

This has been another quite straight-forward year, with continued budget pressures that will no doubt increase in 2025-26. It's not clear yet how the Parish Council will sit in the new unitary Council system with the removal of the secondary tier, NFDC, in 2026 – 27. Exploratory meetings and briefings are still taking place before we get a clear picture.

We are continuing to support ongoing maintenance to the Meadow, Footpaths, Beacon and emptying of our waste bins. Also, a reduced s137 grant scheme that helps toward supporting local organisations.

The Phone Box project has now managed to get to the stage where it is fully restored and awaits the next stage in consultation with Culture in Kind. Thanks to James Burton for his hard work in making the Phone Box look like new.

We are still in the early stages of bringing together a Village Design Code but it now looks like a change in NFDC policy may make this document superfluous. If this ends up not being the case, we will at some point be seeking input from residents of the village.

There have been a number of planning applications and these have been mostly supported by the Parish Council, even if Councillors and Officers at NFDC have had a contra view. I am sure we will continue to make decisions based what we feel is best for our Parish and not the views of decision makers in another place.

Could I now thank my fellow Councillors who give up their time for free in support of our Parish? It can sometimes be a contentious job, but I hope they, as I do, feel that it does make a difference and most of the time is worthwhile.

Whilst I am still on the thanking subject, I would like to once again thank our Clerk who continues to support the Parish Council and in particular myself and Cllr Crane in the day to day running of the Council.

Lastly, I want to give a mention to and thank Cllr Crane as Vice Chair. He has been invaluable; he continues to take some of the workload that may in the past have been covered by the Chair.

Lastly, I need to acknowledge the long serving Councillor Cathy Godber who has been on the Parish Council for over 38 years and has decided to step back at the end of this meeting. I wish to thank her for all the work she has done for the Parish as a Parish Councillor. I hope it is not the last we see of her at our meetings and she feels able to join John asking all those awkward questions.

I hope that Council, as a whole, is ready for what could be another difficult year, but working together for the benefit of our Parish I am hopeful that we can make a difference.