

## Chairman's report for May 2021

What a year we've all had!

A totally unprecedented one that's for sure that's brought harsh challenges for many in our community and around the world. It certainly brought challenges for the Council but with the excellent guiding hand of our clerk we've got to grips with zoom and working remotely and the ever changing legislation and guidelines in response to the Covid19 pandemic. It will be good to get back to 'normal' which I hope isn't too far away.

Unfortunately we received very sad news in March as Cllr Fiona Stevenson died. She was a very valuable member of the Council who dedicated herself fully to the role of Councillor and who always worked to ensure the best for the village. Her input and humour will be greatly missed!

Despite the restrictions brought in to manage Covid19 we've not only succeeded in doing what we wanted to achieve in the year but also a little bit.

As usual the majority of our work and expenditure was in and for the recreation ground. Here all the play equipment was painted and further paving was installed there and at the entrance gate. The metal green waste bins were replaced with new 'guppy' ones. We also installed one of these on the newly repaired pavilion patio. Our negotiations with the letting agent of the adjoining property resulted in the south boundary fence being repaired by them. The statutory five yearly electrical check was undertaken at the pavilion, which highlighted some issues, all of which have since been fully addressed and rectified alongside various cosmetic electrical updates, such as hot water in the toilets and new strip lights. Some remedial work was also undertaken on the pavilion roof. The boundary hedge of the bowling-green had a substantial cut in the autumn and the plan is to keep it at this height. It was rewarding to receive so many favourable comments on its new look. New signage was installed re use of tennis courts, drug use, dogs in or passing through the play area and a car park disclaimer on the entrance. We also had all the old fencing removed for the skate park. Unfortunately; the recreation car park was used in the attempted robbery of the Co-op. Fortunately for us unlike the Co-op, the damage the robbers caused in gaining entry was minimal, with just the gate lock being cut.

Our biggest achievement of the year was the refurbishment of the Spring Wells Island, which I think looks magnificent and from the numerous positive comments we've received it would appear that this sentiment is felt by many. Plans to do this had been in the pipeline for several years so it feels exceptionally good to have at long last achieved this goal. We further enhanced our tourist attraction by painting all the benches etc. and having the trees on the island pruned. Recently we purchased a custom made bench to commemorate VE day, which we hope will be installed in June. To complete the revamp we plan to attend to the overgrown ivy and install paving in front of the benches that are on the grass. We are also considering employing a SW caretaker to ensure this attraction stays in tip top condition.

Elsewhere in the village we painted the allotment entrance gates, had the Pointon Road speed awareness solar panel installed, replaced the damaged litterbin in Vine Street and commissioned a survey on all Council owned trees. Any necessary work resulting from this will be undertaken in the coming months and we have at last decided on our new noticeboard and ordered it.

Prior to lockdown we were looking to employ a community warden to help address anti-social behaviour in the recreation ground, however as the restrictions of the pandemic eradicated this behaviour, we didn't take this idea forward. Should this historic problem begin to emerge as restrictions ease, then we'll certainly pursue this option with vigour.

Following on from consultation with the village via our newsletter in respect to the possibility of the Council acquiring the police sub-station, we resolved at our July meeting not to take this matter forward.

Our biggest problem this year has been illegal parking and speeding and try as we have to address it, unfortunately it's still ongoing! So we will continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the various council departments in our efforts to manage and hopefully eradicate it. To help in the area near the school we've ordered an additional speed awareness sign, which will be installed on the Horbling entrance to the village, applied to LCC to be assessed for a zebra crossing and intend to support the application made by the Traffic Management Officer, to have the double yellow lines on Victoria Street extended up to the school. In the High Street we've put up signs and have asked

the school to run a competition to design a poster for us advising against parking illegally. The winning one will be printed and displayed around the village.

Another ongoing problem is the jitty between Brewery and Burton Lane, which is in a dire and dangerous condition. As our strenuous efforts to get either SKDC or LCC to accept responsibility and address this matter failed, we asked Cllr Hill to intercede for us, so hopefully he'll be successful and get LCC to take ownership and repair the path before someone has a serious fall.

Through the diligent efforts of Hayley we have been successful in having the flooding problem in West Road car park resolved and in getting SKDC to do additional maintenance work in the Churchyard.

We regularly check in with Cllr Hill re LCC's progress in addressing the flooding of Birthorpe Road, the installation of the signage on the A52 and white lines and cats eyes on the approaches to our village, hopefully all these will be completed in the coming year.

We now know that LCC intends to build 25 houses on the old Aveland School site, however, the plans as yet haven't been submitted. We will as usual keep the village informed on this matter. The Aveland playing field still hasn't been transferred to us and unfortunately we have no idea when this will occur.

We had some movement within our team as in July David our cemetery caretaker left us and Jayne took up the role in October and in September Jon Surtees became a councillor, followed by Phil Major and Catherine Labinjo who came on board in January.

Looking to the year ahead the Council plans to install an additional piece or two of play equipment in the recreation ground, improve Birthorpe Rd cemetery with the installation of new gates, general maintenance and planting, explore purchasing two custom designed village entry signs, spruce up the Spring Wells area, to light the High Street for Christmas and to have a Facebook page. We will of course continue with all our usual maintenance tasks such as grass and hedge cutting etc. and remember we always welcome ideas from you as how to improve the village, so if you have an idea or suggestion (polite preferably) let us know.

**As always I'd like to thank all those that have helped or contributed to the upkeep and improvement of the village but especially to:-**

**All those that have volunteered to help the more vulnerable in our community during this pandemic , your kindness and selflessness will have made such a difference to so many people. So a VERY BIG THANKS TO All of YOU**

To those that helped with the Spring Wells island refurbishment, which were Creeton Quarry (which is part of the Johnston Quarry Group), who so kindly donated **30 tons of limestone**, to Mr & Mrs Mair of Billingborough who so kindly gave a financial donation and stored the stone for us and to S J R Contractors of Pointon Fen, who kindly delivered all the stone free of charge **Thank you so very much on behalf of the village for your exceptional generosity and support that enabled us to not only restore but also improve the central feature of Spring Wells!!**

To those that have signed up to be a '**friend of the Council**' - thank you and welcome.

To **BAGS** for managing the allotments on our behalf.

To the **Cricket Club** for liaising with Anglian Water over the new pitch water system and installing it.

To **Jayne** our new Cemetery Caretaker who joined us in October and whose efforts have brought an abundance of positive comments from the public - **so many thanks Jayne.**

To **Kim** our dedicated community village cleaner, **Mark** our recreation ground caretaker both do an amazing job!

To our **councillors** who give their time and expertise and work diligently for the betterment of the village and who haven't given in despite the complications Covid19 brought to role this year! Thank you everyone!

To our super clerk **Hayley!** Who because of the pandemic has had to deal with so many additional tasks on top of her everyday work, while managing ever changing directives, mountains of emails and us on zoom - not an easy task I can assure you. **So thanks beyond words go to you Hayley as you're an absolute star and truly superhuman!**

Finally but not least posthumous thanks go to Fiona for all her hard work!

***THANK YOU FIONA, may you rest in peace.***

Remember we are here to serve you, so please let us know your ideas, opinions, what we're doing well or not so well. Let's all work together to make Billingborough a better place.

***Cllr Chris Woodhead***