

## **Collingham Parish Council – Chair's report 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

This last year has been a busy one for the Parish Council the highlight of which has been the WW1 commemorations. I think it appropriate to thank all those many volunteers who worked very hard for many hours to make the commemorations a great success. There are too many people and organisations to mention. However special thanks to Rosie Scott, Helena Pielichaty and the History Society; all those who knitted hundreds of poppies, produced artwork, put up exhibitions and many many more. Please take a bow – it was a splendid display. Caron, our Parish Clerk also deserves a mention for her contribution.

We continue to liaise with Tarmac at Besthorpe and Langford Quarries and they continue with the agreement that lorries do not use the A1133 through Collingham. The relationship with the Quarry Managers is good and they continue to let us know what new areas are to be opened up and those which will be turned back into wildlife areas. The RSPB, the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Sustrans are also involved. Sustrans have recently gained funding for the Trent Vale Trail route, Phase one being from Collingham to Besthorpe. Long term it is hoped to extend this route to North Clifton and provide a link to the existing sustrans route at Fledborough.

After a difficult start, the Cross Site has been turned into a wildflower meadow, using a special mix of wildflower turf. This is doing well and by this time next year will be well established and will require lower maintenance. The daffodils and newly planted bulbs have grown through the turf to give us a wonderful early spring display until the wild flowers take over in summer.

The skatepark in the Collingham community park is proving to be a great attraction. More work on the surrounding area, including gabions and seating should be completed in the coming year. Trees were planted but unfortunately two or three have been vandalised. Hopefully those using the park can help to ensure it remains in good condition for the Village. The official opening is due early summer.

Our thanks go to Councillor Dobson, especially for the Traffic Regulation Order to stop most lorries driving through the village overnight. Also for her tireless agitation of NCC Highways to have the High Street resurfaced after it melted in the heat. New conservation lines are in place to stop people parking at inappropriate places on junctions and in the High Street. Although parking where there are no lines can be problematic, it has the effect of slowing down the traffic! Speedwatch continues to take details and submit to the Police, and I admit we have not been out as often as we should. This is partly due to a lack of volunteers, so please contact the Parish Clerk if you can help with an occasional hour of your time.

We continue to liaise with the Police on rural crime. PSCO Katie Hewerdine and PC Gareth Nicholls are always in attendance at the Safer Neighbourhood Group meetings and keep us up to date with local and rural crime as well as advice on any issues.

After very long negotiations between Inspire and the Parish Council, the contract is hopefully close to completion for our Library to become a Community Library run mostly but not exclusively by volunteers.

Our thanks must also go to Rodney for his tireless litter collection and vigilance around the village.

Alongside all this, many other things have been planned and actioned for the Village:

- The Parish Council has adopted Collingham Station and spent time putting plants into the 4 troughs supplied by East Midlands Trains. They are growing away beautifully. A noticeboard has also been provided for the Parish Council. We are making plans to generally tidy up the grass banks, etc. A grant has been provided by East Midlands Trains which covered most of the cost.
- As usual we entered the Best Kept Village competition. Although mentioned in dispatches we did not win an award. This year the criteria has been altered and Collingham may fall into a much fairer category, rather than competing with larger villages.
- Caron Ballantyne, our Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer has done a sterling job reporting fly tipping, street lights and potholes, etc. needing attention. She also continues to carry out other duties which are not always included in her job description, e.g. emptying the bins at the cemetery, picking up dog mess left thoughtlessly by dog owners, regularly removing out of date notices from notice boards. Of course walking everywhere in the village does help to identify things requiring attention that those of us in cars wouldn't spot!

The Parish Council achieved the Local Council Award Scheme Foundation level in November 2017, which gave us official recognition that we are meeting the minimum set of standards to deliver effectively for our community. In addition we have in place all the relevant documentation and information for operating lawfully. We therefore demonstrate that we have the foundation for improvement and development in place. We are on the last lap to achieve the Quality level of the Local Council Award Scheme, which shows that we are operating on a slightly higher level.

We have supported the Crawl and Canter, Trent Vale Trail (Lead by Sustrans), Collingham Cricket Club through the provision of grants this year.

I think it is appropriate to end by giving special thanks to our four retiring Councillors

- Rosie Scott, was Chair of the Parish Council for 5 of her 12 years as a Parish Councillor. She successfully gained so many grants that it is impossible to count and her title "Grant Queen of Collingham" is well deserved. There are too many to mention here but the most recent event for Collingham in the Great War enabled all the commemoration events to receive a contribution from the grant. She has also been involved in a myriad of projects: negotiating with the Co-op, the Community Library, the Jubilee Celebrations, the Community Park, etc.
- Val Wright was for some years responsible for the Parish Council accounts, a task which is now shared by all Councillors. She has been a Councillor for 12 years. Val has also been dedicated to her liaison duties for Newark and Sherwood Homes and the Tenants and Residents Association.
- Jane Guest was our Parish Clerk and after a short break was then elected as a Parish Councillor. Her main task over the past three years has been to take the lead on the skatepark, dealing with all the problems that go with such a huge project. This was mainly funded by a grant from WREN and several small grants and many donations from the local community
- Lee Marshall has unfortunately been overtaken by work and family responsibilities so has not been able to commit as much as he would have liked in the last year. In spite of this he took the lead on the Best Kept Village Competition last year.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, Councillor Maureen Dobson, Caron, our Parish Clerk and all those volunteers who give their time to keep Collingham a vibrant Parish.