

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

At the time of writing this report thoughts are on the challenges we all face with the Covid-19 epidemic. Life seems to have been turned upside down. Such circumstances perhaps cause us to long for normality, when nothing much happens and life goes on.....

2019/20 has been a challenging year for your new Council, as it has been dominated by infrastructure issues which have proved difficult to resolve:

- Flooding / sewage: The exceptionally wet autumn brought several floods to East Leake. Whilst we were more fortunate than many communities, the most worrying aspect was the regular overflow of sewage, both from the pumping station in the centre of the village and through manholes in various roads. After years of challenge, Severn Trent has finally accepted that there is a problem. We don't know what the solution will be, but it is likely to take some years to be delivered.
- New Health Centre: there is now a project plan and a business case for a new Centre. Involvement of our new MP Ruth Edwards even got an adjournment debate on the subject at Westminster. When the project happens, if it encompasses the services planned (Health, Social Care, Library, Rushcliffe Service Point, Police Service Point), the Parish Council may decide to move, to get all the services in one place. The only thing needed to move forwards is grant money. In the current pandemic when funds are needed to help individuals and businesses, as well as the NHS, I fear that money for our Health Centre will slip down the priority list again.
- Through the Growth Board we commissioned some work to review ways in which the village centre could be made more pedestrian-friendly and less dominated by traffic. Highways undertook the work, but the results (which we have yet to receive officially) appear to be disappointing. We may gain another pedestrian crossing, but we wait and see!
- Failure of the surface in the Children's Playground: we are very conscious that this is a major frustration for many families, as it is to us. Unfortunately there is no easy (and economical) way to resolve the situation. We are currently taking legal advice on whether we can claim the significant costs of repair from the original contractors.

Looking forward, there are a number of things which have started and should bare fruit in the coming years:

- Tree planting: our tree wardens are exploring ways in which many more trees to enhance our village, and help combat climate change. A start has been made on the Oldershaw Trust land, and other opportunities are being researched.

- Hopefully shortly the Parish Council will seek planning permission for a car park on the derelict land opposite the Costock Road Playing Fields. If approved, construction could start as soon as this pandemic permits. It would finally address the parking hazards on Costock Road on football match days.
- New Costock Road Pavilion: we have agreed to fund additional hours for our Clerk Neil to project manage the work necessary to agree a building design, obtain costings and progress grant funding through the Football Foundation and other bodies. The project is a joint venture between the Playing Field Charity, members of the community and the Parish Council. Good progress has been made. The original building design, which was granted planning permission, would be too costly to construct with the likely funding, so a modified design has now been agreed. This provides a lower initial cost but retains the flexibility to expand at a future date.

As always, I am very grateful for our 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.

Cllr Conrad Oatey

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.

The Local Authority elections in May 2019 resulted in a dramatic change to the make-up of the Parish Council, with 7 new young Councillors being elected. The new Council did, of course, have to work with the Budget set by the previous administration, but a brainstorming session early on in the term produced over 20 new schemes that the new Council felt would improve the village for young and old alike. We could not adopt all these schemes immediately without a massive increase in the Council Tax, but they have been prioritised and will be introduced as and when funding permits.

In this report I shall look at our performance against the budget in 2019/20, and explain in a little more detail our plans for 2020/21.

During 2019/20 we were suddenly and unexpectedly faced with Rates demands for the Health Centre and Gotham Road car parks, back dated for 3 years, and whilst Rushcliffe Borough Council paid part of the Gotham Road rates we were faced with having to pay a total of some £13000.

The Parish Council are required to pay a proportion of the cost of holding the Local Authority Elections which last year was some £5330, although most of this was covered by the annual provision we make to Earmarked Reserves. We also continued with the rolling programme to replace the bench seats within the Conservation Area and we also installed the outdoor gym equipment in Meadow Park with the help of Section 106 monies from the housing developments. The Parish Council have also become the lead in the plans to replace the old pavilion at the Costock Road Playing Fields, initially providing funding for the architects fees to design the new building and enable us to apply for planning consent.

The biggest disappointment was that we were unable to get the problem with the children's playground resolved.

All of this led to us having to increase the Parish proportion of the Council Tax by 3.13%

For 2020/21 we have made provision for the much needed car park off Costock Road, for the inclusion of a further tree on Main Street to carry Christmas lights and for interactive speed signs to be installed at strategic position on the gateways to the village. We are also considering entering the Best Kept village competition next year and provision has been made for the additional work that may need to be done.

With the Parish Council reserves now at little more than the bare minimum recommended by the Audit Office we are no longer able to utilise these to reduce the Council Tax, resulting in an increase this year of 4.89%, but in real terms that represents less than 50p per month for a band D property.

I know some people don't like me saying this, but there is a benefit from the explosion of new building in the village in that there are now more rate payers to spread the burden. For your information the Tax Base in January 2014 was 2286 and in January 2020 it was 3180.

Cllr Kevin Shaw

Amenities Committee

I have again enjoyed this past year as Chair of the Amenities Committee, with a big change in the members of this Committee we have had some lively debates, lots of enthusiasm and some good ideas.

The ongoing bench replacement project continued again this year – replacing five more benches around the village centre, with another 5 to be installed, the old benches that were removed will be recycled where possible.

The Outdoor Gym was installed in 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/weight suitable for them and to progress the difficulty as fitness improves – all in the fresh air, for free!

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.

Following a lot of ground work by Alan Barlow, one of our “Friends”, we were able to obtain match funding from Rushcliffe Borough Council for repairs to the stone paths on Meadow Park. Unfortunately, since the paths were done the weather has been awful, and the Park has been under water for much of the time – the paths will be re-assessed once the ground has dried out to see if any repairs are required. I’d like to thank Alan for his efforts in writing the successful funding application.

One of our new councillors Chris Mulligan tabled an idea to relocate some of the dog bins on Meadow Park – he felt a lot of them were in the wrong place – following the relocation of several bins positive feedback has been received. Dog fouling is a problem in various places in the village, particularly around the schools, this has been the subject of a lot of our discussions and plans are being made to tackle this problem with some new ideas in the near future.

I’d like to thank 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.

We have been very lucky to appoint two volunteer Tree Wardens and they have some exciting plans going forward – I’d like to thank them for giving up their time to focus on this important project. They have been assisted by the Guides with planting the trees supplied by the Rushcliffe Borough Council Free Tree Scheme.

One of the major subjects for discussion this year has been the new Pavilion on Costock Road Playing Fields, obviously this is a major project and it is now progressing nicely, we have some strong sub-committees driving this project forward, with some experts in the fields of construction, finance and fundraising – and I think we have an exciting year ahead – I’d like to thank all those who have volunteered to see this project through and are being incredibly generous with their time! This is a very exciting project supported by the Parish Council which will require the full support of villagers to make it a reality.

Plans are currently being drawn up for the new car park opposite Costock Road Playing Fields and will be one of our main focuses for the coming year.

Sadly we have a serious issue on the recreation ground – whereby the ground underneath the rubber surface has turned to a bog, which has created several serious trip hazards, hence the area having to be closed to the public. We are trying to find a solution to this problem – it is high on our list of priorities, but unfortunately it is not a quick or easy fix, please bear with us.

We are busy arranging the annual village litter pick/spring clean weekend which is due to take place on 28 & 29 March, so please put it in your diary and come & take part in this fun community event – there's an opportunity to win a family cinema ticket!

I'd personally like to thank all the volunteers on The Tidy Team – a great bunch of residents who regularly get together to litter pick, sweep, clean & weed when required to keep our village tidy – if you'd like to join the Team follow them on facebook or keep an eye on the board outside The Greengrocers where the next meet up date is advertised.

I'd also like to thank all those who run Community Care, various talks, coffee mornings and other community gatherings around the village – providing help, support and vital social environments for those who don't get out of the village, to enable them to make friends and develop new skills and interests – these can be a lifeline to some people and are a valuable asset to our community.

Thank you to Neil, Sue, Steve & Ady for all their hard work, Len 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 and being a fabulous place to live!

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

Planning Committee

The Parish Council Planning Committee continues to meet up to three times a month on a Tuesday evening. It has been an extremely busy period with lots of planning matters to consider since I became Chair last Summer.

In addition to considering planning proposals for individual properties within the village, several proposals for larger housing development within East Leake have been submitted during the year for land off Stonebridge Drive, Field End Close, Kirk Ley (Phase 3), Lantern Lane, North of Rempstone Road (Reserved Matters), East of Cornflower Way, Brookside, and Brook Furlong Farm.

The Planning Committee has referred to key policy documents in considering the applications, such as Rushcliffe's Local Plan Core Strategy, Rushcliffe's Local Plan Part 2, Nottinghamshire Highway Design Guide, East Leake Neighbourhood Plan, East Leake Parish Council Planning Policy, and the Notts Mineral Local Plan, before responding accordingly to Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The Committee was pleased to learn that Local Plan Part 2 was formally adopted by Rushcliffe Borough Council last year. The Plan notes that *“it would be unacceptable to identify further land at East Leake for housing development over the plan period. To do so would put at risk the Core Strategy's focus to locate development within or adjacent to the main urban area of Nottingham”* and *“there are also concerns over East Leake's capacity to support and assimilate additional housing at this time and the affect that any further development would have on the character of the village”*.

Some Councillors have recently visited exhibitions about the Fairham Pastures development, approximately 244 hectares of land South of Clifton, which is identified for development over the next 10-15 years.

It is important that your opinion is heard on planning matters. To comment on individual applications, you can come along to the Parish Council Planning Committee meetings on Tuesday evenings, or you can comment via the planning portal on Rushcliffe Borough Council's website at www.rushcliffe.gov.uk under the 'Find A Planning Application' link. Thank you to those of you who have already taken the time to do so.

Agendas and minutes for all our committee meetings are available on the Parish Council website at www.east-leake.gov.uk under the 'Council Business' tab if you are interested in knowing more.

Cllr Donna Griggs