

Chair's Annual Report 2020-2021

I was delighted to be nominated and then elected as new chair for DLH Parish Council at our May 2020 AGM and so this is my first annual report.

Despite the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, this has been another busy year for the council, with all our meetings, including this one, continuing virtually using Zoom. There is much discussion currently regarding a return to face-to-face meetings, or possibly "hybrid" meetings where members of the public and vulnerable councillors could still join via a Zoom link. However, until we receive the guidelines from the government regarding the opening of village halls, we will be continuing to hold virtual meetings.

I would like to thank our clerk for continuing to arrange and manage these meetings and for keeping our finances in excellent order again this year. In addition to his normal duties, our clerk has persevered with the planning permissions required for us to provide new village entry signs for Holloway, plus a beautiful information board. These celebrate the bicentennial, in 2020, of Florence Nightingale's birth and now enhance the Parish and provide information about her and her life to residents and visitors alike. A generous grant was received from our Derbyshire County Council Councillor which enabled us to pay for these signs and we thank him for his support.

We agreed this year to move both Parish Council bank accounts into a more modern account, used by many other Councils, which offers us the facility of online banking. Our clerk managed this transition for us, and I want to thank him for bringing us into the 21st Century. The funds originally kept in the Cambridge account are being accounted for separately from the day-to-day accounts, so that they are available for the special projects for which they were intended.

I wish to thank all the councillors for their hard work over the past year.

I would like to thank Cllr Joy Stevenson for convening the cemetery and memorial grounds working group and all members of that group. Joy, along with Cllr Andrea McDonald, Cllr Steve Dewhirst and several residents have worked incredibly hard to cut the hedges (previously a job we paid a contractor to do for us) and keep these community assets looking tidy and attractive. I am sure everyone will agree how beautiful the memorial grounds looked recently when the daffodils were in full bloom. The Council is funding half of the money for a planter to be placed in front of the toilets, the other half funded by a generous resident, and once that is full of plants it will add another attractive feature to this area.

In addition, Cllr Stevenson is managing a project to build a much-needed new path and handrail at the southern end of the cemetery. This will be paid for from funds originally held in the Cambridge Building Society account. We hope that this path and rail will be built very soon and will make the cemetery a much safer place for those who visit it, particularly when it is wet.

I also wish to thank Cllr Sarah Crossley for starting a new Climate Change Working group which has been joined by several enthusiastic residents. This group has already made good progress and recently arranged a questionnaire on this subject

to find out what the important climate change issues are for our parish. The results of this survey will be published soon and will give the working group a structure to work to.

The Council has continued to explore ways to engage more with our residents and we recently agreed to create a Facebook page for the Council. I wish to thank Cllr Steve Dewhirst for his enthusiasm in setting this up for us and for continuing to manage the page by keeping it up to date with articles, photographs, and interviews.

Cllr Steve Hannath resigned from the council in January after many years of working hard on our behalf. In addition, Cllr Anne O'Neill resigned in April of this year, after carrying out weekly playground inspections and working tirelessly to co-ordinate the Speedwatch project with Derbyshire Constabulary and the volunteers. I wish to thank them both for their many contributions to the work we do and for continuing to be involved in some of the ongoing projects.

One of our younger residents attended one of our meetings in 2020 to request some facilities for older children in Lea Playground, in particular a basketball hoop. Cllr Anne O'Neill arranged for quotations for this work during her time as a councillor, holding site meetings with the Playground Working Group (WG) and potential contractors. The Council agreed a sum of money to fund this addition to the playground. Unfortunately, at least one contractor has suggested that the project could be more complex and expensive than originally anticipated due to the slope of the playground. The WG is currently establishing exactly what is required and whether we are required to apply for planning permission in the hope that we can provide this facility during this year.

The Speedwatch initiative, which started so well in 2019, was temporarily put on hold last year due to the pandemic. The issue of road safety is a subject which is always high on the agenda of the monthly meetings held for all Derbyshire Town and Parish Council chairs and so we will start again as soon as we can.

The vote for our delayed Neighbourhood Plan Referendum will take place tomorrow, May 6th, along with the local elections and the election of the Police Crime Commissioner.

We sincerely hope that our residents will support this referendum by voting "Yes" for the NP as we will then have a legal document which can be applied regarding all planning applications in our Parish. It has been reassuring to note that planning applications received since the NP was approved by the inspector in 2020 already refer to, and take into consideration, many aspects of the NP. Many thanks to the NP Steering Group and additional councillors who have provided such excellent publicity to every household and throughout the Parish in the run up to the referendum.

Finally, work at last started on the Lea Road earlier this year once DCC established the best option for the road reinforcement and the funding for it. It is a large and complex project and during the initial work by the contractor, DCC were advised that a longer stretch of the road needed to be supported than originally thought to prevent future landslips. The project was immediately extended to ensure that the road will

remain stable but unfortunately has meant that the reopening date has been moved from June to the autumn of 2021.