



# Billingsborough Parish Council

## **Chairman's Annual Report for May 2018**

Over the last year the council has continued to work diligently on behalf of the parish, to ensure that its limited funds are used wisely, to encourage villager's opinions and address any concerns swiftly and to ensure public spaces and grassed areas are adequately maintained.

The main expenditure has been on the resurfacing of the public tennis courts, which will be colour coated in the next week or so, this work was planned for late April but had to be postponed due to inclement weather. New nets will also be installed. The village will then have club standard courts that we hope will be enjoyed by many and perhaps even encourage the formation of a tennis club.

The recreation ground is our largest public space providing facilities for all ages so it's important that it's maintained to a high standard, which I must admit isn't always easy but the team of councillors and our caretaker that are tasked with this challenge do their utmost to ensure that this is the case. Over the next financial year we plan to overhaul the pavilion and update/replace all the litter bins within the grounds, alongside the general maintenance of the play equipment, grassed areas and hedges.

Thankfully, as a result of the CCTV system that was installed last year anti-social behaviour and vandalism has been minimal within the recreation ground, which is a very positive step forward. However; we have seen an increase within the village itself, with the empty Co Op building and the Co Op shop being the main targets. Hopefully; the swift intervention of the police and the Co Op who have installed extra security fencing at the old store will deter further incidents. Anti-social behaviour, which is usually a result of bored youths will not be tolerated, hence the council is committed to working with the community and the police to prevent and address it. Though the council is not without empathy, as we understand how difficult it must be being a young person in a village with

limited activities and poor transport links, so our future hope and aim is to develop a community facility or scheme where young people can safely socialise and release their energies.

The old Aveland site transfer is still to be finalised, though it has taken a step forward in the right direction, as the transfer has now been agreed by the Secretary of State but not yet by the Crown Estates, hence the early entry agreement created to allow the development of the allotments, has been extended and will be reviewed six monthly, until completion occurs.

Also; there is still no firm decision regarding the old Grimmer site. As previously, the council will update the village via the newsletter of any developments as and when they arise.

Over the years speeding within the village has been a concern which the council has worked hard to address. We have tried for a long time to secure a fixed electronic speed sign on the Folkingham Road but have been continually thwarted by red tape, then at last success! Thanks to the hard work and tenacity of the councillors dealing with this matter we have recently acquired such a sign on Folkingham Road. The mobile speed sign will continue to be utilised in other locations throughout the village and to further address the concerns around speeding we plan to access a hand held speed camera, which we hope will be manned by members of the community at locations that they consider to be areas of concern. Hopefully these combined measures will help reduce speeding and help address some of the concerns raised by residents.

In September we were fortunate to have access to the Big Clean, which visited our village and addressed the graffiti in the recreation ground and weed growth on pavements, roads and jitties etc. This was a very successful operation which made a substantial difference to the appearance of the village. The scheme is still being operated by SKDC, so when the opportunity to apply for further support arises, we will certainly be applying and will encourage residents to highlight any areas they wish to be addressed.

Meanwhile the council will continue to employ their community cleaner Kim, who goes above and beyond to help maintain a litter free village and in response to both requests and complaints from residents re litter and lack of facilities to deposit dog poo bags, we plan to install additional litterbins in the village, to be

situated on Birthorpe Road and Low Street. The council is also looking to employ someone to help maintain the cemetery, to ensure that it is kept to the highest standard.

To ensure public safety the council recently commissioned a survey of all public trees within the village and will action work as necessary to address any highlighted issues.

The council tries where possible to support any community funding requests that will bring a positive benefit to the community and as such recently donated £50 toward the first Free Children's Christmas Party, which was held in the village hall. Feedback states that this was a roaring success and enjoyed immensely by all those who attended. Hopefully it will become a regular event. It's so brilliant to see the community taking the initiative to enhance the facilities with in the village and foster community spirit! Historically Billingborough had many activities, clubs and community events that with time unfortunately have ceased or depleted, so any efforts to initiate or foster community involvement should be welcomed and encouraged.

This year the council also received a kind donation of £1000.00 from a village family in memory of their father. This was gratefully received and much appreciated and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them again. No firm decision as yet been made as how to use these funds, however; it is a possibility that they will be used to help renovate the Springwells, which is one of our planned projects for the coming year and a location greatly loved by the deceased gentleman.

I'd like take this opportunity to thank everyone who's worked for free for the village - firstly the Youth Offending team, who regularly provide young people to undertake work within the village, which is very much appreciated. Secondly, all our councillors who give their time to work for the village, with a special thanks to Paul, whose hard work brought about the fruition of the allotments and Carol who both unfortunately had to step down from the council earlier this year due to other commitments. Also to Bob who has served as vice chairman for seven years but who unfortunately does not intend to stand for re-election at the AGM. He has been an amazing vice chair, highly knowledgeable and incredibly dedicated to the post. Thanks so much Bob for everything!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank our clerk Michelle, who is our mainstay and fountain of knowledge, Kim our dedicated community cleaner village and Mark our recreation ground caretaker.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH EVERYONE!

Concluding- It's been a busy year in which the council has worked without its full complement of councillors. Recruiting new councillors isn't easy, it's an unpaid position, that requires commitment and giving up ones free time and although it can be very rewarding it can also at times appear thankless. Therefore; it's understandable that we've lost councillors, gained some and then lost them but we are now only one councillor down, so hopefully we may have a full complement soon to work for you and the wonderful village of Billingborough.

*Chris Woodhead*