

Dethick, Lea and Holloway Parish Council Chair's Annual Report for 2024 – 2025

We have come to the end of another busy and, at times, challenging year. Issues brought to the council often generate extra work for the Clerk, Working Groups and individual Councillors in order to reach a hopefully satisfactory conclusion. For this I thank you all.

We go forward into a new year with our finances in a strong position, kept in good order by our Clerk, who also makes sure all Council work is in line with our policies and procedures. He is a reliable source of advice when needed and a much valued member of our team.

A year ago our Chair, Councillor Pat Ward, reported with great pride on the accomplishments of the Council in the years 2023 to 2024 and promised more to come in the months ahead. Sadly, her passing in August last year meant that she was unable to see all of them to fruition. I am pleased to say that the tasks have all been completed and more are in the pipeline for the coming year.

Due to the hard work of Councillors, our telephone box now stands resplendent in a new coat of paint, with its new defibrillator and shelving for the book exchange. The post box was also treated to a facelift.

A new bench has been installed at Lea Bridge, at the corner of Nightingale Close and Lea Road, for the enjoyment of the locals and any passing walkers.

In Lea, a new maintenance access gate to the Recreation Ground has been installed and pavers have been laid to improve access to the play area. A tree, purchased with donations from Councillors, has also been planted in the Recreation Ground, in memory of Pat.

You will have also noticed the addition of two new benches on Long Lane and another in the Memorial Grounds, which have been provided and installed by a family with historic Holloway connections.

Other projects have also reached completion - The Speed Indicator Device has been located in Lea, whilst the Speedwatch group will continue to monitor traffic around the parish. The new outdoor gym equipment has been installed in the Recreation Ground and is proving to be very popular.

At Lea Bridge, Derbyshire County Council finally painted the double yellow line system to remove the dangerous parking problem.

There are also important ongoing tasks around the Parish which we are responsible for. The play area is kept tidy and checked weekly to keep our children safe. The book exchange is regularly managed to keep it clean and keep the books in order. The defibrillators are also checked regularly. General maintenance of the cemetery, Memorial Grounds and planted areas is also undertaken. A big thank you to everyone involved.

The Leashaw Landslip continues to badly affect our community. The Parish Council have been determined to keep up the pressure on Derbyshire County Council and other significant individuals in order to keep the matter current and aim for a satisfactory resolution.

In February, time was set aside ahead of a shortened Parish Council Meeting, in order for DCC representatives to provide the latest update and answer questions from the community. They were left in no doubt about the frustration and strength of feeling. We have been assured that DCC are committed to the repair of Leashaw and that funding is expected to come from the mayoral funds

of the East Midlands Combined County Authority, instead of the Highways budget. They promised that the final deliverable design and overall project plan would be shared once honed by the pre-construction contractors. We have pressed for a timeline for this but so far have not received a useful version. However, efforts are being made to start the work this year with different options being considered to make this possible. Hopefully the changes following the recent elections will not affect the project being carried forward.

As we start a new year, more plans for work around the Parish are in place. Through the winter our green at the junction of Church Street and Mill Lane has suffered badly with damage caused by large vehicles driving onto the grass and damaging the kerbstones. This has been made worse recently by DCC's new signage directing lorries along Church Street to avoid the low bridge at Smedley's Mill, something which has not been a problem in the past. We are planning to install substantial but not unsightly, wooden bollards in three groups around the edges of the grass as a deterrent. The cemetery gates are also to be refurbished in the near future and we are aware that the play area see-saw needs a new coat of paint.

Residents have also requested a replacement bus shelter outside Mill House on Church St. This has been discussed with DCC and we are currently awaiting an exploratory dig of the site to determine the viability of the proposal.

We have recently welcomed a new Councillor, Damon Yapp but will also be losing Andrea McDonald, who has served on the Council for the past six years. Thank you for all your hard work Andrea, and to all the remaining Councillors who give freely of their time and effort.

As Councillors, we are committed to improving life in our community and will continue to meet any challenges which come our way.

Joy Stevenson, Chair Dethick Lea and Holloway Parish Council.