



Eckington Parish Council

Chairmans Annual Report

2023/24

I am pleased to say we have had another busy and productive year here at Eckington Parish Council and we continue to be operating on a sound financial footing, whilst continuing to provide quality services and events for residents in a cost-effective manner. And of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication of the Council Officers, staff and the many volunteers and community groups that work so hard supporting our community and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

We are especially blessed with a superb Clerk of the Parish who is also our RFO, Emma Smith. I would like to say a special thanks to Emma, Rosanna, Roz for supporting me and your Councillors in achieving our ambitious projects this year.

I am also blessed to have a supportive, pro-active and dedicated group of fellow Parish Councillors – despite a mix of Conservatives, Labour and Independent Councillors, it is obvious that we all want the best for our local community, and I am exceptionally grateful that we all work well together for the greater good.

This year we have been continuing with our programme of investing and renovating our buildings and assets. I am particularly grateful to the indomitable Rosanna Hill, our Civic Centre and Cemetery manager, who has really excelled this year. I hope you agree that the Civic Centre looks superb, newly painted and decorated throughout, upgraded toilets and fire doors – and we will be looking to improve the bar area and provide better disabled loos in due course.

Rosanna has also managed to organise and deliver an amazing events programme, with entertainment to suit all ages and tastes. Our popular music events and tribute bands are now selling out months in advance. We host children's themed parties, afternoon teas, comedy, murder mystery events. Our Monday and Thursday lunch clubs continue to grow and be a popular social activity for our community, providing a two course freshly cooked meal, with bingo and raffle. We continue to host lots of regular activities at our venues, fitness, yoga and dance classes, curling, martial arts and community health initiatives such as footcare and smoking cessation.

We also have an excellent package to hire out our venues for private functions and Eckington Civic Centre is now licensed as a Civil wedding venue and we were delighted to host our first wedding last summer.

So I would like to say a huge thanks to Rosanna and her team, Veronika, Kath, James, Michelle, Paige and our other events and catering/bar staff for all your hard work elevating the reputation of the Civic Centre, which prides itself on providing high quality hospitality at affordable prices and we look forward to welcoming more customers in the months and years ahead.



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We have also completed refurbishments at Renishaw and Spinkhill Community Hall – including flooring, kitchen, bar, signage, blinds, windows, fire doors, CCTV and

again a mix of regular and social events and lunches that can be booked here too.

One of our key aspirations as a Parish Council since 2020 was improvement of the Town Centre and the addition of a new super park to serve our Parish, whilst we did not receive any Town deal funding in the last round of bids for the wider Town regeneration plans, we did receive £200K from NEDDC Shared Prosperity Funds for our super park plan in recognising we lacked a super park provision of other comparable Parishes.

The initial plan, as part of the Town deal plan was to regenerate Lansbury park site into a super park with café and incorporate leisure and sporting facilities onto this site, ideally with NEDDC, Eckington Football Club and Football Association and The Miners Welfare and other neighbouring land owners, but, without the Town deal funds £15m plus this was not achievable. However, the £200k plus the EPC reserves of £400k and the possibility of other grants we have decided to develop a simpler super park with café and car parking.

Subsequently we had an opportunity to buy the former Derbyshire County Council Youth Centre site at Stead Street/School Street a few weeks ago, this was another site that we had been interested in buying for some time and due to the short time scale as part of the SPF funding deadline and some significant drainage and land assembly issues at Lansbury park site, we have decided to re-locate the super park to Stead Street for this funding in order to ensure we complete the Park within the strict and short time scales allotted.

We have shared the plans with residents and the planning application is now with North East Derbyshire District Council approval and we are just about to go out to tender for the work (inline with tendering regulations). We are hopeful that a supplier will be found with work commencing by the end of summer. I am very grateful for all the work of Officers and Councillors, especially Emma and Cllr Kenyon for all his assistance with business plans and external funding bids, its been a lot of work in a short space of time. I am also grateful to Tony Jenkins and Claire our architects, for all their advice and planning work at short notice to get our plans submitted. We will be updating residents through social media and newsletters as soon as we have any significant updates.

Just to reassure residents we are still continuing with our plans for Lansbury, in fact we have some s106 funds (£70k) which needs to be spent at Lansbury park and we hope we can get this back on the plan once Stead Street park is in progress.

On top of the key projects I have just outlined, the Parish Council has been getting on with business as usual and busy delivering other services such as:



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- Community safety events such as Cuppa with a Copper with local SNT in Eckington, Renishaw, Ridgeway and Marsh Lane part of our Neighbourhood Watch these are very informative drop in sessions and I encourage you all to attend.
- Parish wide speed indicator devices have been ordered for sites across the whole Parish area.
- We have been awarded funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner Angelique Foster for a number of CCTV cameras in and around the Town Centre, Precinct and other locations.
- We have signed up to a trial with the Police and Crime Commissioner Angellique Foster for additional ANPR cameras.
- Regular speed watches are carried out by Parish Councillors.
- Listing of the Marsh Lane war memorial achieved.
- New play area equipment at Ash Crescent, Darcy Road and Ida's play areas.
- Ongoing maintenance and repairs carried out at all 8 parks – including a new basket swing at Lansbury play area due to vandalism.
- Additional hanging baskets agreed – 33 in total added.
- Defibrillators installed at The Gate, Troway, Green Lawns and Birkhill.
- Additional grit bins installed at Phoenix Road, Main Road, Renishaw and Farm Lane.
- Market continues to run successfully in Eckington Town Centre.
- Archway clock and market town archway are being reconstructed ready to put back into place after the incident.
- Bench placed at Quarry Hill, Marsh Lane.
- Defibrillator training held for community to attend in December another course is booked for May (limited spaces available).
- Bus stop seating installed at the Main Road, Renishaw bus shelter.
- We continue to help organise the Remembrance Day parade and service.
- Grit bag scheme for residents – free bag of grit if you are elderly or vulnerable.
- We have installed “Lets chat benches” allocated at Market Street, Eckington, also bench on Castle Hill, Eckington and Main Road, Marsh Lane – this is in support of helping and highlighting mental health issues in our area, we would like to do more initiatives on mental health going forwards.
- We continue to tend to our community orchards which were planted last year and thank all the volunteers who supported the project and now hope they can enjoy the fruits of their labour!
- We are also continuing with our community events, such as Boredom buster kids holiday clubs and summer activities with crafts, sports and entertainment and we ensure all eligible kids receive a free meal, we also hosted a “Live and Local” cultural event, “The tiger who spilled the tea”. A new breakfast club school holiday initiative ensuring supplies of breakfasts to all families struggling financially, cookery classes, and through “live life better” advice on health (blood pressure monitoring etc) thank you Roz and volunteers, Rykneld



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and Derbyshire County Council for supporting these important sessions.

- We provide quarterly newsletters issued to all parish households regarding local news.
- We have been continuing our work and tidying and improving our Cemetery, the new gate automation is now completed.
- Tarmac repairs at Cemetery completed.
- Hedge removed at Cemetery and some dying trees.
- We have commissioned and renovated the public toilets at the Cemetery.
- Wild area planting has been carried out at the Cemetery and I would like to say thank you to volunteers who helped with re-wilding and spring planting at the Cemetery.
- We are working with Derbyshire County Council and others to improve the landscaping at the cemetery and planting more trees.

I would like to thank our Cemetery staff, Rosanna, John, Paul and Ray and the handymen Dave and Russell for all their hard work and keeping our cemetery, our Parish green spaces and flower beds looking so nice. We say goodbye to Dave our handyman who will be retiring in June, and I would like to thank him for all his service and trust he enjoys a happy retirement.

I would also like to welcome our new staff this year:
Veronika our new Social Media and Marketing Officer.
James our Cook at the Civic Centre.
Michelle who works behind the bar at the Civic Centre.
Paige who also works behind the bar at the Civic Centre and
Raymond our new Cemetery Operative.

As always we are pleased to be able to provide small grants to our local community and volunteer groups. This year we supported:

Eckington Boys and Belles with Community hall hire
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre - £1,000.00
Rotary Club with Community hall hire
Eckington Boys and Belles - £500.00
Citizens Advice - £1,000.00
Eckington Bowling Club - £350.00
Camms CofE Primary School with Community hall hire.
Renishaw Football Club - £400.00
Rykneld Homes with Community hall hire
Race Against Time with Community hall hire
Eckington craft group - £150.00
Live and Local with Community hall hire



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As you can see, we have had a busy and productive year, but there is always more to do to improve our services and support our community. As always, we welcome yours and residents feedback and suggestions and above all we have a wonderful community spirit in our Parish and I thank you for your support.

That concludes my annual report, with thanks Cllr Carolyn Renwick – Chair of Eckington Parish Council