

Annual Report Presented to the Annual Parish Meeting 24th May 2017

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 2016/2017 was set by Full Council in November 2015 based on recommendations on spending needs from each of the Committees. The budget set for 2016/2017 was £48,615 (£10,900 ringfenced) with a precept of £27,000. The difference was met from the carry forward from 2015/2016. The budget set for 2017/2018 is £40,655 (£4,340 ringfenced) with a precept request of £27,500.

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. 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.

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 “Clean for the Queen” initiative.

Residents continue to be 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 2016, the Parish Council again 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 still very few residents have signed up. It is hoped next year the uptake will increase.

As part of the Derwentwise Project, rangers have cleared area where ***tree management*** is required to open up the views along the River Derwent. These include:

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***.

The ***renovation of the benches*** in Memorial Gardens has now been completed.

After consulting the village about renovating the ***sports area***, the Community Payback Team undertook some work on clearing the area together with painting the kickboards and metal posts. Further work will continue this year.

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 with the entry in 2016 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 seventh **Photography Competition** again proved very successful. With 124 entries made which we had to shortlist to 78, 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. We also invited our volunteers 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. In view of the renovations to the Memorial Shelter, the service had to be tailored a little compared with previous years. A member of the Masson Mills Band agreed to play and Sue Sunderland attended and took part in the service on behalf of Holy Trinity Church.

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 jacket potato buffet hosted by the Fishpond and funded by the Parish Council.

As the Memorial Gardens shelter was cordoned off due to the problems with the shelter, we were unable to find an alternative place for our **Christmas Tree**. Normal service will resume at Christmas 2017 and the Christmas Tree will be back in Memorial Gardens. .

2016 saw the 5th **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 2016 the New Bath Hotel, High Tor, Matlock Bath Balti and the China Rose restaurant very kindly sponsored prizes.

December saw the sixth **Seniors Lunch** held at The New Bath Hotel. It was enjoyed by 46 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, 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.