

Hazlerigg Parish Council Chair's Report May 2026

I would like to thank everyone for their parish council activity over the past year, particularly to our clerk, Ali, who has kept us on track and to Cllr Barbour, as deputy chair, for keeping on top of banking and financial matters. Thanks, as ever, goes to Cllrs Fairley and Garbett, for running the community centre and congratulations to Cllr Down for securing a seat as a Castle Ward councillor in the recent elections, as well as for pursuing so many issues on behalf of residents as a parish councillor. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Cathy Sharp, who has supported the community orchard and Hazlerigg Swift project through her role with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. We very much hope that the work we have been doing in the parish with Cathy will continue with her predecessor.

In the past year, we have secured funds for the community orchard, a memorial bench and a sonic pond dipping session thanks to Newcastle City Council, Banks Group and the Environmental Records Centre North East. We also secured new tree planting through the North East Community Forest, on land at High Ridge. We have been lucky enough to secure more Ward funding this year to buy a bench and some brass rubbing posts for the orchard.

To improve green spaces and support biodiversity, we planted more Spring bulbs across the village. The wildflower areas at Lola Street and Enid Street are improving each year. Our efforts to support pollinators were recognised nationally and we were awarded a DEFRA Bees Needs Champion Award last year, with the award ceremony taking place at Kew Gardens. We have been actively engaging with the Natural History Society of Northumbria and more engagement events are taking place in the nature reserve. We have also launched a wildlife-friendly gardening competition this year, to raise awareness of the importance of gardens for wildlife and green space and the need to support pollinators. I am confident that we are complying with the strengthened legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

We have been actively reducing litter in the village by taking part in regular litter picks, whether as individuals or during organised events. Our Great British Spring Clean litter pick this year was supported by Dhillons Chippy, who offered a free pizza to everyone taking part. We installed anti-litter signs around the park and community centre. We have also engaged with Newcastle City Council's litter officers who have been engaging with the youth club and community centre.

We have contacted our MP on numerous occasions to invite her to meet with us to discuss some of the issues in the village, including matters such as illegal parking along the bridleway along Elliott Walk and other grass verges in the village, planning breaches, flooding, fires, motorbikes and illegal fishing in the nature reserve, the PROW between Hazlerigg and Brunswick and poor bus services. We are yet to secure a visit, but our MP has written to Newcastle City Council on several occasions on our behalf. We have also requested surgeries to be held in Hazlerigg.

In Autumn, we replaced three trees in the orchard, thanks to support from Northumberland Wildlife Trust and installed the new sign. Last year all the fruit was picked before it was ripe, so this year we will be increasing awareness of the need to leave fruit to ripen.

We have raised a number of concerns about construction work in and around Havannah Nature Reserve with Newcastle Great Park Consortium and Newcastle City Council. We met with the planning officer and NGP Consortium about landscaping and flooding issues in Cell C3 and will continue to meet with them until satisfactory completion of landscaping in Cell C3. The planning application for houses at Brunton Quarry was approved in January 2026 and, although we objected to the plans, we were able to secure funding from Barratt Homes to make sure that we are reimbursed for any utilities work that takes place on parish council land at High Ridge. We met just last week with planning officers to raise concerns around this development being approved, given the number of policies it did not adhere to.

We attended the Ward meeting in March, during which we raised parish issues with police, fire services, public health, EPIC and tree officers. We have made links with Newcastle City Council's new housing officer, who now has a presence at coffee mornings. Newcastle Airport kindly invited us to visit to the airport solar farm earlier this Spring and we will look to work with the airport to deliver wider environmental benefits where possible.

We have continued to attend Newcastle City Council's All Parish meetings, Airport Consultative Committee meetings, Newcastle Parks Forum meetings and Newcastle Great Park Consortium Nature Conservation Steering Group meetings. We responded to consultations on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Newcastle International Airport expansion.

Thanks to Ali's hard work, we now have a [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website and we will all need to help with keeping this up to date.

Over the coming year, we will also need to focus on improving management of the village planters. We will need to ensure appropriate signage is in place at High Ridge. As ever, funds are tight and time is limited and we need to proactively seek out funding opportunities, as well as encourage more people to join the parish council. I would also like us to think about how best to engage with young people and consider the benefits a youth council could bring to the parish. We are looking forward to working with our new Ward councillors in the coming year.

Finally, as I have done these last few years, I would like to offer the position of chair to anyone willing to take up the post, as I am conscious that I have chaired the council for a number of years now. Thank you.