

Cotesbach Parish Council
Chairman's Annual Report
12th May 2020

Referring back to last year's Chairman's Annual Report, the Council had three main aims over the past 12 months:

- 1) Creating a focus of the different activities that the Parish Council are responsible for
- 2) Clarifying what Councillors' roles are
- 3) Improving the governance of how we operate

A key part of all these aims was the appointment of a new Clerk. Patricia Nunn was selected after a number of candidates from the village and outside were considered. Patricia, a Lutterworth resident, has been hugely appreciated by myself and the other Councillors. She has got us up to date with the necessary procedures and policies in a pragmatic and efficient way. We now have some important policies adopted, including:

- An updated Emergency Plan – in the event of unexpected events, put into practice during COVID-19
- A Code of Conduct - so that we work within the required laws, policies and procedures.
- An Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy – to ensure that we treat everyone equally in our positions of Councillors.
- A Privacy Policy – to ensure any information held by the Council is dealt with according to the relevant laws.
- An Asset Register Policy – to make sure we capture the assets we are responsible for and the condition they are in to help with maintenance and budgeting can be insured adequately.

These policies are all published on the Parish Council section of the Cotesbach Village website, which is regularly updated (cotesbachvillage.uk). The archive of meeting agendas, minutes, finance documents and policies ensures transparency and acts as a strong measure of our improved governance. Credit to Patricia for her efforts to massively move this forward.

Tom Haywood decided to retire from the Council this year after serving a generous number of years, and we recently welcomed Charlie Farley. Thanks again to Tom for his time on the Council.

I spent some time working with Councillors on a set of focus areas for what we do. These helped in describing our activity to others, particularly when recruiting for the Clerk and new Councillors.

These areas are:

- 1) **Industrial Neighbours:** Working with the companies that operate large-scale operations nearby, including Tarmac (Shawell quarry and landfill) and Gazeley (Magna Park)
- 2) **Highways and Crime:** Ensuring our local roads are safe, and our neighbours informed about crime and crime prevention
- 3) **Amenity management:** Having Village amenities available and well maintained
- 4) **Council operations:** Making sure we deliver on our responsibilities and budgets fairly and transparently

These areas of focus were assigned to Councillors during the year, with Margaret Wild taking on Amenity, Tom Haywood on Highways and Crime, and myself on Industrial. Compliance with Council policies and procedures falls mainly under Pat, with all Councillors doing their bit.

“Highlights” of these focus areas include the detailed planning approvals for Magna Park South, and the warehouses are now starting to be built.

We're awaiting a decision on a small extension to the Tarmac quarry. Clare Mellon continues as the Council representative with Tarmac, supporting when the occasional operational issues arise. Smells from Tarmac's landfill have been more of a problem this year, but Cotesbach residents have also

complained more to the Environment Agency – encouraged by the Parish Council’s leaflets and Facebook posts. This has resulted in some more immediate action to at least improve the frequency of bad smells.

A decision on Lutterworth East by Harborough District Council has recently been postponed but it’s looking likely to go ahead and the Council will likely need to put greater emphasis on A426 safety.

There has been a renewed interest in CCTV for the village, for which the Council is exploring a couple of options with some support from village residents. COVID has put delay to finalising these options however. Fortunately Cotesbach has not been affected particularly by crime this year. We are recognising that our police force is not able to attend Council meetings any more, but know how to contact them or meet at regular drop-in sessions.

We replaced the Village Noticeboard this year, with support from Eight Parishes CIC funds. We will also soon be agreeing a pond management plan with input from a resident ecologist to make the pond a pleasant and diverse amenity in the long-run.

Most recently COVID has brought the village together in an unexpected way – with a rapid roll-out of Street Wardens as part of the Emergency Plan, and an “audit” of residents who need support. Although this has been a very difficult time, many residents have appreciated how the community is able to pull together and appreciates how the Parish Council is enabling some of this.

For the next 12 months I expect us to continue our good work on operating a great Council and would like existing and new Councillors to take ownership of their focus areas, working with interested residents where possible to help. We should continue the community momentum and ensure as many people possible have a role to play in keeping Cotesbach a nice place to be!