Ryhall Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2014 –15

The period between March 2014 and March 2015 has been an active one for Ryhall Parish Council. Councillors and, in this year, our two clerks have all dedicated much personal time to make substantial improvements to benefit the parish; with some projects ongoing I hope we can continue to maintain that momentum. We have done this using our existing funds and with valued assistance from Rutland Country Council. We are pleased we have been able to do all this while keeping the precept paid by parishioners the same since 2010.

The year has not been without its challenges. But we dedicate ourselves to be as fair as possible to everyone, giving support to all those who need it while ensuring the majority of our parishioners are confident that the council is utilising public money carefully and responsibly.

Last year saw several presentations during council meetings and afterwards:
One was from Energy Action in which parishioners were offered advice on saving money on fuel charges; another from National Grid where it outlined plans for a substation in the parish and invited bids for Community Funding. The village hall was successful and able to benefit from refurbished lighting. Work on the substation continues.

We have also made improvements to the new cemetery with regular hedge cutting and new gravel for the driveway. The council thanks Dave Toone for his invaluable work with Burial Administration.

Work was carried out on the vicarage wall and roadway to the school but the project is still yet to be finalised. The council continues to press for action

The council decided to have a defibrillator installed centrally in the parish. It is now in place at the village hall and a successful information evening was held in December. My thanks to Nick Bellairs for leading this vital lifesaving project.

A Four-Year Plan has been instigated with the aim of seeing what the parish assets are, how they can be utilised for the future, and what other needs we may have. My thanks to the team of David Wilby, Adrian Gombault and Jon Whowell for their work on the questionnaire distributed in July, its analysis and the consequent follow-up studies. The main issues in focus are the future of the Library and setting up Ryhall Neighbourhood Watch which Adrian is leading.
We may take the Four-Year Plan a step further with a more formal and structured Neighbourhood Plan in 2015/16 where we would aim to have in place proposals that would be in general conformity with the Rutland Local Plan.

Communication, as ever, is key to improvements and the parish aims to launch a dedicated website for the forthcoming year.

Other progress included the council agreement in January 2015 to take over the parish grass cutting as from 1st April 2015.

On the council we have representatives and committee members dedicated to planning,

street lighting, allotments, trees, footpaths and grass cutting. Their work ensures that all these matters are administered efficiently and without fuss.

As an example, the planning committee that includes Stella Smith, Bob Rushby, Emma Sismore and Nick Bellairs was as ever watchful on planning applications for the parish: 24 planning applications considered to date, including four tree applications. Bob also kept an eye on footpaths, Simon Fenn on lighting while Chris Parsons continues his essential work as our County Councillor as well as playing fields representative.

And as always my thanks go to the other volunteers who make up our village committees: the village hall management committee and the meadows playing fields committee. The village hall committee continue to ensure that the building remains welcoming and the ever-pleasant centre of village activities. It also continues to pay its way, something very much to be proud of. The meadows playing field committee have seen at long last the removal of the portacabin, further internal improvements to the pavilion and continued upkeep of the roadway. The playing fields were also the subject of a positive Sports facilities and green spaces review.

The Allotment holders in this parish year opted to take over the management of the land from the parish council. It is now a vibrant hub for all things green with all plots taken and more ambition for improvements.

We also have a Ryhall Commemorative Flagpole and Garden group now that there is a flagpole in St John's Close. This was dedicated in November 2014. We are grateful for the efforts of the Diamond Jubilee Committee for making that possible.

The council has been watchful on travel and traffic in its area.
We have supported a plea for a speed restriction in Newstead Lane, Belmesthorpe, as part of a NHW Speed Review. We have also seen the completion of the new dual cycle route / pedestrian path round Ryhall from Rutland Way to Essendine Hill. My thanks go to Rutland County Council for following up our request to make this route safer for all. There is also a bike rack being installed at the library.

Our roads were made safer in the cold snaps by our Snow Wardens. I must thank Peter Link, who has relinquished the role after four years, and welcome George Roberts.

I mentioned earlier that we have two clerks. We have been very lucky in that Derek Patience was able to step in at short notice as acting clerk during a difficult period when Caroline Adams was suddenly taken ill. We owe him a big debt for keeping us on track. Caroline returned in the summer and once again put in an enormous amount of valuable time and effort for the parish. She is now due to have major surgery and I know the council will wish her well in her recovery.

As you know the council elections are in May. Tonight is the last time we will have this line-up. Certainly we will lose Simon Fenn who no longer lives in the parish. Simon has been a valued and dedicated parish councillor for 20 years. We will miss him.

I do hope that other people will follow his example in wanting to join the council and give something back to their community. The job is not difficult but it does require patience, dogged determination and an understanding of human nature. The rewards are however many and we can all take a pride in what we do.

And there is much pride in Ryhall and Belmesthorpe. Whenever I walk around the parish I am impressed by how much people love this place.
I think of the dog walkers who on the coldest and darkest of winter nights take their torches to ensure the walkways are free of mess, the person who put twinkly lights on the bridge to Belmesthorpe at Christmas time and the villager who set up signs about “horse muck” on the path near the mini roundabouts. They show they have the best intentions for their parish. This is heartwarming. All of you and all of our volunteers share this devotion. It gives great hope for the future.

Paul Huddleston
Chair
Ryhall Parish Council
March 2015