

Bishop Monkton Village Hall & QEII Playing Field

Chairman's Report to AGM, 14th January 2026

Introduction

This is my first Chairman's Report having taken over from Gerald Shervington in January 2025. Having been in the role for a year I have realised two things – the first is how enjoyable it is to be part of a vibrant team of people who make everything happen at the Hall and Playing Fields needed to make it such a wonderful community facility. The second is that there's a lot of work involved for all of us – I now appreciate how much Gerald did in his 13 years as Chair and would like to pass on my sincere thanks on behalf of everyone who uses the Hall and Playing Fields. It's wonderful to have Gerald alongside me still in his new role as Treasurer.

Many thanks also to Lesley Shervington who handed over the essential role of Bookings Secretary to Emma Gough who has done a great job this year, and to Victora Sargeson who resigned as Treasurer last year.

One striking thing about our organisation is that it functions largely as the result of the hard work and dedication of a small number of committed volunteers. Without them we would not be able to afford to operate – their “in kind” support would cost several tens of thousands of pounds a year to replicate commercially. I am sure we all agree that the hall and playing fields continue to look fantastic – a huge amount of work goes into making this happen. So, a big “shout out” to Mick Jackson, Bob Upton, John Binns, Alan Wigby, Chris Higgins and Paul Collinson for their hard work.

I would also like to thank Tony Young our cleaner – he quietly gets on with a difficult job and works incredibly flexible hours to follow the booking pattern and ensure the hall remains in great condition for all users.

We've had a busy year, and my introduction would be incomplete without mentioning the significant event of the Strike (BBC) filming of “Football Fantastics” in March – May 2025. It was an exciting event for the Village and brought in about £20,000 of revenue for the hall – plus benefits for other businesses in the village whose services were used by the Strike team. The series was well received by the BBC, and two more series have been commissioned, to be filmed in 2026 (more of that later!). I do recognise that the filming was disruptive for Clubs and Societies and appreciate their support for allowing the filming to happen.

Looking to the Future

Our Hall was 20 years old in 2025! We still have a facility to be proud of but also need to recognise that the needs of our village change. It saddens me that three of the original purposes of the hall – drama, cricket and football - are no longer supported by active village organisations, although it will be great to see two cricket teams playing in 2026, alongside an active junior cricket club and now two football pitches used by Nidd United, with membership open to our community.

The gap in drama events with the demise of BMEG has been partly filled by visiting theatre groups – something I am keen to see increase in the years ahead.

I would love to see increased use of our facilities by younger people – it's something that we all need to think about and support where possible. With notable exceptions, the demographic of our user-base is skewed towards older people.

We have thriving clubs which were never envisaged when the hall was built – and plans are being developed to take this further as we look to build high quality all-weather cricket nets and explore the ability to host indoor bowls.

With the above facts in mind, the Committee decided to survey the village to understand how they would like to see the facility develop. We received some strong and consistent feedback and as a result have delivered the following improvements in 2025:

1. Installation of high-speed Wi-Fi
2. Installation of a large screen for meetings in the lounge
3. Purchase of four picnic benches
4. Creation of a second football pitch for younger players – this has increased participation and our rental income
5. Renovation of the two boules courts – which were very well used in the summer
6. Installation of CCTV (paid for by commuted sums)
7. Purchase of two new noticeboards
8. Financial support towards the purchase of a high-quality gazebo for village events
9. Purchase of screening for the tennis court / MUGA area, which will provide a welcome wind break and allow more playing hours

We also purchased the following equipment:

1. A new battery-powered mower for use on the three high-quality grass surfaces, including attachments for spiking and scarifying
2. A new petrol mower to be used for winter mowing of high-quality grass surfaces
3. A sanitary bin contract has been put in place for the Ladies' toilets

And undertook the following essential maintenance:

1. Purchase of a replacement water boiler which is also suitable for our future solar installation
2. Repairs to the bowls fence
3. Painting of the car park fences (thanks Paul!)
4. Repairs / fitting of expansion joints to the render on the front elevation
5. Crown lifting of various trees
6. High level “deep clean” of the hall
7. Clearing out of the upstairs store area and bowls room (thanks Bob and Mick!)

The following projects are planned for the future:

1. Construction of an outside toilet with disabled access and baby changing facilities – funding for this is in place, and we are waiting for contractor quotes.
2. Completion of the perimeter path, which should begin in late spring. The project has received a £1,000 grant from Harmony Energy and £8,000 grant from Sport England. The remaining cost will be funded by Commuted Sums, although we will need to provide c. £8,300 of bridge finance until the Commuted Sums from the Church Farm development are received.
3. Installation of solar panels and batteries, to improve the building’s sustainability and reduce our (very high!) utilities costs. This will require future commuted sums funding, so will not happen for 2-3 years but planning permission has been granted.
4. Painting of the front elevation of the hall.
5. Installation of picket fencing on the veranda to match what Strike installed.
6. Construction of two all-weather cricket nets – subject to fundraising.
7. Replacement of the internal wall lights with dimmable fittings.

We should receive significant access to commuted sums from the Avant and Church Farm developments and need to plan how best to spend these.

BBC / Strike 2026

Following the success of the 2025 production, Strike will return twice in 2026 to film two more series of Football Fantastics. They will be on site as follows:

Series 2 : Feb 23rd – April 24th ; Series 3 : 29th June – 28th August

I recognise the concern of a number of clubs and societies about the disruption from this – especially to Table Tennis. We have learned some important lessons from 2025 and built in changes to the 2026 agreements as a result.

The 2025 filming resulted in a cash boost of about £20,000 – and in 2026 this will be over £51,000.

The improvement plans listed above could simply not have happened without the Strike money – commuted sums are highly restricted and cannot be used for improvement, maintenance or purchase of non-fixed assets such as mowers. The Strike windfall has enabled us to accelerate many improvements by several years – and leave a long-term legacy for all users of the facilities.

The financial “trickle down” effect of the production to our pub, other businesses and the Methodist Church should not be forgotten.

Clubs & Societies

Note : The following articles have been written by the Chair / Secretary of the various societies and only lightly edited.

Cricket

Bishop Monkton junior cricket club had another successful season. We ran training and matches for all aged between 5 and 11. Indoor training will start in the coming weeks.

Knaresborough 3rds used the ground on Saturdays which kept a good standard of cricket going and ensured that the ground and especially wicket was well looked after. 2026 will see a newly formed club joining Knaresborough on alternate Saturdays so there will be cricket played at the ground every weekend of the season – this will also boost Village Hall income as the ground rentals will increase substantially.

Table Tennis

A fairly straightforward year for our ninety six members, with the exception of our decamping to Markington and North Stainley for eight weeks while Strike was in residence at the Village Hall. Most of the club were happy to go along with the move but as we know you can't please all the people all the time. Going forward it will be interesting to see how many act on their threat of not renewing their membership for 2026 in view of Strike filming series two and three.

We would be happy to welcome new members to the club, interestingly we only have eleven at present who are residents of Bishop Monkton.

If that reads as negative it's not meant to, most of us know we are very fortunate to be playing in such a clean well-maintained hall with excellent facilities and realise the windfall of Strike Productions is too good to miss.

Bowls

It has been a year of many challenges - a new committee at short notice, withdrawal from the Dalesman league due to lack of male players, the green experiencing the effects of severe drought, new team members learning to play together at league level and accommodating having the BBC on site during a busy competition period but we survived them all!

Some of the highlights included the Bridges team winning the Harrogate Ladies league, a number of our county players reaching the semifinals of their competitions, members stepping up to play in league matches, and fulfilling a full match programme whilst the BBC was on site.

The club hosted a full calendar of social bowling, friendly matches and internal competitions, including the new Seniors competition for over 75's.

The social events have continued to be well supported by club members, their families and villagers; for which we are grateful and thank them for their continued support. We introduced two new social events namely a games night and a strawberry tea afternoon, both proving to be so successful it is planned to repeat them in 2026.

Looking forward to 2026 season our aim is to increase our membership - check out our website (<https://www.bishopmonktonbowlingclub.co.uk>) or speak to any bowling club member if you are interested in having a free taster session when the season begins in April.

WI

The WI continues to welcome new members and currently have 45 on the books.

December hosted a fantastic fashion show event with over 50 guests attending. Our Jan meal (2026) is being supplied by the Afghan kitchen

So, you can see we continue to move forward and that is all down to the wonderful residents of Bishop Monkton.

2027 will see us hosting events to celebrate the BWI Centenary.

Tennis and Pickleball

This has been another successful year for the Tennis and Pickleball club, which continues to thrive.

Summer club sessions continued during 2025 with other games being arranged by members. The number of members has remained healthy and our sessions for the winter season in the hall are in great demand.

We had our annual barbecue and three club pickleball tournaments - all excellent events which were well attended.

The BMT & PC Annual Dinner and Glittering Awards Ceremony was the premier event of the year and included recognition for "Most Talkative Player During a Rally" and "Most Likely to Post First on the WhatsApp Group" as well as an excellent after dinner speech by the former VH chairman, Gerald Shervington.

Supported generously by the village hall committee, we have acquired screening to attach to the outside of the entire facility for next year which will provide protection from the prevailing winds and will greatly enhance the playing of outdoor pickleball and tennis. We would like to reiterate our thanks to the chairman and the committee for this support.

We are very grateful to the Field Marshalls for their care of the courts and the whole of the playing fields, which are a great place to enjoy our sport.

We look forward to the coming year and hope to welcome more villagers as members in 2025.

Croquet

Meeting the challenges of maintaining fine turf, the club lawns continue to improve under the supervision of Chris Higgins.

On the playing front the club continues to offer play for all abilities and the membership remains steady.

A number of members compete nationally with great success. The club has numerous internal and regional competitions and leagues to complement social play."

Football

Nidd United JFC are extremely happy to be located at Bishop Monkton, it's a great facility and one which we hope to continue using for many years.

Teams based at BM:-

Last years U16's won the Harrogate B league, and the U15's finished 3rd in the A league and also reached the semi final of the Barkston Ash U16's Cup.

This year the U16's are currently top of the A league and the new U12's based there are unbeaten in their B league.

We also had our end of season Presentation/BBQ/mini-tournament at BM attended by approximately 300 parents and kids and had an absolutely fantastic afternoon!

Thanks to all the support from your committee and groundsmen and particularly to Bob Upton who have been incredibly helpful throughout my 2 years based at BM

Finance

We have grappled with increased utility costs as a result of global challenges and had to introduce increases to our rental costs after a freeze which had lasted several years.

Affiliation Fees were frozen in 2025 but do need to increase – a 6% increase in the underlying level for 2026 has been agreed but this will be postponed until 2027 to reflect the disruption from Strike this year. Treasurers should note that there is likely to be a further increase as we go into 2027 – so should prepare for a larger total increase at this time.

The accounts show a pleasing increase in cash at bank from just over £60k at the end of September 2024 to £63,300 in September 2025. This was in a year of significant capital expenditure, but also a year in which we received just under £20k in income from Strike Productions – but some of this was spent paying for the relocation of table tennis to Markington (£1638), North Stainley (£312) and other clubs to the Methodist Church (£721).

Our positive net income of £3k reversed a deficit of £9k from the previous year – illustrating the importance of the Strike income and the rental fee increases we have just implemented. But it also illustrates our vulnerability when the Strike series comes to an end.

We have also added to our assets by spending £13,663 on items such as new electric lawnmower £3,830, benches around fields £738, big gazebo £1,036, pickleball wind nets £687 and CCTV £5,407

At the time of writing our cash at bank totals £63,282 an increase of cash reserves of just over £3,000 – but please note this includes £5,116 held on behalf of BMEG. We are committed to paying the Parish Council about £3,500 as a contribution towards the speed warning signs and making a temporary contribution of £8,500 towards the planned perimeter path – this money will be returned from commuted sums in the future when the Church Farm development is complete.

Related Activities

We are pleased to continue to pay for the costs of the “**Bishop Monkton Today**” **website** and would like to thank Glenda Hunter for her sterling work as Editor – and wish Cerys Gill well as she takes over in January.

A big “thank you” to Stancey Coughlan for her work in events organisation – including the **Fun Day** and **MonktonFest**. Money raised has been put toward the purchase of a very high-quality gazebo, which the Village Hall was able to support financially.

Conclusion

It has been a busy year – we’ve managed to improve the facilities, strengthen our finances and provide an outstanding community asset that is used and loved by our village. Thank you everyone for your continued support.

Phil Goodier

14th January 2026