

## **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

2018/19 has been another “full on” year. Despite setbacks, a lot has been achieved – even though at times progress has been frustratingly slow.

So what are the things which have dominated our business over the last 12 months?

- Planning issues. Carys has covered these thoroughly in her Chair of Planning’s report. We have worked hard to establish a better working relationship with Rushcliffe Borough Council (the Planning Authority) and Nottinghamshire County Council (transport and education), with some success. We fully understand residents’ concerns, and are equally frustrated that East Leake remains vulnerable to yet more housing.
- Tour of Britain. The Tour of Britain came through East Leake during this last year, and the Parish Council worked with traders and other parties to make it a very enjoyable and well supported event.
- Parking / Car Parks. Twelve months ago I expressed the hope that the Gotham Road car park extension would be completed during the summer of 2018. How wrong could I be!! Whilst the project started well, straight after the June Carnival, things ground to a halt when we discovered gas mains set too high to accommodate the planned new exit. After protracted negotiations with Cadent (owners of the gas pipes) work on the exit eventually commenced, only to find BT ducts in a similar situation. This was despite the information we had been given indicating that their cables lay in the road, not the verge..... Yet more discussions / permissions were needed with BT Openreach. Thankfully by the time you read this the work will FINALLY have been completed, at least half a year later than planned. Now there is just some planting to undertake around the perimeter of the extension.
- New Skatepark. This will have been covered in Mel’s Chair of Amenities report. It is a good asset for the village, albeit not straightforward (floodplain). It has been financed through a 50% grant from Rushcliffe Borough Council and 50% from your parish precept. As the weather warms up, some grass seeding around the structure will be undertaken.
- The East Leake Growth Board. This is NOT about yet more houses!!! It is seeking to develop the village infrastructure, employment opportunities and retail vibrancy. In other words, it is about making East Leake a good place to live, work and shop. It is still early days to see visible progress, but it has proved useful in calling other bodies to account. Severn Trent have now admitted that there is a capacity problem at the pumping station in the centre of the village, something we have known and had evidence of for years and which last April’s floods amply demonstrated. They are working on a plan to remedy the situation by 2022. The Clinical Commissioning Group has been challenged about its planning for a new Health Centre, and recently Education (school places) were under the spotlight. The Board has also had discussions with Highways, as a result of your input last year to reduce traffic dominance in the centre of the village. They have commissioned a study of options, which is due to be published in the very near future. It remains to be seen whether there is money to deliver the preferred option, but hopefully we will have an agreed project and can explore ways of finding the money.
- Loss of Registrar services. Despite serious lobbying, the Registrar service decided it could no longer afford to deliver a local service. This was despite our offer to cover their travel costs. The use of the venue was free to them anyway! We are frustrated that, at a time of village growth, we have lost a valuable service.

Other things worth mentioning:

- Still no specific news on a new Health Centre. I know that a consultant is producing a shortlist of possible sites and an outline business case. This is due in spring 2019.
- Last November, after discussions with St Mary's Church, we held our first Remembrance "parade" separately from Gotham. It was felt especially important to have a local service on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the Great War. It has been agreed that there will now be a service in East Leake every year.
- We are keen to foster more volunteering in the village. We appreciate the efforts of the Tidy Team, the Friends of Meadow Park and the churchyard volunteers, in seeking to improve the village environment, and Community Care volunteers who provide welcome services for older residents. I know there are others who do things around the village without being part of a formal group. We can all do our bit, even just picking up litter in our own street. We'd love to hear your ideas of how more people can get involved in making East Leake an even better place to live. Remember also that the Parish Council may be able to give support to other East Leake community groups.

We have planned a "Wishing Well" at this year's Annual Parish Meeting (APM). This is to enable YOU to put forward ideas to be taken forward by the new Council after the May elections. It will be useful input to the next Council's four year plan. However if, after the APM, something strikes you, please contact us, either by email, telephone or by dropping into the Parish Office any weekday morning. Your ideas for village improvements will be positively welcomed.

As always, I am very grateful for our loyal staff who undertake all the day-to-day tasks which can never feature in a report such as this: Neil and Sue in the office, and Steve and Adey outdoors. Also thanks to the Committee chairs – Kevin, Carys and Mel. Thanks very much, team!!

**Cllr Conrad Oatey**

## **REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The role of the Management Committee is to monitor Internal and External controls and procedures of the Parish Council, to review income and expenditure against budgets and to prepare a draft budget each year for approval by The Council.

The Committee is made up of the Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Amenities and Planning Committees plus two members elected from the rest of the Council.

In this report I shall look at our performance against the budget in 2018/19, and explain in a little more detail our plans for 2019/20

With the planned expenditure on the car park extensions now behind us, and the new works depot, children's playground and skate park projects completed, the Council was able to keep the Council Tax increase to 2.07%, but we did have to use £5000 of Reserves to achieve this.

For the year ahead, we plan to build up a reserve to convert part of the recently acquired land off Costock Road into a car park to get the cars using the playing fields off the road. We have also made provision to resurface the paths in Meadow Park, although getting this completed in one year will very much depend on a successful bid to N.C.C. for a Local Improvement Scheme grant.

We also intend to complete the planned replacement of the benches in the Conservation Area so that they are all a uniform design, and to provide an outdoor gym in Meadow Park.

All of the above led to The Councils need to increase the Council Tax by £2.84p for a Band D property, an increase of 3.13% which is only slightly above the current rate of inflation.

That completes my report, ladies and gentlemen, but I will be happy to take questions if anyone requires further clarification.

**Cllr Kevin Shaw**

### **REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

I have again enjoyed this past year as Chair of the Amenities Committee, and it gives me great pleasure to report on the many projects that we have been working on.

The extension of the Gotham Road Car Park has finally been completed – several issues arising during construction meant that it took a lot longer than originally anticipated, but hopefully now the additional spaces and one-way-in-one-way-out will improve traffic flow and avoid congestion in the village centre – please be considerate of others and use the free car parks rather than on-street parking when you can! .

Recreation Ground – Following a successful application for a match funding scheme announced by Rushcliffe Borough Council for improvements to skateparks, we are now the proud owners of a fabulous concrete skatepark which is well-used already by people of all ages and as its reputation spreads brings visiting skaters to the village.

Repairs have also been made to some items of the play equipment, which had worn due to their popularity.

Meadow Park continues to be expertly maintained by the “Friends of Meadow Park” and our grounds staff. I would like to thank all the Meadow Park committee members and their volunteers for all their hard work, it really is a delightful area and we are very lucky to have it. Monthly working parties gather on the second Saturday of each month – this is a really great way of making friends, getting some exercise, and giving something back – all ages and abilities welcome – every little helps! You can become a “Friend of Meadow Park” by paying a minimum yearly subscription of £3 per person/£5 per family – which raises vital funds for planting and purchasing tools. Increased footfall in the park is taking its toll and maintenance of the paths is something we are looking into once the weather improves.

Thanks are also extended to those volunteers who help maintain the St Mary’s Church Yard. We are lucky to have such a beautiful church in a lovely setting and it’s not an easy job keeping it looking neat – if you can spare time to join the volunteers particularly in the summer please give your contact details to the Parish Office.

The ongoing bench replacement project continued again this year – replacing five more benches, two on Gotham Road, one at the bottom of Castle Hill and the final two will be installed on The Glebe shortly. The old benches that were removed will be recycled where possible.

The Christmas lights in the village sparkled again this year – we were delighted that the issues with the lights in the big trees was resolved and we are already working on Christmas 2019.

Clearance has commenced of the area of land on Costock Road opposite the sports ground and knotweed treatment is ongoing. The long-term plan for this area is to provide extra parking for the Costock Road Sports Ground.

On 25 April 2019 there is a meeting planned regarding the new community sports hub on the Sports Ground – so if you'd like to help raise vital funds to enable the build of an amazing community space in our village this could be the meeting for you, whether you have experience in writing funding bids, organising events, have fundraising ideas, or simply want to join a team of like-minded, driven people who are passionate about this exciting project – please make yourself known! This is a very exciting project supported by the Parish Council which will require the full support of villagers to make it a reality.

Meet Your Village – another brilliant event – thank you to the Community Plan Group for organising – and everyone who gave up their time to attend either to promote their business/club or members of the public who came along to “meet their village” there was so much going on and so much to find out about I'm sure everyone who attended learnt something about East Leake!

Following the consultation last year on whether East Leake would like a Trim Trail – I am pleased to announce an Outdoor Gym has been ordered for Meadow Park, it is real gym equipment that allows users to exercise all of the main core muscle groups as well as undertaking cardio-vascular workouts – the patented bi-directional hydraulic system can be set in 8 different positions, enabling people of all abilities to exercise at a pace suitable for them and to progress the difficulty as fitness improves – installation is imminent.

The annual village litter pick/spring clean weekend was fairly well supported this year – huge thanks to those who did a shift or two – it was an impressive haul, although it was noted that there was not as much as in previous years, possibly due to the work of the Tidy Team – a great bunch of residents who regularly get together to litter pick, sweep, clean & weed when required!

Thank you to Neil, Sue, Steve & Ady for all their hard work, Marie my Vice Chair and all the members of the Amenities Committee for your support, and also all the volunteers – together we keep East Leake looking lovely!

Finally, please do report problems or issues around the village – we don't always spot everything, come to us with ideas, get involved – we are in this together and we all want East Leake to be the best it can be!

**CLlr Mel Roper**

## **REPORT BY CHAIR OF PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Parish Council Planning Committee meets up to three times a month depending on planning applications received for consideration. All meetings are open to the public and there is opportunity for the public to express opinions and ask questions. The larger housing developments and various strategic consultations generate a heavy workload. The more routine work of the committee goes on in parallel, with applications for residential extensions, work on trees, changes in use etc being reviewed by the Parish Council. We use the Parish Council newsletter to keep residents informed about planning matters that will have general impact, and deliver individual letters to residents most closely affected, holding public meeting as appropriate to ascertain public opinion. We are increasingly using the Parish Council website and various Facebook pages for this also.

Here is a quick round up of the past year's major activities.

### **May –August 2018**

- Prepared for the appeal for the refused application for 195 houses off Lantern Lane, including meeting Rushcliffe and Nottinghamshire County Council officers and producing documented evidence. Lobbied for the hearing to be held in the village rather than in West Bridgford.
- Councillors attended consultation events about the plans to build the National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall, and a written response was made.
- Responded to the Government Consultation on Planning Reforms and issued a press release.
- Attended the week long planning appeal for Lantern Lane site, including a site visit, giving evidence to object to the development. Issued a press release when we heard the inspector had allowed the appeal.
- Supported an application to change 42 Main Street from residential to retail/business use, but noted requirements with access for those with mobility issues.
- Attended Rushcliffe Borough Council cabinet meeting to question them about lack of progress with Community Infrastructure Levy and progressing the development South of Clifton.

### **September-October 2018**

- Took up with Rushcliffe the “pre application advice” they had given about building family houses on the Home Farm site, contravening the Neighbourhood Plan policy which gives priority for uses that need a village centre location.
- Received first indications of applications for development off Field End Close and Stonebridge Drive.
- Objected to Nottinghamshire County Council Minerals Local Plan, siting a quarry close to the Cornflower Way estate and Costock Road Playing Fields. (We have recently heard that this site has been withdrawn.)
- Responded to Rushcliffe's consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Met with developers of the Rempstone Road site to comment on their initial plans and advise about the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. These developers subsequently withdrew, and we are in dialogue with another housebuilding company currently working up plans.

### **November-December 2018**

- Instigated a road safety campaign about the access to the National Rehabilitation Centre. Set up online and paper petitions, met with neighbouring Parish Councils, met our MP, discussed with

our County Councillor, issued press release, gave radio interview. Submitted detailed response to consultation.

- Applied to renew the Asset of Community Value status for the Bull's Head site.
- Responded to the consultation on Gotham's Neighbourhood Plan.
- Participated in the 3-week hearing for the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2, giving evidence etc.
- At a meeting well attended by residents, decided not to respond to a pre-application consultation for the proposed development off Stonebridge Drive.

#### **January-March 2019**

- Submitted written question to Rushcliffe cabinet about lack of progress with the site South of Clifton.
- Public meeting to consider plans for 170 homes off Field End Close, submitted detailed written objection.
- Met Rushcliffe planners to discuss issues of concern, and to build a partnership relationship.
- Objected to plans to massively increase number of homes on the Kirk Ley site, gave radio interview.
- Held a public meeting to consider plans to build 95 homes off Stonebridge Drive, and submitted a detailed written objection.
- Represented the village at Rushcliffe's Community Infrastructure Levy examination hearing
- Undertook a detailed investigation into how money collected by Rushcliffe from developers, i.e. so-called "Section 106" money, is being spent (ongoing).

#### **How can members of the public get involved in planning matters?**

We understand the frustration of residents about the massive growth we are experiencing. It is important that public opinion is heard and there are several ways you can engage in the planning process, for example:

- Join with neighbours to form an action group to oppose a development that particularly affects your area. For example the residents of the Stonebridge Drive area are acting as group.
- Find your way around Rushcliffe's planning portal to look through applications to see exactly what is being proposed. Comments that you make will be taken into account when decisions are made.
- Come to Parish Council Planning meeting on Tuesday evenings, to learn more about the planning process and give your views on applications. The Parish Council makes comments on your behalf – we do not approve or refuse applications, but our input can make a difference. Agendas are posted on noticeboards in the village. Minutes can be read on the website.
- Attend Rushcliffe's Planning meetings, held monthly at Rushcliffe Arena. See how your Borough Council makes these decisions. It is also possible to speak from the floor and we encourage you to apply to do so if an application affects you. Agendas and minutes can be found on the Rushcliffe Website.
- Keep an eye on what is happening around the village. If you think that work is being done that does not have planning permission, or that does not match the plans, you can contact the enforcement officer at Rushcliffe or ask the Parish Council to do this.

#### **Finally, a warm welcome to new residents**

Despite our ongoing planning battles East Leake is still a great place to live, and our community always extends a warm welcome to new residents. One of our greatest fears is that the new estates at the

edges of the village will make the place into a commuter dormitory town, so please enjoy being here, take the time to get to know people, get involved in village life, walk to the shops, around Meadow Park and out into the countryside, use the shops, pubs, and join the clubs, churches, sports facilities and voluntary groups and societies.

**Cllr Carys Thomas**