

Woodborough Parish Annual Report May 2020

This report was collated in the absence of an Annual Meeting of the Parish in 2020. The Annual Meeting of the Parish, scheduled for 28th April 2020, was cancelled as a consequence of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairman's Report - Cllr Pat Woodfield

Woodborough continues to be a thriving and vibrant village, and we are fortunate to have an active and energetic parish council. This year has provided a wide range of opportunities and new experiences, to which we have responded and risen to the challenges presented.

Our village continues to be well-maintained, and the fields, footpaths, playing fields are well-tended. We have changed the way in which our grass-cutting costs are shared by the sports teams to ensure that it is equitable and our village green spaces and cemeteries continues to be well-maintained. We have put some of this work out to tender to ensure that we get quality work completed which demonstrates value for money.

We have a good understanding of maintenance matters throughout the village and we continue to have funding for, and the support of, our Lengthsman who keeps our village so clean and tidy. Despite no Christmas tree last year, we did have some stunning Christmas lights on Governors' Field which made the village so festive in December. Governors' Field now has a weekly inspection and new equipment has been added with two more springies funded by grants, and the facility continues to provide a popular and well-used play area for children.

Working with others from a range of village organisations, our Village Hall Working Party has ensured that our village hall continues to be an excellent venue for a range of users. We have plans to improve the car park surface in the coming year.

The Sam Middup Field continues to be farmed by our tenant farmer, which is an interim arrangement until future plans are finalised. Work has commenced to introduce a footpath around part of the field, and to provide a link to other footpaths in the parish.

Seating around the village continues to be upgraded and maintained, and we also continue to support the Woodborough In Bloom team.

We have had some success with repairs to road surfacing, but this has not yet been completed and we continue to lobby for improvements to road surfaces and pavements throughout the village.

One of our biggest challenges this year has been the flooding which has impacted so many people. Whilst flooding is not directly something which the Parish Council has responsibility for, we have continued to provide support for the Flooding team and have continued to work with the Environment Agency to support potential flood alleviation schemes.

Coronavirus COVID-19 has proven to be our biggest challenge yet. We have followed Government guidelines regarding closing some of our facilities, and our village hall continues to host the pre-school which is providing education for those children whose parents are key and essential workers. We are working to ensure that everyone stays safe. Our employees are able to continue either working from home, or in isolation, and are all working safely.

I would like to thank all of our Parish Councillors for their complete support over the last year, and in particular Andrew Gough and John Charles-Jones who have deputised and helped me with my duties. Our parish council would not be the success that it is without the understanding and wisdom of Averil Marczak our Parish Clerk, who is always professional and dedicated to ensuring that we all work in the best way for our parish. Thank you.

Flooding Report – Cllr Margaret Briggs

Since the last Parish meeting Woodborough Village has been flooded twice and we have had several 'near misses' when the flood wardens have been on alert. Our hearts go out to those residents whose homes were flooded.

I want to thank all the flood wardens for their hard work, turning out in terrible conditions, putting out and monitoring road closure signs in very challenging situations. Thank you also to Sue Walker our coordinator during flooding incidents.

We have support from Katie Harrison-Shearer from Notts County Council emergency planning team. Also, pre COVID, the Environment Agency regularly checked the open culverts in the village and we thank them for that. Hopefully that will continue when the current situation improves.

Via visited the village after the February floods and have cleared some of the blocked drains. Hopefully this will improve the situation. Time will tell.

Village Hall Report – Cllr Jane Stone

Hire of the Village Hall again provided a good income stream of £27,039 against a budget of £27,000. Income from the Solar panels was £1,945 against a budget of £1,700.

As suggested in the previous Annual Meeting of the Parish, decorating was undertaken with both internal and external decoration being completed during the year. Several suggestions of the colour for the internal walls were made but we decided to stay with the original colour because the new curtains had been chosen to tone with the existing colour. Soffits and fascias were replaced during the year and these have a 10 year guarantee.

We have received positive feedback for the new crockery which was purchased in the last financial year, and we purchased further matching items to augment the existing stock. Portraits of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip have been purchased and hung in the committee room.

Various maintenance has been effected during the year, with adjustments to the alarm system and various minor items being replaced such as cells for the Ladies Toilet emergency lighting. We have also agreed to replace some fluorescent lighting tubes. Discussion has taken place on whether we can make the Village Hall more environmentally friendly with the suggestion that we replace the lighting with led lighting.

Governors' Field Report – Cllr Colin Starke

We were successful in obtaining a £4300 grant from Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) towards the cost of a spring rocker boat and a spring rocker car for use by children with disabilities and younger children. They were supplied and installed by Proludic Ltd in

December. The boat will in due course be christened 'The Mayflower' after the English ship that transported the Pilgrims from Plymouth to America in 1620.

There have been no significant problems with any of the play equipment during the last year. Currently, the only outstanding maintenance item is repair of the safe surface under one end of the seesaw. We continue to inspect all the play equipment weekly as well as retaining RoSPA for an annual safety inspection. We are grateful to Richard Whincup for his help with our weekly inspections.

We engaged Via's forestry department to inspect the trees in the field. A programme of work was recommended to improve safety and the healthy development of the trees, and this was carried out in January.

In line with the current restrictions necessitated by the virus epidemic, the Field has been closed since 23rd March and we have suspended our weekly inspections. As soon as the restrictions are lifted, we will open the Field after inspecting the play equipment so that our young people can once again enjoy themselves in safety.

Sam Middup Field Report – Cllr Daniel Raynor

Over the past year, the Sam Middup field has stood-up well in all weathers and the ditch has done its job in removing the volume of rainwater away from the properties along the northern boundary. The field is visited once a month to check if any issues have arisen and if so that they can be resolved as quickly as possible.

The field will continue to be used by its current tenant over the remainder of this year.

The Parish Council has formed a working party to discuss the future use of the field. This has resulted in a bid being submitted to Nottinghamshire County Council for funding to help create a new permissive footpath within the field, in order to connect the field to the existing footpath/bridleway system within the village.

Playing Field Report – Cllr Paul Berrisford

The wet weather of 2019 and Covid-19 in 2020, contributed to the playing fields not being used as frequently as per normal. Christine Leafe has kept the pavilion looking spick and span. The pavilion was redecorated at the same time as the Village Hall.

No increase in fees for the clubs is proposed. Hopefully after the lockdown, and an improvement in the weather, the facilities will see more use 2020/2021.

Allotments Report - Cllr Paul Berrisford

With the advent of Covid-19 the allotments have proved to be a valid form of exercise and are looking well kept currently. There are 2 vacant pitches, we have some interested parties but the lockdown has prevented new tenants occupying them. Hire of plots for 2020/2021 has been kept at £32, with the fees collected going to Woodborough charities.

Cemetery Report – Cllr Andrew Gough

Throughout the year we have worked with our contractors and Gedling Borough Council to maintain and improve the environment in the cemetery and I hope that you will agree that when you visit the

cemetery now, it is, whilst still a country cemetery, a tidy and peaceful environment fit for its purpose.

Footpaths Report – Cllr Andrew Gough

There are no issues currently with the footpaths, which continue to be used regularly by all, other than since the 'lockdown' period began, there has been significantly more 'dog poo' on all the footpaths in and around Woodborough. We have placed dispensers and poo bags on the bins on the playing field. Please use them. If any issues do arise please report immediately to the PC who will liaise with the County Council to rectify.

Planning Report - Cllr Patrick Smith

The twelve months to the end of March 2020 has seen a one third increase in planning applications within our village. The sites are located across the village. Proposals included home extensions, demolitions and re-build, change of use of existing buildings, and felling of trees. Approved building plans only require work to commence within three years of approval. What we see around us in the future will be the cumulative impact of these past decisions. Examples include the approved plans for replacement dwellings in the Bank Hill area which involve demolition and creation of pavilion and contrasting classical style buildings.

Community involvement and feedback to the planning decision makers at Gedling Borough Council is vital to ensure the village evolves in a way that meets our needs and improves our environment. Every month the Parish Council have met and considered the relevant issues including listening to views expressed by residents attending our meetings or set out in correspondence. Central to the decision-making process are 'material' considerations. Such matters must be considered when making a recommendation. These include the Gedling Local Plan, the Woodborough Village Conservation Management Plan, a site planning history, traffic, roads and parking, surface water flooding, and any change in the distinctive nature of our village including historic buildings. Personal feelings about the applicant, or the application, are not relevant. It is the wider public interest in respect of the planning application that is important. New proposals for development around Private Road and Broad Close, and a controversial application for 6 semi-detached homes within the green belt on Lowdham Lane highlighted these issues. The latter was rejected by the Borough.

There is some dissatisfaction with Gedling Borough's planning decisions in relation to sites within the Conservation Area. Enough weight is not being given to its protection and enhancement. One formal complaint was raised but there is no outside body to review the response. During the year administration issues were also a concern. Documents are too frequently not posted on the website. This delays a response and makes it difficult for residents to make comments. In one case decisions were made by planners before the consultation period had closed. The Borough did apologise to the Parish.

The completion of work to allow the Borough to adopt Ash Grove is expected.

The Minerals Plan is now awaiting a review by the appointed Government Inspector. The Parish did respond to the latest consultation to raise issues about the lack of publicity and the failure to be alerted on time. Although late in replying, the comments made are recorded for the Inspector to consider. None of the proposed sites are within the Parish. The first stage of the Waste Plan has been responded to by your Parish.

Planning guidance is an evolving subject. For example, Design Guides are now in place for areas recently adopting Neighbourhood Plans. The present Government is expected to make further changes to advice in due course. Your Parish will continue to monitor all changes that may be relevant to our village.

Maintenance Report – Cllr Charles Wardle

The last year has been another busy one for maintaining the standards of our assets.

The Village Hall has been decorated inside and out and the soffits and fascias have been replaced with UPVC ones which will require minimal maintenance in the future. The Pavilion has also received a lick of paint.

Other more detailed work in the Village Hall has included:-

- a) Renewal of rotten panels under the windows in the main hall.
- b) Replacement of some of the emergency lighting which was not up to standard.
- c) Repair to a socket ring main in the main hall.
- d) Replacement of security lighting in the car park.
- e) Adding pull-rods to the main window curtains to ease opening and closing.
- f) Finding a new permanent home for the Silent Soldier.
- g) Repair to the defibrillator.

We are grateful to Cllr Charles Jones who once again has organised a first class restoration of a very tired bench seat on Lowdham Lane.

We are also very grateful to Tim Tritton our village groundsman who has continued to keep the foliage of the parish under control and to Tom Wiles, our Lengthsman, who continues to wage war against the litter louts, emptying bins, clearing drains, checking the Defibrillators and identifying any other things needing attention. Without the labours of these two gentlemen our village would not be the attractive village we are all so used to. Thank you.

Finance Report – Averil Marczak (Clerk)

Our receipts exceeded payments by £22,026. We finish the year with very healthy reserves which may prove to be a huge advantage over the coming months, as all Village Hall and Playing Field income ceased on March 23rd 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Our cemetery fees income exceeded budget and was up more than £7,000 vs the previous year. It is always very difficult to forecast cemetery fees. Our Village Hall income was in line with budget and grew year on year by £2,000 following an increase in the hire rates effective from April 2019. Our playing fields income dipped due to the unplayable conditions of the football pitch which resulted in our resident club having to play fixtures elsewhere. We did however improve our grants income, notably due to a very generous grant of £4,300 towards the new springers on the Governors' Field. We continue to benefit from the County Council's scheme which part funds our fantastic lengthsman, and we are grateful to GBC Cllr Helen Greensmith and NCC Cllr Boyd Elliott who regularly support our activities with grant funding.

Investment in the Village Hall increased as we undertook 2 major projects, redecoration and the replacement of fascias and soffits. Both projects were subject to a competitive tender process. The installation of the springers was the single highest value project this year, at a cost of £7,879.

Our loan repayment to the Public Works Loan Board remains constant at £8,536 per year. The balance of the loan, which was taken out to purchase the Sam Middup Field, is £209,364.

We have also asked our Village Hall caretaker to help keep the Institute clean following discussions between the Institute's trustees and the Parish Council. A nominal charge is reflected in the Parish Council's accounts.

Woodborough in Bloom Report

Due to the Government Lockdown the AGM planned for late March was cancelled. The accounts were audited by Peter Kirkland and are available should anyone wish to see them.

Summer 2019 saw a wonderful display of colour around the village but sadly we were not successful in the Best Kept Village competition. Only a small percentage of the marks are awarded to the planting, and it is the best kept not the prettiest villages that go through to the final round. The bowser rota under the guidance of Paul Reed did a wonderful job keeping the plants in excellent condition, often going out to water at 6am whilst many were still fast asleep and to avoid any traffic congestion on the Main Street. Modifications were made to the bowser with a retractable industrial hose reel fitted to make the task of watering easier for those volunteers who work alone. Woodborough in Bloom wish to thank and acknowledge the PC for funding the hose reel and to Cllr Colin Starke and Robert Hanson for their guidance, research and carrying out the fitting.

2 new planters made by Martins Farm and a replacement trough for the damaged one on Buckland Drive were put in place in late September. We are now in the excellent position that all the planters and troughs have been replaced; the old ones served the village extremely well lasting 15 years. Rob Dixon once again gave his support by hanging and taking down the hanging baskets. The bulbs and pansies survived the very wet winter and the flooding and went on to produce a show of colour for the spring.

As we venture into the unknown this summer we plan to plant everything as normal apart from the hanging baskets. This is made possible by Timmermans supplying all the plants at cost price for the troughs and planters and the many offers of help from our loyal supporters. At this point in time we do not know if we will be allowed to use the bowser.

The team of Woodborough in Bloom wish to thank all those who help and support us. Without this help we would struggle to provide the wonderful display of colour around the village. It really is team work.

Woodborough Community Association Report

The WCA continues to maintain a full diary of events to encourage the community of Woodborough to come together.

The WCA led the village preparations for The Best Kept Village competition, supported by the Parish Council and of course, the hard work of The Woodborough In Bloom group. We made it through the first round but unfortunately didn't win our section this year and we were sad to see the Winner's post removed from the village.

We worked hard to encourage stall holders and villagers to support our Annual Street Market. We thank all those local businesses and individuals who donated such generous gifts for the raffle. We

also thank Councillor Helen Greensmith for kindly opening the street market. Those who attended had a good time, but it must be said that in recent years this event has seen a decline in support. Consequently, we have decided to completely re-evaluate this event with a view to presenting a much more vibrant and up to date Village Fair. As part of this relaunch we have booked the village hall and co-ordinated with the cricket team to ask that we may also use the playing field as a new site. We have contacted many new prospective stall holders and had updated the booking forms for 2020 but then COVID 19 stopped us all in our tracks. At the time of writing we wait to see what happens next...

The year continued with a successful coach trip for villagers – this event used to be known as ‘The Over 60’s coach trip’ but we have decided to remove the age barrier and invite any adults to take part. The Cinema night was fun and the Winter party, led by our friends ‘Revival’ was fun, but again numbers were down, and whilst we broke even we did not manage to raise funds. The Christmas Lights Switch on – an event organised jointly with the Parish Council, was better supported than ever. The Just Sing Choir led the singing and the school choir also shone. The lights were beautiful, the mulled wine and snacks appreciated, and (despite not being able to enjoy a Christmas tree), the lights were beautiful. Each month a small but dedicated band of villagers meet to play bingo, numbers are small but for those that attend it is an important evening out that we hope to continue with. 2020 began with the Over 65s meal, thoroughly enjoyed by all. It continues to be a labour intensive event but so long as we can count on volunteers stepping forward each year, we will continue to provide a meal and, more importantly, a social gathering, for the elders of our village.

We have already informed the Parish Council that we will not be able to support the Best Kept Village this year as we simply don’t have the able bodied helpers and struggle to attract helpers to come out on a set day. We do appreciate that the Parish Council have previously funded the tools, paint, weed killer etc that is needed, and many private individuals do their part, but we struggle to come together to do this and wish to use our energies elsewhere.

The WCA remains committed to providing social events and supporting the community of this village. As ever, all these events rely on volunteers to help organise and create the events. Looking back through the original minute books I see that from its conception (at the request of the Parish Council), there is a common theme ‘We need more helpers.’ Following our AGM this year we have decided to review our calendar and our arrangements for meetings. When I became Chairwoman, I decided to open the meeting half an hour earlier to allow anyone attending to have a drink and, more importantly time to chat before getting down to business. Never-the-less we are rarely joined by any villagers who are not part of the ‘usual group’. Furthermore, those who do attend are struggling to meet each month and, to be fair, given that so much has become routine, there is little incentive to attend. Consequently, we are reviewing our arrangements and will be reducing our physical meetings and making better use of online facilities. Our constitution requires only one trustee to be part of any sub-committee and we hope to create subcommittees for some events. This is a model that has worked for us in the past but in recent years we only had the same few people helping with everything. We are however going to try. With this in mind, when we were invited by the Parish Council to lead the organisation of the V.E. Day celebrations we asked for volunteers to get involved and held two meetings before, again COVID 19 and the subsequent need for social distancing caused us to reduce those plans. We sincerely hope that we can carry forward those arrangements to V.J day. In the meantime we are inviting people to send in films of themselves singing along to Vera Lynn and hope people will decorate their homes and hold front garden tea parties, in line with social distancing rules.

Thank you to all those who have worked so hard to provide events that have contributed to the well being and social life of the village and its residents. Please stay safe and look after each other.