

Colston Bassett Parish Council

Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting 12 April 2021

In June 2020 I was elected as Chairman, I am honoured to take on the role and the challenge, and it has indeed been a challenge to chair meetings on Zoom. Thankfully we managed to avoid many of the pitfalls, and survived the ordeal with humour and with a modicum of decorum. We now look forward to returning to the Village Hall as soon as it is safe for us all to do so.

This past year will, of course, be remembered for the impact that Covid-19 has had on all of our lives. Social distancing, locked churches, paying our respects on the roadside to departed loved-ones, so few able to marry, meeting on the doorstep when clapping for the NHS.....

Thankfully, the vaccine is now giving us all hope for a better and safer future.

I would particularly like to express thanks to Mrs. Jane Clark who has acted on the Council's behalf, keeping in contact with isolating residents, and organising Christmas gifts for them which were greatly appreciated. Many others in the village stepped up to assist their neighbours and my thanks go out to all who helped others in this difficult time.

My sincere thanks go to all Councillors and to the Clerk who have worked hard throughout the year in support of the Parish.

Cllr David Clark not only brought the finances of the Council into the 21st Century with on-line banking and management reporting, but also ensured that the financial standing of the Council is in excellent shape. Mike Garrett kindly volunteered to take on the role of Auditor and we welcome his sound advice, and thank him for taking on this role. Cllr Nick Goddard has focussed on planning, carefully analysing applications and advising the Council on the impact of proposed developments. We were joined during the year by Cllr John Jennings who is taking the helm of the Environmental agenda, driving forward the ambitions set out in our Neighbourhood Plan. John has initiatives in the pipeline to make our village as green and clean as can be. Cllr Nelken has provided guidance to the Council putting her valuable legal expertise to excellent use and also making a contribution to the wider Rushcliffe BC Standards Committee. And last but not least, Cllr Jackson has taken on the role of making sure our lovely Village Hall continues to thrive post-pandemic, and will sadly leave the Council this year in order to focus on this challenge. We wish him success and thank him for his service to the Council.

Significant changes introduced during the year included a new contract for grass cutting which has seen improvements in the appearance and upkeep of the Village Hall paddocks and the grounds of St. Mary's. A new website was introduced and this will be updated during the coming year.

Flooding has remained a key issue with our village suffering 11 incidents in an 18 month period. During the year I called on our MP Ruth Edwards for her assistance, and she has been a great help in keeping this topic on the agendas of those bodies who should be acting to assist us. Some improvements were made during the year (flood alerts, flood wardens trained, some maintenance and clearances of drains undertaken), however more action is needed if we are to avoid the consequences of high rainfall in future.

Planning has of course loomed large again and I am extremely disappointed that some developments which have resulted in 'harm' to the Conservation area have been permitted by Rushcliffe. During the year the Council has lobbied Rushcliffe and has held meetings with Rushcliffe Councillors responsible for Planning, and with the Chief Executive. Our efforts have influenced the

introduction of an Enforcement Policy, and through the hard work of our Borough Councillor, Cllr Tina Combellack, we hope to see scrutiny of Planning in Conservation Areas in the near future. The Council aims to see improved processes at Rushcliffe which provide better protection, not just for Colston Bassett, but for all the Borough's Conservation Areas.

Our County Council representative Cllr Neil Clarke, and Borough Council representative Cllr Tina Combellack, have both been a great support to the village, listening to our concerns and taking our requests to their respective Councils. I thank them on behalf of the Council for their efforts.

One key matter, which is still outstanding as the year comes to a close, is our request for reduced speed limit for traffic approaching the village along Colston Road. We wait in anticipation of what may emerge from the County Council's legendary sausage machine!

The village relies heavily on the hard work of numerous volunteers – gritters, flood wardens, tree planters, village hall trustees, and most recently the newly formed litter pickers led by David Lambert. We are truly grateful for their invaluable contributions to village life.

Although the village has had to endure the isolation of 'lockdown', there were a few occasions which lit-up an otherwise bleak year:

- the WI singing '**we'll meet again**' around the village cross on the anniversary of VE-Day
- Services at the War memorial for VJ – day, and Remembrance Sunday (even two horses observed the silence)
- Christmas trees and lights decorating the Village Hall at Christmas
- Christmas Carols outside of St. Johns on Christmas morning

The Clerk, Nige Mayglothing has once again worked tirelessly on behalf of us all; a fount of knowledge on all things related to the Council procedures, keeping us informed in his unique style (why use one word when you can find another five?), good humour, and even in the face of serious illness, going way beyond his paid hours. Thank you Nige!

Finally, the referendum on the Colston Bassett Neighbourhood Plan was cancelled last March due to Covid. At last on May 6th we will all be able to vote for (or against) the plan. Information including a short video presentation, the plan and Independent Examiners report are available on our new web site [Neighbourhood Plan | Colston Bassett Parish Council](#) and a copy of the plan is available in the porch of St. John's for those without internet. The revised National Planning Policy Framework, which aims to deliver 300,000 homes per annum will be implemented soon, and Neighbourhood Plans feature in this new planning regime.

If supported in the referendum the Council is committed to delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan and I urge all residents to vote. Without the Neighbourhood Plan there is **no local influence** in the planning process, so please do vote!

Cllr Josie McGuirk

Chairman Colston Bassett Parish Council

April 2021