

Doveridge Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Kate Darcy, Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.00pm, Tuesday 29th April 2022 At Doveridge Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Bointon, Cllr. Dews, Cllr Lyon, Cllr. Banner, Cllr. Mason, Cllr. Goulden, Cllr. Ewing, Cllr. Ogram and Cllr. Buck., Parish Clerk K. Darcy

APM 01.22 Apologies

Apologies were received from County Cllr. Bull.

APM 02.22 Minutes of last Annual Meeting

The minutes of the last annual meeting were circulated, it was agreed that these were a true and accurate record and the Chair Cllr. Bointon signed them.

APM 03.22 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

APM 04.22 Chairman's Report

Some of my report is very similar to that of last year. I make no apologies for this when I thank all the Parish Councillors for their commitment to our village as we strive to improve our environment in the limited way in which we are able. All Councillors give their time free of charge and do so in the hope of making a difference. No changes have been made to the Council this year and each member has played their part by bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. It is not always easy and social media is often responsible for apparent criticism. The Council has tried to rectify this by responding to such comments by updating posts with factual information and by making personal contact to discuss an issue wherever possible.

As the current Chair, I am very proud to work with such a committed group. I think you will agree that we live in a fantastic village, and we all strive to ensure it continues to be so.

Unfortunately for us we are about to lose Rachel Male, our expert clerk. She has been in post for the last four and a half years doing all the work behind the scenes. If Rachel doesn't know the answer she knows where to find it in order to correctly advise us. In addition, she knows where to source any available finance for projects that the Council

might wish to undertake. The Council would like to extend its gratitude for her hard work and wish her all the best for the future. However, we are very fortunate to have Kate on board. She is already proving to be very capable. Rachel and Kate will be working together for the next couple of weeks before Rachel stands down. So, Kate, you have two weeks to learn everything Rachel knows!

Our thanks also go to Councillor Steve Bull and Councillor Jacqui Allison who are our representatives for Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council respectively. They serve as our link to both councils and also attend our meetings to update us on matters being dealt with by the relevant councils, which will affect us here in Doveridge. As you will hopefully be aware, there are different councils which deal with different matters at different levels. I used to say that the Parish Council was bottom of the pile, but I have been corrected and told that we are the lowest tier of government. If you get a minute, you can view the different levels of responsibility on the internet.

That brings me nicely on to the road surface at Brocksford, which I know is a burning issue for motorists, cyclists and anyone using this stretch of road. You will be aware that the surface is in a very poor condition and potentially dangerous to users. I am sure we have all heard tales of near misses and damage caused to vehicles as a result of its condition. The road is the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council Highways and your Parish Council is actively putting pressure on them to undertake the repair. I think it fair to say that many roads are in need of repair, but as far as we are concerned this should be a number one priority.

The latest news is that representatives of the Parish Council met with Councillor Bull and Councillor Charlotte Cupit from the Cabinet Office on site, in order that they could see the extent of the problem. Following the site visit this it was intimated that the surface would be repaired as part of the 22/23 budget, with the work to commencing any time after April this year. Unfortunately, the published list of road repairs for 22/23 does not include the stretch at Brocksford. We are currently working with Councillor Bull to have this decision changed, so a huge thank you to Steve for his continued support.

The Parish Council published a website address, in order that residents could report this road surface and I know many did. We will bring this matter to the forefront of those concerned in order to ensure the matter is expedited.

On the same day as the Brocksford meeting, Parish Councillors also visited the junction of Derby Road and Cook Lane outside the Cavendish Arms where the 'Give Way' road markings have been almost completely worn off. This has resulted in some drivers failing to realise the need give way at this point. It was agreed that the markings would be replaced, but to date we are still waiting!

Also visited was the entrance to the village on the Sudbury side to discuss the problem of vehicles entering the 30mph zone in excess of the speed limit. This is something else the Parish Council is trying to address, but the responsibility lies mainly with the Police. As the number of injury accidents on Derby Road are almost non-existent, this stretch of road is not a priority for speed enforcement. At the time of meeting Speed

Indicator Devices were not in general allowed by Derbyshire County Council. However, following a change of policy it may now be permitted to put one or more of these devices along the road. Thanks to Dave Vernon for the update on Community Speed Watch and we hope the Speed Gun, recently purchased by the Parish Council, is soon put to good use. I need to mention of course that Councillor Bull has since provided a grant to the Parish Council in order to cover the cost of the purchase. Once again, thanks Steve for your support.

The new burial ground is another matter the Parish Council is endeavouring to resolve and take ownership of under a Community Asset Transfer from Derbyshire Dales District Council. We previously agreed to do this two, or three years ago, but needless to say these things take time. Initially there is a cost involved to the Parish Council, there eventually revenue will be generated. It was thought that the Parish Council would be in a better position to maintain the area to a good standard since, for many, it will be their final resting place. In addition, we want to ensure it is also a pleasant area for loved ones to visit.

Due to the passage of time, the area has become somewhat neglected and negotiations have taken place to have the area put back to a suitable condition before the Parish Council to take over. We are now in a position to take over the land, which we hope will take place within the next couple of months. The current situation underlines the reason why the Parish Council wishes to take ownership of the burial ground. Thanks to Councillor Mike Lyon who heads the burial ground committee and to our Clerk for all their hard work so far.

The Parish Council continues to maintain the playing field and some of the footpaths within the village, not to be confused with the pavement footpaths. The area between the school playing field and Meadow View is also maintained and tidied by the Parish Council. This year we have carried out further work and had a Willow tree removed. Investigation by tree experts showed it to be potentially dangerous. Another Liquidamber tree was sourced and planted by Councillor Geoff Buck to replace the Willow. We look forward to this maturing and giving us all a wonderful Autumn display.

On the subject of trees, the Parish Council own a number of large trees and it is our intention to have them surveyed in order that they can be properly managed. This is important since the cost of their maintenance is high and an order of priority needs to be established. The survey will ensure we can avoid removing trees unnecessarily, whilst at the same time ensuring they are safe. Any trees that might need to be removed in the future will be replaced with a specimen appropriate to the location

Once again, the Parish Council has arranged for the overgrown verge at the top of Cook Lane to be cut back. Visibility at the junction had become compromised making it difficult for vehicles to exit Park Crescent safely. This is not actually our responsibility, but previous attempts to identify the owners had failed.

During November the Parish Council put up many poppies on lampposts throughout the village to mark Remembrance Sunday. As a result of the positive feedback, it is something we will be considering for this year. Thanks to Councillor John Banner for his efforts and time spent in putting these up.

I like to think that the current Parish Council is being proactive within the village and not simply maintaining what we have and continuing to routinely do the things we have always done.

We have recently been reviewing the playing fields, looking at how it is used and how it might be used in the future. We are continuing to liaise with the football clubs, the tennis club and all users of the field. To this end a working party was set up consisting of Councillors John Banner, Simon Ogram, Peter Goulden and Howard Mason. They have produced a mission statement, which gives guidelines for the use of the field, current and future. We continue to liaise with Doveridge Scout Group to investigate, with other agencies, the possibility of erecting a permanent scout hut on the field, to fit in with other stakeholders.

I am pleased to report that the playing field seems to be getting more and more use by all age groups. We are currently applying for a grant to install a number of adult exercise machines.

The saga with the footpath running between the High Street and Hawthorne Close, past the allotments and the Bowling Club, has now reached a conclusion. After about 7 years of closure, it is now fully opened and recognised in law as a footpath. It has taken a while, but all the hard work has been worth it. To this end I would like to acknowledge the work put into this by former Councillor Gordon Stubbs.

We continue to progress the improvement of the area around the village pond and now have the permission of the owner, Derbyshire Dales District Council to do this. Following a recent survey, we also have the support of residents. Work is underway and wildflower seeds are being planted in a largish area adjacent to Park Crescent. If things go to plan there should be a fantastic display of wildflowers later in the summer. A path is also planned to give better access to the side of the pond, although this has been scaled back due to cost. Later we hope to install a viewing platform on the east side of the pond. Increased mowing is planned alongside the routine mowing by Derbyshire Dales District Council, which hopefully will keep the area tidy. All this work is led by a working party consisting of Councillors Geoff Buck, Peter Goulden, Jo Ewing and Susan Dews.

The Parish Council continues to keep an eye on local planning matters, and we are lucky to have Councillor Susan Dews who has plenty of experience to be able to do so. It has to be said that we have virtually no influence over any planning decisions, but we do keep a look out, particularly in relation to ensuring plans conform to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Before I finish, in the coming months you will notice several lamp posts around the centre of the village with brackets attached to them. In the summer months these will hold hanging baskets, which we feel will enhance the village centre. Needless to say, these are expensive. We feel the cost is worth it and that they will be of benefit to the whole village. If this trial is successful, we will certainly consider it for subsequent years.

Hopefully you can see that all of your Parish Councillors are busy and active in both decision making as well as being hands on getting things done. Once again, my thanks to you all.

Finally, it is my absolute pleasure to be able to announce this year's winner of the annual Citizen of the Year Award whose name, or names will be added to the honours board at the back of this hall. There were several nominations for the award, and I think that this is a reflection of the residents of this village. There are so many kind and helpful people amongst us. I know it is a cliché, but there were genuinely several worthy candidates, and much discussion took place before a decision was made. I am going to read out part of the nomination received for this year's winner "*They do so much to support various groups in the village such as the school and playgroup, and also fundraise for various national charities through events at the Club. During the pandemic they also volunteered at vaccination centres. I hope that they will be considered as they do so much for others it would be nice for them to be recognised.*" Short and to the point. I know that these two people are heavily involved with this village in many other ways, always looking to help where possible. So, congratulations to Jan and Eddie Gregory, worthy winners of this year's award and much deserved.

The chairman took questions from the residents:

- A member of the public asked why the precept had been increased for the forthcoming year. The chair gave a full explanation on this.
- A member of the public asked why minutes of meeting didn't show financial updates on the Website. The Chair advised that financial updates were always recorded in the minutes. The Parish Clerk demonstrated to the resident examples of this on the website.
- A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for all their work during the year.
- A member of the public commented that they felt that the parish council precept was extremely good value for money for the work undertaken on behalf of residents.
- The Chair thanked all those present for attending and participating in the Annual Parish Meeting.

Meeting closed at 19.55pm