



Report of Stoney Middleton Parish Council – 2022/23

SMPC is pleased that we have been able to settle into a more 'normal' way of working this year, back at the newly extended Wesleyan Chapel. Thank you to the Church Warden for allowing us to use St Martin's Church as a temporary meeting place.

We have continued to progress routine matters such as maintenance, mowing, repairs and commenting on planning applications. However, some issues require particular mention, including those that feel intractable, are longstanding and require optimism and resilience!

Councillors

We should start by recording our thanks to Councillors Chris Tsielepi and Reuben Thorpe, both of whom have resigned from SMPC this year. They made a significant contribution to the life of the village whilst serving as councillors.

We also wish to welcome Councillors Martina Hodgson and Karen Wood who have hit the ground running, particularly in respect of grant funding opportunities to obtain equipment and services to enhance the life of the village.

Village Cross

It has taken a VERY long time but the Village Cross and Steps are finally registered under community ownership and the deeds are in safekeeping.

Community Building on the Playing Field

SMPC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SMILE agreeing that the construction of the community building can be undertaken in three stages. The first stage will be for SMILE to arrange for the safe removal of the dilapidated football hut and replace it with a half-sized (20 foot) container painted green (approved by the PDNPA) and lay foundations for the community building.

Lack of Affordable Homes in the Derbyshire Dales District

The need for affordable housing was identified as a priority in the 2020 Village Plan. SMPC has taken up the offer of meeting with a local housing association to discuss the lack of affordable homes in the parish and explore possible options. We also support PDNPA Councillor Kath Potter's campaign against the Peak Park's blanket ban on barn conversions and lack of affordable housing.

Improving Play and Exercise Facilities on the Playing Field

SMPC already has £6.5K gifted to the community from the filming of Mission Impossible 7, earmarked for replacing defunct play equipment. However, this is not enough to provide a multi-

use piece of equipment suitable for children up to the age of 12. Similarly, funding is required to install adult gym equipment, first identified as a village priority in 2020.

Consequently, two grant applications were submitted; one to DCC (for up to 20K) and the other to The Better Derbyshire Dales Fund for (up to £1K) for funding to achieve these improvements

Unfortunately, both applications were rejected, mainly due to the volume of applications in relation to the funding available. However, we are heartened that SMPC's grant application for up to £20,000 from DCC was considered to be a strong application and we will take on board the feedback to demonstrate more robust community support when applying for further grants.

Jacob's Ladder

SMPC wish to thank DCC Highways for putting in culverts at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder, and keeping them clear, to drain surface water away to stop it pooling under the Old Hall Gardens boundary wall.

The seat at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder has also been repositioned, repaired and repainted by a local contractor.

Sadly, motorbikes and 4x4 vehicles continue to use Jacob's Ladder, particularly at night, breaching the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on the route banning motorised vehicles.

To compound matters, SMPC believes that signage has been deliberately removed from the bottom of Jacob's Ladder giving false indication that the route is a Byway Open to all Traffic (BOAT) without restriction. This matter has been reported to the relevant agencies, including the Police who have recorded it as a crime. DCC has agreed to replace the necessary, missing TRO sign but please be vigilant as it may disappear again.

Residents are urged to report any vehicle using Jacob's Ladder to the Police via calling 101, Facebook or Twitter. Whilst the Police may not be able to take enforcement action it builds up an evidence base of usage that can be used for negotiating measures such as the installation of CCTV.

Flood Alleviation Measures

We would like to thank the Village Flood Warden, Dan Hodgson for his ongoing persistence in negotiating and pushing for flood alleviation measures in the village, in particular, the regular clearance of drains and culverts along the A623, the Nook and for a start date for the agreed works to improve the surface water drainage by Trinkey Lane/Meadow Close.

Residents are reminded that they can report blocked gullies and drains to DCC via its on-line 'Report a Road Fault' system.

Bath House and Gardens

A contractor has been commissioned to repair the Bath House roof and a grant of £1000 has been received, from the Better Derbyshire Dales fund, which will cover the majority of the work. SMPC intend to consult with residents about ways the Bath House could be enhanced as a village amenity.

The Late Queen's Platinum Jubilee

DDDC and DCC provided grants totalling a £1000 to help fund Jubilee celebrations. The funding was used to assist with a Jubilee party held on the playing field, the planting of a Maple tree, at the

bottom of the playing field and the planting of five cherry trees in the Bath House Gardens, along with the purchase of two commemorative plaques. The trees are thriving and will be a lasting reminder of the Platinum Jubilee. They will also help to offset the trees lost to Ash Die Back

Grove Gardens

A local contractor has repaired and repainted the bridge and benches in the garden, repainted the metal gate and railings and re-fixed various plaques to improve the safety and aesthetic of the garden.

Allotment/Community Orchard

A sign was installed on the gate to the Community Orchard to welcome all to the space and enjoy the fruit when ripe. Also a number of volunteers pruned the apple trees at the end of last year to ensure their continued longevity.

We now have an Allotment Management Group in place formed by three allotment holders. The Group will be a regular presence on site, managing the allotments on a day to day basis and being the first point of contact for the allotment holders.

Environmental Improvements:

The good news is DDDC is now managing the wild flower verge opposite Avenue Close. The bad news is DDDC may be abandoning the idea, which was supported by SMPC, to find alternative solutions to using glyphosate weed killer in the district.

SMPC has agreed to support Hope Valley Climate Action regarding renewable energy initiatives and are pleased that the Hope Valley Climate Change Group is supporting the introduction of 20 MPH zones in villages where quality of life is impacted on by heavy traffic.

DDDC Waste Bins

SMPC contacted DDDC regarding the need for a waste bin on Mill Lane due to reports of increased dog fouling and filled poo bags being strewn along the lane or put into residential bins.

We were told that this was not possible in view of a pending review of waste bin provision. Consequently, SMPC asked for the bin by Old Hall Gardens to be moved onto Mill Lane as there were 2 bins in this area (Old Hall Gardens and Meadow Gate) but none on Mill Lane. The bin was removed from Old Hall Gardens but, despite repeated requests and site visits, DDDC has declined to place it on Mill Lane on the basis that the vehicle used for emptying waste bins can't easily turn there! Consequently, it's been put on the playing field, alongside the existing bin, which was often overflowing.

Tree Management

SMPC employs PDNPA tree inspectors to regularly inspect trees on community land, including trees along the concessionary footpath. Inspectors have identified trees requiring work, mainly diseased Ash trees, in the Bath House Woods and along the concessionary footpath, together with a plan of work. Some of the work has already been done either by contractors or volunteers and further tree felling along the concessionary path will commence in May. This work is expensive and takes a significant chunk of the village precept.

Concessionary Footpath

It has been agreed to seek quotes to replace and/or repair the stock fence along the concessionary footpath as cows were getting onto the path last summer. Keeping the fence in good order is a requirement of the 1992 permission for the path.

Defibrillators

We would like to thank Lucien Cottle for undertaking a weekly check of the 2 defibrillators in the village.

Ongoing Work to Achieve Speed Restriction Measures

This is a longstanding issue and thus far DCC Highways has rejected all efforts to engage with SMPC, even following a joint petition with Calver PC for reduced speed limits along the A623 through both villages. SMPC is now collaborating with Calver PC and Froggatt Village Community Speed Watch Group to formulate a collective approach to the issues shared by the 3 communities.

SMPC has signed up to the Derbyshire Constabulary Community Speed Initiative. A number of residents have been trained by PCSO Boswell to carry out speed checks and two have been undertaken so far, with equipment borrowed from Froggatt village. However, SMPC has now agreed to join with Calver PC to purchase and share equipment to enable regular checks to be carried out in both communities.

SMPC is also keeping a watching brief on the possibility of Derbyshire Constabulary installing ANPR cameras to automatically log the speed of vehicles passing through communities. The data captured is directly accessed by the Police. However, so far, Derbyshire Constabulary has not agreed to use this system.

To try to reduce the speed of lorries passing through the village, in October the Parish Clerk sent letters to local haulage companies asking them to encourage their drivers to observe the speed limits through the village that SMPC is campaigning for.

Thanks

SMPC would like to thank the many residents, including Parish Councillors, who give their time freely for the benefit of the community to undertake work such as:

- Litter picking;
- Clearing the grids on Dale Brook to ensure it flows freely at times of flood risk;
- Putting up and taking down the village Christmas tree;
- Putting up and taking down lamp post poppies around the village;
- Volunteering for working parties to prune/remove diseased trees, plant new ones and manage and improve community green spaces; and
- Signing up/training for the Community Speed Watch Group

Also, we would like to thank the Hancock family for providing the electricity for the Christmas tree and defibrillator.

All of the contractors commissioned to undertake work in the village.

DCC Councillor Hobson, PDNPA Councillor Kath Potter and Police representatives for their time, enthusiasm and support on behalf of the village.

Special thanks are extended to DDDC Councillor Helen Froggatt for all of her help as Stoney Middleton moves from the Calver Ward to the Grindleford and Eyam Ward in May and to PC Linda Hancock who retired in December having policed the area for over 20 years. It was lovely to hear that she had a special affinity for Stoney Middleton.

And last, but not least our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for keeping us on track. and telling us, in the words of Jackie Weaver, if we have the authority!!