

## Annual Report Presented to the Annual Parish Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

The Parish Council continues to take a high-profile role in the village. Though our statutory responsibilities are few, we continue with many non-statutory roles and have extended these during the year. With the higher profile comes increased 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 certainly not the case. We are happy to pass the issues raised with us to the responsible authorities or individuals 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.

Awarding Grants	Website management	Photography Competition
Planning issues	Facebook page	Art Competition
Summer tower florals	Twitter account	Seniors Lunch
Flower barrels	Quarterly newsletters	Advice / support for residents
Cattle trough florals	Bus shelter maintenance	Liaising & Lobbying
Rose garden	Press releases/radio/TV	Neighbourly Networks
Footpath maintenance	Signage maintenance	Station adoption
Winter service scheme	Climate Emergency	Community Speed Watch
War memorial Cleaning	Nature Reserve:	Residents litter
Benches & Maintenance	Maintenance & clearing	Singing Round the Tree
Bench plaques	Implementing Grants	

During 2021/2022 two Councillors left the Parish Council. We were sad to see the loss of two extremely experienced Parish Councillors. However, four new Councillors have joined us so we now have a full complement of 9 Councillors serving. 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** – A budget for 2021/2022 of £39,865 (and ringfenced funding of £5,400) was set by Full Council in January 2021 based on recommendations on spending needs from each of the Committees. The precept requested was £28,000, the difference was met from the carry forward from 2020/2021. The budget set for 2022/2023 is £40,675 with a ringfence of £7,695. In view of rising costs the precept request was raised to £29,000. This is the first increase in precept since 2016.

**Finance and General Purposes Committee** - This Committee oversees the *finances* of the Parish Council and deals also 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. The Finance Committee this year has recommended to Full Council to grant an award to Matlock Bath Pre-School and Playgroup.

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

**Planning Committee** – In the past year the Parish Council has considered many planning and tree work applications. The Planning Committee consider each application in detail and the merits or detriments of each one assessed. Although the Parish Council has only an **advisory role** on planning issues, we 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 some specific to Matlock Bath. The Committee has met regularly and sometimes had on site meetings 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. It does not deal with the Climate Emergency; this is dealt with by our Climate Advisory Group. There has not been any volunteer work in the Nature Reserve this year and as a result we had to secure the services of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust rangers for a day who cleared large areas of brambles which had become intrusive in the meadow. They also removed small unwanted self-set sapling trees. In the last year, we have started to deal with ash dieback on the reserve. This involved consulting with DDDC and the Forestry Commission from whom we have to obtain a license to remove the infected trees and agree a replanting scheme when the work is complete. We still await approval of our application before the work can commence.

The Parish Council has continued to provide **four three tier planters** along the Parades. After purchasing the planters in 2020, we rely on volunteers to plant up. Each of the planters is sponsored by four businesses in the village who keep them watered throughout the year. In addition, three **flowering barrels** – one opposite Masson Mills and two at the bottom of Clifton Road as well as the cattle trough is planted up and maintained by a local resident. The Rose Garden in Memorial Gardens continues to be maintained and looked after by a local resident. An increasing number of residents have asked to be involved in **litter picking** around the village. In addition to the litter picks loaned by DDDC to businesses, the Parish Council continues to have its own volunteers who also have been provided with litter picks and bags by the Parish Council.

As part of the Rights of Way Minor Maintenance Scheme, the Parish Council has arranged for a number of **footpaths** to be cleared by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. This work was paid for through the Maintenance Scheme at no cost to the Parish Council. We have also supplemented work through a small budget to enable us to clear more paths.

In 2021, 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.

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

The Parish Council once again arranged for the bus shelters, village signs and noticeboards to be cleaned regularly. A review of the work undertaken by our long-standing contractor meant a change of contractor.

Work on the renovation of the **sports area** was completed last summer and the area is now available to residents to use. We already have a number of residents using it together with a few groups and residents outside of our village. All proceeds from the hire charges will be used to maintain the area.

The flower bed outside of the court has been cleared and planted up; paid for from the Welcome Back Fund.

The Parish Council budgets each year for benches to be sited in the village. A bench in memory of Parish Councillor Trevor Bowmer was designed and constructed by a resident in discussion with the Bowmer Family.

The vandalism to the benches on Riverside opposite Waterloo Road continues to be prosecuted

**Communications Committee** - The **website** continues to be a popular way of communicating. The new 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 uptake of advertisements in the Newsletter offsets some of 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 have continued 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 and went ahead after a 'covid break' in 2021.

With the closure of Sir Richard Arkwright's Masson Mills, the winners of all previous Pro Loco Art Competitions since its inception in 1980 had to be removed from the Conference Centre. The plaques have been cleaned, work photographed and will be housed in the Grand Pavilion. All artists were contacted beforehand to ensure they were happy that their painting was been moved to the Grand Pavilion. The Parish Council remains custodians for the work. It is hoped that more people will get to see and enjoy the winning work.

The twelfth **Photography Competition** again proved very successful. With over 250 entries made, we had to shortlist to 90, a task which proved near impossible for the Shortlisting Committee. With the high standard of photographs received, we are able to use many of the entries in our publicity material, website etc. Sponsorship for both competitions was again received from Sir Richard Arkwright Masson Mills and Heights of Abraham with other prizes sponsored in the "Best Picture of ..." Categories. We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors who support our competitions each year.

In December a joint **presentation ceremony** for both of the competitions was held at The Mining Museum. 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. Once again, the service in 2021 was held in the morning with the two minute silence at 11.00 am. Rev Pauline Key attended on behalf of Holy Trinity Church. Two wreaths were laid by on behalf of the children of the village and the residents.

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, Christopher Vivian on keyboards with audio by MDS. Mulled wine was provided by Mad Hatters followed by a buffet provided by Forget Me Not and funded by the Parish Council.

December saw the ninth **Seniors Lunch** held at The Fishpond. It was enjoyed by 26 residents. The food was outstanding and it was good to see so many 'senior' residents attending. For 2022, Full Council agreed that the Lunch be opened up to all residents. Seniors will go for free but a charge made to those not yet 60.

**Matlock Bath Climate Advisory Group** – This group was set up in May 2019 when it was agreed by Councillors to declare a climate emergency. The Group's focus is on advising the Parish Council the actions they need to make to be carbon neutral by the earliest possible date. The Parish Council in turn will advise and encourage residents, businesses and visitors to be climate change aware and on the actions they can take to reduce their carbon footprint. The Group will recommend effective and meaningful lobbying of local and national government on this important international issue. A Policy has been drawn up which outlines what the Parish Council will do to help with the climate emergency. In view of Covid restrictions there are no matters to report.

**Matlock Bath Development Association** - Though a body independent from the Parish Council, this was borne 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.

Directors met recently to decide on how to move forward with the Association. Although a lack of resources means that no work can be undertaken, the Development Association will remain active for at least another year to see whether further volunteers come forward to help.

**Welcome Back Fund** – Following Covid restrictions the Government made available funding to encourage members of the public to return to rural towns and villages. Funding was made available to the Parish Council to purchase a number of picnic tables together with plaques to be placed in Derwent Gardens Memorial Gardens, the grass area opposite High Tor and the Artists Corner play area. In addition, volunteers from Holy Trinity Church agreed to become Ambassadors for the village and were subsequently equipped with tabards, bags, information about activities in the village. Information pamphlets including a copy of the cartoon style map were produced. Information leaflet holders were purchased so that maps of the village can be available to visitors to the village.

We were subsequently notified that there was still further funding available if the Parish Council could use it. The rules and regulations for spending the money is clearly defined and very stringent. As a result, it was agreed to purchase bulbs and plants to be planted around the village. In addition, postcards were printed showcasing not only our lovely village but using the photographs from our Pro Loco Photography Competitions. These have all been distributed to hotels, B&Bs, holiday lets in the village so guests can send home a postcard. We also had funding to provide a stamp which have been distributed amongst some businesses who wished to be part of the initiative.

Funding has covered all costs relating to this initiative without any actual cost to the Parish Council. However, the facilities purchased using this funding do become the responsibility of the Parish Council.

**Halloween Hunt** – The Parish Council along with a number of businesses took part in the Halloween Hunt organised by Matlock Rotary.

**Community Speed Watch** – The Parish Council agreed to embark on this new initiative to try and help with speeding in the village. 13 volunteers have come forward to be trained and hopefully speed watch duties will be resumed as soon as restrictions are lifted. We were very fortunate to receive funding from our County Councillor, Irene Ratcliffe, to purchase our own equipment. Unfortunately, a number of volunteers have now dropped out due to other commitments. We are currently trying to arrange a roadside refresher course with the Police. It is hoped that a small group will be deployed shortly.

**The Joyce Pawley Arbour** – The Parish Council following the untimely death of our District Councillor, Joyce Pawley, that a constant reminder of the work Joyce undertook for the village should be erected. It was agreed that an arbour would be a fitting memorial in the Water Gardens in Derwent Gardens, funding for which was raised by residents, businesses and the Parish Council. Derbyshire Dales District Council agreed to lay the base for the arbour as their contribution. The area around the arbour has been developed and a new rockery has been laid. The Pawley family have also undertaken some planting. There is still money left over from the donations which will be used to maintain the area and complete the planting.

## **And we also ....**

As well as the work of the Committees, we have representatives on various bodies including The Derwent Valley Rail Partnership, 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 flowers.

The Parish Council would like to thank our District Councillors and County Councillor for their work in keeping us up-to-date with what is happening at District and County Council levels and for all the lobbying they have done on our behalf throughout the year.

We also continue to have regular **Closer Working** Meetings with DDDC which are held every three months. These meetings allow us to raise issues/concerns formally with Officers and receive feedback.

## **The Future**

During these unprecedented times, it has been the shining light in the gloom to see the community spirit thrive and grow. Though the topography of the village does not lend itself easily to help us bond into a community, the activities and social media links that have formed have enabled us to act together. 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.