

As I come to the end of my 3<sup>rd</sup> and final term as Chair, I look back on what again has been a memorable year of achievement in the village.

The **new classroom block** at the primary school – the Acorn Block – has been opened along with the **new pedestrian entrance** on Welland Road. It is unfortunate that the turning circle was not included; even so I believe the additional entrance has alleviated some of the pressure on Peacroft Lane. We are excited to report that the **Scout Hut** has eventually been demolished to give way to a new and larger hut. This build should be completed by September; we wish them luck with the project. The **Mease Pavilion** was handed over to the Parish Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> September – albeit not completed. Hilton Harriers has been using the facility – but not yet to its full potential, due to the final accounts not being produced by the contractor. It was very sad that, over the Christmas period, the building was subject to criminal damage and graffiti by mindless vandals. This cost in the region of £2000 to repair and caused great inconvenience to those who have worked tirelessly to provide such a valuable village amenity. Plans for the **proposed police station** – to be constructed next to the pavilion – are presently out to tender. We all hope that the build will begin sooner rather than later, as our village can only benefit from regular police presence. The Parish Council is about to begin the tendering process to refurbish the **tennis courts**. This facility is in desperate need of modernisation, as in its present state it cannot be used to its full potential. £60,000 has been earmarked by SDDC for this project, but with the help of Ian Hey, Community Partnership Officer at SDDC, we hope to obtain match-funding – which will then allow us to put a good proportion of the £60,000 towards other projects. Work has also taken place on the **Back Lane Playing fields** on the ditches and at the bottom end of the small football pitch to try and stop the water-logging of the pitches. We are very hopeful that this will work; only time will tell.

The **Village Hall site** has been completed with the children's play area proving very popular. The Parish Council has been asked by SDDC to take over the running and maintenance of this facility; so negotiations are now taking place to ensure certain areas, equipment and planting are in an acceptable state before we take ownership. I'm sure you would all agree it is a vast improvement on what was previously there. Paul Watts, the project manager employed by SDDC to deliver some of the projects highlighted in the **Village Plan**, resigned in July, which increased pressure on the Parish Council to ensure the schedule of planned works continued. The Parish Council Clerk, Clare Orme, took on much of the co-ordination – in an unofficial capacity – and has done a wonderful job; supported by Parish Councillors, who rallied round to make sure we could continue to deliver the needs of our village. 12 out of 16 of the original tasks identified in 2004's Village Plan have now been delivered, a great achievement. **Hilton Community Action Group** (HCAG) has now been formed to, amongst other things, update the plan and the Group is now in the process of consulting with residents. This will enable all those people who have moved into Hilton during the last 4 yrs to also have a say in the future of the village. Anyone wishing to be involved in the group please contact [villageplan@hiltononline.org.uk](mailto:villageplan@hiltononline.org.uk) or Ian Hey, via the PC Clerk.

The **Village Hall** Booking Clerk, Ben Dowell, resigned in February due to other work commitments. We would like to thank him for all his hard work over the past few years. A new Clerk has been appointed, and works in the Village Hall office Monday – Friday 9am-1pm. This has taken some of the work-load off Clare, who has done a fantastic job carrying out the day-to-day running of the Hall's accounts. The end of year accounts have just been sent to the auditor and the PC would like to thank Clare for all her efforts in this mammoth task. There are many

plans for the Village Hall going forward. In the near future, we hope to draw up plans for an "extension" to give us a bigger and better facility, greatly needed as the village continues to grow.

In October, we held a Public Meeting to discuss Derbyshire County Council's choice of preferred locations for a variety of **waste sites**. Hilton Business Park on the Mease was identified as a potential area. We had an overwhelming turnout of nearly 300 residents and Hilton sent over 1000 letters of objection to the Council. We have heard nothing more as yet. The next round of consultation is set for September, as soon as we hear anything we will be informing residents via our website, [www.hiltonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.hiltonparishcouncil.org.uk), [www.aboutmyarea.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk) and the Hilton Directory. The Community Action Group also has a small band of leaflet droppers to get the word out, and we thank them for taking the time to volunteer.

You may have noticed that the **grass bank on Eggington Road** next to the entrance to Peacroft Lane has been transformed over the last 18 months. The Parish Council obtained a cultivation licence for the patch, and the **Gardening Club** took on the project of clearing, planting and maintaining the site. On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank them, they have worked incredibly hard and have transformed it from what was an overgrown eyesore to something which enhances the village and makes me notice and admire it each time I pass. They should be very proud of their hard work. There will be an official opening of the garden on June 9<sup>th</sup> at 5.30pm.

3 areas which represent a continual challenge to the Parish Council are **dog fouling, recycling and anti-social behaviour**. These issues have plagued the Parish Council for as long as I can remember, and frankly we are at a loss to know how best to deal with them. The dog fouling increases year on year, and even with bins and notices around the village, people still fail to clean up after their dogs. The Parish Council will continue to raise awareness of this issue especially on the football pitches on Back Lane and The Mease and urge residents to report any incidents they witness. It is the responsibility of all of us to eradicate this problem - 3 residents of the village have already been fined £80 each, we hope this will deter others in the future. The **recycling** issue still fails to be addressed by SDDC. We are all urged to recycle but unfortunately the planners at the council on 3 occasions have ignored the Parish Council's requests for the major developers to incorporate recycling areas in their housing schemes. The Main Street site is always overflowing. It is worthy of note that any items left at the site - but not in the banks - are not recycled. They are classed as contaminated and go to land-fill - which defeats the object somewhat. If the banks are full, please do not leave items on the ground. Please take them to another centre or back home and try again later in the week. Finally the **anti-social behaviour** of some of the youngsters of the village still continues. Even with the new play areas, a skate park, a huge football club and the Teenage Action Group, they still say there is nothing to do. This village has a great deal more facilities than most villages and I feel this is just an excuse for them to drink and cause a nuisance. Parents must become more aware of where their children are and what they are doing - cases of children being drunk and disorderly and acting in anti-social ways are increasing in our village.

The **precept** rose again this year to £85k, which caused some concern. However, after the article in the Hilton Directory explaining the reasons for this rise, most residents felt more at ease with the increase. Of course we would like not to have to increase the precept at all; however the ever-increasing population and additional amenities that are required to sustain the village do come at a cost. It doesn't help either that SDDC work out the village population based on 2001 figures of just over 2,000 council tax paying households, when we are now nearer

3,000. We have asked SDDC if they can make Hilton a special case, but unfortunately this is not possible. We can only hope they update their figures very soon.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to **thank** our staff, Lengthsman Derek Woolliscroft and Groundsman Sam Bevins for all their hard work and dedication in what is an extremely difficult job of keeping our streets clean and facilities maintained. They are a great team. Also thanks to Paul Stretton, Caretaker of the Village Hall for taking such a pride in the Hall – and tackling each day with the attitude that nothing is too much trouble. Thank you to our District Councillors Amy Plenderleith and Julie Patten for their support in District matters – and there’s been a few... Thanks to Frank Hood, our County Councillor for his help especially with highway matters – we have been assured that the humps and drainage problems on Main Street will be resolved this year...Thank you to Ian Hey, Community Partnership officer with SDDC (and a resident of the village), who has given the Parish Council valuable help and advice with funding and rural issues. Thank you to our 2 PCSOs Kerry Waite and Rob Crane for all their hard work with policing matters in the village - it is obvious they care a great deal about our community as well as providing a much needed visible presence.

A big thank you goes to our PC Clerk Clare Orme, without whose commitment, professionalism, and support the Parish Council wouldn’t function and be the Parish Council we are today. Thank you to my Vice-Chair Jenny Keery, who again has been a wonderful support to me as Chair. Also to Cllr Pete Walton-Knight, for dealing with all the planning applications received at Parish in such a thorough way. Last but not least, my wonderful Parish Councillors who have offered me such great support throughout my time as Chair. I can honestly say visiting and talking to other Parish Councils around the district, there are few Councils whose members are as committed as you. The people of Hilton are incredibly lucky to have such dedicated people who work so hard for them; I am truly proud and honoured to have been the Chair of such a great team. I know you will continue with the same level of support for my successor.

Cllr Lis Kolkman 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008