

ANNUAL REPORT 2004/5

Written by John Bullimore, Chairman of Asfordby Parish Council

Another year gone, another report to write repeating many things that you already know, but no matter. It's difficult to explain to you just how much effort we put into trying to make Asfordby Parish a better place. Decisions that affect Asfordby are very often taken by other authorities but our efforts and input should never be doubted.

We were very proud of being awarded the title "Council of the Year 2004". This is an exceptional achievement and something that I hope reflects not just upon the Parish Council but the Parish in general. Unfortunately, it is sometimes hard to live up to the expectations of some of our residents but it won't stop us trying. We will not be resting on our laurels, we daren't.

The Valley flood alleviation scheme, which we had hoped would have been completed in time for the 2004/5 winter, should, if it has not been already started by the time you read this, be only a few weeks away. It was important that the design was the correct one. Money has been (and still is) very hard to come by but let us all hope that the flood scheme will never be put to the test.

Figures show that our I.T. Centre is being used more than ever before. It's Homework Club is a "godsend" to youngsters who don't have computer access at home and not all families can afford to. It is also well used by older members of the parish, learning how to unravel the mysteries of I.T. Good luck to them! I've decided that I can survive without this knowledge.

A successful Teenage Parent Project is currently being run in the Parish Hall, giving help and advice on the problems that, unfortunately, arise with those in this situation.

The results of our survey on housing needs aren't considered when new developments take place. In fact, we feel that we are in constant conflict with the new planning regime at the Borough Council with, what we feel, are too many inconsistent recommendations being made we feel that the same rule book is being interpreted in different ways by individual officers. We have discussed Melton Council's planning process with other parish councils and found that we share common concerns.

We have recently had a meeting with the Council's new Chief Executive and, while not expecting to achieve all that we would like, we felt that she understood our concerns. The types of housing that are needed in the parish are very diverse, making it such a difficult area that we find it hard to begin to know how to resolve it, but we try. Life is never straightforward, I'm afraid. We have also been discussing with the new Chief Executive the need for the Borough Council to put into place their own developer contribution scheme levied on developments within the parish, proposing that the money would go to the parish council to upgrade or create new facilities that otherwise could not be afforded. Again, we wait with eager anticipation for their response.

Our cemetery extension has started and, with its new gates and ashes burial area now in place and the new burial area grassed, you can already see that, not only will it be somewhere very pleasant to be laid to rest, but somewhere nice to sit and remember your loved ones who are already there. Two generous parishioners have kindly offered to donate bench seats and we would like to thank them very much. The grant that we applied for to complete the second phase of the works has just been agreed and so work should be completed by the Autumn.

I'd like to say thank you to the Youth Club leaders for their hard work over the past year and congratulate them on the projects that the members have undertaken on both local and national concerns. The Parish Council understands the concerns of parents for a need to provide the older youngsters with somewhere to hang out, relax, talk and be together without upsetting local residents. If anyone has any sensible ideas, please get in touch with the Parish Council.

I would also like to congratulate once more everyone connected with Captains Close Primary School, children included, on their excellent Ofsted Report. Well Done; build on it; you deserve it.

Dog fouling is still a major problem, made worse by irresponsible owners who have no sense of civic responsibility. Disgusting.

Finally, a big thank you to all our Parish Councillors who, once again, have worked well together and in the best interests of the parish; to Janice, our excellent Clerk, who keeps us all on the straight and narrow and never stops looking out for what is best value for Asfordby; to our three part-time employees, who all work extremely hard; to our Borough

Councillors, Mal Sheldon and John Robinson; to Don Tempest, our Vice-Chairman, who is also a Borough Councillor for a Melton ward but still works hard for Asfordby. A special thank you goes to our retiring County Councillor, Bernard Chapman who, for many years, has worked tirelessly in the best interests of Asfordby Parish. Thank you, Bernard. You deserve to enjoy a long and happy retirement.

The Clerk and myself attended a Parish Councils Liaison Meeting with the Chief Constable at Police Headquarters in Enderby recently, where we heard (and to some extent could understand) his many reasons why beat bobbies, particularly village ones, are so few and far between. Even so, we expect to see more of ours than we are currently seeing. So, "Come back, Tim, all is forgiven."