

Cotesbach Parish Council

Chairman's report

May 2022

Many thanks for the Councillor's and Parishioners support over the past 12 months. It has been a relatively quiet few months for the Parish Council. Councillor's and residents have been busy adjusting to coming out of the pandemic, whether it's how they do their day job, manage home improvements or even move home. It has continued to be a relatively uncertain period, so I continue to appreciate everyone's time and commitment. We welcomed Raj Philippardos as a new Councillor, and thanks as always go to Pat Nunn for keeping us organised and well governed.

The Parish Council's funds remain stable (see report on annual accounts for more detail) showing how the current precept rate is sufficient (excluding any allowance for inflation). For reference, we reserve only about 5% of the annual precept for ongoing maintenance of village assets (defibrillator, pond etc) and the remaining is spent on Clerk costs, insurance and other mandatory expense items.

There have been at least 2 major planning considerations this year:

- 1) The potential for tarmac to build a new industrial / office site on the existing quarry works when it has reached its end of life in c. 10 years.
- 2) The creation of a new quarry south of Misterton.

Both could impact Cotesbach, in particular the new industrial site. This site is currently at "concept" stage, as part of Tarmac's submission to Harborough District's plans for development in the area (a lengthy, publicly consulted process part of the Local Plan revision). Little can be done until the draft plan is publicly consulted on. The new quarry is reported not to use the existing quarry or tile works, but we need to observe closely and support Misterton and Walcote where possible.

Approved major planning developments have progressed, with the construction of the solar farm underway but not yet complete, and Magna Park South nearly at completion. We continue to liaise with these developers. Before the solar park is completed we will have a strategy to manage the agreed £20,000 community funds. Magna Park continue to advise that Gibbet Roundabout will not be modified until early 2030s.

Shawell Parish worked hard to submit an objection to extension of the Tile Works operations. We supported a small amount in comparison to Shawell's contributions, and Leicestershire County Council did refuse the application. The recycling plant on the site is operational at its current capacity. This doesn't appear to be causing any issues to date, but we aren't yet clear what their operations involve (i.e. whether they are using landfill material, as was the sites intent).

The landfill appears to have finished working on the area closest to the village, and smells may have improved this calendar year as a consequence but we can't be sure. Quarrying in the area adjacent to the lane from the Garden Barn to West Cottages has now been completed, with some backfill completed but it seems to have stopped in recent months. We await quarrying to start in the area parallel to the A426.

Eight Parishes supported a complete refurbishment of the village sign, and with help from a previous Cotesbach villager Brian Burgoine, we made use of local workmanship including Olly Boyett the local Blacksmith. We continue to have funds available for other assets in the village that residents will make use of.

We had one councillor move out of the village, so we continue to look for new Councillors so that we ensure we are quorate in case a councillor can't attend a meeting. We also need to ensure there are replacement councillors if others decide to leave their post.

We hope a focus for this coming year to be starting a Neighborhood Plan, that will enable us to have more powers over specific issues and developments in and around the neighbourhood. We are looking to work closely with Shawell to do this as we likely have a mutual interest to minimise development at the quarry site, and maximise its restoration.