

## ANNUAL REPORT – 2021/22

### Introduction

The annual report of Collingham Parish Council covers the civic year, which starts in May at the Annual Parish Council Meeting when the Chairman of the Council is elected by fellow Councillors. The report also covers the financial year, being 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March and gives an overview of past and potential expenditure by the Parish Council.

This report is divided into sections, each outlines relevant information and details the work the Parish Council has been doing during the Civic year May 2021 to May 2022. We hope that you find this report of interest as it is intended to be a communication and information tool to keep you, the electorate, informed of the activities of your local Council. Much of this information is included on the website and is updated on a regular basis, this report simply collates the information on an annual basis.

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### Introduction to Collingham Parish Council and Councillors

Historically North Collingham Parish Council and South Collingham Parish Council managed the affairs of the two separate parishes. In 1970 the 2 Parish Councils merged to form Collingham Parish Council. Parish Councils are now seen as an important tier in the government structure and are able to take on and manage local areas. With the introduction of the Localism Act in 2011, this has given the opportunity for more powers to be developed to the local Councils in respect of the management of local services.

The Parish Council is proactive in ensuring that the views of its electorate are heard at District and County Council level, with the Parish Clerk in regular contact with both District and County Councils to ensure requests made by residents are dealt with.

The Parish Council is therefore proactive with all aspects of Planning within the Parish and will also respond to planning consultations in adjacent Parishes/Districts if it is felt that the application will have an impact on Collingham residents. Any planning policy changes at either local or national level are considered and responses sent when appropriate to the decision makers to ensure that these are fit for purpose. The Parish Council responses to all applications are greatly assisted when comments are received from parishioners and enable the response to truly reflect the local feeling on any proposed development, whatever the size. The Parish Council is therefore looking to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, which will form a more local policy document, in order to meet the future needs of the community.

It is extremely important to the Council that no additional financial burden is placed on its residents. It is important to the Council that its annual precept request is not unduly increased and grants of all sizes are continually being sought to supplement the annual budget. Without the additional grant income, the Parish Council would be unable to continue to improve the facilities and therefore lives of its parishioners. For example the wonderful facilities enjoyed by everyone at the Community Park would not have been possible without significant funding from external sources.

The Parish Council is extremely proactive in trying to represent as much of the Parish as is possible. With this in mind, informal links have been established and are regularly reviewed with over 40 groups within the Parish. Often this is Councillors/the Parish Clerks acting as a conduit for the groups of which they are already members, but also includes them regularly contacting other groups/organisations which they may not ordinarily do.

The Parish Clerk (Caron Ballantyne) and Assistant Clerks (Sarah Markall and Christine Douglas) can be contacted by the following methods:

**Telephone:** 01636 555700      **e-mail:** [Info@Collingham-PC.gov.uk](mailto:Info@Collingham-PC.gov.uk)

Clerks and Councillors will be available weekly on Wednesday mornings, May to September, 9:30-11:30am in the village centre under the gazebo

### Local Council Contact Details:

Nottinghamshire County Council

County Hall  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 7QP

Telephone: 0300 500 80 80

e-mail: [enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@nottsc.gov.uk)

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Castle House  
Great North Road  
Newark  
NG24 1BY

Telephone: 01636 650000

e-mail: [customerservices@nsdc.info](mailto:customerservices@nsdc.info)

### Collingham Parish Councillors

COUNCILLOR	TELEPHONE NO	E-MAIL
Jim Barrie	01636 892985	<a href="mailto:Jim.Barrie@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Jim.Barrie@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
Steve Blagg	01636 894072	<a href="mailto:Steve.Blagg@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Steve.Blagg@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
Jean Davies	01636 892911	<a href="mailto:Jean.Davies@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Jean.Davies@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
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Sue Gray (Vice-Chair)	07498 142550	<a href="mailto:Sue.Gray@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Sue.Gray@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
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Mike Lloyd (Vice-Chair)	01636 893581	<a href="mailto:Mike.Lloyd@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Mike.Lloyd@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
Derek MacKenzie (Vice-Chair)	01636 892051	<a href="mailto:Derek.MacKenzie@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Derek.MacKenzie@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>
Tim Musson	01636 892312	<a href="mailto:Tim.Musson@Collingham-PC.gov.uk">Tim.Musson@Collingham-PC.gov.uk</a>

### Achievements during the year

The Parish Council has adapted how it operates, as everyone has had to do, due to the Covid-19 situation. Whilst normally it would work in the background on many issues and services within and affecting the Parish, throughout the pandemic working closely with Collingham Village Care and the many volunteers has become normal.

Whilst the Parish Council, returned to face to face meetings in May 2021 as the legislation required. Initially meetings were held outside in the Community Orchard, where Councillors, staff and the public felt safer, whilst continuing with the essential business of the Parish Council, but as the colder darker evenings started in September, we moved back the usual meeting venue of the Youth & Community Centre on Low Street.

The Council has continued to work closely with the District and County Councils and has liaised with them to ensure matters affecting local residents, falling within their remit are addressed.

No matter what the query, all matters brought to the attention of the Parish Council, either through its Councillors or direct to the Parish Clerks are taken up on behalf of the community.

Throughout the year the Council has reported potholes; blocked gullies/road drains; managed the maintenance of grass verges along the highway and council land; managed the maintenance and continuing development of the community park and Pitomy farm play area; managed the maintenance of trees on council land; received audit reports; managed notice boards; managed burial and memorial requests in its cemeteries; managed the provision of a Christmas tree and erection of the lights for the village centre.

The Parish Council continues to consider the health and wellbeing of residents and the Cross site converted from grass to wildflower meadow was slightly disappointing in 2021 as the resplendent show throughout the months of 2020 lockdowns was not as good, so additional seeds have been sown in the hope that this year will be better – early signs are promising. The Pinfold last year following the previous years efforts was resplendent and the wildflower meadow turf did put on a good show for everyone who passed. Plans are now in place to start developing the Pitomy Farm play area into a more mindful space for the whole community, with benches now having been installed, with long vistas into the surrounding countryside, we are working with a local landscape design company to improve this area in phases over the coming years.

The Parish Council was successful with its application for the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold Level. This award shows not only that we meet a set of minimum standards to deliver effectively for the community, but we are striving to offer more to our residents. To meet this award the council has had to demonstrate that it has the required documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. We also produce this annual report, which was gratefully received in the Summer of 2018, when it was first published and therefore continue to publish this annually. It is with great pride we share the news of this award, as the only council in Nottinghamshire to have achieved this.

The Parish Council team of staff this year, has been further strengthened with the appointment of Christine Douglas as Assistant Clerk. This does mean that the phone and email will now be answered by any of the staff.

#### [Chairmans report \(given at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners\) 14 April 2022](#)

This is the first Annual Parish Meeting since 2019 due to Covid restrictions.

Firstly, thank you to our past Chairmen Michael Davis and Tim Musson. During their time in the Chair, they faced two consecutive years of flooding and the first lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our thanks (somewhat belatedly) must go to the Flood Wardens; those who helped in the clean-up operations and everyone who offered a helping hand to those adversely affected.

The effects of the global pandemic have dominated everyone's lives for the past two years, but I am delighted to say that the **whole Parish** has pulled together to make sure all Parishioners especially the most vulnerable were taken care of.

Whilst I can't give an individual thank you to everyone the efforts of those connected with Collingham Village Care, The Pantry, The Rural Advice Centre and our Churches all deserve a special thank you.

During the lockdowns we all became aware of how important green spaces are for physical and mental health.

Residents of Collingham and surrounding villages are fortunate to have access to the Trent Vale Trail (TVT) leading to the Besthorpe Nature Reserve managed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Langford Lowfields reserve managed by the RSPB.

Thanks go to their staff and the volunteers that support them.

Visitor numbers to both sites increased significantly during lockdown and have remained high, confirming these spaces really are important to us and contribute to our general wellbeing.

Although some of our activities were curtailed by Covid-19 the Parish Council continued to function, firstly by remote meetings via zoom and when we were allowed to meet, we met outdoors in the Community Orchard.

During this time our Parish Clerk Caron worked tirelessly to make sure that the Councillors were able to continue with as many of their duties as possible whilst remaining within the government guidelines: this meant that all financial transactions were reviewed and approved as normal; all planning applications and consultation documents were responded to and all Parishioners received responses to any queries or questions.

As if this wasn't enough, we changed our email address; installed a new telephone system and gained a Quality Gold standard award, we are the first Council in Nottinghamshire to achieve this.

Our local MP Robert Jenrick presented the certificate to us but as covid restrictions were still in place at the time it was not at a fancy reception but in the village car park.

So again, another thank-you, to Caron and also to our Assistant Clerk Sarah who is mainly tasked with keeping our website and social media sites up to date.

The Council aims to support as many residents of the Parish as possible by awarding grants. The money can come from either Community Infrastructure Levy known as "CIL money" or from funds designated under Local Government Act 1972 section 137 known as "137 money"

What the money is to be used for determines which pot it has to come from.

In the last couple of years the Council has been able to provide grants to: Friends of the Trent Vale Trail; Royal Oak Community Pub; Rural Advice Centre; the Football Club and most recently a small donation to help the Norton Disney Big Dig.

Pre covid the Parish Clerk was available for consultation with Parishioners in the Library but during covid the library was closed so instead we held "Gazebo Wednesdays" where residents could come along to the village centre to meet with the Clerk or Councillors and chat safely in the open air.

Several liaison groups e.g. Safer Neighbourhood Group and William Bailey House were halted during covid but we are slowly reconnecting with them as the situation improves.

We were able to maintain contact with the library - albeit remotely - and whilst the discussions were protracted the outcome is that several new volunteers have been recruited and the Library is now opening more frequently.

On Earth Day 2021 we launched Collingham Green Vision and it is this group that have organised Great British Spring Clean litter picking events, Recycling Roadshows and held the exhibition "No Planet B" about the effects of climate change.

The banners accompanying the exhibition were produced by and kindly lent to the village by the Newark Quakers.

Again, thank you to all our supporters and volunteers who engage with Green Vision and keep our village tidy through regular litter picking.

In September 2021 we worked with a Company called Extreme Wheels and held a very successful skate park jam for the youngsters of the village.

The Neighbourhood Plan had a faltering start a couple of years ago but has now progressed thanks to the efforts of Sarah, Caron and Michael. You will be able to see the results in the video later.

Christine Douglas has been recently appointed as a temporary second Assistant Clerk with a main aim of bringing this project to fruition.

Please join me in welcoming Christine to this role.

At the very end of 2021 the Council purchased the piece of land behind the Phoenix Hall on Station Road. We are now working with the Scouts and residents of Station Road whose gardens border the land to work out the best use for it.

Supporting the idea that the village wants to improve its green credentials considerations so far are for trees/flowers and wildlife habitats.

Personnel changes have happened too:

Gillian French had to retire from the Council due to family and work commitments in 2020 and was replaced by Angela Haberton.

Sadly, our County and District Councillor Maureen Dobson passed away in 2021 and the resulting elections put in post Debbie Darby as our County Councillor and Emma Davis as a new District Councillor to work alongside our existing District Councillor Linda Dales.

Shortly after the County and District elections two of our Parish Councillors resigned for personal reasons.

Rik Hatton has already left the village and Chris Allen will be leaving shortly.

I would like to record via this report our thanks to Rik and Chris for the hard work they put into being a Councillor for the benefit of Collingham residents and at the same time welcoming our newly elected County and District Councillors and the recently co-opted Parish Councillors Sue Gray and Steve Blagg.

As you walk or drive around the village, I hope you will notice some of the physical changes that have happened during the last 2 years.

- Footpath stiles have been replaced with more accessible gates
- Benches are being refurbished and new benches were installed in St John the Baptist's Churchyard and Pitomy Farm play area
- New safety matting is being trialled in the play park and some equipment is being repaired /replaced.
- Improvements have been made to the Pinfold: new wildflower turf was laid and a plaque giving the history of the Pinfold was installed.
- Improvements are also ongoing at The Cross site: clearing ivy; planting bulbs and trees.
- Planters at the station have been installed.

It is with many thanks to our merry band of parish gardening volunteers that the last three items on this list have been achieved.

This year is Jubilee year and many celebrations and events will be happening to mark this historic occasion.

March 11<sup>th</sup> was civic tree planting day. As part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and by kind permission of Gusto, trees were planted on the Hedgerows estate by Collingham pre school children ably assisted by the first and oldest resident at Beaufields Eric Holden.

Some of the trees were purchased by Gusto others by the Parish Council. The Council has also purchased a commemorative plaque to be installed shortly.

Other planned activities for the extended bank holiday weekend include: an Afternoon Tea by Churches Together; Beacon Lighting at the Royal Oak; Big Jubilee Lunch Picnic in the park in association with the Friends of John Blow and a Family Fun Day hosted by the Cricket Club.

As you can see a vibrant village to be part of.

Looking to the future:

- We will be working with Extreme Wheels building on the success of last year's skate park jam to provide weekly sessions for the over 9's. These will be held at the skate park until the end of October then move into the Memorial Hall from November through to March 2023. The first session was on Tuesday this week.
- There will also be another skate park jam in September.
- We are working on plans to transform the little used play area in Pitomy Farm into a dementia friendly sensory/pollinator garden suitable for use by all.

- In association with NatureScape we have created a blend of wildflower seeds namely the “Collingham Mix”. Our intention is to provide a packet of seed to every householder in the Parish so that once sown we will have significantly increased habitat for pollinating insects, birds and other wildlife.
- We will continue “Gazebo Wednesdays” from May to September if the Library is still not available.

And finally, but most importantly, in recent weeks the people of this Parish have already shown kindness and compassion for the people of Ukraine through monetary donations and clothing collections.

The Parish Council will, whenever possible, lend its support to any future initiatives for the benefit of those beleaguered people.

Thank you for listening.

#### [Finance: 2021/22 year](#)

The Parish Council is in a favourable financial position and has delivered all objectives and priorities for the 2021/22 period within its agreed budget. The Parish Council has, when setting the budget for 2022/23, recognised the need to plan for future service delivery & development, whilst also not increasing the financial burden on the residents in these very difficult financial times for many.

An internal audit has been undertaken with the auditor report being submitted to full council. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return report to the council is anticipated to be signed in June and associated paperwork will then be submitted to the appointed external auditor.

The Parish Council will publish their accounts, and once the report is received from the external auditor this will be updated to include their report.

Savings are made directly into earmarked reserves which include setting aside amounts each year for future projects/ expenses such as election costs and asset maintenance.

Full details of expenditure and budgets can be obtained by written request and the audited accounts can be inspected by appointment with the Parish Clerk in accordance with the Notice of Public Rights to be published on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

The Parish Council continue to seek grant funding each year where applicable to assist with funding of improvement and new schemes for the benefit of all facilities.

Additional income has come from housing developments in the form of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some of this money is available to local groups through grants.

#### [Councillors Attendance Record \(is published on the website \[Collingham-PC.gov.uk\]\(http://Collingham-PC.gov.uk\)\)](#)

Possible attendance is for the current term of Office from May 2019 election (or date of co-option) to 12 May 2022.

#### [2022/23 Timetable of Meetings \(are published on the website \[Collingham-PC.gov.uk\]\(http://Collingham-PC.gov.uk\)\)](#)

All meetings of the Parish Council will start with a public forum commencing at 7:15pm

#### [Closing remarks](#)

The Parish Council has continued to work hard to ensure “best value” and to make improvements throughout the parish for the benefit of all residents.

The Council will continue to serve you, its community as a “Corporate Body” to the best of its ability during the next 12 months and will continue to rise to the challenges that constantly require us to review and change what we do and how we do it, in order to properly represent the community which we serve.

There will be Parish Council elections in May 2023 and current Councillors would encourage anyone who may be interested in putting themselves forward for nomination to come along to any Parish Council meeting to see the wide variety of topics discussed and projects that we can and do get involved with on behalf of all parishioners.