

## Cotesbach Parish Council

### Chairman's report

Edmund Hunt, May 2025

Thanks to all the Councillors for their ongoing support and time taken for their duties. Particular thanks to our Clerk, Pat Nunn, for keeping us on track, on time and properly governed.

Roles and responsibilities for the Councillors over the past 12 months remained relatively unchanged from the previous year:

- Chairman - Ed Hunt
- Vice Chairman - Gavin Bennett
- Village Hall representative - Ed Hunt
- Magna Park Liaison - Margaret Wild
- 8 Parishes CIC - Ed Hunt
- Highways - Rob Morris
- Planning - Ed Hunt / Gavin Bennett / Annie Newton
- Pond / Environment - Gavin Bennett

Cllr Rob Morris took a further lead on liaising with the police. This was welcomed as 2024 unfortunately saw a number of crimes in the village. The incidents were burglary and theft related with at least 6 reports occurring over a 3 month period. Residents were concerned that the village was being targeted. Through Cllr Morris's engagement with the police, our Community Officer reassured residents at a local meeting that Cotesbach remained a safe place and crime activity was lower than many villages. Advice was provided on keeping safe and luckily the activity has subsided.

The increased levels of crime did raise questions again on whether the Parish Council should consider investing in CCTV / ANPR in the village. Police advised that, although feasible, ANPR would not greatly support police investigations of incidents in the village as there is significant ANPR presence in the area (Gibbets and Whittle islands). This, alongside the ongoing data protection, data management and ongoing cost considerations, led to the Council deciding that Council-owned CCTV / ANPR was not required at this time.

Cllr Bennett and Cllr Newton supported Clare Mellon at the Shawell quarry liaison committees during the year. Restoration of the Shawell Lane quarry ("Fields Farm") continues to be delayed, initially due to poor weather conditions and more recently due to water logging. There is little in terms of penalty that can be done to accelerate the restoration but pressure will continue to be applied.

Environmental activities continue to revolve around the pond, wildflower verge and more recently bulb planting. A new wildlife board was installed at the pond with contributions from the 8 Parishes Fund and SHIRE grant. No further contributions were made for the wildflower verge although an increase in

wildflowers have been seen. The verges do need at least bi-annual maintenance to keep it relatively tidy, which can be a burden. This is often left to Cllr Bennett single handedly, so thanks to him for his time. It is therefore being monitored to ensure residents are not dissatisfied and we should be exiting from the scheme. Bulb areas have also extended to near the village hall and around the millennium sign.

Cllr Morris has also been pursuing the Council's and residents' concerns of speeding on the A426. Requests have been made at least twice to Leicestershire County and the police to understand why our stretch of the A426 cannot be limited to 50mph. The responses have been the same - that there are not unfortunately enough accidents on our stretch of the road for its traffic flow to merit a reduced speed limit. It seems nothing can be done at the moment.

Grant monies were obtained from 8 Parishes for the pond wildlife sign. As mentioned, a SHIRE grant was also secured by Cllr Bennett for the pond sign.

There was an investigation in to the possibility of a playground on the Village Green, which is owned and maintained by the Village Hall. The principle of a playground being installed on the Village Green was turned down by the Village Hall Trustees on the basis of reduced green space not being viable and the potential reduction in income for the hall if the green could not be used to its full potential.

Magna Park continues to be developed, although Magna Park South nearest Cotesbach should be now completed. There are further plans for a lorry refuelling station and some fast food amenities, including lorry parking in the nearby area. Magna Park representatives also shared their submission to Harborough Council's new Local Plan to add further significant warehousing to the North East of the existing Magna Park North. The Parish Council responded to this Local Plan consultation objecting to this expansion, amongst other relevant points.

There have not been any significant planning applications in the past 12 months in the village. The Council will be monitoring the change of use of barns at Orchard Farm into Class E flexible use, which was allowed without planning permission. Similarly, the Council have exploring with Harborough District Council why land adjacent to Elmdene continues to hold shipping containers and building materials. An enforcement notice was given to prevent further development on the site and the containers be removed. The land owners have appealed against this so have extended the time needed to remove the containers / materials. The Council will continue to monitor this.

Once again, many thanks for Cllrs spending their time on Parish Council matters over the past 12 months and hope they can contribute for a further 12 months.