

# **COLLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

## **CHAIR'S REPORT 14 MARCH 2013**

There has been one major change for the Parish Council in the last year. We were all aware of increasing administration problems and in March 2012 our previous Clerk, went on leave, and at the end of May left the employment of the Parish Council.

Jane Guest joined us in September 2012 as the new Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer. I think the job title 'Clerk' is a misnomer – it should be Chief Executive. It is the Clerk's job to keep councillors obeying the law, rules and regulations of parish life – whether we want to or not. Jane has taken to this multi-faceted role like the proverbial duck to water.

During the time we did not employ a Clerk several of us took over various aspects of the Clerk's role. I would like to thank my colleagues for their help and support over those months.

Just after the Parish Meeting last year there was a drought – amazing – then as hosepipe bans were threatened we started having flood warnings, which was a continuing theme for the rest of year.

We did have one heat wave, when the bunting went up and several of us got sunburnt as we moved towards the deluge that was most of the Jubilee weekend. Something we all have memories of, or have been told about. I will always remember the generosity, goodwill and hard work of the people of this parish, both as businesses and as individuals. I think the weekend was everything we wanted it to be, and more. I will not try to list names, there are too many, but would like to thank everyone for what they did for being there, in all the preparations and the clearing up. It was a privilege to be a part of it. I said I won't list names, but cannot let this review pass without thanking Celia, our co-ordinator and enthusiast in chief.

The Parish Council bought Jubilee commemoration medals for all children 11 and under living in the Parish. It was delightful when we visited the baby and toddler group, pre-school and John Blow to give out these medals. Apparently, some thought my name was parish council and Celia was really the queen.

We have tried to make sure that all babies born since the Jubilee have received a medal, as well as children moving into the village in 2012.

Parish life has a rhythm of its own, planning and environment chaired by Marcia, finance and budgeting chaired by Val. There seems to be masses of new legislation, new strategy documents and policies from the District Council for comment and implementation, which makes work for our web site supervisor Terry.

However, sometimes new initiatives are needed, in June a questionnaire, organised by Chris Allen, about our play equipment was distributed. From this questionnaire volunteers formed a committee to consult with our community about a park/recreational area with equipment for all ages. The consultation is needed to inform the design, which then, in

turn, informs the grant application, is extensive and on-going. Look out for us at the May Fair, we also have to think about the name – play park doesn't cut it with the over 11s.

Collingham has had flood wardens for many years, sometimes snow wardens, we have now been asked to form a Community Emergency Committee to liaise with the County and District Councils and act, not as an emergency service, but to be first responders with a lot of local knowledge. We have been meeting to write the emergency plan since January and are very pleased to be joined by members of Collingham Fire Crew, and co-opted members, who all have a vast amount of local expertise and knowledge. Allied to this and as a result of the December flooding we are liaising with the flood warden of Girton and this Saturday morning will meet with residents of Girton to look at the individual flood defences they have installed.

The December floods meant once again community action was needed and with our flood warden Derek Evans in the lead, aqua sacs and sandbags were distributed to all properties at risk. The water levels came incredibly close but very little water entered homes, though people were stranded inside their homes near the Trent, for some time. Again, this was a community effort and our thanks go to everyone who helped at this time.

Just after the first episode of flooding we came together in the Village Centre for Advent Lights and Carols, mulled wine and mince pies. This is the first time the Parish Council has organised this and it was rated such a success we have been asked to make it an annual event. Please book 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and be in good voice for communal carol singing. The lights were bought with the surplus money from the Jubilee raffle, thanks to everyone's wonderful generosity, and the Jubilee committee voted to buy white lights for the centre of the village. In extremely cold weather, supervised by Rob Townsend, members of the Fire Crew put up and later took down the lights for us. Thank you all and Jerome Wright and Mr Holland for loaning the lifting gear.

Some members of the Parish Council attended the carol concert at Kelham Hall in December, taking the Collingham Citizen of the Year with us. We were delighted that Rodney Bayes, was rewarded in this way – it was so well deserved for all his hard work keeping Collingham tidy and well looked after.

Last April we were awarded a grant under the Nottinghamshire County Council Local Improvement Scheme, for decorative village signs at the north and south entrances to Collingham. These should be installed at the beginning of April, and were designed by a Collingham resident. The second part of the grant was for a noticeboard for Brough, which after lengthy negotiations was installed in the late autumn. More grants have been applied for; we await the decisions in April.

For the future, a station car park is being promised again, on the far side of the crossing. Network Rail is, we are told, planning a replacement link road when the Cross Lane level crossing is closed. Negotiations about the Village Centre carry on. Budgets get tighter and we are asked by all levels of government to do more with the same money.

We have been asked by groups of residents to start a campaign to extend the 30 mph zone at the north and south of the village and will be pursuing this with the County Council. We will be asking for community support on this.

Throughout this report the central theme has been our parish life enhanced by volunteers. My thanks go to all my colleagues on the Parish Council for their hard work, to County Councillor Vincent Dobson and District Councillor Mel Shaw for their support and work for the parish, and to all the people of the parish who work so hard as volunteers, on committees and raising funds; also our local businesses that so consistently support us in so many ways. This is what gives such value to the life of this parish and makes it the envy of many. Thank you all.

*Rosie Scott*

*8 March 2013*