

# cottinghamparishcouncil

## **Chairman's Report, year ending 31 March 2011**

The past year has seen a lot of activity by the Parish Council working behind the scenes in a wide range of areas. We have made sure that the Borough and County Councils – and any other relevant agencies – are aware of all remedial highways works, environmental works, infrastructure works and conservation works that are needed around the village.

This ongoing activity has been identified and acted upon by the Parish Council either as part of its routine village walks, or in response to direct requests from villagers. As a dedicated group of councillors, we're proud to say that our work doesn't just stop at the end of our monthly meetings.

Planning remains an important issue in the village and although we have supported many of the applications we consider, we are still concerned that applications not supported by the Parish Council and refused by the Borough Council could be turned over on Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. We are also concerned that cuts to the Borough Council's budget could mean that planning decisions will be made on the strength of the Borough Council's financial ability to fight a potential appeal and we look to the Borough Council for reassurance on this matter.

Elsewhere in planning, the notice period for the unauthorised development at the stables site on Rockingham Road expired in March and the Borough Council is now taking action to return it to its original state.

As far as environmental issues are concerned, we were delighted that the Wildlife Trust and Pocket Parks officers were pleased with the standard of management in the Dale following their visit in September.

The protection and preservation of trees in the village is a major ongoing concern and the new Tree Survey – completed in November – highlights all the work that will need to be undertaken. Over the years we have put a lot of effort and expenditure into making sure that these trees are healthy and safe, particularly in a public place like the Dale. Thanks must go to Cllr Owen Davison, our Dale liaison officer, and Tree Warden Jon Dixon for the care and attention they bring to those sometimes difficult roles.

Parking around the village, and parking on grass verges and pavements in particular, is a persistent problem that has concerned the Parish Council for a number of years, but seems to have no easy solution. We look forward to Cllr Geof Hudson's findings as he continues to make headway with this particular challenge.

The Parish Council is still pursuing Quality Council status and we are now confident that we can meet what is an extremely comprehensive list of criteria. Hopefully 2011 will see Cottingham become one of just 12 Quality Parish Councils in the county.

As Peter/the Parish Clerk will detail later, and echoing last year's Chairman's Report, the Parish Council has again kept its expenditure at a reasonable level so our contingency finances can continue to grow.

Rounding off, I would like to thank all of my fellow councillors for the work they've done over the past year – in particular Vice Chairman Cllr Clive Ashworth, whose considerable experience and expertise we continue to rely on.

It's worth acknowledging the efforts of individual councillors such as Alan Davies for the important work he's undertaken on road safety around the entrances to the village and I'm sure we'll be seeing the fruits of his discussions with the County Council shortly.

And also Cllrs Swallow and Beadsworth for their dedication to the Youth Club, and especially David's successful efforts at bringing football back to the Recreation Field.

There are also those people who are not councillors but still make a valuable contribution to the Parish Council and the village in general: Tree Warden Jon Dixon, Footpaths Warden Diana Sharvill, Speedwatch Co-ordinator Mike Curtis, grounds maintenance contractor Steve Morphy and Cllr Stan Hegg for his constant and generous support over the year.

And special thanks must go to PCSO Mark Tooley who is very active and very visible around the village, and makes sure we're all aware of Police-related activities in the area.

Finally we can't wrap this year up without a mention of our Parish Clerk, Peter Taylor, who clocked up 25 years service with Cottingham Parish Council in February. He has been described on occasions as 'the rudder on the boat', but I think we all view his immense contribution as much more than that.

So thank you again for all your good work and I'm sure this will continue for the coming year.

**Pete Bowman**

Chairman, Cottingham Parish Council