

## **Denstone Parish Council - Annual Report 2024/5**

Welcome to our annual report for 2024, It is hard to believe that another year has passed, it certainly does not seem a year since I was reading out our last annual report highlighting all the activities that the Parish Council get involved with on behalf of our village and residents. As I have previously done at the beginning of our annual report, I would like to recognise the time, effort and energy dedicated to another 12 months of support from all our councillors. As we all know this is a volunteer role, and one which the team dedicate themselves to because of their connection to the wonderful village we live in.

This year, as always, has seen significant contribution in many ways that bring benefit to our Village. As you may be aware, each of the councillors takes the lead on some key areas of responsibility, meaning that the workload is shared amongst the team. Although this is still perhaps not quite evenly distributed, it does allow us to bring some focus to our activities. This year's report will not cover all accountabilities, but it will highlight some of the significant activities undertaken. While smaller activities are important and contribute significantly, this year's Annual report will focus on projects that have been ongoing for a considerable period.

Regarding **Highways**, Councillor Shermer has exhibited exceptional persistence in obtaining a response from SCC regarding the feasibility study conducted approximately two years ago. You may recall, we posed the question to the Highways department that we were looking to resolve some key issues in our village including:

- a) Speeding
- b) Parking Safely around the school
- c) Congestion at school time

Despite significant delays and lack of responses from SCC, Cllr Shermer has remained diligent and has recently met with the senior team who are progressing our feasibility study. Along with our Clerk Julie Sadler they have reiterated our concerns and reviewed progress of SCC plans this far. We are now hopeful that this project is back on track, and we will continue to keep you all updated.

Secondly on Highways, another big step forward has been in relation to drains and flooding. We are still not completely resolved, but major strides have taken place. With the work done outside Stone House, it has reduced the flooding seen at that part of College Road. The Tavern landlords have helped reduce flooding outside the pub, resulting in less flooding this year compared to previous years. The work is not completed, and we continue to push for drains along Alton Road and the drains outside the Church to be looked at, but at least we have seen some movement. It is to my mind ridiculous how long these things take to resolve, and thanks to Cllr Shermer and our Clerk Julie Sadler for remaining diligent in this regard.

Next, the **Play Area**, a popular spot for local parents and visiting families. We spend a lot of time and effort in ensuring this play area is fit for purpose. I would like to thank Cllr Flower for all the time he spends each week in reviewing the status of the equipment and the surrounding area, ensuring that it is fit for purpose.

During this year's annual inspection by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, the roundabout had an 'amber' reported issue showing that parts needed replacing. Thanks to Cllr Flower for getting us a great price and sourcing a new company who supported this repair, to the required standards, whilst saving significant costs over our previously used organisation – great job!

Cllrs Edmonds and Shermer continue to work closely with the Head from Denstone College, and through our team of volunteers who perform traffic counts for us, we have demonstrated that the processes that have been implemented by the Head are controlling the traffic generated by the College. Even with the increase in pupil numbers, we are seeing a static level of traffic in terms of volume – this is good news.

We have further seen enhancements to our Village by the placing of 2 new benches that have been donated by Alton Towers. Cllrs Mountney and Wright have been our liaison with Alton Towers, and not only have they donated the wonderful benches this year, but they have also pledged money, along with Denstone Hall Farm Shop, towards the installation of new SIDs on the B5031. This will be a project that we will continue working on into this year.

We commend the Village Hall on their continued role as a real community centre for our Village, and thanks to Cllr Stratton for the ongoing liaison role that you have, which facilitates the connection between the Parish Council and the Village Hall.

We also saw a fantastic remembrance Sunday event held at our War Memorial, I would like to thank Cllr Edmonds for being the Parish Council representative at this event, and it is worth noting the recent drive from the Royal British Legion to increase the membership of our local branch and the events that have been underway to support this wonderful charity.

The final specific call out for our Village this year is that the new emerging Neighbourhood Plan has now been agreed with ESBC and at some point soon, our residents will have the opportunity to vote on the plan in a referendum. This ends 3 years of hard work by the NPMG and the Parish Councillors and we are very pleased to have reached this point.

All that remains for me to say is thanks to all the councillors for another great year, welcome to our new Councillor – Cllr Oldroyd Clark, we look forward to working with you this year. Thanks to our Lengthsman, all our community speed watch team, Scott Doherty and Dave Green, all of whom have given their time for some great causes in the Village on a voluntary basis. I may only have called out just a few, but a big thanks to everyone who devotes their time to the upkeep of our Village, it is greatly appreciated. Lastly, on a personal level, thanks to our Clerk, Julie Sadler, without whom the role of Chair would be impossible, she keeps me well organised.

Here's to a great 2025 for Denstone!!