

## **East Bridgford Parish Council**

### **Annual Parish Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

#### **Chairman's Report**

##### **Clerk to the Parish Council**

Michele Sharratt resigned her post as Clerk in January. The Council is grateful to its other officers, Jess Molineux and Euan Temple, for covering various roles and also to those Councillors who have similarly contributed, especially Cllr. John Turner who has been dealing with financial issues. Anne Chisholm has been appointed to be our new Clerk. Unfortunately, a prior commitment means that she is unable to attend the APM but I trust you will all join me in welcoming her to East Bridgford.

##### **Butt Close and the Pavilion**

The process of transferring the ownership of Butt Close from Nottinghamshire County Council to the Parish Council has taken longer than expected but sorting out the fine detail has been necessary to protect its status as playing fields for the community and for the academy, while access to the existing parish-owned land on which the pavilion stands must always be preserved. The Deputy Clerk has spent many hours on this detail, for which we are very grateful.

Another very impressive show took place in June, and attracted many visitors to the village. In November, the Friends of St. Peter's Academy, held another successful fireworks display. The amount of organisation needed for these events should not be underestimated, and the volunteers who get involved deserve our grateful thanks.

The extension to the Pavilion to replace the old 'viewing lodge' at the tennis club and provide further facilities was effectively completed just before Christmas with the additional benefit of some money being made available to replace the wooden shutters to the front of the pavilion with electric ones. This facility is a major enhancement to the pavilion and a great credit to everyone who has been involved.

##### **Highways, Traffic, Parking & footpath/pavement issues**

By the date of the APM, the start date for the 18-month experimental closure of Trent Lane should have been published. The original scheme to make the road one-way near to Gunthorpe Bridge had to be abandoned because of safety concerns. There will now be a full closure in both directions to all but pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists, with a barrier at Gunthorpe Bridge and a gate near the old toll bridge site to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Traffic surveys were carried out on Butt Lane, Kirk Hill and Trent Lane and recent survey data used from the Red Lodge exit from the A46 so that, following the closure, the impact on traffic through the village can be assessed.

Representations have been made about on-going issues with parking near the crossroads and the state of some roads & pavement surfaces, especially on Main Street. It is hoped that some works will be included in the 2019-20 programme by Notts Highways through VIA(EM). Possibilities, apart from resurfacing, include primrose yellow lines at the crossroads, and a new no-parking Bus Stop bay outside of the Royal Oak which would also give a wider 'refuge' for vehicles heading eastwards to wait for a clear road ahead.

Concerns have been raised about the difficulties faced by pedestrians attending the new garden centre. In particular, the petrol service station reports that pedestrians have been cutting across their forecourt which is extremely hazardous. The Council has approached the manager of the garden centre and it is understood that there should be improved access when the old garden centre site is developed.

Following repeated lobbying, the over-grown hedge on Kirk Hill near the traffic lights was finally cut back in February. Hedges encroaching onto pavements & footpaths around the village are a regular feature of parishioners' concerns, especially for those using pushchairs or mobility aids. Residents are reminded that neat trimming is not sufficient and hedges need to be regularly cut-back hard to the edge of the path or pavement.

Fly-tipping incidents have increased dramatically in recent months, especially at the end of Closes Side lane where it meets the by-way parallel to the A46 and most recently on Old Hill Lane. Some of these incidents appear to be the result of cannabis 'farms' set up in rented properties since the debris contains things like carbon filter boxes and strong light packaging. Most is mainly garden rubbish, old fencing and the like. Residents should always ensure that traders used to carry out work and remove the rubbish are going to dispose of it properly. They are jointly liable with the trader, so if it is fly-tipped and subsequently traced back to them, they will receive the same penalty as the trader (in a Derbyshire case last month, this was a suspended prison sentence).

### **Support to other organisations**

Small grants were made to other organisations during the year, including the following:

St. Peter's Academy, for the DARE project.

The Parish Magazine, towards printing costs and also the distribution of information materials to all households in December, which, together with the East Bridgford website, continues to provide an invaluable service to residents and visitors

A contribution to the St. Peter's church Parochial Church Council towards the recently-installed automatic winding mechanism for the church clock, from the Heritage fund

A Donations Policy governs the process if a donation is being requested, details of which are available on the village website.

### **Precept**

Taking into account the rate of inflation and anticipated expenditure on the maintenance of the play area, the Council resolved to raise its precept by 3% for 2018-19 (equivalent to 2.7% on a Band E property).

### **Capital projects**

No other capital expenditure projects have been identified but it is clear that the Play Area will need significant refurbishment sooner rather than later.

### **Best Kept Village Competition**

The village was included in the short-list of four in its category of this competition, run by CPRE and sponsored by Wilkinson's. Despite coming runners-up in 2017, it made it no further. Less detail was available about the criteria and judgments this time round but road-side weeds along Main Street were mentioned as a negative issue. The Council is grateful to volunteers from within its ranks, from residents, members of the Garden Club and the Scouts & Guides who assisted with tidying up in the run-up to the judging period. In addition the East Bridgford Garden & Home Centre kindly donated baskets and plants which were displayed by business premises.

### **1918-2018 100 years commemoration of the end of the Great War.**

November 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the armistice, which ended the First World War. In addition to the Remembrance Sunday service in the morning, during the afternoon there was a very moving exhibition in the church about how lives were changed or lost, and in the evening, following torch-lit processions from the car park & Kneeton Road, a special service was held in commemoration. Overall, the programme of events felt like a very appropriate way to pay our respects to all those people and the events were a credit to those who organised them or contributed to them in any way.

### **Community Plan**

During the year, the Community Plan has been published after a lot of hard work by the group of people involved. The data collected in the village appraisals has become a very useful benchmark & source of evidence for consideration when various issues are discussed or actions proposed. The Rushcliffe Borough Council consultation over the Local Plan 2 began during this process, and, by necessity, the Community Plan group contributed to this. The Parish Council agreed with the main thrust of the argument that, while the village was overwhelmingly against development into the green belt, if that development became inevitable, it should be done in a rational way which mitigates the impact and meets some of the needs of

the community. However, the Parish Council expected that the revised proposals would be the subject of a further round of public meetings & consultation (see below).

There will now be a period of action planning based on the conclusions of the Plan.

### **Development in the green belt and Planning applications**

The Local Plan 2 process has reached the stage where it is subject to an examination by a National Planning Inspector but, at the time of writing, there has been no publication of any findings. It is unlikely to happen before the elections (see below). The proposals for East Bridgford have caused significant controversy since they involve development in the established green belt to the east of the village. The Parish Council was disappointed that the final proposals were not brought back to a third public meeting & consultation process, and made that point to the Inspector.

Over the year, there has been the usual variety of planning applications which the Parish Council has needed to consider as a statutory consultee. One worrying situation is the use of a relatively rare aspect of planning law regarding the building of significant properties in the countryside, including the green belt, in which, if the development meets the criteria such as 'exceptional design', the planning decision may override local policies of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

### **Springdale Wood**

The Council has a 999-year lease on the wood, which is owned by the Woodland Trust, but depends upon the voluntary group Friends of Springdale Wood for the 'management' of the wood. This year, there was an initiative to plant trees which emanated from the Queen and spread across the Commonwealth. In this country, each parliamentary constituency was encouraged to take part and East Bridgford volunteered on behalf of Newark & Sherwood. The trees were planted by the Friends in a short ceremony in the presence of our MP, Robert Jenrick, and elected Councillors in a clearing which is now called The Queen's Glade.

### **Elections**

Borough & Parish Council elections are due to be held in May. All Parish Councillors retire at this point. Anyone who wishes to stand for election and who qualifies needs to have completed a nomination pack and returned by hand to RBC by 3<sup>rd</sup> April. A vote will be needed if the number of candidates exceeds the number of seats (11 in the case of the Parish Council). This time, a number of long-standing Parish Councillors will not be seeking re-election, and Cllr. Nigel Lawrence is also retiring after many years of distinguished service as the Borough Councillor for this ward. It is appropriate to give an appreciation of their service – how this will be done will be decided in due course.

### **Conclusion**

This section has been used previously to note as many of the varied other demands of Council business not already mentioned as possible. These include:

responding to consultations and changes in legislation, maintaining memorial and other seats, weekly monitoring & safety inspections of the Play Area, arranging for surveys of and works to trees on parish land, reporting fly-tipping, liaising with Rushcliffe Borough Council about travellers' camps off Butt Lane, occasional cleaning & maintenance of information boards, the defibrillator and the telephone box 'book swap', managing the allotments on Butt Lane and dealing with numerous concerns raised by residents.

The Council is grateful for the amount of time freely given by Councillors, the willingness of the elected County & Borough Councillors to attend its meetings & follow through where necessary, the work of its employees and contractors, who often go 'the extra mile' on its behalf, and for the work of the internal auditor, Alan Hopwood. Last but not least, we are fortunate to have many individuals in our parish who willingly help out in a myriad of ways.

Finally, the Parish Council works best when it is helping to facilitate the aspirations of other groups, and we are fortunate in this parish to have so many groups and individuals prepared to try and improve what is on offer here.