

COLLINGHAM *Parish Council*

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 12 MARCH 2015

CHAIR'S REPORT (presented to the meeting)

REVIEW OF THE YEAR SINCE LAST PARISH MEETING: Sadly, the parish year was framed by two sad events. In May the sudden and untimely death of Derek Evans, who was both a Parish and District Councillor. In February, after a long illness, Vincent Dobson, who was for so long the County Councillor for this parish, died. Our thoughts are with both their families.

Immediately after our last Parish Meeting Jane Guest, our Clerk, formally resigned - she had been offered a full time post by her other employer. Jane was instrumental in getting many initiatives in the Parish up and running and left them flourishing.

Parish council life has an annual rhythm of its own, but since the Parish Meeting of 2014 'pending or perhaps' has become 'happening' with several developments in progress with the finishing line ahead.

In June 2014 the contract for the sale of land to Lincolnshire Co-operative Society, for the new store development was signed and a proposal became 'starting soon'.

Also in June was the Best Kept Village competition, with fantastic efforts by so many residents and groups. We went into the second round of judging and came second. We were told it was a close contest but our pavements were not swept enough. It was still a valiant effort by everyone and our thanks go to everyone who worked so hard.

June saw the first Parish Council meeting in Brough and we warmly welcomed by the residents who attended and prepared the Methodist Chapel for us. All our meetings are open to all the residents of the parish, wherever they are held.

July started off an eventful summer. The Rotary Club of Newark donated £2000 for our first defibrillator and case, some of the proceeds of a fund raising lunch they organised in the garden of Anna and Tim. A great addition to all the fees donated by the First Aid trainees on the courses organised by Stella Herbert at Collingham Fire Station.

At the end of July we were joined by Caron Ballantyne our new Parish Clerk. Caron's other working life is as a Highways Engineer working with County Councils. Parish Clerk is a lovely title but perhaps a misnomer for the work undertaken. The Parish Clerk has statutory and legal duties, and must be an excellent multi-tasker and manager. Above all, the Parish Clerk is the constant in the life of the Parish.

Over the summer a review of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was announced and once again Collingham Fire Station became at risk of closure. After campaigns, meetings and a great many letters, we were all delighted when it was saved.

In August the Parish Council found out that a grant of £75,000 had been awarded by WREN, under the Landfill Communities Fund. Earlier grants had been obtained from Fields in Trust for over £20,000.

Four excellent candidates applied for the casual vacancy on the Parish Council in September. Tim Musson was welcomed as the new Parish Councillor and the remaining three candidates became volunteers for the Parish Council.

The Emergency Committee continued its essential work, we now have seven flood wardens who have all attended training with the Environment Agency and with Nottinghamshire County Council for road closure training. The flood wardens may now close agreed roads if Low Street becomes flooded for the safety of residents and to protect buildings.

Through the last year the Community Park Committee has met. This was started by residents asking for improvements and a questionnaire sent out by Chris Allen to parents to find out their views. In the autumn the contract was placed by the Parish Council for the refurbishment of the play equipment following nine consultations with the residents of the Parish. Another 'pending/perhaps' transferred to 'happening'.

Throughout the autumn and winter donations to the defibrillator fund have been coming in. We have now received enough donations and promises to buy four defibrillators and cases, to be installed at locations in the North, South, East and West of Collingham. Thank you to all our donors and to Caron who negotiated excellent discounts and maintenance terms for our purchases.

In October the Parish Council started a trial period of one meeting per month, as happens in most parishes. This will be reviewed in the near future.

Broadband became a 'happening' for some Collingham residents, 'pending' for others. Less welcome for many was the positioning of some of the green boxes - placed without consultation with either Newark & Sherwood District Planning or the Parish Council.

The Braemar Farm development was given outline planning permission by the Newark and Sherwood District Council Planning Committee in December.

In January the purchase of 71 High Street (the old Police Contact Point) by the Parish Council was finalised. Following the recent approval by Nottinghamshire County Council the Library will move there with added community use. It is planned that Caron, as Parish Clerk, will work from the office for a few hours each week.

For the future, the Community Park play equipment will be installed by the end of this month. The refurbishment of 71 High Street will start and the library move should take place in the summer.

On May all ten Parish Councillors will stand down after the proscribed four years, some will stand for re-election. We would like to emphasise that any number of candidates may stand for this the first tier of local government.

Finally, my personal thanks to Jane and Caron for their commitment to their work and this Parish; to my colleagues on the parish, district and county councils and most especially to all the voluntary organisations and residents who do so much to enhance the life of this community in so many ways. Thank you all.

Rosie Scott