

When I took over the Chair last March, I asked Tim about the amount of work involved. His reply that there was not that much to do and I would easily cope with it. Tim, I think you were having a laugh. Something needs attention every day and at times it is quite full-on with meetings. Caron is kept very busy, working for the Collingham Parish Council. This year she gained the CiLCA certificate and is now a fully qualified Clerk, but she often works several hours in her own time. Without her, the Chair's job would be impossible.

Over the past year the Parish Council has:

- Awarded a £1,000 grant to Collingham Scouts for “extras” on their trip to Switzerland. Before they went they spent several weekends clearing the village of litter and on their return showed us a well edited and comprehensive film of the trip.
- Awarded a £1,000 grant to the Trent Vale Trail (of road cycle route) for scoping from Collingham to North Clifton / Fledborough Viaduct.
- Awarded £100 to Notts wildlife trust.
- Grant to be awarded to the Baby & Toddler Group to add to funds they raised independently. This is to cover the cost of safety mats in the community park to the new item of equipment which it is hoped will be installed next week, specifically for the younger children.

The Community Park continues to progress. There are plans for a new Skatepark, with money raised through grants and various community funding schemes. The Parish Council will also contribute with payment from an account which is ringfenced for capital funding only.

Two areas within the village have been identified as suitable for planting a wildflower meadow. This is partly an attempt to reduce long term maintenance costs and will create areas of interest and colour. Maintenance of grassed areas is very expensive and the contractor is only obliged to collect grass cuttings in the community park. A beautiful display of wild flowers could prove a rewarding experience.

We know there were problems at St Johns when our contractor needed to access part of the burial ground managed by the Parish Council. This work was not managed as well as it could have been and we apologise again to those who have been affected. Work will be carried out to ensure that paths and turf are put back in good order. A lesson learnt – which has led to a protocol being put in place for any land or buildings managed by the Parish Council. I have spoken to many people

about this and with the new protocol in place, this should not happen again. If any parishioner is unhappy with work being carried out on behalf of the Parish Council, the appropriate action is to contact either myself, the Parish Clerk or any parish councillor. We cannot and will not respond to comments put on social media.

We continue the battle with the dog poo problem. Our new glow in the dark “eyes are watching you” signs have proved effective in the location where they have been used. Additional “clear-up after your dog” signs can be put in areas identified by you – please get in touch with the Parish Clerk who can arrange this for you. Of course, if you have any other ideas, these will be most welcome.

Consultations are on-going with Network Rail regarding the closure of the Cross Lane level crossing, diversion of footpaths and the installation of the new road link to the east of the Swinderby Road level crossing. A public consultation is currently scheduled for 31 May, for which information will be posted to every household by Network rail in the near future.

Glass covered Parish Council notice boards have been refurbished with magnetic backing. Other PC noticeboards have a specialist rubber material making them longer lasting and easier to use. In addition, Village Care have donated funds to provide a new noticeboard outside the Post Office, which will be adopted by the Parish Council. This will be in the same material as others in the village, so no more injured fingers when attempting to pin up notices. This was one of the items mentioned in the Best Kept Village Competition last year. Caron can provide relevant details to clubs or societies who wish to refurbish their own noticeboard. Free magnets are available for the magnetic boards.

We have decided to enter the Best Kept Village Competition again this year, which will be co-ordinated by Lee Marshall – so any ideas or offers of help should be directed to him. We came second in our category last year and were awarded £50, so let's see if we can do better. Braemer Farm and the Village Centre (around the shops under the dentist etc) will be excluded from the assessment.

Preparation for the WW1 100 years commemoration continue – Rosie Scott will talk about this later in the meeting.

The Community Partnership Library initiative is ongoing - hopefully we are on the final straight.

Our thanks to Councillor Maureen Dobson who works tirelessly on our behalf. In particular she has secured a permanent overnight weight restriction running through villages along the A1133 between 7.00pm and 7.00am. This can now be monitored by the police. She has also arranged for the High Street to be partly resurfaced in those areas which were “melting” last summer.

The precept for the Parish Council has been increased by 1½% this year, which represents a payment for all Parish Council services of approximately £36 per household – a very small rise (17p) per household for the services provided by the Parish Council.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors, Caron and all the volunteers who give their time to Collingham Parish Council. The Local Council Award Scheme Foundation level has been achieved this year which is designed to recognise the best local councils to improve and develop to their full potential. According to the criteria, we currently perform above this level and intend to move on to the next grade.