**Normanton-on-the-Wolds Parish Council Chairman’s Report. April 2021.**

2020/21 has been unlike any other year since the Second World War for the Parish of Normanton-on-the-Wolds. Lockdown came in over a year ago now, and the Plough Inn closed - but during that time the Parish Council has held meetings via new technology using the Zoom system.

The work of the Parish Council has continued, and it was agreed between us that we would look again at the regime for cutting grass verges in the village. The entrances to the village need to be kept shorter for highway safety purposes, but in order to allow wildflowers in the verges to bloom we have reduced the number of times that it is cut. I think everyone will agree that the celandines look lovely at the moment. To everyone that has planted bulbs in the grass verge, thank you. The snowdrops in the village gave a wonderful display which have been followed on by daffodils and now bluebells. I should like to place on record my thanks to Peter James, who was engaged by the Parish Council to maintain the grass verges and clear the vegetation from the ditch at the entrance to the main village, which has allowed the flood water to drain more freely.

Litter continues to be a problem, and regular litter picks are held by the Parish Council members to help keep the village looking tidy. Most of the litter appears to be discarded fast food wrappers and drink containers, and I am grateful to everyone for their efforts in this direction. We have also asked Rushcliffe Borough Council to arrange a full litter pick along the A606 to remove some large items which are beyond the capability of parish councillors and volunteers.

Our footpaths throughout the village have been well-used by local people and visitors. They are correctly waymarked by the footpaths officer at the County Council, and show a direct line of the footpath. There are no obstacles to impede walkers, and when the stiles have been broken they have been replaced by the landowner. May I remind everyone that there is now a new countryside code, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-countryside-code-launched-to-help-people-enjoy-the-outdoors>. Footpaths are generally over private land on a defined route, and walkers are reminded to keep to [the] line of the footpath and keep their dogs either on the lead or in close control.

Over the past year, there have been several planning applications - some of which have caused concern regarding the removal of mature trees. Whilst it is acknowledged that planting programmes have been established to replace these trees, it is important that we keep the balance between mature trees and those newly planted. Planning applications have been diligently reviewed by all of the parish council members, and comments have been passed on to Rushcliffe Borough Council - the Parish Council are only consultees, and the decision on all local applications lies with Rushcliffe Borough Council.

We have been awarded funding through the County Council's Local Improvement Scheme for two planters - one to be erected on Clipston Lane, and a further planter for Normanton old village. Steps will be taken in the next twelve months to establish these, and hopefully volunteers will come forward to maintain them.

We have commemorated VE day 75 years ago by placing at each entrance to the village large, red poppies. Flags and bunting were put up throughout the village by residents to celebrate this occasion. Again, the poppies were in situ for Remembrance Sunday. Thank you to the Royal British Legion for the additional poppies which they put up, and thank you also to a local resident who planted and maintained the container sited on the grass verge near the Plough Inn. A poppy wreath was also laid at the war memorial at St Mary's, Plumtree, on behalf of the Parish Council, but sadly there was no service due to lockdown.

All members are looking forward to having face-to-face meetings again when we are able. We have made a contribution to the running cost of the Burnside Hall where parish council meetings are held, as this is a charity which relies upon its income to maintain the hall and the excellent standard which it is.

Recently, Nottinghamshire County Council advertised a new speed limit from the A606 to the 40MPH sign on Cotgrave Road. The intention is to make the speed limit between these two points 50MPH instead of the current national limit. It remains to be ratified by the County Council before it becomes the limit.

Thank you also to our neighbouring parish of Plumtree, who organised the broadband voucher scheme for residents and businesses to draw down for full fibre broadband to each home who requested it. This is a nationwide scheme, which is administered by the County Council. We all look forward to full-fibre broadband in the coming year.

I should like to place on record my personal thanks to all of my colleagues on the Parish Council, who are unpaid volunteers, to the Clerk for keeping the accounts and the business of the Council in good order, and Rushcliffe Borough Councillor Debbie Mason and Nottinghamshire County Councillor Richard Butler for attending our Parish Council meetings.

Kay Cutts.

Chairman.