

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023/24**

2023 and the start of 2024 has been not been without its challenges but, as I type this, I'm looking out the window and I can see Blue Tits frantically going about their business, the daffodils are almost over for this year, the garden is emerging from a very wet winter, as the leaves are coming out on the trees. Despite 23/24 being the 9th wettest winter on record we seem (for all intents and purposes) to have come out the other side not too damaged. From my recollection it started raining in September and well.....didn't really stop. I recorded one day where we had 90mm of rain in a 24hr period.

This was when our community spirit sprang into life and I know from being involved or being told that a lot of people were helping the friends and neighbours by removing leaves blocking drains, lifting drain covers to allow the water to escape, setting up sand bags, and even opening gates to allow water to flow away. I know from experience that all the farmers in the village have been helping where they can, despite the personal challenges they have faced with their land being saturated and crops spoiled.....Farmers, I thank you. Now the weather seems to have finally decided to give us a break we will soon be back into cutting the village grass. I want to say particular thanks to Nigel at the end of Low Street who always keeps that end of the village looking lovely.

We have seen new faces moving into the village which is always nice to see, and we have sadly lost some too. Again, I've seen friends and neighbours supporting their fellow villagers in their hour of need. It's been a delight to report that our pub is finally back open and firing on all cylinders. We have eaten in the pub most weeks since it opened and can report it to be excellent. James and his team have worked so hard in making it a warm, welcoming friendly and a clean environment. The makeover has transformed it from what it was, and this is evident from the amount of people that are now eating and drinking. Long may it continue.

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group have continued to make progress with the plan. We are almost at the point we are able to share the draft plan with the Parish Council. This follows the 'call for sites' exercise we conducted earlier in 2024. There will be a slight pause as we now need to wait for the Government funding portal to reopen to allow us to secure funding to have the sites assessed for suitability.

Our village hall committee have been working hard to encourage the use of the hall. Its nice to see the regularity of events taking place and being shared on social media.

As we now look ahead to 24/25 and have what I hope will be a nice summer, we are planning a village event organised by Ann Stanley and a team of willing helpers who I like to refer to as Ann's-Elves. This will be called our East Drayton Day and I know from speaking with Ann that she is planning to showcase the talent that the village offers, our church, a cricket match, a rounders match and even an old-fashioned sports day. So.....dust off your hoops, make sure your bean-bags still have some beans in them, and check your potato sacks for mice holes so they are ready for the sack race.

That said.....Lets get hopping, jumping, running and skipping and look forward to 2024 and 25.

Cllr Stuart Manson

May 2024