

I am very happy to present the Chairwoman's Report for Morley Parish Council for the 2008/9 year.

The Council business has included:-

COUNCIL

Two new Councillors have contributed much to the work of the Council. The diverse areas of expertise represented on this council ensures lively discussion, knowledgeable input and the best possible progress of Council business. Councillors have attended training sessions, dealt with consultations on various subjects including Planned Maintenance Schedule, Electronic Planning, have adopted a new Model Freedom of Information Policy, and are currently working on a Contract of Employment, a Recruitment Policy, and a Grievance /Disciplinary Procedure. Throughout the year the Councillors have been guided and assisted by the Clerk who has ensured that Council business, the budget and financial matters have been dealt with quickly and efficiently. The Clerk has consistently carried out his duties in an exemplary way for which we wish to express our sincere thanks.

COMMUNITY

The Council has provided support to the Church towards the maintenance of the church clock etc., Morley Youth Club, Morley Primary School re the railings, the Village Show and Morley Mirror. The Council are delighted Morley Mirror now has an expanded editorial team and look forward to the continued success of this village newsletter which is delivered free of charge to residents and other individuals with an interest in Morley matters. The Council continue to Sponsor the Autumn Footprints Heritage Trail, which will be organised this year on behalf of the council by Mrs. Y Arkless and team, to whom we are particularly grateful. The Council have contributed to a new Village History Project, which we hope will lead to the formation of a group to research a new Village History publication. Work is progressing to repeat the successful Christmas Lights Switch on Ceremony in December 09. The Welcome Pack continues to be delivered to new residents free of charge. All the organisations and the majority of the projects mentioned above are dependent on the work of volunteers, and we thank those individuals who give so much of their time to ensure that the community enjoys the benefits, opportunities and advantages made possible by their commitment. The parish website has expanded to use two addresses www.morleyparishcouncil.co.uk and www.morleyparishcouncil.com and continues to widen access to information about the village and the work of the Council. The amenities provided through the capital projects scheme are all in place, and the work on all projects has been successfully concluded.

ENVIRONMENT

The long awaited speed limits on the A608 and the signs are operational. We believe these measures, along with the new Puffin crossing, will help to keep us all safer. However, there are still outstanding concerns regarding speed limits, weight restrictions and pavements elsewhere in the village. The issue of motorcyclists in Moor Woods is also ongoing. We are by no means complacent, and will continue to press for action in the interests of public safety for drivers, pedestrians and the environment. Following our planting scheme the Parish now has several areas of grass verge which are to be designated 'Roadside Reserves' because of their exceptionally diverse flora. We are delighted to say these areas will be the first

'Roadside Reserves' in Erewash and wish to thank Mark Toms for his work which has made this possible. The Council await the outcome of a grant application to install markers to identify these areas. The native daffodils planted on the triangle at the junction between the A608 and Church Lane provided the most beautiful display this spring, and cowslips and native bluebells are also in evidence elsewhere in the village.

PLANNING

There have been a considerable number of planning applications during the year, and we note with concern that in many instances the Council's recommendations have been at variance with the final decision of the Planning Authority. In particular those relating to Lower Church Lane, which the Council, residents, and others had opposed.

OTHER MATTERS

The presence of Morley Retreat has been a very welcome and important feature of the village for many years, bringing countless visitors to the village, raising our profile and benefiting the community generally. The Council, residents and retreat staff regret the decision of the Trustees to close the Retreat from 30th April 09.

IN CONCLUSION

Being the first woman ever to be elected as Chair of Morley Parish Council is both a great privilege and a great milestone, for which I thank my fellow Councillors and parishioners.

Women continue to be under represented in both local and national government, a 'tradition' left over from a time when women were denied access to the democratic process. I would recommend that the continuation of male dominated governance needs the urgent attention of women in Morley and elsewhere.

Parish Councils, like all other institutions and organisations, function best when men and women work together, combining their intellect and expertise, addressing concerns and working together as equals. I believe we have achieved this in Morley, and I thank the Clerk and my colleagues for their consistently efficient, amiable and lively good-natured approach to the job.

Chrissie Hall
Chairwoman, Morley Parish Council
May 09