

Chair's report for April 2023 meeting

Firstly, let me say what a pleasure it has been to chair this meeting for the year 2022-23. The councillors around this table, plus our clerk, Kay, have all contributed to make this task an easy, and an enjoyable one.

So, what have we achieved in the last year?

Maintenance

The play equipment on both Dobholes Lane and Stainsby Meadow has been regularly inspected and kept in safe working order.

Paths around the village have been kept clear of foliage and fences have been mended where necessary.

Trees have also been cut back and made safe where they have grown too large or been damaged by the wind.

Improvements

A gate has been installed at the entrance to Stainsby Meadow, finishing off the work undertaken to remember a popular resident of the village and erstwhile member of this council, Brian Leivers.

Improved signage at the recreation ground has also been installed and plans have begun to establish welcome to Smalley signs at the parish's outer limits.

Work has also been agreed to make improvements at parish cemetery in terms of shoring up a bank and potentially providing more space for ashes to be interred.

The council has engaged the services of many local contractors, suppliers, businesses and sole traders during the year in order to help keep Smalley looking its best and I'm sure this will continue in the years ahead.

Administration

In addition to these pieces of work, somewhere in the region of 20 - 30 Planning applications have been reviewed and a decision made on each as to whether a comment should be fed into the process from the parish council.

Projects

During the last year members of the parish council, along with residents, have set up and run Community Speedwatch, using police-approved equipment. These sessions have been an important example of community engagement where direct action has been taken in partnership with residents to make Smalley a better place to live.

Staying with road safety, this year was also notable for the securing of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner in order to purchase and install a Speed Indicator Sign on Dobholes Lane. Look out for its smiley face congratulating considerate drivers very soon.

During this last year, the Parish council has also worked closely with the Community Group to help get the Platinum Jubilee Garden established and we wish it every success. It will be a positive addition to the village and much appreciated by all who visit it over the years to come.

Council members

We have had one new Councillor join us - Amanda Paget - and it has been great to work alongside her and all the other, more established councillors during the year. Many thanks to the vice-Chair, Martin, for his excellent work throughout the year. There is a lot of skills and lots of experience shared amongst the councillors and they do a fine job acting on behalf of the community.

Finally, I would like to commend Kay, our clerk, for her unstinting enthusiasm for the task at hand, her exhaustive knowledge of procedure, and her patience while supporting me so ably during the year. Smalley Parish Council is very lucky to have her.

One down, many more to come! On with 2023-24.

John Saddington