

Annual Report Presented to the Annual Parish Meeting 25th May 2016

It has been another extremely busy, challenging, eventful yet satisfying year for the Parish Council. As you will see in the following report, 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.

There are eight Councillors serving, just one short of our full complement of nine. 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 2015/2016 was set by Full Council in November 2014 based on recommendations on spending needs from each of the Committees. The budget set for 2015/2016 was £47,340 (£8,700 ringfenced) with a precept of £23,969. The difference was met from the carry forward from 2014/2015. The budget set for 2016/2017 is £48,615 (£10,900 ringfenced) with a precept request of £27,000.

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, the Children's Christmas Party, Peak District Mining Museum for their heritage project, the boatbuilders who do a splendid job during the illuminations and the pre-school playgroup.

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. It has been used by the school as a regular resource and is currently being used by another primary school as an outside area resource.

Volunteers have been working hard throughout the year to clear the reserve to allow the paths to be used.

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 which are planted and maintained by a local resident. There is also the cattle trough and area around it on the A6 together with the Rose Garden in Memorial Gardens which again has been planted and maintained by a local resident.

The Parish Council arranged for **clearing work** to be done on the A6 from Clifton Road to opposite the old school house together with New Bath Road and the paths which adjoin the A6 to the New Bath Road. This was undertaken by the Community Payback Team. Further areas will be cleared during this current year by the Community Payback Team.

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. In addition, the Parish Council arranged for the Community Payback Team to **collect litter** – this amounted to 26 large sacks collected on one day. This was done as part of the Clean for the Queen project in conjunction with Derbyshire Dales District Council.

Residents have also been involved in **dog 'poo' picking** in order to keep the village clean and tidy.

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.

In 2015, the Parish Council signed up to 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 was very successful with businesses although very few residents signed up. It is hoped next year the uptake will increase.

As part of the Derwentwise Project, the Parish Council met with representatives to identify areas where **tree management** is required to open up the views along the River Derwent.

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**.

Three new **benches** were fitted in the village which again have been very well received. **Memorial plaques** on all of our benches still prove to be very popular. Renovation has started on the benches in Memorial Gardens which will continue into this summer.

After consulting the village about renovating the **sports area**, the Parish Council started work on the **renovations**. The Community Payback Team cleared the area of shrubbery and litter in order that the renovation could begin. The intention is to extend the court to the wall edge. However, planning permission has had to be sought which has held up the renovation but we hope to hear the outcome soon.

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.

In October, a new **noticeboard** was erected. The noticeboard is in a more prominent position in the village (in front of the Pavilion Car Park, by the telephone box) and the Parish Council will continue to display important information on it. The previous noticeboard will be relocated to Artists Corner so that more information can be displayed there.

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 with the entry in 2015 being the highest since its inception. On line voting again very popular and in total over 200 votes were received over the 4 different categories by members of the public.

The sixth **Photography Competition** again proved very successful. With 166 entries made which we had to shortlist to 74, a task which proved near impossible for the Shortlisting Committee. With over 350 members of the public voting, this certainly was a 'larger community' event. 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.

In November a joint **presentation ceremony** for both of the competitions was held at The Temple. It was a chance to bring together all the winners in both competitions and was very well received by those attending.

The Parish Council is very proud to work with representatives of the British Legion to facilitate the **Remembrance** at the War Memorial. This is an integral part of the **Great War project**. The event this year was an inclusive event and included contributions from children and representatives from Holy Trinity School and Highfields School. As usual it was well attended and we were fortunate to have representatives of the Masson Mills Band. They very generously declined a fee and instead the money was donated to the Help the Heroes Charity.

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. The event was then followed by a tasty buffet hosted by the Midland Hotel and funded by the Parish Council.

As the Memorial Gardens shelter was cordoned off due to the problems with the shelter, we had to re-locate our **Christmas Tree**. With the help of Derbyshire Dales District Council the tree was re-located to the grass area. The Parish Council was grateful to Mel and Chris from The Temple who once again sponsored the Christmas Tree.

2015 saw the 4th **Illuminations Village Evening**. The weather was perfect and the boatbuilders were able to row the boats to give residents and traders a chance to view the illuminated boats without the weekend crowds. The Temple very kindly hosted a BBQ afterwards, funded by the Parish Council. Incorporated into the evening was the voting for the village Favourite. This is another village tradition with prizes being awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. In 2015 we approached three local restaurants – Hodgkinsons Hotel, The Fishpond and Matlock Bath Balti who very kindly part sponsored the prizes.

December saw the fifth **Seniors Lunch** held at The Temple. It was enjoyed by 38 residents. The food was outstanding and it was good to see so many 'senior' residents attending.

Heritage Lottery Grant Funding - As was reported in last year's report, the Parish Council was very fortunate to secure a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project commemorating WW1. The Great War – Life in The Bath project is a partnership with Peak District Mining Museum, Holy Trinity Primary School and local residents. The project so far has included a special Act of Remembrance, two exhibitions in the Pump Room and a vintage newsletter delivered to every residence in the village. There is currently a display of material on the bandstand. A website was set up carrying a lot of information and reports on what the Committee is doing. Feedback has been very positive.

An information board containing information about the war memorial has been erected in Memorial Gardens as part of the grant.

And we also

As well as the work of the Committees, we have representatives on various bodies including The Derwent Valley Rail Partnership, the Safer Neighbourhood Team, footpaths, the Pavilion 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. DCC provided and planted the hayracks making the station a wonderful sight for all.

The Future

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.