**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**THURSDAY 6th MAY 2021**

**MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

**2020/2021**

**Councillors**

Peter Rhodes – Chairman

Neil Hobbs– Vice-Chairman

David Griffith

Steve Ashton

Clare Cornmell

Peter Shervington

Carol Stevens

**Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer**

David Cornmell

**Foreword**

It gives me great pleasure to present my Annual Report, covering the work of East Cottingwith Parish Council during 2020/2021.

The past year has been dominated by the Coronavirus pandemic and the effect it has had on the country and the parish. Due to a national emergency having been declared, it has not been possible to hold physical meetings and instead we have had to call upon technology in order to conduct Council business. Remote meetings have been regularly held by Zoom video conferencing facilities, with members of the public and the press being able to take part, if they chose to do so. The pandemic meant that it was not possible to hold the customary Annual Parish Meeting in 2020.

**The Year’s Work**

**HAGG BRIDGE**

Plans to carry out repair work at the bridge were first announced by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in September 2019. The county council estimated the work would take six months to complete and that it would be necessary to close the road during this period. The parish council met with the Principal Highway’s Engineer to express concern about the proposed closure and the damaging effect it would have on businesses, the lives of our parishioners and those in neighbouring parishes. A strong case was made out for a temporary bridge, which was backed-up with the findings of a household survey and traffic survey, all to no avail. Instead, a diversionary route of some 14 miles was proposed. Despite the best efforts of the local MP, Ward Councillors and representatives of neighbouring parish councils, the county council refused to budge. Consequently, work on the bridge got underway in April 2020: the promised six-month road closure came and went, with various reasons being put forward for the delay. All in all, the road was closed for 12 months, traffic only being allowed over the bridge on 31st March.

**ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS**

Npower has been the supplier of electricity for the street lights and the power point for the defibrillator and Christmas tree lights for a number of years. Contractual arrangements with the company ceased on 31st December 2020. Better terms have been achieved by switching to different suppliers. A new agreement has been made with the county council to include the supply of electricity to the street lights, as well as routine servicing. Eon is the new contractor for the power point at the bus shelter. The change in suppliers will achieve considerable savings in the long term.

**FINANCE**

It is a legal requirement of the parish council to determine the local precept – the money required to meet parish expenditure and maintain a reserve. This levy is included in the annual council tax bill. Regrettably, it has been necessary to increase the precept to £8,800. The council has taken on extra responsibilities and has also been faced with other additional expenditure which has made this necessary.

The major items of expenditure continue to be the cost of grass-cutting, the Clerk’s salary and this year the cost of electricity. A donation has also been made to the Village Hall Committee to help with efforts to improve facilities at the hall.

New procedures were introduced in 2015 requiring the parish council to publish, on its website, details of all expenditure over £100 and other financial information. In addition, a more stringent internal audit regime came into effect at this time. The Council continues to embrace those procedures and is particularly grateful to a local parishioner who has freely given of his time, over a number of years, to carry out the annual audit of the Council’s accounts.

**PLANNING**

The Council was asked to comment upon 15 new planning applications during the course of the year.

Whilst the majority of these were supported, others gave cause for concern and resulted in an objection being lodged with East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Of those dealt with during the year or the previous year, the following are worthy of note:

**Cherry Tree Farm, Postern Lane – Erection of an agricultural building**

The application was subsequently withdrawn.

**Forest Farm, Langrickgate Lane – Conversion of former pigeon lofts to storage and workshop space**

The county council has yet to make a decision on this application.

**Wold View, Langrickgate Lane – Conversion of former garage to dormitory style holiday accommodation and change of use of land to dog walking area**

The county council has yet to make a decision on this application.

**Land North of Middleton Farm, Main Street – Erection of a dwelling**

The county council has yet to make a decision on this application.

**Conclusion**

All in all, another busy time for the parish council in dealing with ongoing issues affecting East Cottingwith and Storwood and its parishioners.

Once again, I would like to express my personal thanks for the loyalty and support shown to me by my fellow councillors and the Clerk during the past year.

Peter Rhodes

Chairman

6th May 2021