

Colston Bassett Parish Council
Chairman's report to the Annual Parish Meeting 21 March 2022

Cllr Nick Goddard RIP I feel it would be appropriate to open this Annual Report by paying tribute to Councillor Nick Goddard who so sadly passed away last year. Nick had lived in Colston Bassett since boyhood and had a passionate dedication to his home village. He served the Parish Council as Clerk, Grass Cutter, and most recently as Councillor. As a lawyer with expert knowledge of planning legislation he was most valued, and as a kind, considerate, warm person he is sorely missed by all.

Nick was also a driving force for the Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks to a high turnout (62%) at the May 2021 Referendum the plan was voted in with an 80.7% YES vote. Planning policies which help to protect the village from inappropriate development - based on community consultations - are now part of the legal planning framework.

Over the last few months various improvements and repairs have been completed in the village centre including installation of new benches, repairs to older benches, and repairs to both roof and walls of the Village Shelter. To mark 100 years of the Royal British Legion the Village War memorial was cleaned in time for Remembrance Sunday. New dog bins were installed and are proving to be popular, although sadly some dog owners still believe that poo bags are tree decorations! We hope to install signs this year to remind people to dispose of dog poo in the bins.

Much of the work of the Council is carried out behind the scenes, lobbying public bodies who have responsibility and budget to keep our village safe and clean. We have lobbied Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) to improve the processing of planning applications in Conservation Areas. Many applications are delayed, or even worse approved in the face of local opposition, often causing long term harm. We were disappointed when a promised scrutiny of Rushcliffe Planning was delayed to July 2022, and we have now approached other Parishes in Conservation Villages experiencing similar issues to join forces with us. We intend to keep pushing on this important issue.

The village was spared the deluge experienced in other areas of the country from recent storms, but by only by a few centimetres - the river level thankfully peaked just short of a flood alert. Our MP Ruth Edwards continues to help to put pressure on the various agencies and is once again raising our long-standing lack of maintenance with the County Council (VIA). Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board have cleared banks and river bed between the Smite and China bridges, keeping the river flowing. Environmental concerns raised by some residents relating to the work has also been brought to the attention of the MP. Loughborough University continue work to identify causes and possible nature-based solutions, and we thank residents who are working hard to supply data on historical ponds. A report from Loughborough is expected in May/June.

Unfortunately, the County Council 'sausage machine' - considering CBPC's request for reduced Hall Lane speed limits - has churned on to no avail. The CBPC's preference is for a 30mph limit along Hall Lane, however a buffer zone of 40 mph has been proposed for investigation by County Council, and will at least be an improvement on the current 60mph. We await the outcome of the investigation and we will carry out another survey in October to assess the current impact of through traffic.

Even though the past year has been at many times challenging, 2022 starts with a new sense of optimism for the future. We can all look forward to celebrating together the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a village party, and say our thanks to HM Queen Elizabeth II for her lifetime of service. Let's face it, after the last two years we need a good party! Help if you can, but please do come along and join the festivities.

Our County and Borough Council representatives - Cllr Neil Clarke and Cllr Tina Combellack - have both been a great support to the village, not only listening to our concerns and taking our requests to their respective Councils, but also helping out with allocations of funding. I thank them on behalf of the Council for their continued efforts.

So much of what the village does best is achieved with the hard work of numerous volunteers – the litter pickers, gritters, flood wardens, tree planters. A very special thank you goes to the Village Hall Committee who have made several splendid additions and improvements - sound insulation, wi-fi, on-line booking, sound system, to name but a few. We are truly grateful to all of you who contribute your time and effort to village life.

I also wish to say a very big thank you to the Parish Councillors. All work voluntarily, doing their utmost to represent all of the village. I am grateful that Jonathan Good has joined the Council and has taken the Planning portfolio on board. Jonathan has worked on Cropwell Bishop's Conservation Area proposals and brings knowledge and experience of the practicalities, pitfalls and problems associated with planning in a conservation area. There are still 2 vacancies on the Parish Council and I encourage others to come forward to serve the village in this way.

I would like to close with a very big thank you to our Clerk Nige Mayglothling. This year has been extremely challenging for him as he has endured cancer, HIPEC surgery, and chemotherapy, all in the midst of the pandemic and its inevitable impact on those suffering serious illness. He has not let us down, and continues to keep us all (Councillors!) in order. Thank you, Nige!

Cllr Josie McGuirk
Chairman Colston Bassett Parish Council
March 2022