

Annual report by Chair of Parish Council 2022 - 2023

Once again this has been a tough year for residents with the aftermath of the pandemic, people still getting Covid and others living with the debilitating effects of long Covid. Then there was all the political and financial uncertainty which was compounded by increased interest rates and energy prices. It was therefore so good to see the setting up of the Warm Spaces community project and we must thank all the venues and volunteers who contributed to this important service.

Residents will have noticed the completion of the upgrade of our streetlights to low energy luminaires (with a 10 year warranty) which gave a 70% reduction in energy consumption but, unfortunately, this was largely offset in huge increase in energy prices.

The village celebrated the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee with the Party in the Park; we are proud of our new village clock as a fitting tribute to our late Queen Elizabeth for many years to come. Souvenir bookmarks were available for all children in the village and also for many adults. Then we had the sadness of the Queen's death in September. However to mark the Coronation of King Charles III, the Parish Council has given Coronation mugs to all our primary school children and again, we will make some available for adults as well.

As usual, the churches organised our Remembrance Service at the memorial in November and the switching on of the Christmas lights on a magnificent Christmas tree. As well as supporting both these village events, the Parish Council has given financial support to the school, the village hall and the leisure centre, and welcomes applications from any groups who would like help during the year. We would also like to pay tribute to those residents who work tirelessly throughout the year to make our village so attractive with plants and flowers in our planters at the three entrances to our village and in the flower beds in the centre of our village.

Over the last year, we have made progress with the new allotments, albeit a lot more slowly than any of us would have liked; it is good to see all the activity of plot holders, including quite a few new ones, and we hope that the remaining issues will be resolved soon.

Six of our longstanding councillors stepped down from the Parish Council in May 2022 and for many months we carried on with several vacancies. This meant that, for the majority of the year, we tried to cover the responsibilities of the whole Parish Council with only six instead of ten Councillors. On top of this, Cllr Ball was acting Clerk for five months, which put further pressure on the Council especially Cllr Ball, to whom we formally record our thanks for all that she did for the Parish Council. During this last year, we also received a great deal of criticism and challenges from a few residents, which deflected our attention from more positive things that we wanted to do for the village. However we now have our full quota of Councillors and a new Chair, so we look forward to a positive and more productive year ahead.

Cllr Shân Dobinson, Chair, Wolston Parish Council 2022-2023