

Annual Report Presented to the Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2018

The Parish Council continues to take a high-profile role in the village. Though statutory responsibilities are few, we continue with many non-statutory roles and have extended these during the year. With the higher profile comes increase workload. Many from outside the village and some residents and businesses see the Parish Council as all powerful and responsible for everything which of course is not certainly not the case. We are happy to pass the issues raised with us to the responsible authority or individual though. As you will see from the list below, we have been involved in a variety of activities that hopefully will have brought an improvement to both the environment of the village and quality of life in Matlock Bath.

Summer tower florals	New noticeboard at	Nature Reserve:
Flower barrels	Artists' corner	maintenance
Cattle trough florals	Website management	hedge planting
Rose garden	Facebook page	clearing
Residents litter picking	Twitter account	Surveys
Dog 'poo' picking	Quarterly newsletters	Awarding Grants
Footpath maintenance	Press releases	Planning issues
Winter service scheme	Pro Loco Art competition	Advice / support for
Derwentwise tree	Photography competition	residents
management	Presentation ceremony	Liaising & Lobbying
Bus shelter maintenance	Remembrance	Development Association
Signage maintenance	Singing round the Tree	Peak Leader grant
Bench plaques	Seniors' lunch	Winter lighting
Bench maintenance	WW1 information display	Christmas tree
	Station adoption	Summer activity area

With one resignation and two new co-opted members this year, there are now nine Councillors serving, our full complement. We encourage volunteers to help with the work of the Parish Council on a casual basis as well as serving on our Committees. Copies of all Committee notes and Parish Council Minutes can be found on our website. The Parish Council's thanks go to all our volunteers for the hard work they put into the work of the Parish Council for the benefit of the village.

Parish Council Budget - The budget for 2017/2018 was set by Full Council in January 2017 based on recommendations on spending needs from each of the Committees. The budget set for 2017/2018 was £52,285 (£14,340 ringfenced) with a precept of £27,500. The difference was met from the carry forward from 2016/2017. The budget set for 2018/2019 is £64,445 (£24,805 ringfenced) with a precept request of £28,000.

Finance and General Purposes Committee - This Committee oversees the *finances* of the Parish Council and also deals with *employee and personnel issues*. As well as managing its own budget, the Finance Committee oversees the budgets of all the other Committees and the financial planning of the Council. Much of what the Finance Committee oversee is required by statute (the audit for example) or is not optional (insurance). The Finance Committee budget funds for **Grants** and over the past year we have been able to award grants to the Derbyshire Sub Aqua for the Boxing Day Raft Event and the Children's Christmas Party.

Details of the Income and Expenditure for each financial year can be found on our website.

Planning Committee - The Parish Council has only an *advisory role* on planning issues but feel that this area is important for the village. We have local knowledge pertinent to the needs of the village all of which is in a conservation area and covered by other planning regulations. The quality and frequency of planning advice sent to us by the District Council has benefitted from the expertise of this Committee. They meet regularly and sometimes on site to look at planning applications.

Environment & Conservation Committee – This Committee deals with anything to do with the **environment and conservation** in the village including the **Nature Reserve, florals** around the village, **footpaths** and any other issues. The work in the Nature Reserve is carried out by a group of volunteers who have strived to make the area a haven for flowers and wildlife as well as making it a safe and quiet area for residents. This year we managed to secure the services of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Volunteers who cleared large areas of brambles which had become intrusive. They also removed small unwanted self-set trees. They also clear self-set laurel. The ‘year-round colour’ hedge planted on the border with the New Bath Hotel was completed with the final plants from the Woodland Trust. There are even some ‘spares’ which we will use this spring to replace any failing specimens.

The Parish Council has continued to provide **four three tier planters** along the Parades. In addition, three **flowering barrels** opposite Masson Mills and at the bottom of Clifton Road together with the Rose Garden in Memorial Gardens which have been planted and maintained by a local resident. There is also the cattle trough and area around it on the A6 which again is planted and maintained by a local resident. An increasing number of residents have asked to be involved in **litter picking** around the village and litter picks have been provided by the Parish Council as well as DDDC as part of the annual national litter picking initiative. Residents continue to be involved in **dog ‘poo’ picking** in order to keep the village clean and tidy. Unfortunately, much of the ‘mess’ they clean up is from the dogs of residents who should know better than to foul their own village.

As part of the Rights of Way Minor Maintenance Scheme, the Parish Council arranged for a number of **footpaths** to be cleared. Although the Parish Council receives a small grant for this work, it is supplemented by a budget each year to enable us to clear more paths than would normally be possible.

The Parish Council took part in a signage survey with DDDC and a full report is on both the PC and DDDC websites.

In 2017, the Parish Council again joined the **Winter Service Scheme** operated by Derbyshire County Council. This scheme provides free ‘grit’ to the Parish Council to distribute to residents/businesses who sign up to be a volunteer to clear snow and ice from footpaths during the winter months. This scheme is very successful with businesses although still very few residents have signed up. It is hoped next year the uptake will increase.

As part of the Derwentwise Project, volunteer rangers have cleared areas where **tree management** is required to open the views along the River Derwent. These include: horse chestnuts on the riverside on North Parade and self-set trees on the riverside on Lovers Walk which obscure the view of the children’s play area.

Facilities Committee - This Committee oversees the **sports area, bus shelters, benches, signage** and the **war memorial**.

The Parish Council has a contract for the **bus shelters** to be cleaned each month along with the **village signs** and our **noticeboards**.

We have replaced the notice board at Artists’ Corner with the one which used to be outside the Community Centre in the Pavilion. It has now been renovated in traditional black.

In 2017 we were approached by a company who wanted to hire the sports area to set up a children’s activity/fair area. After careful consideration the Parish Council agreed as it would bring in some very much needed funds to renovate the area. Although the Parish Council budgets each year for renovation, it was unlikely that the area could be renovated without a large influx of money. The Parish Council felt this was a way to raise funds. The fair proved very successful with the Parish Council receiving a number of praises for bringing yet something else into the village. In 2018 and 2019 we are hiring the sports area out; this will be raise sufficient funding for a renovation in early 2020. The area will then be brought back to full use for all residents.

Communications Committee - The **website** continues to be a popular way of communicating. The website contains a vast amount of information enabling us to keep residents up to date with village life and some of this information is mirrored on our **Facebook** page. Both are updated on a regular basis and are extremely reactive tools.

Our main vehicle of regular communication with residents continues to be the quarterly **Newsletter**, a hard copy of which is delivered by hand by again some willing volunteers to every resident and business in the village as well as being published on the website. It continues to be well received. The Parish Council issues regular press releases to the local newspapers, and magazines, the radio and TV stations. These promote the events we are holding, or report on events held, issues of public interest or anything else that might promote the village in the wider community. The uptake of advertisements in the Newsletter remains constant – the income from which offsets the printing costs.

Activities Committee - The Parish Council has for many years promoted ‘village’ activities, some of which have been open to the wider community. We intend to continue this promotion both as a community service and to promote Matlock Bath to the wider world. The **Pro Loco Art Competition** has attracted many entries **over the years**.

The eighth **Photography Competition** again proved very successful. With 142 entries made which we had to shortlist to 93, a task which proved near impossible for the Shortlisting Committee. With the high standard of pictures, we are able to use many of the entries in our publicity material, website etc. Both competitions have attracted sponsorship from various sources including Sir Richard Arkwright Masson Mills and Heights of Abraham. In addition, sponsorship money was received for ‘specialist’ photographs from Derbyshire Dales District Council (Illuminations) and Holy Trinity Church.

In November a joint **presentation ceremony** for both of the competitions was held at The New Bath, sponsored by Heights of Abraham. It was a chance to bring together all the winners in both competitions and was very well received by those attending. We also invited our volunteers in order to acknowledge the work they do on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is very proud to work with representatives of the British Legion to facilitate the **Remembrance** at the War Memorial. A member of the Masson Mills Band agreed to play and Rev Nick Grayshon attended on behalf of Holy Trinity Church. Wreaths were laid by two schoolchildren and one of our Councillors on behalf of the village.

Our Christmas event – **Singing Round the Tree** – again proved very popular and it was good to see so many residents coming together at this time of year. Music was provided by John Phillips on guitar and Gerry Kreibech on keyboards and audio by MDS. The event was then followed by a buffet hosted by The Midland and funded by the Parish Council.

December saw the seventh **Seniors Lunch** held at The New Bath Hotel. It was enjoyed by 50 residents. The food was outstanding and it was good to see so many ‘senior’ residents attending.

Heritage Lottery Grant Funding – WW1 – Life in The Bath.

After many delays for a variety of reasons we managed at last this year to complete the permanent exhibition in the Memorial Shelter on life in Matlock Bath during WW1 and information about those who gave service to the armed forces at this time. This should be a lasting tribute to those who often gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Matlock Bath Development Association

Though a body independent from the Parish Council, this was born out of the Parish Council initiative with Derby University – the Into the Future project. In addition, what MBDA do is closely aligned with the work of the Parish Council so we work collaboratively and supportively. In the past year, it has applied for Heritage Action Zone status for the village and though unsuccessful – we lost out to Grimsby in the East Midlands – it has resulted in Historic England being directly involved in the village and brokering a special conference in the autumn in promoting the heritage of the village.

The association also worked on a project with students from Sheffield University on the links the village has with Mary Shelley and Frankenstein. This has resulted in a 9-day Frankenstein Festival in the village in the autumn. Through grant funding, a 'green man' trail in Derwent Gardens and Lovers Walk will be installed shortly in collaboration with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust at The Whistlestop Centre. The Association has 5 directors – all living in, or involved directly with, village life and voting members plus many supporters who are all vital to the success of the MBDA. Ongoing work includes an accessibility report and guide for the village being commissioned from Accessible Derbyshire. These will both be published shortly. Finally, MBDA are working with Nottingham University at the possibility of using the famous Matlock Bath thermal water as a source of natural energy. This project is still in its early stages of development, but we are hopeful a successful outcome will benefit many in the village.

Peak Leader grant application

For some time now, there has been a desire in the village to have Christmas lights. The sports area renovations were proving quite costly. It was hoped that during the renovation of the Memorial Shelter, the grassed area in front of it would be turned into far more useable hard standing. As the Parish Council could not fund these projects immediately it was decided on the back of the university report to use its findings to support an application for a Peak Leader grant. This is European funding administered by DEFRA and DCC to very strict guidelines. Our application was part-successful and we were awarded funding for Winter Lighting and Signage. The first stage of the Winter Lighting was installed just prior to Christmas with Phase 2 being currently considered and this will be in place before Christmas 2018.

Toilets

We were approached by DDDC and asked if we were interested in taking over the toilet provision in Matlock Bath. With running costs of over £50,000, this would have meant tripling the precept to residents. This was clearly not an option. We lobbied Derbyshire Dales against closure of any of the facilities, but our protestations fell on deaf ears and we are to lose both the Pavilion and Artists' Corner facilities. The Parish Council has agreed to work with all parties in the future to bring these much-needed facilities back.

And we also

As well as the work of the Committees, we have representatives on various bodies including The Derwent Valley Rail Partnership, footpaths and the DDDC Illuminations Liaison Committee. We lobby the higher tiers of local government (County and District Councils) on a regular basis on behalf of residents and on general issues of concern in Matlock Bath from water leaking onto the highway to dangerous trees, from the provision of grit bins to litter and refuse.

Once again our adopters of Matlock Bath station planted and maintained planters and barrels with summer bedding and winter flowering and cleared and developed the bed in front of the platform. DCC provided and planted the hayracks making the station a wonderful sight for all. New self-watering barrels have recently been installed.

The Future

The future for the village is exciting. We have the Matlock Bath Development Association working hard to bring new money and life into the village. This is crucial as the help and support we receive from both the District and County Councils is diminishing due to lack of finance. Thanks go to all those who have worked so hard in everything we do for the village and, of course, to those who selflessly give their time to act as Councillors or volunteers with the only reward being that we do it to make Matlock Bath a better place to live, to work and to visit.