

ANNUAL DESFORD PARISH MEETING

**To be held at Desford Library, Main Street, Desford
Wednesday 24th of May 2023 at 7pm**

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. To receive and approve the minutes of the annual Parish Meeting 22 May 2019
3. Parish Councils Chairmans Report
4. To receive a report from Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
5. To receive a report from County Councillor
6. To receive reports from Borough Councillors
7. To receive reports from village organisations
 - 7.1. Barns Charity Report
 - 7.2. Sport in Desford Report
 - 7.3. Botcheston Village Hall Report
 - 7.4. Desford Village Hall Report
8. To thank community volunteers and receive volunteer reports
 - 8.1. Desford in Bloom
 - 8.2. Heritage Working Group
9. Questions or points raised by residents and members of the public

Signed _____

Colin Crane - Chairman of Desford Parish Council

ANNUAL DESFORD PARISH MEETING

Held at Desford Library, Main Street, Desford on
Wednesday 22th of May 2019 at 7pm

DRAFT MINUTES

Present were: Colin Crane (in the Chair as Chairman of the Parish Council), Sue McMillan, Pat Crane, Nic Lockley, Andrew Norton, Ian Cunnington, Martin Broomhead and Lisa Sly.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from Zena Rood, Nick Carr and Scott Wakefield.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 16 May 2018

The minutes from last year's meeting were received and accepted.

3. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2018-2019 has been a successful year, many developments have been undertaken by the Parish Council with further underway. The village is working well together in particular Desford in Bloom, they have made great changes within the village and in particular the scarecrow festival. This year we have printed a news letter which has been received well within the community. The Parish Council's Finances are good and this was reflected by the fact that Desford Parish Council did not increase their precept this year.

4. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

There were no County or Borough Councillors.

5. BARNS CHARITY REPORT

Report accepted

6. SPORT IN DESFORD REPORT

Report accepted

7. BOTCHESTON VILLAGE HALL REPORT

A report has not been received from Botcheston Village Hall. Colin Crane gave a brief report saying how hard they worked, improving the hall and putting on numerous events.

8. DESFORD VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Report accepted

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Meeting Closed 7.13pm

Desford Parish Council
Chair's Report to Annual Meeting – 2022/2023

First of all I would like to thank all who have helped the Council to have a successful year – parishioners, office staff, Parish Councillors, Borough and County Councillors. During the year the Clerk (Martin Broomhead) retired and the Projects and Grants Officer (Eithne Allen) resigned. We are fortunate to have a new Clerk (Pip Gould) who is keen to improve council processes. Julie continues to give her vital support as Admin Assistant. A new Projects and Grants Officer will start in June.

The Council Procurement Working Group has worked assiduously to prepare a programme of improvements. These have been prioritised and the programme will proceed at a rate determined by appropriate funding, for which we trust the Projects and Grants Officer will be a key person. Desford in Bloom is another Working Group of the Council and I am sure you are all appreciative of their magnificent work around the parish to improve the environment. They were instrumental in designing and producing the wonderful Union Jack flower bed in front of the Library. Apart from their work on the hanging baskets, they prepare and maintain planters throughout the parish and also the Blue Hearts Verge (wildflower area) on Hunts Lane.

The Heritage Working Group orchestrated the impressive 2-day Heritage Festival and, more recently, the Coronation Celebration.



The planning and delivery of these projects was truly amazing and the parish should be very proud of this group. During the year a trail of Heritage Boards have been installed across Desford and Heritage Walks are regularly organised, attracting many visitors to the village. On the heritage theme, a few new heritage lamp posts have been installed in the Conservation Area of the village.

A new bus shelter has been installed in Botcheston after a vehicle accident demolished the old bus shelter. I know that Botcheston residents are proud of their new shelter and have plans to improve the aesthetics of the hamlet by maintaining

planters in conjunction with the Desford in Bloom group. The Parish Council have employed an architect to improve the facilities at Botcheston Village Hall and we look forward to the new Projects and Grants Officer accessing grant funding in order to implement this design.

A trim trail has been installed at Kirkby Road Recreation Ground with a series of exercise equipment scattered around the outside of the trail. Work is still ongoing to level the surface around the trail and grass seeding of this location.

Aware of some anti-social behaviour in the village, new 24 hour monitored CCTV cameras have been installed on Kirkby Road Recreation Ground and Pickards Recreation Ground. Monitoring is undertaken in Hinckley. Market Bosworth Police have been involved in the siting of these cameras and have access to view images that may be of concern.

Traffic has been a major concern within the parish – speeding, parking and 7.5t vehicle transgressions. New “Vehicle Activated Signs” (VAS) and Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS) have been installed throughout the parish. These signs are having some limited effect, particularly the one on Peckleton Lane that displays the actual speed of vehicles. However, even that VAS is not affecting a total compliance with legal requirements. We have been pestering the Highways Department at County Hall to improve compliance with traffic laws and on occasions we get good vibes from County Hall, but limited action – we will keep pestering and with the help of our County Councillor we hope to see improvements. With regards to 7.5t transgressions, we have regular meetings with Caterpillar, Neovia and Griffen and they take action against miscreant drivers by banning them from their sites. We will continue actions to improve problems with vehicular travel.

There have been two major housing developments in Desford – Miller Homes on Barns Way and Owl Homes on Peckleton Lane. Both of these sites are almost complete, although there are visibility problems with the access to the Owl Homes site. Highways Department are in the process of enforcing Owl Homes to improve the road access visibility onto Peckleton Lane and installing a footpath leading to and from the site.

Griffen Park development is now underway after receiving planning approval. There have been many adverse comments during the progress of this development and all of these views have been taken seriously by the Parish Council and acted upon with the appropriate authority, be it Griffen, the Planning Authority or the Highways Authority. Problems of concern include:

- Visual aspect of the site
- Closure of the bridleway for 6 months and flooding when re-opened
- Destruction/removal of swathes of trees
- Rubbish from the site being scattered around the surrounding area
- Security of homes bordering the site
- Safe access to the Kirkby Road Recreation Ground from the bridleway
- Securing the balancing ponds

These issues are of continual discussion between the Parish Council and Griffen. However, at present they are complying with conditions of the planning approval. Nevertheless, we will keep pestering and where necessary seek enforcement action by the Planning Authority.

We appreciate that in May 2021 the Parish Neighbourhood Plan was approved by a 94% vote in favour of the plan being "made". This ensures we have some protection on any future development, but nothing is forever static. Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group are undergoing a review of the "made" plan. A public consultation on this review was undertaken in Desford Library. It is necessary to continually review the Neighbourhood Plan, as the developers are circling like vultures to build all over Desford. We all know that Davidsons have made their 4th application to develop Ashfield Farm (120 units) and have been refused on all occasions by HBBC Planning Committee. At the time of writing this report we have been informed that Davidsons are appealing to the Secretary of State. So, we will now have to put up a good case together with HBBC to defeat this appeal. Apart from Davidsons, Jelsons wish to develop near the allotment site and another company wish to develop on the field at the side of the cemetery. Whilst we accept that possibly another reasonable sized development needs to be progressed between now and 2039, it should be on a site and size that is most acceptable to the parish. Our Strategic Site Assessments (SSA) indicate a more convenient site. Public consultation on the Plan review will be undertaken as soon as possible. First of all, we have to get an SEA Environmental Report from a consultancy firm who are progressing consultation with three statutory bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency). As an SEA Environment Report was produced for the original Neighbourhood Plan, we hope this new consultation will be a speedy process. Then we can proceed to consultation within the parish on our review and hopefully gain your approval.

Over the past year we have been focused on reviewing and updating our Neighbourhood Plan, once again ably supported by Gary Kirk of YourLocale. Many thanks also to all members of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan Working Group for their ongoing support and help throughout the year.

Initially, HBBC was to update its Local Plan, and so it was important that we also updated our Neighbourhood Plan to ensure we remained aligned with the housing requirement, especially as the two years of cover provided by our existing plan expires in May of this year.

In the event, HBBC's draft new Local Plan was thrown out, and so this has now been delayed, with no specific timescale for completion. This made completing our own review even more urgent, as the lack of an up-to-date Local Plan means that once our existing Neighbourhood Plan ceases to protect us, there will be a presumption in favour of any development proposed.

As with the initial Plan, we put out a call for sites and reviewed the responses we received. In order to allocate sufficient housing in our review, we needed a figure with which to work. Despite a statutory obligation to provide us with a housing requirement number, HBBC was unable to do so. Therefore, we commissioned an external agency, AECOM, to assess the housing need for us. AECOM has carried out similar work for other Councils, and so their findings are acceptable to HBBC, in the absence of being able to provide a figure of its own. Having received the report from AECOM, we were able to identify appropriate sites for allocation for inclusion in the draft of the revised Neighbourhood Plan to meet our housing need.

Based on our experience of LCC's Highways Department, and its seeming inability to find that unbridled development does, indeed, compound the already extensive problems with traffic from which our village suffers, we also decided to commission our own independent traffic survey. This reinforced our own view that any development deemed necessary should be to the East of the village, as the majority of traffic generated by any such development would tend to head East towards Leicester and the motorway network, rather than adding to the existing bottlenecks within the village.

In parallel, work was also carried out to review all elements of the Plan, with updates made as necessary to the various sections. The draft of our reviewed Plan was finally shared at a public open event at Desford Library on 22nd April, and I am pleased to report that it was very well received by the 80+ people who took the time to attend. There was near universal support for all policies, including our proposed site allocation, which is an extension of the new Miller Homes site on Barns Way, to accommodate circa 100 homes. This, and a small site of five houses off Lindridge Lane, which is also proposed as an allocation, more than adequately covers our likely housing requirement, theoretically for the duration of the Plan until 2041 but, realistically, for the next couple of years at least.

This also means that we have justification for proposing to remove the two sites to the West of the village (Ashfield Farm and land on Hunts Lane adjacent to the Bellway Estate) that we reluctantly included in the existing Plan as 'reserve sites' at the recommendation of the Examiner.

The next stage is formal Regulation 14 consultation, but first we have to wait for HBBC to decide if a full environmental review is warranted, based on the proposed changes. Hopefully it will not be needed, and so we can proceed to Regulation 14 within the next couple of months. Once that is completed, we can submit the Plan for formal examination and, should it be necessary (it may not be, given the changes are relatively limited), put it forward to a referendum in the Parish for acceptance by residents.

Scott Wakefield

Chair - Desford Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

May 2023

Written Report

County Councillor Peter Bedford

May 2023

Since the last Parish Council Meeting I have been working on a number of issues affecting the area. These include:

- Meeting with Highways to discuss concerns and solutions for speeding on Station Road, Desford.
- Reporting drainage issues to LCC for several roads around St Martin's Drive, Desford.
- Working with LCC Highways Officers on an MVAS unit for London Road, Markfield as part of the Members Highways Fund. Preliminary work has been undertaken and I expect this to be in place during the summer.
- Liaising with Dr Luke Evans MP on the Ashby Road, Markfield development. Dr Luke has written to the Secretary of State to request that the decision be reviewed in light of Markfield's ratified neighbourhood plan.
- Attending the Desford neighbourhood plan open day to speak with residents about their priorities for the village.
- Campaigning for HBBC and Charnwood BC to get their updated Local Plans in place to ensure that our villages are better protected from overdevelopment. I have been liaising with Markfield's newly elected Borough Councillor, Claire Harris, and I am sure she will be holding HBBC to account on this issue at Hinckley.
- Liaising with the Markfield Court Residents Association about the proposed expansion of the Islamic Centre in the village. There are understandable concerns about the level of traffic and disruption to local residents. I have meetings scheduled with LCC Highways to ensure that these concerns are considered as part of the planning process.
- Attending a Q&A (providing the A's!) of the Local Enterprise Partnership to discuss the status of any potential devolution deal for the East Midlands. Once I have a firm updated on the direction of travel, from Government, I will be able to update Parish Councils.
- Liaising with Severn Trent on the recurring parking issues at Thornton Reservoir.
- Liaising with HBBC on some residents' concerns for the proposals at Stanton Stores.

If Parish Councillors wish to raise any issues or concerns please feel free to contact me via email: peter.bedford@leics.gov.uk or via telephone: 01455 824733

Best Wishes,

Peter Bedford

County Councillor for Markfield, Desford and Thornton

(incl. Botcheston, Bagworth & Stanton under Bardon)

Barns Charity report for Annual Parish Meeting 2023

We continue to work on improvements to the charity fields including clearing of ditches to aid water flow, new fencing and hedging, planting of trees. We have a brilliant group of volunteers who regularly work at the fields.

Nick Crowley leads the volunteers and liaises with groups such as the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust who provide advice and occasionally additional volunteers.

A number of different groups have used the fields for study of wildlife – both flora and fauna.

We continue to rent the fields to a local farmer who keeps a small number of cattle at the fields during the growing season.

There is concern that water run off may become an issue after the building of the Miller estate. There was always water running from the land above the fields but now that the fields nearest to Barns Way have been built on there will be more water run off running towards the Charity Fields and we will need to monitor this.

Finances

A large part of our income has been farm subsidies which have been complemented by fund raising through the sale of cards and various activities by trustees and volunteers. Farm subsidies are now being reduced and will shortly stop altogether, although we hope that the government will implement a new scheme that we will be eligible for, this is not clear at the moment.

We have held a number of successful fund-raising events recently including a quiz night, children's cinema night and a supper evening and will continue to try to find ways to supplement the Charity's income now that farm subsidies are being reduced.

Due to the successful fund-raising, which is helping to bolster the charity's accounts, we were able to raise the amount of grant paid to students this year and granted £200 each to 8 students. Grants are available to anyone in tertiary education or an apprenticeship who is resident in Desford and applications are considered each year at the November meeting of the trustees.

We have successfully updated the Charity's Constitution, with the help of the Charity Commissioners, to reflect the activities of the charity today (it had not been updated since first written in 1871) and the constitution now reflects the work and objects of the trustees today.

With regard to the background of appointing trustees – the charity has been in existence in some form since 1778 and was constituted in 1881, the trustees were originally the rector, churchwardens and overseers of the poor plus 3 'competent persons'. When overseers of the poor were no longer a part of society, it was decided to invite 2 members of the parish council, who were seen as upstanding members of the community. The Parish Council has no influence over the charity, merely provides 2 trustees.

The trustees are grateful to the Parish Council for providing our insurance cover.

Sport in Desford Annual Report May 2023

Governance

Our Vice chair and Trustee, Steve Morris passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the end of February. Steve was a founder member of Desford Striders and a member of the SiD executive committee for many years. He is very fondly remembered and sorely missed. We are seeking to find a new Trustee, and this is in hand. We are still quorate with our remaining number of Trustees.

Compliance/ Health and Safety.

Regular checks are done in respect of fire call points, emergency lights and intruder alarm. Any arising issues are dealt with promptly.

All necessary DBS checks are up to date. All sections comply with their own NGB regulations with regards to First Aid. We have recently done Defib training. All defibs are checked regularly. There have been some issues with inappropriate parking. New signs and remarking of the no parking places are being done to address this.

Facilities

Solar panels are working well and alongside the Tesla batteries, we are generating more electricity than we use, being carbon negative and a net exporter to the grid. We are currently having an energy audit with reference to the gas boiler, to inform future plans.

The Chair gave a presentation at Active Together (formerly known as LRS) County conference on SiD's energy actions and installations, which was well received and provoked a lot of interest.

We have replaced the tennis surround netting, and all 3 courts have LED lighting.

Fulfilling remit

The Inclusive club has secured funding for the next three years from NHS and Awards for all. This includes the cost of a mini bus from Hinckley to bring groups across to SiD. After a slow start this is now working well. The State of Mind project is currently a quarter funded for next year and still needs a further £3K which we are confident we shall find. Putting ball stop netting between the Football pitch and parking by the MUGA is also underway with £1.5K of the £4.3K in place. In response to interest from the U3A, we are setting up Pickleball to be played on the MUGA. This is a game similar to beach tennis played on a half size court with hard wooden bats and airflow balls. We are also looking to see if there is any interest in Korfbal, which is similar to netball but played with mixed teams and has different rules. U3A continue to play table tennis. An elite table tennis group meets twice a week.

Meadow View Farm come twice weekly for their PE sessions. Linda Williams Dance Academy continue to expand and offer more classes. Our over 50's clubs continue to be popular, as are Pilates, Tai Chi, Mature Movers, Belly Dance, Karate, Fall prevention, Personal fitness and Futsal. The Mosaic group for severely disabled people continue to meet weekly.

Sections

Football. Deford Football Club has joined with Caterpillar. They run 23 teams, mens, womens, vets, boys, girls and inclusive. We are very disappointed with the disruption due to the damage to the pitch at Kirkby Road during the making of the footpath. This is still not appropriately repaired to the required standard, worrying as the new season approaches. Women's teams have done particularly well and are in a position to win both cup and league.

Tennis. The Club has had a good year with mens, womens, winter and summer league teams. Junior teams have also played and junior coaching from 4 to teenagers remains busy. In addition there is adult coaching at all levels, and a great deal of Inclusive work on both a regular basis and also special events.

Striders. The Club has grown with many new members and are on their 6th couch to 5K course, with many participants going on to join the club. Sadly in February, their Life President passed away following a heart attack during a 5K Parkrun at Braunstone Park. We are planting 2 trees a rose and a bank of wildflowers in memory of our dear friend Steve. Striders are renaming their local race after Steve.

Netball. This a growing club and are enthusiastic members of the SiD family. We are delighted to have them on board and making good use of the MUGA.

Bowls. Numbers have grown and the Club is very busy with various leagues. They are very please with the green under the care of greenkeepers, Chris Mews and Neil Harris.

Gym. The Gym is regaining it's footfall in the wake of Covid, with more of our older members having the confidence to return. Health referral work continues and we have an influx of younger members, which is good.

Scouts. All the sections of Scouts are a valued part of our Sid family, and provide a great opportunity for many, many youngsters in our village.

Squash. A new leadership is now in place in the Men's section, and we look forward to working with them and integrating more closely into the SiD Family. The women's section has again excelled in their league.

Finance

Sid has received £34K of grants over the year. Finances are sound and our reserves stand at £48K

We value the support of the Parish and District Councils.

SiD remains a special place with a strong ethos of excellence, equality and inclusivity. We have a huge team of passionate volunteers and excellent staff members.

It remains a privilege to be Chair.

Sue Houghton

**Report from:
Jill Townsend
Chairperson Botcheston Village Hall.**

Botcheston Village Hall Report.

Our Village Hall opened its doors after the pandemic at the beginning of 2022. It had not stood totally idle as it had been used by the Botcheston support group and volunteers as a supply hub for residents to access fresh groceries. Since then, we have a very strong and enthusiastic new committee of 12 members and a team of volunteers acting as 'friends of Botcheston Village Hall'.

Our events remain very well supported and this year started with Burn's Night in January. This was catered for with Haggis by our local Publican and involved a Piper, a disco and lots of whiskey.

We have recently had a St George's Quiz Night and are currently in the midst of planning our Coronation Party involving a Fun Day with a live singer, BBQ, stalls, Prosecco bar and activities for children.

Later this year we have planned a Car treasure Hunt and fish and chip evening, Casino Night, Harvest Supper, Bonfire Party and Christmas Party. We also have a monthly Film Night.

The Hall is regularly hired out by local groups such as the WI, Desford Striders, Yoga, Jowett Car club, French and History Societies, Kirby Grange etc. It is also well used for Weddings and Anniversaries, Christenings, Baby Showers, Children's Birthday Parties, and a whole variety of local celebrations.

We have recently been granted a License, so we are able to run a Bar at all our functions and are able to offer to run a Bar for some Hall Lettings. We also have WIFI installed so that we can now take contactless payments and offer it to Hirers. Recently a new website has been created

<https://bvhall.co.uk> and we appear on Facebook!

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Council for all the support we have received. I would also like to thank Colin Crane and Andrew Norton for their attendance and advice at meetings.

DESFORD VILLAGE HALL**Registered Charity No. 226627****Annual Report 2022 - 23**

Charitable Objects: Provision and maintenance of a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants of the parish of Desford, without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions for the said inhabitants.

Governance: In accordance with the constitution for Desford Village Hall, the charity is managed by trustees. The total number of trustees can be up to 14 but we currently have 8. With the departure of Diane Gudger to pastures new, I would like to put on record, our thanks for all the Craft Fairs that she has masterminded during her time on the committee. Fortunately, Sue McMillan has re-joined the committee and stepped forward to help Molly organise the Craft Fairs.

All the trustees on the Management Committee are volunteers and have continued to provide their time and effort to work and support the running of the hall for the benefit of the community. The Annual General Meeting was held in September but once again, no members of the public attended.

Performance & future plans:

The hall suffers from damp and we have recently had the building, including the adjoining cottage, surveyed. The surveyor's Report has arrived and the committee now need to ascertain the work needed and to plan how this will be done and paid for. A daunting prospect, but work needs to be done and we will look for grants wherever possible.

Trustees check the hall on a rota basis, to ensure that everything is in order after bookings.

We currently have 7 regular bookings and the number of casual bookings has increased in the last few months. The Village Quiz, Craft Fairs and Concerts are popular community events and in 2022 we successfully organised a concert independently of Live & Local. Having said that, we are immensely grateful to Live & Local for their support, which enables us to have performers of high calibre. Many thanks to Dave Cowper for continuing to take care of all the admin for these concerts. Thanks also to Dave & Lynne for decorating our tree for the Christmas Tree Festival.

Further thanks to Dave for looking after our website, facebook and Instagram and for setting up a WhatsApp group for those on the committee with mobile phones.

Thanks are due to Yvonne and Molly for dealing with casual bookings, to Mary for looking after the accounts and regular bookings, and all the committee members for their time and care for the hall. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Parish Council who are the guardian trustee.

Finances remain healthy but as intimated above, there are likely to be huge costs to carry out the necessary work to secure the future of the building.

The management committee has begun discussions with Desford & District Heritage Society, to investigate the future use of the hall for storing the parish archives and displays to illustrate the history of the building, but this cannot be progressed until the damp problem has been dealt with..

Pat Crane

Chair

May 2023



ANNUAL REPORT - MAY 2023

Sponsorship circulars were distributed to residents early April 2022. Donations received go towards funding our annual planting requirements for hanging baskets and bedding plants; the library platinum bed; purchasing new equipment (eg new hanging baskets); and general maintenance etc.

Projects currently on-going include the Blue Hearts wildflower verge near the cemetery; checks of the hanging basket brackets for safety purposes prior to planting; new baskets have been purchased for High Street to replace the existing ones which were proving very difficult to erect and water; flatbed railway truck from Snibston which will be sited on Lindridge Lane and then subsequently planted; and the installation of new hanging baskets on Kirkby Road along the terraced houses near the Co-op.

We are in the process of purchasing a new bowser for watering due to the existing ones being in need of replacement.

Future project ideas currently being looked into are the possibility of paying a contractor to create tiers on the Lindridge Lane bank (near the Miners' Wheel) which would prevent soil erosion and make it easier to manage; and hanging basket trees (as seen in Earl Shilton). Also, in line with the heritage of Desford, a wicker sculpture (perhaps on the newly created bed outside the library); a miner/mining sculpture; or metal planes on sticks of different height placed in flower beds.

Fund-raising events held over the last financial year have included running Beer Tents at the Heritage and Scarecrow Festival weekends; a 'Ceilidh' social evening; the Christmas Wreath Workshop; a Quiz night; and a 'Night at the Races' evening held in conjunction with The Blue Bell pub. Further events are planned this coming year.

Daffodils & snowdrops have been planted in various areas around the village, along with primulas in the various beds and planters.



DES福德 HERITAGE ANNUAL REPORT - MAY 2023

Desford Heritage have had an extremely busy but successful 12 months. The year has been divided between our ongoing work associated with the development of Desford Heritage Trail and our support of community events.

The Desford Heritage Trail has been in existence since 2017 when it started as guided walks. We set ourselves a target of raising the necessary funds to create a physical trail with 16 information boards positioned at key heritage sites around the village. We have been extremely proactive in our fundraising efforts over the past few years and also applied for some grants. We were delighted by how quickly we were able to raise our target. The 16 boards were written by the Chair of the group and proof read by members of the Desford & District Heritage Society. A member of the group did all of the graphic design work for each information board and, again, worked closely with the archivists at DDHS to collate the most appropriate images. So much hard work went into this that we felt that an official opening of the trail with a launch event was fitting. This event ended up being the Desford Heritage Festival which took place in July 2022. The idea was to showcase and celebrate all of Desford's vast history by dividing the village into different time zones. Each zone would be full of re-enactors, musicians, actors, vehicles etc. Once again, we had to do a huge amount of fundraising and gain sponsorship from local businesses to make this vision a reality. The result was a highly successful weekend which not only opened the Desford Heritage Trail, but provided our community with a much needed celebration in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

Desford Heritage were then approached by St Martin's Church to support their Christmas Tree Festival by taking on Santa's Grotto and the market on the Church Green. We were only too happy to support this fantastic event which was celebrating its 20th year. We approached many different stall holders over several months and managed to get a diverse range of stalls and also a range of entertainment such as brass bands, live singers and a school choir. For our first year, we were delighted with how well it went especially as we had to compete with the World Cup England game on the opening night. The Church Centre was transformed into Santa's Workshop with a magical grotto at the back of the room and a range of stalls and games in the main room. This was an incredible success! We had to replenish the gifts from Santa due to how many visitors we had! We really enjoyed being able to help St Martin's launch Christmas in the village.

Finally, following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II last year, we knew that a Coronation would be taking place in 2023. The team felt this was an appropriate historic occasion for us to help the community to mark and the councillors on the team assured us that this was welcomed by Parish Council. The Coronation Celebration was designed to give residents a place to come together after the formal ceremony had been watched on television and celebrate as a community. It was planned as a totally free, family friendly afternoon/evening. Despite challenging weather the Church Green was once again full to bursting as residents joined in with all of the festivities on offer.

The year ahead promises to be a busy one once again. Our projects include an extension of the boards on the Heritage Trail, a trail guide that can be purchased so that people can complete the trail independently should they wish to, more guided walks for the public and private group bookings, the establishment of The Desford Heritage Family History Group and supporting St Martin's Church at Christmas once again.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with this team of extraordinary volunteers on all of the projects that have filled the last 12 months and we are so very excited about what's to come. May I take this opportunity to thank Desford Parish Council for your ongoing support – it means so very much.

Kind regards,

Kate Twitchin