

Winthorpe with Langford Parish Council

Chair's Report – 2022/23

It's been a very busy first year as Chair of the Parish Council and we continue to have many impacts on the Parish, both from within and affecting us from external activities.

I would first of all like to thank again Lee Cammack on behalf of the rest of the PC for his 7 years as Chair of the PC and many more as PC member. Lee stepped down at the last AGM as Chair and his experience and enthusiasm will be missed as he leaves the PC at the 2023 AGM.

We also said goodbye to Steve Lord who again has been a long-standing councillor and carried the load for carrying out minor works across the Parish, thanks again to Steve and we have definitely missed his abilities with a screwdriver and hammer! Following advertising the vacancy, we welcomed Abbie George to the PC who will bring a younger view to the table, Abbie is representative of the change happening in the parish at the moment where people are moving into existing properties in Winthorpe in particular.

Following a lot of searching we now also have a new Internal Auditor, Kyle Kena who has recently audited the 2022/23 accounts and has provided support for the PC during the year, thank you Kyle for all your support.

We joined NALC (National Association of Local Councils) during the year, and this has already helped the PC in several areas. They also provide a variety of training options for councillors which no doubt we will be using at some stage soon.

At the beginning of the 2022/23 year, we also joined the NCC 'Lengthman Scheme' which provides funding for minor maintenance activities around the Parish. We have documented a wide range of issues which need resolving and many of these have been reported by residents. The scheme will run for three years, and the aim is to correct the majority of the issues in this time frame.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now at long last in final draft form and will be submitted to all residents for comment in the form of a consultation from 5th June 2023. The consultation will last for 6 weeks and there will be a range of opportunities for residents to comment on the content. The Parish Plan has been in development for over three years now and has involved a lot of effort from working group members, focus groups and general input from residents during surveys, village meetings etc. The plan outlines the ideas for the parish to develop over the next 10 years and is an important document which will help us to maintain and improve the community values and feeling of Winthorpe and Langford.

During the process of developing the Neighbourhood Plan, the History Focus Group identified an idea for the creation of a 'Winthorpe Heritage Guide' which has proved very successful. Copies were printed and circulated to all properties in the parish and larger copies of the guide were made available in The Lord Nelson and Newark Tourist Information Office. Due to demand we have reprinted additional copies for residents and walkers using the area together with a batch delivered to Winthorpe Primary School.

We meet regularly with representatives of The Newark Showground and discuss areas of shared interest/concerns. Amongst other areas we have worked with them to reduce the impact of traffic entering the showground and although there are still issues on certain days, we have seen a distinct improvement.

Communication with National Highways and their contractors over the development of the A46 has continued throughout the year and it was good to see the adoption of many of the ideas put forward by 'Think Again' over routing etc of the road particularly around Winthorpe. Some members of the PC are also members of 'Think Again' and this has enabled us to discuss issues with one voice. As we move nearer to the construction phase of the project, the Parish Council will be working with other PC's and interested bodies in the area to ensure that the impact of the road changes are minimised as much as possible.

As we enter 2023/24 we now also have another vacancy on the PC following the resignation of Lee Cammack from the PC as a whole. We will be advertising the role over the next few weeks and hope to have a new Parish Council member in place during June.

We continue to enhance the existing Village Website but during the year we have considered options for a new website using all the existing information which is there at the moment but in a more up to date feel and meeting the requirements of a Parish Council Website. We also launched a Parish Twitter account at the beginning of the year which has proved popular and is growing in terms of followers. In addition to Twitter, we continue to use every communication media available to us to ensure that we speak to all residents.

We also welcomed Julie Hill as the new Editor of Focal Point at the end of the last financial year and I believe this has taken FP to a new level. The magazine is circulated to all properties and gives all groups and individuals the opportunity to communicate with all residents each month. Julie has also been successful in attracting more advertisers which has improved the income and therefore maintain the future of FP.

We have been working closely with various village groups over the year and in particular with The Village Hall. Through a change of venue for one group which has used the hall for many years this has now enabled the hall to get back to providing a meeting place for people in the community and this now appears to be bearing fruit.

The Neighbourhood Watch initiative has also had a 're boot' during the year and Mark Kneen has stepped in to cover the group. The group is now back in full swing and communication with local police officers and PCSO's is good with occasional meetings taking place through regular 'Safer Neighbourhood Group Meetings'

Finally, just to say a big thankyou to Sally our dedicated Parish Clerk and all Parish Council members. Everybody on the PC provides their time for free to support their community and without this level of commitment and involvement the Parish would be a much poorer place. The coming year will see the full adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan and I believe we can look to an exciting future for our community.

Paul Smith

Chair, Winthorpe with Langford Parish Council