

## **ELSHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**MAY 2020**

At the beginning of this Parish year no one could have envisaged that we would all be experiencing the difficult, worrying, distressing and quite frankly strange situation we all find ourselves in due to Covid-19. So may I firstly say I hope you are all well and coping during this difficult time.

We are all fortunate where we live in that we have gardens and open spaces to ease the effects of lockdown, others are not so lucky. I know from the village Facebook page that the community spirit is alive and well with all sorts of offers of help to people, which is fantastic. Let us hope that it is not too long before this virus is beaten, in the meantime please stay safe and well.

At last year's Parish Council AGM I announced that this would be my last year as Chairman and as a member of Elsham Parish Council. After nearly ten years on the Council I felt it was time to move on and let someone with new ideas and a fresh pair of eyes takeover and move the village forward and I know that Sandra van Oosterhout as Chairman will do just that.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve you all. I have enjoyed working to improve and enhance the village and its amenities for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone. All of which would not have been possible without the support of my colleagues on the Parish Council and our Parish Clerk, Deb Hotson. My very grateful thanks go to them all, together with my very best wishes for the future. My thanks also must go to our three Ward Councillors, North Lincs Council leader Rob Waltham and Councillors Nigel and Carl Sherwood for their help, support and guidance in achieving our goals. Lastly, my thanks to my wife Jane who has supported me throughout and together with her team of volunteers successfully ran the village play park since its opening, a task which I'm sure with everyone's support will now continue under the stewardship of Jane Ousby.

As this is my last report, it is only up to January when Sandra took over as Chairman I do not intend to follow the usual format but to summarise what has been a relatively quiet year, as follows:

We finally got our Bus Shelter.

We were awarded 2nd place in the Best Kept Small Villages competition and the Best Playground award; fantastic results and well done to all involved.

The Nature Reserve Management Agreement with NLC was finally signed, which will enable the Parish Council to enlist the resources of NLC in the maintenance and running of the Nature Reserve (The Quarry).

NLC improved the village road signage.

Regarding planning, residential applications were mostly for amendments or extensions with one refusal for a development off Woodland Drive. There were also a number of industrial applications on farmland and the Industrial Estate.

This was the third year of having a Christmas tree outside the Village Hall, with thanks to Simon and Suzanne Halmshaw for their generous donation of the tree.

With my very best wishes to you all.

Graham Evison

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This part of the report covers February to May 2020, following on from Graham Evison's report above. As the Parish Council year ends, we are indeed facing very strange circumstances amid the COVID-19 lockdown. Council meetings are being held virtually via a conference call and residents can join meetings by contacting the clerk for details.

### **News in Brief**

In mid-March, the UK entered lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The Parish Council sent letters to every resident in the parish with the contact details of a person who could help with shopping or other tasks that self-isolating residents required. This has been a success and there has been a great community spirit during this trying time. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help others.

The lockdown has undoubtedly caused delays and there are several matters waiting for more normal working conditions to be restored. A Heritage Trail board and an Information Board for the Nature Reserve have been manufactured and are waiting to be installed. Volunteers for the Speedwatch initiative have come forward and are awaiting training. The VE Day celebration we had planned had to be cancelled and rescheduled for later in the year. We have installed water butts and compost bins at the Village Hall.

### **Elsham Play Park**

The play park had to be closed due to the lockdown. Jane Evison stood down from her duties regarding the play park and Jane Ousby took over the organising of the rota for locking the park, although at the moment it is not required. We thank Jane Evison for her many years of organising the opening of the park and generally keeping an eye on it.

### **Planning**

The Old Smithy Barnetby Lane – Counsellors and residents put a lot of effort into objecting to the demolition of the Old Smithy without the biodiversity plan and other requirements on the outline planning permission being adhered to. North Lincs Council listened to the objections and stipulated that the biodiversity plan had to be done before demolition could commence.

Other planning applications:

Plot 12a The Flarepath – installation of a sulphur dioxide storage tank. Approved

Plot 11b The Flarepath – installation of a sulphur dioxide storage tank. Approved

### **Highways**

Surface water has been a problem this winter on Church Street and at the bottom of front Street, despite investigations and work by Anglian Water and North Lincs Council. The leak on Front Street is still being investigated and some roads in the village are due to be resurfaced this year.

We are still waiting for the 30 mph sign on Front Street to be moved further up the hill.

Work will also be done to prevent water running off from the field at the bottom of New Street at the junction with the B1206.

North Lincs Council provided materials to refurbish the finger post on the junction of Hall lane and Barnetby Lane and this has now been done by Ian Bowmer, the new village handyman.

### **Crime and Neighbourhood Watch**

Diana Connolly, our neighbourhood watch coordinator, has circulated reports of any suspicious activities in the area, which has been much appreciated. Apart from a break-in at the Old Smithy there have been no incidents in the past few months. Crime numbers in general in the area are down from last year.

### **Elsham Nature Reserve (The Old Quarry)**

During the lockdown the nature reserve has been kept open for local residents to exercise whilst social distancing. The information board that has been created by the Parish Council is ready to install inside the Nature Reserve and this will be done when circumstances allow. We may also be asking for a working party to help collect up the old plastic sleeves as the manufacturer has agreed to collect them for recycling. This will have to be done when restrictions on working together are lifted. We thank Ian Bowmer for refurbishing the two wooden seats in the quarry in his new role as the village handyman.

### **BT Kiosk**

Some of the glass panes in the kiosk were removed last year to allow window boxes to be installed on the phone box and this resulted in a stunning summer display. Thank you to the Elsham Elves for all the planting and maintenance around the village and to Helen Machin for watering the plants at the kiosk. Ian has repainted the kiosk this spring and we are trying our best to source plants for this year's summer display, which is proving a little difficult! We still plan to enter the 2020 best kept village competition.

### **Village Verges/Public Right of Ways**

The Parish Council have taken over responsibility of cutting village verges and public rights of way. North Lincs Council have forwarded the funds for this. This way we can ensure more regular cuts to keep verges looking neat and tidy, and decide if we would like some to be more natural to benefit wildlife.

### **Parish Council Personnel**

Graham Evison resigned as chairman in February and at February's meeting Sandra van Oosterhout was voted in as Chair and Andrew Horner as Vice Chair. Jane Ousby also joined the council in February. We still have one vacancy on the Parish Council, so if any resident is interested in joining then please contact the Parish Clerk or any Parish Councillor, we look forward to seeing you.

Thank you

Graham Evison and Sandra van Oosterhout

Chairman, Elsham Parish Council

May 2020