

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 8TH MAY 2008**

In this brief report it is not possible to do full justice to all the achievements and activities of the Parish Council in what has been, again, another very busy year.

I hope, at least, to give you an overview and pick out some of the highlights.

If I may start, then, with pointing out some of the more visible changes in and around the parish.

Now in its eighth year, the Millennium Wood on the Spalding road is maturing nicely. However, it seemed that not many were aware of it. So, there is now a traditional style sign-post pointing to it, hopefully encouraging more people to benefit from the peace and tranquillity it offers.

Changes have taken place at 'Woody Heights' ....home of the Skate Park. We had requests from skate-board users for more challenging equipment. By bidding for, and securing Big Lottery Fund monies, we have been able to meet their requests. We knew that from an earlier consultation with local youth, a Youth Shelter was high on their wish list. By successfully applying for funding from LCC and SKDC, we have been able to install a Youth Shelter for them. Its distinctive artwork came courtesy of a mural artist working with some of our young people on the opening day, and our thanks to the United Charities for sponsoring this event.

On Thackers Way, the first phase CCTV has been installed, and the long awaited goal posts....suggested by the police in an attempt to rechannel youthful energies...have been erected.

A staggered barrier has been put up at the end of the footpath that runs between Millfield road and Spalding road in order to deter short-cutting motor-cyclists.

In the cemetery, the Community Service team have continued with their excellent work from last year, amongst other things they have continued removing vegetation, renovated the gravel paths, and painted all the galvanised railings black. Many people have commented on how much better the cemetery looks. All the monuments have been checked for safety, and some repairs have been carried out.

You may know that responsibility for maintaining the river banks rests with the Environment Agency. You may also recall that last year the grass on the river banks either side of the bridge had grown knee-high before it was cut. Clearly, that's not acceptable in what should be a picturesque setting.

This year, therefore, we have hired a local contractor to cut the grass on the top of the banks on a regular basis.....in addition to whatever the Environment Agency manages.

Onto other, less tangible areas in which the Parish Council has been active. We have not lost sight of the need to press for improvements to The Leisure Centre, and continue to have discussions with management representatives who attend the Council meetings with their report.

Also, a lot of time has been spent considering how to get the best use out of the facilities offered by the Deepings Recycling Centre. Eventually, in October we began a trial of providing a Saturday skip at the site to enable DSJ residents to dispose of landfill material. Of course, at the same time we hoped that would in turn lead to more recycling, and cut out fly-tipping. This trial, I'm pleased to say, has been very successful, and we have decided to continue to fund the service for another year.

From the Transport committee, I would like to mention two initiatives. Firstly, for junior cyclists we arranged for the distribution at local schools of reflective safety bracelets...slap-wraps. and for our PCSO to distribute these at the bike wise training sessions. Also, in partnership with the road safety charity called BRAKE we organised a training session for local community leaders aimed at reducing the dreadfully high crash rate amongst young motorists. A Greener Driving leaflet was distributed to every household.

This year, as every year, we have attempted to keep the community we serve informed and involved in the council's activities. All of our council meetings begin with an Open Forum, and we publish a quarterly newsletter of a high standard. We get regular feedback, and a monthly report from our PCSO. We have a voice on the DMP, and this year have had liaison meetings with MD councillors, Deepings School staff and other community representatives to co-ordinate youth provision. As always, we have councillors serving on many local groups, and through our grant aid scheme have been able to financially support a number of community groups.

Just looking forward to the coming year, we have three major projects planned. The Manor Court landscaping project. The Cycle path between Frognall and the Deepings School, and a Multi-Activity Sports area and play equipment for younger children. All of these are subject to securing the necessary funding.

None of all of that could happen without the elected volunteers who make up the council. The year began with the co-option of five new councillors, Ashley Baxter, John Broughton, Pauline Neal, Kim Parr and Janine Walsham. All of them have engaged positively in all of our meetings, and so a big thank you to them and to all our councillors for their continued hard work, and commitment to the welfare of Deeping St James.

And finally, three more names.

Chris Clark has continued as our PCSO, and makes a valuable contribution to our community.

Maurice Thorpe, our Maintenance Worker, now has a new work schedule, mainly to help give you a cleaner and tidier environment.

And the person who is not just the public face of the council, but also our co-ordinator, organiser. minutes secretary, but mostly our prime motivator.....our indispensable clerk., Sheila Kostyrka

Jim Blessett

Chairman, Deeping St James Parish Council