

COLLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 8 MARCH 2012

CHAIR'S REPORT

When I started to think of all that has happened in the Parish since the last Parish Meeting, there seemed to be a theme – campaigns, cuts and changes. First the campaigns to avoid cuts and closures. Collingham Library which serves so many villages had its hours reduced by 50%, from 20 hours to 10 in April 2011. Many people campaigned to change this and out of that campaign volunteers came forward to work in the Library. In January 2012 the hours went back up to 19.5.

Also in April 2011 the Mobile Library ceased to stop in Collingham, although it still travels through the village. It was decided that a 'Not-so-Mobile Library' would be opened in a spare corner of a cupboard in William Bailey House. Open every Tuesday morning from 9.00 am to 10.30 to coincide with the coffee morning. As our bus service has also been reduced many residents felt unable to walk to and from the Library with a bagful of books. Our thanks go to Val Wright for organising and staffing this service, in liaison with the Library staff. There is also a facility through the Library service for books to be collected and delivered by WRVS volunteers for readers who are housebound.

Collingham Rural Advice Centre and Collingham and District Village Care have both suffered from cuts in their grants and we are sure there have been many others to voluntary groups. The Parish Paths Partnership was closed down by the County Council in April 2011. Our parish has a huge network of rights of way and bridleways and so this has had a huge effect on us. Our rights of way will only be cut once a year and all repairs to pathway surfaces, fixtures and fittings will be negotiated with the Highways Department of the County Council.

The cuts and changes to our bus service is an on-going saga and I would like to thank Bob Poynter for his help in negotiating timetable changes with TravelWright and the County Council.

The Contact Point was closed in January 2012, at very short notice. We are trying to negotiate with Nottinghamshire Police about a shared facility in the village. We are also consulting with them about sites for the Speedwatch campaign in the village. Once these sites have health and safety clearance the campaign will restart.

A major change occurred at the end of April, three of our long standing Parish Councillors, Mike Gascoigne, Bill Jackson and Tim Sheldon resigned. Nine parishioners stood for election, some standing again and some new candidates. No election was held as ten councillors are required. The vacancy was advertised and Gary Norcott joined Chris Allen, Stuart Dove, Mick Dowell, Derek Evans, Celia Moody Terry Ozbourne, Marcia Parkin, Val Wright and me on the Parish Council.

At the Annual Meeting following the election I became Chair, Derek Evans Vice-Chair, Marcia Parkin, Planning and Environment Chair and Val Wright Finance Chair.

Four Councillors attended the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Council's (NALC) training for new councillors and the Chairs and Vice-Chair attended the NALC training for

Chairmanship. Two councillors are attending training as emergency responders, under a scheme organised by Newark and Sherwood District Council with St John Ambulance.

In September the first public Jubilee meeting was held to find out if the Parish wanted to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and we are delighted to say the answer was 'yes'. Celia Moody is now the co-ordinator for this event and meetings are on-going. The agreement for the Community Orchard was signed and it was agreed that the rent paid to the Parish Council would be an apple per annum.

In October there was an Open Day for the Local Development Framework plans and policy being agreed by Newark and Sherwood District Council. This Parish had the best attendance figures for the District. The comments of both Parishioners and the Parish Council are incorporated into the document, which will be vetted by a Planning Inspector at a formal hearing. The Lincolnshire Co-operative Society was granted planning permission for a new store in the village centre. Negotiations are still under way with the eight parties involved.

In January the Management Committee of the Youth and Community Centre retired to become trustees of the Youth and Community Association. The Parish Council would like to thank Keith Brummit, Maureen Dobson, Colin Owens, Sue Owens, Mel Shaw and Di Smith for their sixteen years of hard work and organisation of this lovely building. The new Management Committee continues with three Parish Councillors and two members of the community.

The Parish Council was asked to take care of a memorial plaque from the Baptist Church before it was put up for sale. The plaque is dedicated to Robert Stanley Hunt who was killed at the battle of the Somme in October 1916. We will try to contact descendants of the family to find out their wishes for the siting of the plaque. Our thanks go to Mr King, who has watched over the Baptist Church, for help with this.

In February Collingham and District Care celebrated the thirtieth anniversary with a splendid tea party in the Phoenix Centre. This is another example of Collingham leadings where others follow. A few years later there was encouragement from the government of the day for all medical practices to have links with user groups. Our thanks go to Barbara Stocks as first Chair of this group, and who is still a committee members.

Warren Shaw recently retired as Watch Manager of Collingham Fire Station, Warren was the youngest recruit to the retained Fire Service and we thank him and his colleagues for their campaign to keep the Fire Station open and their work for the community.

Finally, thank you to all my Councillor colleagues, past Councillors and our expert advisors, County Councillor Vincent Dobson and District Councillor Mel Shaw, An especial thank you goes to the people of this Parish who work in so many ways for the life of the community.

Rosie Scott