

CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Parish Council have continued to be busy over the last year, maintaining and improving the village assets.

The damaged stone on the Village Lock Up has been replaced and the War Memorial has been cleaned and re-lettered.

Replacement litterbins are still being installed in the playing field and the tree maintenance has continued. This year a 1m band of ivy has been removed from all the trees and the saplings cut back from the boundaries. The overhead rotator piece of equipment has had a total overhaul and been re-installed in the play area and all the benches and seats have been cleaned ready for this coming year. The Playing Field is to be used this year for the Village Fayre on 6th July.

Also around the village the telephone kiosk has now got a new life as a lending library. We purchased the new windows and the volunteers installed them and kitted out the kiosk with the shelving.

Grants of £300 were given to Digby Primary School for improvements and £200 to the Parochial Church Council to help keep the grass cut in the Churchyard

We had to replace the battery in the Defibrillator at £225.00 this year and the pads. We organised a training session at the Village Hall coffee morning on the 6th April.

The lighting of the footpaths within the Village Hall grounds is finally working properly. It involved removing all the existing system and installing a completely new system. We received a £1000.00 grant from LCC to help get this projected completed.

Over hanging hedges, trees and shrubs have caused some problems throughout the year and has meant gentle reminders have been sent out to ask for them to be cut back, but in general everyone has acted promptly. We have just had the encroaching ivy cut back from near the entrance to the footpath that runs from Church Street along the side of the Church to the School. It was rapidly spreading into the neighbour's property and growing out onto the footpath. LCC were not prepared to cut it so the parish council agreed to get it removed as a visual improvement for the village and help prevent the neighbour's land being overrun.

We are still requesting NKDC take over the Open Space at Chestnut Close. We are further along the process now and hopefully we will have a positive result this year.

Plans for this coming year include repainting the play equipment and the green metal bus shelter, this work will commence in May.

There are some issues that we have no control over and Highways has been the biggest problem, with huge potholes and subsidence occurring throughout the year, we have spent a lot of time chasing for the repairs to be completed and we know this will be an ongoing situation. We are still reporting the terrible condition of Fen Road and hopefully work will be carried out here. We also approached Highways after the last Annual Parish Meeting

about the damage to The Cross, but they report they cannot offer any additional protection to it.

Another issue we have no final control over is planning. This year there have been 6 new applications which include extensions. 10 amendments and variations on already approved applications, 2 changes to reserved matters and 10 approvals. We are constantly frustrated that our comments carry very little or no weight in the final decisions of NKDC planning, but we continue to submit them.

All this work needs to be organised and the councillors need to keep upto date with all the changes that keep taking place. The New General Data Protection Regulations came into force at the beginning of last year and created a lot of work, also a new audit system was introduced by the Government, at around the same time. This created a lot of additional administrative work for the council and the councillors and Clerk attended many training courses. Also one of our councillors completed the play equipment routine inspection course, so we now have two qualified inspectors.

We have had two councillors resign towards the end of this financial year due to work and family commitments and we now know there will be no election for Digby parish council due to only 5 people completing their nomination papers. We will be co-opting 2 additional councillors from May if anyone is interested.