

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council

Chair's Annual Report 2023-2024

I would like to thank our clerk for arranging and managing our council meetings and for keeping our finances in excellent order again this year, as well as giving the whole Parish Council his excellent guidance and support regarding procedures and standing orders. It has been another extremely busy year and our clerk has had to deal with many additional tasks for us, including arranging two public meetings last year, the meeting tonight, plus onsite meetings with DCC councillors and other officials while we continue to pursue a solution for Leashaw.

I wish to thank all our councillors for their hard work over the past year and list below just a few of the tasks they have undertaken, always as volunteers.

- Helping to care for the Parish Council's assets, which include the cemetery, the memorial grounds, the playground and the public toilets. We have a contractor to mow and strim the cemetery and playground, but our councillors have carried out tree works, safety audits and added to plantings throughout the year.
- The Speedwatch team has been very active and, based on the number of cars they have found to be speeding, the Parish Council is funding a Speed Indicator Device which will be appearing in the Parish soon. It can be placed in two locations: outside the playground in Lea or beside Nightingale Close. The Speedwatch team will still be out and to continue monitoring the speeds of cars in various "hot spots" in the Parish.
- One of the bus shelters on Church Street had fallen into serious disrepair and, after communicating with Derbyshire County Council, it was removed. We have paid for a bench to be placed at this lovely spot so that we can all enjoy the vista from it. Another shelter on Church Street will also need to be removed and we plan to put seating there too.
- 100 Kg of daffodils were planted along Long Lane last Autumn by a group of enthusiastic councillors and their spouses, with help from a resident using his digger. The bulbs were kindly donated by a resident and I'm sure that we will all enjoy them when they flower in the Spring.

I wish to especially thank our retired councillor, Councillor Barbara Wright, for her long and dedicated service to our Council. Cllr Wright retired at the end of 2023 and we will miss her excellent contributions in decision making and vast knowledge of the Parish.

I am pleased that, even though we are a small council, we have been able to budget for some large amounts of expenditure to enable us to continue to enhance and improve the facilities and amenities in the Parish.

- As already mentioned, we are funding, with some grant input, our first Speed Indicator Device to reduce the amount of speeding in a key part of the Parish.
- An additional defibrillator will be appearing on the old telephone box in Lea very soon. This is to add to the one on the wall outside the Florence Nightingale Memorial Hall. We feel it is important that these vital pieces of equipment are available close to as many residents as possible to save time in any emergency. For information, defibrillators are also located at Lea Green, Lea School and near to the High Peak Junction Visitor Centre.
- We are delighted to let you know that the Parish Council is paying for three pieces of outdoor gym equipment for our playground. These will be arriving and installed in March, when hopefully the weather conditions have improved.

- As part of the cemetery, we maintain the receiving house. Unfortunately, the roof has started to leak very badly and so this is being repaired for us by a local builder.
- We are continuing to buy seating for the Parish and a new bench will be installed early this year at the end of Nightingale Close.
- We have pledged an amount of money to help the team of people who are working to keep the village shop and post office open.
- In addition to the special projects I have mentioned, the Parish Council is financially responsible for the insurance and maintenance of all our assets.

We all know that parking in and around the Parish is an issue in many places and the Parish Council does pursue this with the relevant organisations.

When Lea Road eventually reopened in December 2022, many visitors (and some residents), continued to park along the blind bend near the entrance to the High Peak Junction Car Park entrance, as had been the practice during Covid lockdowns and the road closure. The car park was left virtually empty. The Parish Council liaised very quickly with both Derbyshire County Council and the police to come up with a solution to the problem, which they agreed was “dangerous parking” because of the amount of traffic on the road and the complete lack of visibility around the bend. We sent photographic evidence of dangerous situations to DCC and the police and DCC therefore agreed to make this stretch of road a “no parking at any time” zone. The police said that they would monitor the situation on a regular basis and hand out notices to those parked there. The process to put parking restrictions in place is extremely long but DCC finally started the 3-week consultation on 8th February, the last part of the process, and we are hopeful that this situation will soon be resolved.

In addition to asking for parking to be prevented, we asked that the parking charges be reduced in the High Peak Junction car park, as they are rather expensive, and even had an onsite meeting with the responsible officer from DCC. This request was refused on the grounds that the income from the car park helped to support the Visitor Centre at High Peak Junction.

A large amount of our time and energy this year has been spent in pursuing the repair and restoration of Leashaw. We have liaised tirelessly with Derbyshire County Council, including our elected councillors; initially with Severn Trent until they pulled out of the project and our local MP, Ms Sarah Dines. The continuing delays, which have resulted in the road being closed for 15 months, have had a huge negative impact on the businesses and residents close to the landslide. This situation has been incredibly frustrating when we were promised various dates that it would reopen in 2023, at least in part. We have invited key people from these organisations, plus councillors from Crich who are also badly affected by the closure, to attend tonight to enable our residents to hear the latest update on the work’s progress and to be able to ask questions. Our MP was invited but is unable to attend.

I wish also to personally thank our vice chair, Cllr Joy Stevenson, who so capably and efficiently chaired some of our meetings when I was unable to attend in the past year.

Pat Ward,

Chair, Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council, March 2024