

PARWICH PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

INTRODUCTION

Good evening and welcome to the Parwich Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2019/20.

It is unfortunate that at the time I present this report we are undergoing unprecedented and enforced social isolation and restrictions on our civil liberties resulting from the current Covid-19 pandemic. Everybody throughout society has been affected by these restrictions in one way or another and whilst it has brought many families closer together many others have undergone real hardships both physically and mentally.

We have all come to understand the value to our society of those people in healthcare (including our own Parwich First Responders) and those key workers providing a continuity of essential services

It has also been heartening to see the gestures of goodwill and assistance that have been made throughout the country by businesses, organisations and individuals. Our own small community has been no different, and the kind and generous offers of help by a number of organisations including Parwich Helpers has been inspiring to see along with the fantastic updates and news provided by the village blog. Local businesses have been forced to adapt to the restrictions and have organised deliveries within the local area which in turn has further helped those people isolating and in particular those elderly and more vulnerable residents who are unable to do their weekly shops.

One such business that has had to find new ways to continue trading has been our local pub, The Sycamore. Take-away's have been available since the beginning of the outbreak and I can attest from my own personal experience that the food is every bit as good as it ever was. They have also offered food and grocery collections which has been invaluable to many village residents.

I would hope that this support for local businesses and enterprises continues long after the current restrictions have been lifted.

I would therefore like to extend the Council's thanks to all of the local businesses and individuals who have made offers of help and assistance within the community.

In a time of such upheaval it has also been reassuring that the Parish Council and contractors have been able to proceed with only minimal disruption. However it must be noted that the safety and wellbeing of the Council, its Contractors and the General Public has been, and will continue to be the priority.

One such initiative since April 2020 has been the use of online Zoom meetings for all Parish Council monthly meetings. We continue to receive guidance from the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils of how our procedures can be modified to be compatible with online only meetings. My thanks go out our Clerk Andrew for attending the online guidance meetings and for implementation of the new procedures. My thanks also to the other Councillors, as this was the first time that many of us, including myself, have communicated in this way. Despite the odds we were able to hold our first online meeting with a full complement of councillors!

Tom Moorcroft continues his fantastic solo job of mowing the village green areas throughout the parish, and the village continues to benefit from his efforts. As we have previously requested, can all members of the public please be aware of the current social distancing measures in place when he is working around the village.

My thanks also to all people in the village involved in the VE day celebrations. Despite the social distancing measures there was still a real sense of community celebrations.

I would also like to offer a brief update on some of the other items addressed by the Parish Council over the last 12 months:

1. Pump Hill

The works carried out at the Pump Hill community garden area over the last 12 months has been nothing short of astonishing. A huge amount of work has been put in by many people and organisations. I would like to give thanks for the efforts of all of the volunteers who have given up their time to make the area what it is today. The work in creating the pathways throughout the area by the Community Payback Scheme completely changed the

look of the area within a matter of days and has once again proven to be a great initiative that local parishes can make use of. Thanks must also go to all of the people and organisations who have generously donated money plants and resources for the scheme and of course our thanks go to Lynette Coyne and Fiona Hadfield for the time they have dedicated to the scheme. Time not only spent getting their hands dirty but also talking to local people and organisations, arranging for the various elements of works to be carried out and acquisition of the many features within the area.

Sadly, after a lengthy dispute with a local resident over the location of the southern boundary of the Pump Hill garden area, the Parish Council has been forced to surrender the disputed area, despite it being the council's view that the area has been owned and maintained by the council for many years.

After mediation proved to be unsuccessful the next step would entail tribunal. Despite our conviction in our position the council took the decision that even a successful outcome at tribunal could potentially incur substantial legal costs with no guarantee of restitution. The council, however, continues to explore other options.

2. Sale of Land Adjacent to Shaw Barn

I am pleased to report that the sale of the land has now been completed. The land has provided a useful outside area for a local resident whilst the fair market price obtained for this area represents good value for the Parish as a whole.

3. Parwich Moor Agricultural Tenancies

The council continues to collect rental income from this valuable asset of Parish owned land.

4. Mowing

The mowing tender represents a significant proportion of the precept received by the Council. We are currently in the final year of a 3 year contract for the mowing of the village green spaces. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Tom Moorcroft for his efforts.

5. Flooding

As a result of the extremely wet winter there have been several instances of flooding within the village. The council has considered what actions it can take in areas where there has been over land flooding or breaches of the local watercourses. We have taken advice from both local residents and expert bodies and temporary measures were put in place. This item has currently been put on hold due to social distancing measures but visits from the Flood Authority are planned once it is safe to do so. The council continues to take care of local water courses within its jurisdiction using both village clean up days and local contractors. Cleaning of the tennis courts is also planned to be carried out shortly.

6. Affordable Housing

The council has discussed the issue of affordable housing within the village and a presentation by Isabel Coggings, **Cogings** the Rural Housing Enabler for Derbyshire Dales District Council was given on the 19th February 2020. The council has arranged for a Housing Needs Survey to be conducted within the village to see if there is enthusiasm for such a project, however, due to the complexities and large budgets involved in such a scheme this will **be** an issue that will be discussed robustly and openly within the parish before tentative steps can be made. I would urge all parishioners to complete the survey when it arrives to enable the council to gauge the true feeling of the whole village for such a project.

FINANCE

The decision was taken during the last budget review to hold the precept level of £9,255.00 for the next financial year as all councils continue to operate within tight fiscal budgets. The Council continues to collect rental monies from the Parish owned agricultural land as well as funds relating to the sale of the ground adjacent to Shaw Barn. Last year a request was made through the village blog for ideas from residents regarding any community projects they would like to be considered by Council throughout the year, however, I do not recall that any such requests were made. As a council we are always happy and willing to hear from local residents should they have ideas as to how parish funds could be spent, within reason!

CONCLUSION

As always, I would like to offer my thanks to Andrew, our Clerk. Andrew always works tirelessly for the Parish and considerably more hours than what he is contracted to and paid for.

Finally I would like to thank all of the Councillors for their invaluable work often going above the remit of what is required in giving up there time for not only the meeting but the numerous volunteer days and also to the local residents who do the same.

I look forward to meetings being held in more normal circumstances, however, in the meantime I wish you all a safe 2020.