

KIRK SMEATON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 21/22

This year has brought many challenges both personally and professionally. It has been an honour to chair the Parish Council and to continue to support its work despite a period of ill health.

I have benefited greatly from the advice and support of the Clerk Kate Bowden and the Vice Chair Tony Lenc, I have also welcomed fresh ideas from three relatively new Councillors, James Stephenson, Carl Vitty and Barney Byfield.

As a young council I know we all look forward to supporting the village and addressing future opportunities and challenges as they arise.

I would like to now present some of the successes and challenges over the last year.

The Covid 19 pandemic impacted on us all but the work of the Parish Council continued through increased use of virtual meetings and social media. It was heartening to witness how neighbours supported neighbours on a multitude of issues across the village.

Endless hours were consumed on the objection to the Planning Application for the expansion of the Wentedge Quarry. Although the application was approved by North Yorkshire County Council it was by only one vote and quarrying has been delayed by over 3 years. I must thank a previous Councillor and resident of the village Martin Donlon for his endless support on this issue.

As a result of the application Brockadale Action Group was established and successfully raised over £1500 towards the ongoing protection of the Brockadale Reserve. So far monies have been used to fund the professional fees of a Landscape Architect and Ecologist as well as providing £500 towards the erection of a height barrier at the Reserve Car Park in an aid to prevent further industrial scale flytipping.

The relationships between Kirk Smeaton Parish Council, Little Smeaton Parish Council, Friends of Brockadale and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust have been strengthened, and further work on the preservation of the Reserve is to be undertaken following a multi organisational workshop .

The Parish Council has been involved with and funded many projects that have helped beautify the village including wildflower planting , planters on the village green, tree planting , increased number of hanging baskets and Christmas tree decorations across the village. Most recently , 3 stone planters have been built at the entrances to the village and filled with plants . These planters bring a colourful feature to Wentedge Road, Pinfold Lane and Water Lane.

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Increased attention has been given to both the cemetery and the allotments. A new fence in front of the allotments has been erected and extensive repair work has been achieved to many old gravestones that were causing a safety risk and looked unkempt. Further work is to be undertaken over the next year on a Garden of Remembrance and the Parish Council is extremely grateful to the grant given by Councillor John McCartney.

Working parties have helped with planting of flowers and maintenance of the village areas, the Parish Council are mindful to ensure monies are spent wisely and the grounds contracts are currently being reviewed.

Speeding has continued to be an issue across the village, despite a build out on Water Lane and the erection of a VAS on Water Lane and Wentedege Road. New signage is awaited on both Hodge Lane and Water Lane and the Parish Council are actively engaged in Community Speedwatch.

Despite active involvement with the Safer Streets project across the village, rural crime has continued. The village has reported both theft and attempted theft including a violent theft on Manor Close. The Parish Council continue to liaise closely with the Police and local enforcements agencies as well as encouraging village residents to be vigilant and report any issues. Flyers have been sent to every household raising the awareness of rural crime, numbers of agencies to contact and pointers on how to increase safety to homes and personal belongings.

Flytipping is a constant blight on the landscape and sadly we have had numerous dumps both small and on an industrial scale. The support we receive from Keith Armstrong, Emma Walton and the enforcement team at Selby has been exemplary. More is being done to explore use of cameras as well as potential barriers to some routes.

Dog Fouling causes concern to village residents and it does appear as the footfall across the village has increased during Covid this has brought its own issues. The Parish Council have been active in raising awareness of the problem by increasing signage around the village, liaising with the School, providing stencilled notices on all footpaths around the village and using social media and the village magazine.

Council members are actively involved in the Community Events team and there have been some highly enjoyable cross village events including the Summer Fete and Christmas Celebrations. We all look forward to the Platinum Jubilee event and another Summer Fete.

I would like to thank all my Parish Council colleagues for their constant support. So much work goes unnoticed. It is through their attention that we continue to live in such a beautiful place in the county of Yorkshire.

11 May 2022

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