulting draft will be subject to approval through a local referendum.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the Parish Council this year. Parish Councillors, staff, partners, volunteers, and Parishioners have all played their part. We remain committed to serving our community, listening to residents, and working hard to deliver practical, positive, and realistic improvements for Armthorpe. We will honour our past and aspire for our future.

Never forget,

Armthorpe is a great village!

Chris Brodhurst-Brown

Chair, Armthorpe Parish Council.

ARMTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Appendix

The Council and its Members

The Council is a local authority by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972. It comprises fifteen Members. Eleven Members of the Council were elected in 2025, and the four vacancies were filled shortly after elections. All Members will automatically retire from office in May 2029, when the next local council election is held.

Each Member of the Council has signed up to the Council's Code of Conduct and registered their interests, which may be inspected by members of the public. The register of members' interests is on deposit at Armthorpe Community Centre (the Community Centre) and may be inspected during the Centre's opening hours. The registers may also be viewed on the Council's website at:

www.armthorpeparishcouncil.co.uk.

The names of all Members of the Council (in alphabetical order) are as follows:

Councillor Andy Barrington
Councillor Ashley Bradley
Councillor Leanne Bradley
Councillor Christine Brodhurst Brown
Councillor Anya Duckitt
Councillor Colin Head
Councillor Martin Jackson
Councillor Linda Monks
Councillor Tim Needham
Councillor Emma North
Councillor Craig Parry
Councillor Shane Rose
Councillor Craig Trewick
Councillor Michael Walton

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

The Council is required by law to appoint from its Members a Chair and Vice-Chair. During the year of this report, the Chair of the Council was Councillor Christine Brodhurst-Brown, and the Vice-Chair was Councillor Shane Rose.

Employees

The Council has the statutory power to appoint whatever staff it deems fit; on such reasonable terms and conditions it considers appropriate. It has a statutory duty to appoint a responsible financial officer (RFO).

Consequently, since its inception in the late nineteenth century the Council has appointed a full-time Clerk, who has responsibility for undertaking all the administrative duties of the Council, including servicing meetings, preparing Minutes, dealing with all correspondence. Additionally, she has overall responsibility for management of the Council's employees, its allotments, burial ground, playing fields and the Community Centre. The Clerk has also been appointed as the Council's RFO, with responsibility for all the financial functions of the Council.

The Council has appointed other employees in various capacities as follows: -

A part-time Deputy Clerk.

A full-time Sports and Recreation Officer.

A full-time Community Centre Manager.

A full-time Events co-ordinator.

Three part time Cleaners.

Three part time gatekeepers, one for the Cow House Lane playing field, one for the Briar Road playing field and one for the burial ground at Rands Lane.

A part-time Community Clean Up Champion.

A team of employees who work part-time as and when required as bar staff at the Community Centre.

The Council has also recently employed a part time Estates Maintenance Officer to manage the upkeep of Rands Lane Burial Ground, Mercel Avenue Allotments, and the play park, once opened. The Council employs the services of The City of Doncaster Council to provide gardening services at the playing fields at Briar Road, Cow House Lane, and Mansfield Crescent.

Functions

The Council owns and administers an allotment site, a burial ground, three playing fields a Community Centre and The Acorn Hub. It also leases additional land in the Welfare Park, which will be the site of The Heart of the Village Park.

Several events are also arranged or co-ordinated by the Council during each year, for example, the annual village fireworks display, Remembrance Day parade, Christmas Market and the annual Christmas tea, an Easter event, Halloween and Christmas parties and a full programme of sports and recreation activities. The Council also works in partnership with Shaw Wood Academy to deliver the Pride of Armthorpe Awards, bi-annual summer gala, and street food events. The Council also opened a youth club facility which is available to children 7 to 16 twice weekly.

Meetings and Business

The Council conducts its business at various meetings, which it holds throughout each year. These meetings are held at the Community Centre and commence at 7pm. They are held during each month of the year except August, which is the recess. All meetings

are open to the public, except those meetings or parts of the same where the public is excluded by resolution. It is rare for the public to be excluded from meetings.

The full Council meets eleven times a year on the first Tuesday in each month and at other times when a special meeting is called. Its meetings deal with all matters that have not previously been delegated to its committees.

The Parish Council currently has the following committees in place.

Committee	Members
Community Centre & General Purposes	Thirteen
Staffing	Seven
Events	Seven
Sports and Recreation	Five
Finance	Ten
Strategic Planning	Seven
Disciplinary and Grievance	Six
Freeman	Five
Traffic	Five

Council Services and Activities

1 Allotments

The Council has one allotment site at Mercel Avenue, containing thirty-eight allotment gardens.

2 Burial Ground

The Council owns and manages a burial ground situated at Rands Lane. It is a lawn type cemetery for ease of maintenance. On average, it accommodates approximately twenty-five interments each year and the same number of interments of cremated remains.

The Council purchased the land for this purpose in 1965. It is freehold and comprises approximately three acres.

As the costs of purchasing and maintaining the burial ground are paid mainly from funds collected through the precept from Council taxpayers of Armthorpe, the Council operates a policy of discouraging non-residents of the parish from utilising the burial ground facility. It does this by subsidising the fees of local residents and charging non-residents of Armthorpe a rate that is greater than the significantly higher charges imposed by CDC for its cemeteries. Charging the latter rate is a clear disincentive to non-residents.

3 Armthorpe Community Centre

The Council owns and operates the Community Centre, which is situated in the Welfare Park, Church Street. It was purpose built by the Council and paid for from both its own funds and a significant grant from the European Economic Community.

It is currently valued for insurance purposes at £ £4,232,610. It is a valuable community resource providing a venue for a range of activities.

The Community Centre is hired out to various individuals, groups, and organisations for a variety of social, educational, and recreational activities. A full list of these is displayed at the Community Centre. It is also hired out for children's parties, wedding receptions, engagement parties, and other celebratory events.

4 Miscellaneous Activities

In addition to the activities/events referred to earlier in the main body of the Chairman's report above, the Council has responsibility for the playing fields at Briar Road, Cow House Lane, and Mansfield Crescent. Council taxpayers' money has, of course, been spent on maintaining these community assets.

The Council, as always, has made numerous representations to CDC and other organisations on a variety of matters including highways, planning, environmental services, bus services, etc. Many of these have been productive and improved local services and the quality of life for some Armthorpe residents. Some of these, however, have not proved productive, much to the disappointment of the Parish Council. The Council will continue to lobby outside agencies to secure whatever improvements it can for the local community.

Council Finances and Accounts

The Council's income is derived mainly from the annual precept and Community Centre letting charges. It also receives some income from allotment rents and burial fees. It may from time to time obtain grants for specific purposes. The Council uses its income to pay for its functions and activities, including payment of employees' remuneration.

The precept is a formal demand made to the billing authority City of Doncaster Council (CDC) to pay a specified sum. CDC collects the amount due from the Council taxpayers of Armthorpe and passes it on to the Parish Council. The Council tax is fundamentally a property tax and dependent on eight valuation bands lettered A to H. Precepts are based on the total equivalent band D properties in the Council's area. This is known as the Tax Base.

For the financial year 2025-26, the Parish Council precepted the sum of £318,708. The Council's finances and accounts are governed by its formal financial regulations. They are also subjected to annual scrutiny and examination by a system of independent internal and external audit in accordance with statutory requirements. The Council endeavours to comply with all the recommendations and requirements of the auditors.

The balance sheet from the Council's Accounts for the financial year commencing 1st April 2025 and ending 31st March 2026 is below.

16/04/2026

Armthorpe Parish Council 2025-2026

10:14

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2026

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

31st March 2025		31st March 2026	
Current Assets			
12,230	Debtors	6,608	
8,990	VAT Control A/c	10,985	
3,653	Stock	3,473	
97,280	Co-Operative Bank Plc Current	692,957	
0	Co-Operative Bank Instant Acce	0	
9	Co-Operative Bank 14 Day A/c	9	
50	Tea Dance Float	100	
500	Bar Float	450	
0	Vending Machine	50	
122,712			714,631
122,712	Total Assets		714,631
Current Liabilities			
11,326	Creditors	146,187	
1,698	Credit Card (Year End)	1,297	
4,926	Accruals	2,029	
6,763	Receipts In Advance	6,282	
3,507	Pension Control	0	
3,387	HMRC /PAYE & NI Control	0	
31,607			155,794
91,105	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		558,837
Represented By			
86,105	General Reserves		163,783
5,000	EMR - Elections		0
0	EMR - Park Project		395,054
91,105			558,837

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31st March 2026 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :
Chairman _____ Date : _____

Signed :
Responsible
Financial
Officer _____ Date : _____