

## HATHERSAGE PARISH COUNCIL 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

### Introduction

2021 saw some return to normality, for the whole community, with the gradual easing of Covid restrictions. In-person Parish Council meetings resumed from May 2021. Legislation allowing all levels of local government to meet virtually (online) expired in May 2021; there is some facility for sub-committees to meet virtually.

This report summarises the key issues dealt with by the Parish Council and its various committees from May 2021 to April 2022. Details of all meetings - including agendas and minutes – are published on the Parish Council website ([www.hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk))

The Parish Council continued with the same arrangement of committees; some meet on a regular basis and others are convened as business requires. We post news and updates on the Parish Council Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hathersageparishcouncil/>

There have been no changes to Parish Council membership since May 2021. Chaired by Councillor Jane Marsden, the Parish Council is at its full complement of fourteen Councillors - current membership is: Martin Bloor, Emily Booth, Sara Furness, Bill Hanley, Bridget Hanley, Tim Hill, Jane Marsden, James Marsden, Rosie Olle, Peter Rowland, Heather Rodgers, James Shuttleworth, Stuart Turner and Nick Williams. All Councillors are thanked for their hard work and unselfish commitment to the community of Hathersage.

Full Parish Council Meetings are regularly attended by Derbyshire Dales District (DDDC) Councillor Peter O'Brien and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Councillor Alasdair Sutton. Both Councillors also regularly support the Parish Council with making representations on our behalf at District and County level.

As well as the committee structure that supports the Parish Council to work efficiently there is regular, committed support from many residents of the village. Residents' support is invaluable and helps many initiatives progress to completion - the Parish Council is very grateful for this support and sincerely thanks all those who help in any capacity.

### Typical business dealt with by the Parish Council in 2021-22

**The Swimming Pool:** following periods of closure in line with lockdown measures - and reduced operating capacity in line with Covid social distancing measures - the pool is now fully operational again. Further improvements have been made including a new, recently-laid fully accessible path. New poolside furniture is on order and further improvements are planned to the showers and changing areas. In a timely move, given rising energy prices and climate change reports, the Parish Council has signed a contract to undertake the first steps in implementing a carbon neutral heating system for the pool - the first stage being exploratory - assessing current energy need and use; out of this assessment the Parish Council hopes to have some firm proposals to consider in terms of actions/next steps.

## New equipment for the playing field and playground, January 2021



Some of you may have noted the new equipment in the toddler area – a train and carriage; tower, bridge and slide unit; two new ‘springers’; and a piece of equipment for adults – a stationary exercise bike. More adult exercise equipment is on order and should be installed by the end of the summer. Huge thanks to the (Friends of) Hathersage Playing Field Association for all their support.

## Celebrating the easing of Covid measures

With funding from the government **Welcome Back Fund (WBF)** the Parish Council facilitated an open-air cinema event, on the playing field, in September 2021. Many residents attended ‘The Greatest Showman’ and feedback was very positive with attendees asking if the Parish Council would host an open-air film showing again. A further WBF event was held in September with a performance by popular local band Millstone Grit on the pool bandstand; the band kindly donated their fee to help fund new equipment for the playing field.



**11 September 2021, King George’s Field**



**24 September 2021, Hathersage Pool**

A further **WBF** initiative was provision, by Derbyshire Dales District Council, of planters at the Heart of Hathersage. Installed from June 2021 until the autumn, and tended by Councillors and the Parish Council Caretaker, the planters provided a colourful display, much appreciated by residents and visitors, and also helped encourage social distancing measures in place at the time.

### **Donations**

Since May 2021 the Parish Council has made a number of community donations including £500.00 to Hathersage Lunch Centre and £950.00 towards the upkeep of the churchyard.

### **Full Council Meetings and the work of the committees**

Full Council meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm at St Michael's School, School Lane. The main committees generally meet at Hathersage Memorial Hall (Stanage Hall). The Swimming Pool Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month (7pm start); the joint Recreation and Amenities Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month (7.30pm); the Transport Committee meets, bimonthly, on the fourth Tuesday of the month (7.30pm). Meetings of the Planning Committee are convened as necessary when there are planning applications to consider. It is always best to check the Parish Council website, or the village noticeboards, for meeting details. Ten minutes are allocated at the beginning of every meeting for public participation where attendees can raise relevant matters. The Parish Council cannot comment on any matters not on the agenda but comments from the public can be noted – and items can be put forward for the agenda at the next, or a forthcoming, meeting.

### **The Swimming Pool Committee**

Chaired by Cllr Stuart Turner, other members are Cllrs Bill Hanley, Bridget Hanley, Tim Hill, Jane Marsden, Rosie Olle and Heather Rodgers. Pool Management team and the Parish Council's Responsible Finance Officer also attend. The Swimming Pool Committee (SPC) oversees pool operations and takes an overview of the long-term management and development of this well loved and well used village facility. Through the Covid pandemic the pool was shut entirely during lockdowns and, in periods of social distancing, user numbers were restricted. The pool is now fully open and fully operational, and the most recent improvement has been the construction of an accessible path from the non-stepped entrance/exit gate and the pool side. There was consideration through 2021-22 about the possibility of constituting a separate charity to manage the pool. In large part, discussion was informed by financial considerations. For the time being the Parish Council has agreed to keep things as they are with the Parish Council continuing to be directly responsible for the governance and overall management of the pool. To keep the pool working well requires ongoing maintenance and renewal and, sometimes, significant improvements (such as the recent works to upgrade the filtration system). One of the next significant projects worth mentioning is the aim to reduce the pool's environmental impact. To explore this further we have engaged consultants to provide options for a zero-carbon heating system. This initiative, and others, will form part of Parish Council's next five-year Hathersage Swimming Pool business plan (2022 - 2027).

The winter of 2021/22 has been the first cold season that we have had the heated pool open throughout - demonstrating that we can keep the pool open throughout the year, in years to come. We are extremely grateful to the staff team for all they do – whatever the weather - to make the pool such a success.

### **The Amenities and Recreation Committees**

Joint meetings of these two committees have been held since spring 2020. Chaired by Cllr Jane Marsden other members are Cllrs Emily Abbey, Sara Furness, Bridget Hanley, Tim Hill, James Marsden, Rosie Olle, Peter Rowland and Heather Rodgers. Hathersage Playing Field Association (HPFA) members also attend; Cllrs and HPFA members work together to plan and fundraise for new playing field equipment. Between these two committees, a broad swathe of business is covered.

**The Recreation Committee** focuses on the playing field, playground and MUGA (multi-use games area). In the last year residents will have seen new equipment installed in the toddler play area, at the playing field. Also installed is a piece of adult exercise equipment with further pieces on order – they should be installed by the end of the summer. Hopefully many residents will take the opportunity to ‘have a go’. The Parish Council is very grateful to HPFA members for all their support. The MUGA (next to the pool) gets great use both from regular groups – netball, football (and walking football), kettlebells – as well as individuals who come to play tennis or basketball.

**The Amenities Committee** oversees the Heart of Hathersage (HoH) - including use of the public area outside HoH for events e.g. Christmas events; Remembrance Day gatherings. The HoH toilets are also the remit of the Amenities Committee. The toilets get heavy use and there are ongoing operational issues; all donations towards the costs of maintaining the toilets (there is a donations box directly outside) are gratefully received. Other items considered by the Amenities Committee in 2021-22 were:

- provision of cycle parking at HoH - a cycle stand is on order;
- provision of a drinking tap at HoH – options are being researched.
- reports from the Parish Council Footpaths Officers – thanks to Alan Kydd and John Wooddisse
- oversight of lease renewals on land owned by the Parish Council

### **Transport Committee**

Chaired by Cllr Rosie Olle other members are Cllrs Martin Bloor, Bill Hanley, Tim Hill, Jane Marsden, Peter Rowland, Heather Rodgers, James Shuttleworth and Nick Williams.

**Cllr Rosie Olle, Transport Committee Chair – summary of business considered in 2021-22:**

#### **1. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)**

The Parish Council agreed there were a number of areas in the village where a review of the parking restrictions currently in operation (‘yellow lines’) was required. The Transport Committee consulted with residents in those areas identified and information was shared with Derbyshire County Council (DCC), to progress the TRO. Unfortunately, due to limited resources and the impact of Covid 19, DCC has not yet been able to progress the TRO so it has not yet been put out to public consultation, which is the next part of the formal process. It is hoped this will be progressed later in 2022.

## 2. **Parking**

Residents will recall that HPC undertook a transport survey in the spring of 2021, and we would like to thank all of you who responded to this survey. As expected, the response highlighted a number of parking problems in Hathersage, both for residents and visitors. It is recognised that, as a result of foreign travel restrictions over the last two years, travel to the Peak District had increased significantly which led to an increase in parking problems. Also, there has been a reluctance to use public transport, due to Covid restrictions, which has added to the problem. The Transport Committee has been exploring the possibilities of providing additional visitor parking - and funding options - and is also investigating what opportunities there may be for a residents' parking scheme. There is a continuing dialogue with DCC around these issues. At the request of the Transport Committee parking charges at the railway station have been discontinued, which allows residents who commute to work by train to park at the station without incurring additional costs to their journeys.

## 3. **Public transport**

There has been a notable decline in the use of public transport over the last two years due to the pandemic however it is hoped this decline can be reversed and use of public transport will increase. The introduction of a new bus service (257), an hourly service between Bakewell and Sheffield, via Hathersage, is to be welcomed. Also, new air-conditioned comfortable rolling stock has been introduced on the railway replacing the old 'pacer' trains which were far from desirable!

## 4. **Cycling**

Cycle parking facilities are going to be provided in the Heart for Hathersage and at the swimming pool.

## 5. **Climate Action**

The Parish Council welcomes the positive work being undertaken by the Hope Valley Climate Action Group (HVCA) in relation to transport and will continue to foster a working relationship with HVCA.

## **The Planning Committee**

Chaired by Cllr Jane Marsden other members are Cllrs Martin Bloor, Tim Hill, James Marsden, Heather Rodgers, James Shuttleworth and Nick Williams.

The majority of applications have been small-scale alterations to existing residential properties in the village which have little impact on the village as a whole and the Planning Committee have rarely had cause to object. In considering a planning application Cllrs look at whether it is fitting to its setting and whether there are any issues which might influence the village. Cllrs may not be aware of specific reasons why neighbours or others may object to any individual application. Anybody objecting to an application should direct their complaint to the [PDNPA Planning Department](#) directly - not through the Parish Council - although it is useful if objections are copied to the Parish Clerk so the Council are mindful of neighbours' objections. On some occasions Cllrs' views may not coincide with those of neighbours but they may still wish to support neighbours if the points they raise are reasonable - and points that the PDNPA consider are "material". The final decision is always with the PDNPA as planning authority.

### **The HR Committee**

Chaired by Cllr Bill Hanley other members are Cllrs Bridget Hanley, Jane Marsden, Heather Rodgers and Stuart Turner. The committee is responsible for ensuring due process is followed in recruitment and management for all staff (including swimming pool staff) employed by the Parish Council. **Cllr Bill Hanley, HR Committee Chair – summary of business considered in 2021-22:** the Parish Council employs a part-time Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer and Village Caretaker. At the pool, the Council employs two full time managers and approximately 20 part-time lifeguard staff – lifeguard numbers vary, seasonally. The HR Committee met seven times during the year April 2021 to March 2022; the committee is scheduled to meet quarterly but additional meetings are scheduled when necessary. Through 2021-22 business considered included reviews of staff salaries and increments for Swimming Pool staff; salary reviews for the Assistant Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer; staff furloughing and other Covid-related employment issues; recruitment of an Assistant Clerk; reviews of appointments procedures.

### **The Finance Committee**

Current membership - Cllrs Jane Marsden, Heather Rodgers, Peter Rowland and James Shuttleworth. The Responsible Finance Officer, Chris Cave, attends all Finance Committee meetings. The Finance Committee's prime functions are to prepare a detailed income and expenditure budget on which the Council sets the annual precept. Actual income and expenditure is monitored by the full Council against this budget on a monthly basis.

The Council's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Its financial transactions are audited by an internal auditor appointed by the Council and by an external auditor independently appointed by Smaller Authority Audit Appointments. The Council's financial affairs and governance procedures both received a clean bill of health for the 2020/21 year. The 2021/22 audit will not take place until later in the year. The 2020/21 Accounting Statements, Annual Governance Statement and External Auditor's Report were published in accordance with the legislative requirements. The Council's precept, the amount collected through residents' rate bills, was £58,000 of which £9,600 was for loan interest and repayments in respect of the village centre & public toilets. During the year the Council's expenditure has been within the budget on which the precept was based. During the year playing field equipment was replaced at a cost of £22,500, financed from reserves the Council had built up for the purpose, and from donations received. With the Covid restrictions eased the swimming pool has been open throughout 2021/22. Income has more than covered running costs, but it must be remembered that we have to accumulate funds in readiness not only for large regular repairs such as new boilers and pool covers but for ongoing improvements to the pool infrastructure. Over the previous two years some £450,000 has been spent improving the pool and further substantial expenditure will be necessary under the Council five-year plan. The Council continues its policy of building up reserves to meet future large scale expenditure such as the renewal of playing field equipment and resurfacing the MUGA, as to precept for the expenditure in full, in the year it was incurred, would result in a huge increase in the precept in that year. The 2022/23 precept will be £60,000.

### **The Burial Ground Committee**

Current membership - Cllrs Sara Furness, Tim Hill, Jane Marsden, Heather Rodgers and Peter Rowland. This committee generally meets once or twice annually to undertake a site visit/burial ground inspection. Where there are issues with burial plot maintenance, the Parish Council writes to those family members responsible for upkeep. In 2022-23 it is proposed to merge this committee with the Amenities and Recreation Committees; joint meetings of all three committees will be held monthly.

### **Website Working Group**

Current membership - Cllrs Bill Hanley and Rosie Olle. The website – and the Parish Council Facebook page - is the place to go for information about the village. The Parish Council thanks Mr John Dalton for his technical support.

### **Memorial Hall**

The Memorial Hall is run by a Management Committee which is separate from Hathersage Parish Council. The Parish Council acknowledges the work of the Memorial Hall Management Committee for their efficient running of the Hall.

### **Going forward and the focus for 2022-23**

**Queen's Platinum Jubilee:** the Parish Council has been meeting with representatives of village groups and societies to help with planning and coordination of events for the long weekend Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. The Parish Council is also helping residents with road closures – for a parade; and street parties – submitting an application to the District Council covering all requested road closures.

**Affordable Housing:** the Parish Council is liaising with the District Council and Peak Park about provision of affordable housing in and around the village.

**Staff changes:** in August 2021 the Parish Council welcomed **Suzanne (Sue) Cass** as the new Assistant Clerk; Sue settled in very quickly, is familiar with the area and is a keen pool user.

Maura Sorensen (Clerk for Hathersage Parish Council).

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