

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025

What a difference a year makes, as I type this, I recall from last year's summary that it started off with the amount of rain that had been falling and the damage it was doing to the villagers, roads and farmers. This year I have been watering the garden earlier than I ever recall. I don't remember having to water this early in April.

We have been supported through all the activities that have been happening in the village and the surrounding areas by Dcllr Emma Griffin who's support never goes unnoticed, we still have a lot of struggles that we will need further support but I'm confident that with Emma standing side-by-side with us we can continue to make proactive progress. I have been working with Emma's flood group and the surrounding villages to ensure we have robust infrastructure around us to cope with flooding if it does happen again. As we are surrounded by so much water its only a matter of time before the waters rise again, but we hope that with the focus on prevention rather than cure we will be in a better place than in past years.

Our Neighbourhood Plan continued to develop during 2024/25 and we are now about to go out to the villagers and surrounding businesses for 6-week consultation starting 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025. We have exhausted all the options that we had available to us including a 'call for sites' development boundaries, protected green spaces and significant green gaps. Our planning consultant Helen and Will from BDC have been essential on leading this process and for that we are thankful. The process has run approximately 18-months over the planned completion date, this was, in part due to COVID and the work that AECOM did when conducting the surveys on the suitability from the 'call for sites'. We have been supported by the work that our neighbourhood plan steering group (NPSG) has been doing and without the help and focus of some of the individuals who have played an active role, progress may have been slower.

As always, we have been helped through the year by our farming community despite them having their own challenges and day jobs to deal with. They are glue that holds the village together and create the beautiful views that we all see as we are out with the dogs or driving in and out the village. They are out in all weather looking after crops and livestock that enables us to put food on the table.

The 'one earth' upgrade programme continues to bubble away and unfortunately it has crept closer to the village than originally expected. Discussions and consultations continue to take place, but time is now limited for objections to be shared. If you have objections, then I would urge you to share your views. Once the consultation closes there is no cause for complaint if you haven't objected.

We have welcomed some new faces to the village and hope that they are settling into East Drayton life and the wider community. Our pub continues to expand and it's great to see that some of the younger folks from the village are working in there. James and his team are getting some great plates of food out the kitchen and I can speak from experience that its well worth a visit if you haven't already.

There has been a lot to speak about and so much activity happens in the background. The Cllr's give up their time FOC to attend meeting, plan events, cut the grass look after the de-fib, repair signs, make sure the flood supplies are available, update the website, print and deliver leaflets, keep the notice board updated and many more activities but, special thanks need to go to Gill Squire who keeps us all in check and none of the above would be possible without her.

Happy 2025/26 all.....

Stuart Manson  
Chairman