

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Introduction

My first year serving as Chairman was looking a little somewhat daunting having to follow on from my long serving predecessor Alan Wilson, who I am sure most people have known as a key figure within the village. So, thank goodness when I heard that he was indeed staying on the Parish Council, so I could use him as a reference point for the many various aspects of the Chairman's role and many historical scenarios from the past.

My aim has been to involve myself with as many aspects as possible, but never to immerse myself so completely that the tasks would swallow me up, not necessarily an easy task.

Following on from the previous 2 years of Covid was always going to be an interesting one as many people were still not convinced about "mixing" with their friends and family, let alone venturing out into the wider world to go shopping etc. This had an effect on some of the regular activities in the early stages but things appear to be easing for most people, unfortunately we now seem to be suffering the effect of this by people catching the various strains of flu and other bugs.

Parish Council

During 2022-2023 the Parish Council have endeavoured to run, arrange, and even fight in some cases, issues relating to the general well-being of our residents. This has not always been successful and outcomes will never please all of you all of the time, but one thing that can be assured is that this Village's interest is at the heart of the Parish Council endeavours.

Such a scenario was the Mercia Avenue access which concluded as a success for the residents and this was driven forward by support from your Parish Council.

Reports regarding various issues with the building site (Bloor Homes) have been lodged and in most cases a reasonable solution attained. Many contentious planning issues have been lobbied to Rushcliffe BC but unfortunately the Parish Council do not have the overall say in the outcome, and so we recognise the disappointment when the outcome is unsatisfactory to some of you.

Funding for a myriad of elements was gained through the hard work of your Clerk, Janice Towndrow, and this enabled such things as the Finger Post, to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, to be installed right at the centre of the Village. This was completed after the main event which saw the Village once again descending on the Cropwell Bishop Memorial Hall playing field to celebrate with prayers, pipers and songs from the Village Choir, followed by the lighting of the beacon then a Fireworks Finale, which was enjoyed by all who came.

No doubt most of you will remember the return of the much-loved Picnic in the Park in July, which was totally arranged by the Parish Council, and another spectacular Fireworks Display to conclude what had been a fantastic event. Thanks go again to all those who helped to make it, what we hope will be, the start of more successful village annual events.

Also, the Parish Council maintain the Children's play facilities at the Cropwell Bishop Memorial Hall Playing Field, in order to conform with ROSPA requirements, and this year saw the installation of a new slide configuration in December to replace the old version, which was well over 40yrs old.

After the glorious dry hot summer, it was somewhat of a relief to prepare for the coming colder weather and the position within the Pinfold for the Christmas Tree had been questioned, so it was decided to re-site it to its new position and install a permanent power feed to make sure that we had a spectacular illumination throughout the Festive period every year. This of course was linked closely with the placement of the frontage small Christmas trees which lined the roads through the Village. Thanks to all the owners for supplying the power, let's hope that continues even with rising costs.

The annual Seniors Buffet was held at the Old School on 16th Dec and although attendance was lower than previous years (possibly due to some fears of mixing) a good time was had by all. Many thanks to those who donated raffle prizes and the people who gave up their time to create a lovely Festive Celebration for those very valuable residents.

Councillors attending the regular Rushcliffe Town and Parish Conferences were given the opportunity to sign up for reducing the Carbon Footprint within their environment, and as such the Cropwell Bishop Parish Council has committed itself to the challenge of creating a greater effort towards Zero Emissions.

With this in mind, we are looking initially into the changeover from incandescent and fluorescent to a more efficient method of lighting within the Old School. This will be followed by investigating the heating system and insulation of the building, plus any other ways that the whole Village could follow generally.

Events and Activities

Saturday Cafe, held each month in the Old School, has been building steadily in attendance throughout the year with the occasional stalls whereby cards and gifts along with used books and jigsaws could be purchased. Super job done by the Ladies who work so hard in the kitchen for those two hours and more also the stallholders and cake bakers.

Cropwell Luncheon Club continues to run and is well attended with meals being prepared by more stalwarts of the Village who give their time and effort to please others, we thank all.

The revival of the Friday Film night has also been a success as people feel safer coming to the Old School for some light entertainment and a little refreshment. Live "stage shows" have also been a big success this year with acts such as George Egg and The Swearing Jar creating a great collective Village atmosphere that hopefully will be here to stay. Thanks to the Entertainments team for getting that all off the ground.

In June a team of youngsters steered by Cllr Jo Wroughton created a wonderful display of hand painted pebbles which were glued onto the concrete plinth of the Gas substation at the bottom of Hoe View Road, topping out what had been a bit of a transformation, from a scruffy overgrown area, into a small haven of colour and habitat for wildlife.

September was a month of highs and lows as we were once again visited by the Tour of Britain bike ride, but unfortunately for some this was mid-week and so the Village couldn't really go to town like had previously been seen when it was held at the weekend. The roads were however lined with many onlookers for the short period of transition from Nottingham Road through Church Street and onward to Cropwell Butler with children waving flags and thoroughly enjoying the time out of school.

And so the saddest part of the year when we all had the news that our beloved Queen Elizabeth had passed away on the same day as the previously mentioned bike ride. The news came out to the world and the majority of this country mourned and waited to hear when the official funeral and relevant services would be. It wasn't really until that moment that I realised that most of us had never experienced anything like this before, and so thank goodness for guidance from the powers that be, even though some of it was a little confusing at times. The Nation was glued to their TV sets to watch the whole Funeral Service transpire and see King Charles taking up his new role. Cropwell Bishop held a small Service of Reflection at "the turn" on the 18th September right next to the Finger Post that was placed earlier in the year to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Back on a lighter note, the return of the much-loved Music Quiz, hosted by Richard Turner on the 24th September, was that well received he was immediately booked for 4th Feb 2023 and another sell out went down well.

The construction of the Boules court was carried out on the old base of the skateboard park and is used regularly in the more clement weather. We trust that the village embraces this as another outside activity that can be enjoyed by the whole of the village, as it is open to all users, but not used as a track for bikes.

Some people will have noticed recently that the Cropwell Bishop Memorial Hall playing field has been buzzing on a Saturday morning with the Field Academy football. This is a private enterprise that is hoping to develop in stature by having the address as their home base, to create something that could be of massive benefit to the whole village. We on Parish Council and the Memoria Hall committee are fully behind this scenario and wait for its growth to create a leap forward in terms of potential as it has strong links to the world of football and its funding structures. We would also like to clarify that we are also very aware that the Village would not want the playing field to become a football stadium and can assure everyone that this will never be the case as the area is designated specifically for a Village space.

Village Plan

A question was asked at last year's Meeting of the Electorate regarding the updating of the Village Plan. We investigated the history of this and found that at its inception there were some 20 or so likeminded residents who were more than enthusiastic to set up and manage the Plan, and since then it had been successful in encouraging new groups to be established throughout the Village. We did contact some of the original members and there was still an interest if we were to attempt to carry out the task of updating. We also sent out the question, via the Cropwell News and the bulletin board, "does the Village want the Plan updating" and if so, could we receive any resident's names who might be interested in setting up a team to carry this out. Unfortunately, we had a very weak response with only a couple of people coming forward and so we have decided that at this juncture we will leave this until a later time, but not forget it.

Sadly, as time passes, we have been losing some of the groups that were set up for the Plan originally and it is unfortunate to see this happening. Some of these groups have been run by committed people working hard to attract new blood, with little or no result, and so ultimately, they cease to continue as a viable group. We do hope that this is not a continuing trend and will help wherever possible when organisers feel there is a need for assistance.

As part of the Plan the Memorial Hall was also an important element, and although it has been mothballed due to some structural and material elements being deemed unsafe, part of the building has re-opened for use. Hopefully this will generate some interest so the Memorial Hall committee can now move forward in their efforts to raise monies for what will be eventually a new build, and once again create a central aspect of our village.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the organisers and helpers of the various activity groups within Cropwell Bishop that mean so much, in their own way, to help to bind our community together.

A special thanks goes out to someone who tirelessly supervises the CKOB, which is growing in stature with some 60 or so children regularly attending, so well done to Cllr Jo Wroughton and her volunteer aides.

A huge thanks to Tony Jarrow for all his hard work in keeping us informed with all the latest news etc. that gets forwarded to him for publication on the Cropwell News site and to his wife Hilary for the DTP that must be done in order to create and print the Cropwell Bishop News to be distributed by hand throughout the village. Big thanks go to Cllr Jo Wroughton and her Mum Jane Miller for their monthly footslog in all kinds of weather.

Thank you, Darrel Towndrow, for keeping many in the Village on top of their computer literacy and ensuring that we are as up to date as possible with technology.

Thanks also goes out to Mrs Maria Carter for her running of the Facebook page - The Cropwell Bulletin Board, which interacts between various people and sectors of the Village.

Once again, we send out a massive thank you to the Cropwell Bishop Litter Pickers group who regularly brave the roads around the Village to keep us litter free by delving into the murky depths of the hedgerows and the open spaces along the kerbsides.

A very special thanks goes out to two councillors who have dedicated their own personal time to assist in running the Parish Council over many many years. The retiring Vice Chair Cllr Judith Gelsthorpe, who has been Parish Clerk, in her time, and served on the Entertainments team. Also, the retiring Cllr John Greenwood, who has served on the PC for many years and who assures me that he will continue to fight for better service from the bus companies.

Reflection

In a year which has seen a lot of ups and downs with the loss of our Queen, Prime Ministers coming and going, massive climatic changes, continuing war in Ukraine and subsequent effects on Global Economy, strike action like some have never seen or experienced before, we really need to keep helping one another by simply supporting each and everyone in the way that we know is so easy - ***please just be there.***