

Healeyfield Parish Council

Serving Castleside and District



Striving to keep our community thriving

Adam Pearson, Chairman.

1st May 2025

Chairman's Annual Report 2024/25

The Parish Council has continued to strive to help our community thrive over the past 12 months. While we have faced challenges, we have also achieved many positive outcomes, thanks to the collective efforts of our councilors, residents, volunteers, and other local stakeholders including Durham County Council and the Mid-Durham Area Action Partnership. This report provides only the highlights of the work undertaken by the council over the past year.

An impressive c. 455 people were in attendance at the D-Day 80th Anniversary event held on Thursday 6th June 2024. A number of local stakeholders took part in the event including Consett Brass provided music from the war years, Castleside Primary School a poem and Angus Pearson an account of a Padre involved in the D-Day Landings. We were delighted to have Deputy Lord Lieutenant Dr John Levick with us to light the beacon. The evening concluded with a spectacular 10-minute firework display from Reaction fireworks. Positive feedback was received from several attendees and we are grateful to everyone who made it such a success.

During the year the resignation of Cllr. Adrian Hird was received after many years on the parish council, serving the community. I am most grateful to Adrian for his invaluable contribution to council and wider village life during this period. His wealth of knowledge and his dedication are greatly missed. More recently, we were successful in appointing Cllr. Kelly Piggott via co-option and we look forward to her future contributions and the fresh perspective she brings.

Although the Council chose not to hold the Autumn Festival this year, plans are already underway for a new family event in 2026, involving several community organisations. While we are in the early stages of planning, we hope to share more details in the near future—so watch this space!

As usual, residents of the parish paid tribute to our fallen in our usual way this year. The parade and service were well attended by approx. 150 residents. Clergy, parish and county councillors, uniformed organisations, village groups, local schools and residents paraded from outside of St Johns Church to the War Memorial. As usual, clergy from all churches which serve the parish led the service with a poem being read from a pupil of Castleside Primary School. Representatives from organisations that serve the parish laid wreaths.

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At the end of November, the Parish Council once again held the Annual Christmas Light 'switch on' in conjunction with St Johns Church, bringing Christmas cheer to the centre of Castleside. The well attended event hosted Castleside Primary School Choir and Consett Brass.

Last year, I reported that Ann Scott and David Dixon had been nominated and conferred upon them the Honorary Freedom of the Parish of Healeyfield. Sadly, both passed away in the latter months of 2024. Both individuals gave of themselves freely in many ways and have left a lasting impact on this community.

The Parish Council continues to be in a good financial position. achieved through prudent budgeting and a commitment to achieving best value in all our spending. However, it has been necessary to increase our precept for the financial year 2025/2026 by 10% meaning that each homes annual precept is £29.88 (based on band 'D' property).

In early May 2025, elections for both county and parish council elections were held. The Healeyfield Parish election was uncontested, and there are currently two seats vacant which I hope we are able to fill in the near future via co-option. Elections for Durham County Councillors saw Castleside moving into the Consett South ward, a big shift having had a long-standing representation under the Lanchester ward. County Councillor Douglas Oliver did not stand for the new ward, and Mike McGaun was not re-elected. I am most grateful to them both for their advice, support with local issues and for keeping us up to date with the decisions and events at County Council level. I look forward to forging a good relationship between Healeyfield and our new County Councillor, Dominic Haney, ensuring that Healeyfield continues to have a strong voice at County level.

In conclusion, it has been a great privilege to represent my community, and I am proud of what the Council has achieved over the past year. I would like to thank all the members of the Parish Council and Ian Robson our clerk, for their continued hard work and commitment over the past year.

I look forward to another productive year ahead.

Adam Pearson

Chairman, Healeyfield Parish Council 2024/25.