



Boroughbridge Town Council Mayor's Report 2025/2026

The past year has proven to be both exceptionally busy and highly productive for the council. We have experienced a number of personnel changes, including councillors who have moved on to pursue other interests. However, we are delighted to welcome two new councillors, Elisa Philips and Simon Ashley, who have joined our team. In addition, our new Deputy Clerk, Agnes Gurney, has taken up her post, bringing energy and commitment to the role. I would also like to extend our gratitude to Pam Howell, our Burial Clerk, who stepped in to fill the position on a temporary basis.

The transition from multiple district councils to a single large unitary authority has presented significant challenges. It is clear that the complexity of this “bedding in” process was underestimated, resulting in a much greater workload for our council.

1 Hall Square

Our town council office at 1 Hall Square continues to act as a valuable tourist information point, ably supported by our dedicated team of volunteers. The office also provides important services and information to assist with queries relating to North Yorkshire Council. In recent months, we have undertaken essential works to bring both the office and the building up to current standards. Priorities included installing a modern fire alarm system and low energy lighting, as well as carrying out some external repairs and painting. An unexpected new boiler was also fitted.

As a result of new regulations, we have updated our computer and data systems, including the establishment of new email addresses.

Mill Lane

The Mill Lane site is currently up for sale, and we have recently received a new offer. We remain hopeful that a successful conclusion can be reached soon.

Car Park and Toilet Block

The town car park continues to provide much needed parking for visitors, contributing to the vibrancy of our town centre. We rely on those using the car park to make a small donation, and we are considering ways to make both the car park and the toilet block more sustainable, thus reducing their impact on our council budget. The recently refurbished toilet block is a significant asset, and we are grateful to our caretakers for maintaining such high standards of cleanliness, as evidenced by the many positive comments we receive. In the coming months, we plan to commence resurfacing and white lining works in the car park

Recreation Ground

The second phase of the Recreation Ground refurbishment plan has been completed, offering play facilities suitable for all age groups. The new equipment was officially opened by pupils from Boroughbridge Primary School. Funding for both phases of the project was secured through commuted sums contributions from housing developers.

Cemeteries

The cemeteries committee has worked diligently to ensure both cemeteries are well maintained. A new footpath has been laid at Aldborough cemetery, and we are exploring ways to improve the children's section at Boroughbridge cemetery. Once the weather improves, the cemetery railings will be painted by the community payback team. Further tidying works are also planned for both cemeteries.

Sports Village

Progress on the Sports Village has been slower than anticipated, primarily due to the transition to a unitary authority and resulting staff changes at North Yorkshire Council, which disrupted continuity. The application process for this type of development is particularly complex. Nevertheless, matters are now back on track, and we anticipate submitting an outline planning application soon. It is worth remembering that this project is a unique initiative led by the Town Council, with financial support from a local commercial business and a charitable trust.

Youth Provision

Despite the Town Council's efforts to support Inspire Youth in their mobile youth provision, safeguarding concerns arose regarding the operation being located at the roadside next to the recreation ground. As such, we felt unable to continue with this arrangement.

Bridge Lighting Project

The proposal to install pedestrian lighting on the bridge over the Ure has regrettably been abandoned due to escalating costs, which meant the project no longer represented value for money. Furthermore, only half of the bridge falls within our parish, with the remainder under the jurisdiction of the highway authority.

Arson Attack – Springfield Grove

The council was deeply saddened by the arson attack at Springfield Grove, which resulted in two elderly residents being made homeless when the block of bungalows was set on fire. Alongside fellow councillors, I provided support by liaising with the affected families and North Yorkshire Council. This traumatic event affected many, but I am pleased to report that restoration work has now commenced.

The Fountain

Significant restoration may be required for the fountain at St James's Square. We are currently awaiting the results of structural reports before making any further decisions.

Parking Issues

The council has supported both the Primary School and the Spar shop on the High Street to help resolve ongoing parking issues. We continue to urge all motorists to be considerate in their parking habits. We are also mindful of the persistent traffic and parking difficulties on Horsefair, and anticipate that these challenges will only worsen with the continuing expansion of local housing developments.

Flooding Issues

Flooding remains a concern in the town, largely due to blocked drains and an ageing sewage system that is no longer adequate for our growing population. We have raised these concerns on several occasions and remain vigilant, aware that the situation is likely to deteriorate as the community continues to expand.

Closing Remarks

We are a very active and industrious council, and this report only provides a glimpse of our ever-increasing workload. I would like to close by offering my sincere thanks to my Deputy, Cllr Sean Hynes, as well as to our Town Clerk and the entire clerking team for their tireless hard work and ongoing support.

Date

Signature