

Cotesbach Parish Council

Chairman's report

Edmund Hunt, May 2026

Thanks to all the Councillors for their ongoing support and contributions to the council. Particular thanks to our Clerk, Pat Nunn. Thanks also to those residents who engaged and helped with council duties.

Roles and responsibilities for the Councillors over the past 12 months remained relatively unchanged from the previous year:

- Chairman - Ed Hunt
- Vice Chairman - Gavin Bennett
- Village Hall representative - Ed Hunt
- Magna Park Liaison - Margaret Wild
- 8 Parishes CIC - Ed Hunt
- Highways and Police - Rob Morris
- Planning - Ed Hunt / Gavin Bennett / Annie Newton
- Pond / Environment - Gavin Bennett

Main areas of Parish Council activity during 2025

Crime, Community Safety and Police Liaison

It was fortunate that Cotesbach didn't experience the same number of crime incidents in 2025 than in 2024. Nevertheless, the council maintained contact with the local policing team to remain prepared.

Highways and traffic concerns

Speeding and road safety remain a concern for the council, for for residents. The A426 in particular is of concern, with the risk of high speed traffic being an issue for pedestrians crossing. There have been a number of road traffic incidents on the A426 over the year, although the authorities continue to state the incidents are not frequent enough to merit speed limits being enforced.

Environment, Pond and Village Maintenance

Funding for new benches was secured from the last round of the Magna Park community fund. These replaced old benches around the pond, and were installed early Spring 2026. The pond has matured in recent years and does require ongoing maintenance to be a place for people to see and experience. April 2026 saw a breeding pair of moorhens with chicks.

The Eight Parishes CIC fund for Cotesbach provided £5,700 (including VAT) for a new, metal village noticeboard to replace the existing wooden, broken board. This new board remains to be installed due to complexities related to its unexpected size. A resolution by end of Summer 2026 should be found.

Shawell Quarry and Liaison Meetings

Restoration of the area nearest Cotesbach, where quarrying finished a number of years ago, is still ongoing with some soil mounds still to be moved and large pond areas completed.

The landfill is progressing closer to Cotesbach although smells have not been a major issue in the past 12 months based on resident feedback.

The most important update is the preparation of a major planning application by Tarmac to create an industrial site on the existing quarrying works, with proposals for energy facilities, a solar farm, waste water treatment and other activities. Tarmac are presenting this as a sustainable development but it's clear that restoration of quarrying sites and the landfill, or any benefit for nearby residents is a low priority. The council will continue to engage with Tarmac, Cotesbach residents, Shawell, and other stakeholders as this develops.

Magna Park

Development at Magna Park continues, mostly at Magna Park North. The owners, GLP, continue to put pressure on Highways England to make improvements to the Gibbet Roundabout although no actions are yet being taken.

A visit to Magna Park South was carried out to see the level of screening of warehousing from Cotesbach. The conclusion was that landscaping does exist, albeit not in high densities or maturity. GLP were clear that they are no longer duty bound to invest further in screening / landscaping.

The Council will continue to maintain presence with the owner / operators through the liaison group.

Planning Applications and Enforcement Issues

Aside from the upcoming expected Tarmac industrial site application, planning proposals in Cotesbach were limited. There were concerns regarding around Orchard Farm related to the farm site obtaining approval for alternative uses (workshops / cafes / small industrial units), and a wellness / camping site. The Council will continue to monitor these proposals.

Village Hall

The Village Hall did submit a request for Eight Parishes funding for solar panels on the Hall. The council didn't agree to the proposal for the full requested amount, indicating potential for a smaller contribution. The Village Hall has since secured funding through Harborough District Community Fund.

Governance and Finance

The Council has continued to operate within its financial and governance responsibilities, ensuring transparency and prudent management of parish finances. The Precept was increased by the typical inflationary levels to ensure ongoing budget management.

The £30,000 fund from the nearby Northfield Solar Farm was approved to be rolled into the "Cotesbach Solar Fund", with Cotesbach organisations (e.g. the parish council, church and village hall) able to apply for funds. Guidance and principles of the fund were agreed by the council.

A new website has also been produced as the previous one was held on a resident's local server. There is little change in the website design and function, just a new website address: <https://cotesbachparishcouncil.org/>

Once again, many thanks for Cllrs spending their time on Parish Council matters over the past 12 months and hope they can contribute for a further 12 months.