

## DUFFIELD PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMANS REPORT 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023

2022 has been a busy year for the Parish Council with positive progress and many successes to report. It has however, also been a difficult year as in August, the Council received the devastating news that Jane Terry, the Parish Clerk, had passed away following a battle with an aggressive form of cancer. Jane is very much missed by the team and her dedication and commitment to the parish will be evident for many years to come through her work and achievements during her time as Clerk. Assistant Clerk Jackie Clements, supported by our Admin Assistant Dee Fitzgerald and Finance Officer David Melsome, ably navigated the Council through the subsequent difficult months and continue to offer their expertise and diligent attitudes to their roles. Village Warden Michael Forkin and Groundsman Michael Hutchinson have continued to provide an exceptional standard of work maintaining the Cemetery grounds, Gray Recreation Ground, Eyes Meadow and the village in general. The Council would like to thank the team for their efforts over the year and particularly for ensuring the work of the Council continued, largely without disruption, following the sad loss of Jane.

The Parish Council is made up of 12 Councillors and serving over the last 12 months have been: Kevin Burke, Paul Greenwood, Yvonne Greenwood, Jim Grieveson (Vice Chair), Roger Harrison (Chair), Shamsa Hussain, Joe Martin, John Shoesmith, Mark Spilsbury, Nick Storer, Jan Thompson and Alice Vincent. The Council comprises 6 Liberal Democrats, 3 Conservatives, 1 Green, 1 Labour and 1 Non-Affiliated Cllr, although we try to run the Council on a non-political basis. Key Committees include the Outdoor Management & Development Committee to oversee existing assets and development of new facilities; the Strategic Development Committee to focus on longer-term needs, residents' priorities and climate change; the Finance & Management Committee focusing on compliance with our financial regulations, the annual budget, management of accounts and the precept; and a Staffing Sub-Committee focusing on resources, salary levels and recruitment. We also operate small Working Groups to focus on the Environment and Anti-Social Behaviour. We support Plastic Free Duffield and provide Councillors as a Governor of Ecclesbourne School, Millennium Meadows Committee and The RJ Weston Duffield Charity.

### Village Action Plan

The Council have continued to work towards the priorities for improvements for the Village as set out in the Village Action Plan, a copy of which can be found on the Parish Council website: <https://www.duffieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/duffield-action-plan.html>. The priorities identified are arranged under four themes: Traffic Management; Environment; Community and Culture and Supporting Vulnerable Residents, and an update on the Council's progress is outlined below:

### Traffic Management

**Parking:** It has recently been confirmed that the County Council has agreed to impose "no waiting" restrictions at Ecclesbourne Avenue and Chapel Street, to designate blue badge spaces on Chapel Street and Town Street, and to designate limited waiting spaces on Chapel Street. Additional signage has been erected to direct drivers to the Eyes Meadow Car Park. We are hopeful that these changes will go some way towards improving parking capacity in the village centre. Cllr John Shoesmith continues to assess ways to improve parking in the rest of the village and the opportunities for the creation of identified cycling routes and key footpath improvements.

**Community Speedwatch:** The Duffield Community Speedwatch Group (chaired by Cllr Thompson) has continued to undertake speed checks around the village in 2022. Cllr Thompson attended the Community Speed Watch seminar earlier this year, where commendation was given to Derbyshire for its use of Speedwatch Groups and the police reported that speeding numbers are reduced as a result of the work undertaken.

### Environment

**Wildflowers:** The Parish Council, as part of an environmental initiative, took the opportunity of the Theatre event in July to hand out wildflower seeds to those attending. Thanks to Hudsons Plant Centre for donating seeds. Commitment to rewilding continues and a budget has been allocated to further wildflower planting around the village.

**Floral Hanging Baskets:** The village looked fantastic yet again through the summer months thanks to the beautiful baskets and planters. The Parish Council has approved a small increase to the budget for the hanging baskets to ensure the village can continue to benefit from the floral displays in the coming year. Plans will be made to hopefully increase the locations of the displays for the future.



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**Ecclesbourne Meadow:** Following the successful tree planting scheme at Ecclesbourne Meadow last year, further enhancements including installation of a Sensory Garden continue to be discussed and the Council is hopeful to be able to update on progress later this year.

**Cycling:** The Council continues to support the Derwent Valley Cycleway project. We are also currently working to assist in the installation of new cycle racks at the Co-op area on Town Street, at Meadow Vale and New Zealand Lane.

### Community and Culture

**Events:** Our Outdoor Theatre event, the Illyria Theatre production of '*Peter Pan*' was held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022 on a very warm and sunny day! The Council thanks Mark and the team at The Co-Op in Duffield for donating a hamper raffle prize and refreshments for the performers and staff. Local support for these events is very much appreciated. We are pleased to announce that Illyria will return in 2023 with a matinée performance of '*Robin Hood*' on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June. Unfortunately, due to the difficulties faced over the Summer months following the loss of Jane, the decision was taken to cancel the Movies in the Meadow event in August and the annual Fireworks event was passed into the very capable hands of the Duffield Community Association who organised an excellent display which was very well attended and enjoyed by all. Thanks are given to the DCA for their support. The Fireworks display will be held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November in 2023 and will be hosted by the Parish Council and the DCA. The Remembrance Parade this year trialled the new route beginning at Eyes Meadow Changing Rooms and proceeding along Donald Hawley Way to the War Memorial outside the church which, whilst enabling safety concerns and traffic management issues to be addressed, was largely felt to detract from the importance of the event and, as a result, the Parish Council is committed to returning the Parade to its original Town Street route for 2023. The Parish Council was also happy to support the Duffield Carnival and the Eyes Have It music festival and we look forward to offering this support once again and to supporting further events in 2023.



**Photography Competition/Duffield Calendar:** The Parish Council took on the task of producing the 2023 Duffield Calendar. A great selection of photographs were entered by local residents and it was a difficult decision to narrow the selection down to those featured in the calendar. We would like to thank all those who contributed photographs as well as those who have purchased a calendar.

### Supporting Vulnerable Residents

The Parish Council continues to support the RJ Weston Duffield Charity (Weston Centre) whose activities aim to support older people. The Weston Centre offers activities including a film club, a lunch club, coffee mornings and fitness activities. We have been delighted to help promote the new Helping Hands initiative, which will bring much needed support to the lonely and vulnerable with assistance in everyday tasks. Cllr Harrison and Cllr Thompson are Parish Council appointed Trustees of the charity.

### S137 Grants

We were delighted to provide £50 community grants this year for community groups to hold street parties to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. We are proposing to offer a similar grant fund this coming May for groups wishing to celebrate the coronation of King Charles. We also approved grants in May 2022 of £500 to Duffield Methodist Church for sanding and resealing the hall floor for the benefit of the Vision Dance Group and other community group users of the hall; in November 2022 of £5000 to the RJ Weston Duffield Charity for car park repairs and replacement / purchase of chairs for the centre; also in November of £1000 to the Duffield Community Association for Christmas Lights and in January this year for £100 to The Belper District Scouts for funding towards their 2023 America trip.

### Open Spaces

**Eyes Meadow:** There have been a number of improvements made at Eyes Meadow. Five steel benches have been installed to replace the damaged wooden benches, along with a BBQ stand and a metal bin in the hope that damage to the grass from summer disposable BBQs will be avoided. Thanks to a grant from Network Rail and invaluable guidance and assistance from Di Hancock, the Parish Council was able to arrange for the planting of several new native trees, three of which have been dedicated as memorial trees.



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**Cemetery and Allotments:** The Cemetery continues to serve local residents. In 2022 there were 23 full burials and six ashes burials in the Cemetery, and 15 in the Garden of Remembrance. We have welcomed two new allotment tenants over the last 12 months.

**Gray Recreation Ground:** Gray Rec has seen installation of a “Big Rig” multi-gym, alongside the play area. This provides a fantastic facility for older teenagers and was largely possible due to the hard work of our admin assistant, Dee, in securing a National Lottery “Awards For All” grant of £10,000.00 which boosted the project funding allocated by the Parish Council. The Big Rig was officially opened in May 2022 and has been very well received. Recently we have also replaced the two toddler swings and continue to maintain the recreation ground for the benefit of residents.



### **Budget for 2023/2024 (1 April 2023 to end March 2024)**

The annual budget for 2023/24 was set in January 2023 at £ 292,280 total expenditure, of which £43,150 is for projects to be undertaken during 2023/24. The Parish Council has set the Annual Precept at £216,300 for next year keeping the increase to 5%, which is below projected annual cost inflation in what is likely to again be a difficult year for many families as the cost of living accelerates. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends holding General Reserves of 30-60% of the Precept value and we have set a target of holding £86,520 - £108,150 General Reserves plus an additional £41,080, which have been earmarked for Specific Projects in future years for equipment replacements, footpath maintenance, building maintenance and car park repairs. Approximately 85% of our income arises from the Precept, and the rest comes from cemetery burials, allotment rents, events and income from renting out the Eyes Meadows playing fields. Staff costs equate to about 36% of expenditure.

### **The Coming Year ...**

We have some exciting projects planned for the coming year, including various environmental projects, the installation of picnic benches at Gray Rec, footpath improvements as well as further plans to enhance Ecclesbourne Meadow.

### **THANKS.....**

To everyone in Duffield who continues to support the objectives of the Council in enhancing facilities and services for the community, particularly the village volunteers: the many individuals who carry out litter picking, keep an eye out for elderly neighbours, run village clubs and organisations, help coach sports activities, or volunteer for the Carnival Committee; and to members of the DCA, the flood warden Luke Heaton, our footpath and tree advisers, Community Speedwatch volunteers, Ecclesbourne Meadow working group, uniformed organisations and others, our sincere thanks;

To my fellow Councillors for their tireless work on behalf of the community;

To the Council staff who continue to show commitment and dedication to their roles for the benefit of the Parish and a warm welcome to Fay Craig who was appointed to the role of Parish Clerk in November.

**Cllr Roger Harrison,  
Chairman, Duffield Parish Council**

**March 2023**

