

## **DETHICK, LEA and HOLLOWAY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

The last year has seen a number of initiatives and actions completed.

- The Parish website is now up and running and it is hoped that this will assist general communication and that parishioners will make good use of it by being better informed and also become interactively involved.
- Following an initiative of the Council, an enthusiastic group of volunteers is developing a Parish Plan. This will provide an important contextual reference for future Parish Council decision making.
- A handrail has been installed in the cemetery alongside the central steps. This has been generally welcomed in particular by those visitors with difficulties of mobility.
- Similarly the broken steps by the war memorial have been replaced.
- It is pleasing to report that the statutory inspection of the headstones etc in the cemetery was efficiently concluded with no headstones required to be laid flat, although there are a number which require remedial work to be undertaken. The clerk is endeavouring to contact relatives.
- Also a wooden seat in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Rouse has been installed at the top of the cemetery.
- The Council has reviewed its policy on burial fees for long standing members of the parish who, latterly in their lives, have had to move into care outside the parish.
- The four Tourist Information Boards in the Parish have been updated and have replaced the originals installed in 2000. One of the originals had been damaged and the others had deteriorated in legibility. The WI, who had been instrumental in the creation of the original boards in 2000, has expressed considerable concern that they were not properly consulted on the redesign nor appropriately acknowledged along with the other bodies responsible for the original design. This is a matter of regret to the Council and the concerns of the WI are expressed in the Council's minutes.
- The Play area in Lea has received its annual inspection and certain remedial action undertaken. The Council is continuing to monitor the issue of dog fouling on the playground.
- Also in Lea the Council has purchased the now redundant BT telephone kiosk for one pound and has invited parishioners to offer suggestions on future possible usage. At present no decision has been taken other than to retain it as part of our village heritage.
- The Parish Council main notice board outside the village hall has been renovated.
- The Council has resolved to landscape and plant out the small piece of land next to the toilets on Church Street. It is hoped that not only will this look more attractive but that it will deter dogs from fouling the land.

- The four Sorbus trees in the Memorial gardens are about to be replaced by Derwent Treescapes.
- At the request of parishioners the bus stop near Smedley's has been now set on both sides of the road as opposed to previously on one side only.
- At the request of Council the Police have agreed to undertake speed checks in the parish with particular attention given to speeding on Leashaw. Indeed on a more general level discussions are I hope near conclusion on new road signing on Yew Tree Hill, further down Mill Lane and the 30mph near Lea Hall.
- The Council has responded to a large number of planning applications both for buildings and trees. It is important to stress that the Council's freedom to comment is tightly constrained by external criteria and when appropriate, individual Councillors have declared a personal interest in a particular application and been excluded from the discussion. A planning committee, under the leadership of Councillor Hooker, has proven effective in preparing recommendations to the full Council as indeed have our two tree wardens.
- Finally, the Council set the precept at £16500 for 2009/10 an increase of 2.55%. This was felt to be justified in the light of the zero increase in 2008/09.

Notwithstanding the above, it is very disappointing to report that no real progress has been made towards resolving the issues surrounding Footpath 38 in spite of the Council making several and strong representations to County Hall to prioritise and expedite the application. Given the lack of progress the Council is now considering making direct representation to the Secretary of State. The parallel pressure is from the Leawood Trust who have taken advice from Counsel and have received a favourable and encouraging response. However as yet it is unclear what the Trust's next steps might be.

Second, the Council came very close to having the bus shelter reinstated on Church Street. However the widening of the road to accommodate the shelter became dependent on a more general widening of the road along Church Street by DCC which the Council considered not to be in the public interest particularly from the traffic flow point of view. At the last minute therefore the entire scheme was abandoned. In view of the public consternation I felt it important to provide an explanation which was published in the Parish magazine. Notwithstanding these unfortunate events, the Council has resolved to press DCC to widen the road only to receive the new shelter.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Councillor C. Jackson and the Police representatives for their support which is much appreciated, together with those parishioners who have attended meetings to raise matters of common concern.

Mike Wiser Chairman  
29 April 2010