# Minutes of the Ockbrook and Borrowash Annual Parish Meeting.

# Held at the Parish Hall, Ockbrook, on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 19.00.

## Present.

Councillors G Maskalick (Chair), J Fraser-Burton, S Fraser-Burton, J Fazackerley, T Stevenson, S Cresswell and K Thomas, S Kitchener (Clerk and RFO) and 25 members of public.

## 01/24 To Approve the Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting, held on the 15th March 2023.

The minutes were approved as a true record and were signed by the chair at the meeting.

## 02/24 Report from the Chair – See appendix 1.

## 03/24 Report from Other Councillors – See appendix 2.

## 04/24 Reports from Outside Bodies – See appendix 3.

## 05/24 Date and Time of Next Meeting.

The next Annual Parish meeting is scheduled to take place March 2025, a specific date to be decided nearer to the time.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 19.45.

Refreshments were served after the meeting.

## **Appendix 1 -** REPORT BY THE CHAIR.

I would like to welcome everyone to this Annual Parish Meeting. It is wonderful to see so many new faces in attendance as well as familiar friends. The Annual Parish Meeting is always a special meeting for the Parish and so it should be. It’s a time where we come to celebrate and hear of the good works of organisations that really shape our Parish life.

Every group, club and organisation here tonight care deeply about our Parish community and adds so much to it in their own special way. I have visited a few over the past year and it has been uplifting to see youth involved in several clubs. May that long continue. It is equally heartening to see the many organisations geared towards adults doing so much to better our community life.

All one must do is walk around the two villages and you can see and hear what is going on. Real community involvement in making Ockbrook and Borrowash an incredible place to live and raise a family. Since the end of the COVID pandemic there has been more community groups active within the Parish than ever before. More people wanting to do things to make a difference.

The May 2023 election brought sweeping change to the Parish Council. We now have 10 Independent Councillors and 1 Conservative Councillor. We all work as a collective and try to do our bit in making the Parish stronger, better, and evolving to meet the needs of the future and fit for purpose. We have been able to make some sweeping changes and some painfully slow changes but changes all the same. We will continue to work in this manner as that is what the people of this Parish have asked for.

One of the big things we have been able to accomplish is taking over the public conveniences at the Coop. We now run this community amenity and we will be asking you, the public as to what you would like to see done with it. The facility is getting tired and needs an upgrade, but we can also repurpose parts of it to other uses for the community as well. This is where we would like your ideas.

Another item that we are keen to develop is Belmont Cemetery. It is completely closed and overgrown. We will be getting it professionally cleared after which we will be wanting to turn it into a usable community asset. Once again, ideas from you the community will be most welcome. Please keep an eye out for future announcements on these two important next steps in enhancing our community.

We will shortly be replanting the Queens Canopy in Deans Drive Park. If anyone or group would like to help you would be more than welcome. Once again, an announcement will be made, and I will ask the Parish Clerk to send you information to your contact emails on this matter. It would be superb if as many community groups had a hand in rejuvenating this area of the park.

As a Parish Council we serve you, the Parishioner and Community groups. As a Parish Council we like to get involved and get our hands dirty. We have been out taking care of hedges, helping when there are flooding issues, being active in protesting to keep green spaces as well as greenbelt in our area and working with local authorities to get the best deals possible for investment into our Parish. I hope you are seeing a difference in approach than in the past. We are not perfect and if we miss something out, please let us know.

There is so much more I could say but I don’t want to drag this out any further as we are here to celebrate the good works of you, the Parishioners and Community groups. So, without further ado, I now ask the respective Parish Council Committees to deliver their reports followed by the most important reports, from you, the community. Then it’s on to enjoying the displays and everyone enjoying some refreshments and a chat.

**Appendix 2** -Reports from Other Councillors.

### A report from the Recreation Committee Chair.

We ran the following recreation events in 2023.

2 summer inflatable and climbing wall events. We hired a more substantial inflatable which both children and adults enjoyed. We held one event on a weekday and one on a weekend. This was well received and the format will be copied for 2024.

The Remembrance parade was well received and the huge majority of the feedback was positive. We will secure the use of a sound company for 2024.

Our very first Parish Youth & Young at Heart Concert was held in October. It was a really good event and we received great feedback. This event will be adopted into the annual plan.

The Ockbrook and Borrowash Christmas light switch on were a huge success and well attended. The feedback from the community has been positive. A similar format will be adopted for 2024.

Christmas trees were again offered by the Parish Clerk with a scaled down offering to reduce costs to the parish.

### Planning and Environment Committee Report for the Annual Parish Meeting – 13th March 2024.

Dear Councillors, community groups and members of the public,

The Planning and Environment Committee are pleased to have made important strides since the election of the new Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council in May 2023. Ockbrook and Borrowash is very fortunate to be a wonderful environment to live in, both from a built and natural environment perspective. We have two distinct and uniquely characterful villages in the Parish, and everyone in the meeting today will surely agree that they are both wonderful places to live.

We are also lucky to have scenic and open countryside right on our doorstep, which I know from speaking to people before and since the election is vitally important for residents.

So, with so much good from an environmental perspective, you might think the Planning and Environment Committee at the Parish Council will not have much to do. Well, you’d be wrong. We can always make the place better for everyone and that’s what we’ve been busy doing.

Crucially we have begun to address the single biggest environmental threat to the Parish and that is from climate change. We have become the first Parish Council in Erewash to declare a Climate Emergency and it is intended that this will give the Council the political mandate for climate change considerations to underpin all of our decision making as we attempt to reduce our carbon footprint.

From this, the Parish Council have accepted an initial working document towards achieving net zero in our operations. We will soon also be beginning the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Parish Council to set the path towards protecting existing and welcoming new biodiversity to the Parish. For both of these strategies, we will be looking to engage with and soak up any available expertise and experience from Parish residents. This is your Parish and we think allowing you to influence what happens in your Parish is of critical importance.

The Parish Council has made strides towards more proactively managing our trees, which provide habitat for birds and other wildlife, water interception to reduce flood risk, shade for those braving the hottest summer days and year-round amenity for all residents and visitors. We have completed a professional tree survey to benchmark the condition of our trees and which identified early any emerging issues with our trees, both of which will help us to plan how we manage them in the future.

The Parish Council has also pledged its unequivocal support for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, a cross-party bill currently going through Parliament. We have made our local MP aware of this and encouraged her to support this as much as she is able to and we hope to see this pass at the earliest possible stage.

The last 12 months have been a tough one for many residents as the Parish and the region suffered from significant flooding and seemingly relentless rainfall. Again though this has shown the strength of our Parish and the power of residents to enact positive change. We congratulate the members and activists of the Ockbrook Residents Flood Group on successfully establishing themselves and forming their action plan to manage flooding. Please know that the Parish Council will support your endeavours at every opportunity, and we hope and anticipate that you will make a big impact to reducing the threat of flooding to residents.

This year, we have welcomed a new contractor – Fox Contracting Services – to take care of the Parish’s green spaces and ecological assets from hedges to parks and cemeteries to our allotments. The committee wishes to thank Fox for their excellent services provided this year. We have received many comments from parishioners about the good work they are doing and the positive impact they are having on the way the Parish looks.

Of course, the Planning and Environment Committee has a core function of representing resident’s views on planning applications and being vigilant when it comes to planning applications that will harm our environment or enjoyment of our environment. We have objected to some key applications that threaten this – the green belt development at Spondon Wood and the conversion of agricultural buildings to an industrial unit on Far Lane, Ockbrook. We have also supported residents affected by the Harrington Green sale by Erewash Borough Council and amplified their calls for a fair consultation on the sale. More recently we have supported them in their calls for developer-funded improvements to facilities and services if and when any planning application comes forward for this land.

Looking to the future, we look to continue where we left off this year. For example, we are going to be looking at how we can encourage positive changes as a Parish Council in relation to potholes in particular Green Lane, Ockbrook. We will be progressing our Neighbourhood Plan when funding is again available from the Government. This will enable a greater local input into planning application consideration and again will need the input of local people who want to shape the future of the parish. We will also be continuing to progress the Parish Council’s biodiversity and climate change action plans. And as always, we look forward to facing new challenges and taking any new opportunities that arise over the next year in the area of planning and environment.

As ever, thank you all for your support of our work.

Ashley Dunn

Chair – Planning and Environment Committee of the Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council

### Cemeteries Committee Report 2024.

**Parish Cemetery Balmoral Road**

The cemetery on Balmoral Road is the only cemetery in the Parish which is still being used for burials and the interment of cremated remains. Over the past year the Parish Council has had work done to pollard a tree which was dangerously overhanging a neighbouring property and also to raise the crown of several trees making the cemetery safer and more accessible. The Cemetery Regulations have been updated and thanks go to the Parish Clerk Sarah Kitchener for her hard work on this.

Going forward we are looking to extend the path, reseed around gravestones, improve the Remembrance Garden by the Pavilion and carry out remedial works to the Pavilion.

**Belmont Drive Cemetery**

The main entrance to the cemetery was located and cleared allowing access and for some initial clearance work to be started, thanks to Councillors Stephen Fraser-Burton and Julie Fraser-Burton for their help. The Burial Ground Charity has been reinstated with the Charities Commission and it is hoped that the Trustees will now be able to source funding to allow further works to be undertaken.

**All Saints Cemetery**

Issues with rubble that prevented the mowing of certain areas were resolved and the graveyard is now being maintained appropriately.

A special note of thanks to Fox Grounds Maintenance for the excellent work they are doing in the cemeteries and throughout the Parish.

### Allotment Report for the Annual Parish Meeting – March 2024.

I presented my first report to the full council meeting in June 2023, a month after being elected and taking on the role of Chair of the Allotment Committee. The report included a list of things that needed attention:

1. Improve security to the Elm Street allotments, at Ladysmith Road
2. Remove trees causing problems with access and light at Shacklecross.
3. Better management of the perimeter hedges around both sites.
4. Replace the locks on both allotments.
5. Review the tenancy agreement.

By this point Cllr Thomas (vice chair) and I had already been to visit and inspect both sites and whilst there had the chance to meet several tenants. In response to Elm Street tenants' concerns about the state of the cart track, I spoke to Dan at Hooks Farm. Within a few hours, he was onsite with his Dad, brother and a small tractor, levelling the track and less than two hours later the job was done.

With bi-monthly inspections restored and carried out by myself and Cllr Thomas, a long waiting list for allotments (21 across both sites), and several plots not being cultivated to a satisfactory standard, quite a few plots changed hands over the summer. By September the waiting list had dropped to 13. In addition to inspections, I have taken on the job of meeting prospective tenants and showing them around the sites, which has helped reduce the workload of the Clerk.

The new Parish Council contractor - Fox Grounds Maintenance – started work in August. They have done some excellent work at both sites, cutting perimeter hedges at both allotments and removing a tree at Shacklecross which was obstructing the cart track and four others that were obstructing the pavement on Draycott Road. Emails of thanks on behalf of tenants have been received and I have been able to pass on my thanks in person to the maintenance team.

During the summer, the tenancy agreement was reviewed, updated and re-written. An Allotment Structures Application Form was added to ensure that structures are suitable both in terms of size and location. New locks and keys were purchased for both allotments and arrangements made for the locks to be changed at the end of September.

In November, I started on looking at how to make the entrance to the Elm Street site off Ladysmith Road more secure. The parish council has a responsibility to protect the site itself and a duty of care to ensure that tenants feel safe whilst working, often alone, onsite. The gate, which until a few years ago. used to be kept locked, can no longer be closed and the wooden posts have both rotted. I have now received three quotes to complete the work and the matter will be discussed at next week's committee meeting. Letters were hand-delivered to 10 residents on Ladysmith Road and Elm Street, informing them of our plans. One letter of objection was received. This issue was discussed with tenants at the Elmcross Allotment Association meeting I attended in January. The general consensus was that a working gate that would be kept closed at all time was a basic necessity, but it was agreed that it would not have a lock on it. A second letter will be sent to residents giving them further details, once we know when the work will be carried out.

Elm Street Community Orchard Champion

Plot 46 was cultivated for many years by Jerry Anderson, along with plot 47. It hasn't benefitted from having a long-term tenant since he gave it up a few years ago which has allowed horsetail and other invasive weeds to take over. A couple of years ago Elmcross Allotment Association had the idea of turning it into a community orchard, a plan that was agreed by the Parish Council.

Since then, in addition to maintaining his own plot to a high standard, Jerry has spent dozens of hours digging over, clearing and covering his old plot. He has just finished removing the couch grass and nettles from the plot and although there is still horsetail at a greater depth, he anticipates that this will be controlled by regular mowing once the grass has established. Due to the change in level between the path and the allotment, Jerry had to lay edging on one side of the plot. This too has been completed. A degree of backfilling was required as well as some grass sowing to tidy up this edge.

The top ¼ of the plot was sown with grass seed last September and has grown well. The remaining grass will be sown this month. In addition to grassing the plot, Jerry hopes to sow a wildflower mixture over the approximately 5 metres of the plot at the track end. This area does not have a significant amount of horsetail so shouldn't not need controlling with mowing. At the other end of the plot there is a compost bin and bags of weeds which Jerry hopes will eventually turn into compost. There are also a load of bricks and broken slabs and old wood which he has offered to take to the tip.

Going forward, he plans to sow this area with grass seed which he intends to do either in September or next March.

Shacklecross Standpipe Champion

After receiving concerns about the state of the stanchions in November, and after discussions with Malcolm Kerr, the tenant who reported the problem, offered to design and build a possible solution. This was completed in a matter of days and photos of his work were shared with me at every stage. and has saved the Parish Council a lot of time and money. He has also very generously offered to build two more replacements with leftover wood that he has to replace another two. His work has saved the Parish Council a lot of time and money.

Some very positive feedback was received from another allotment holder who wrote:

“The work Malcolm has done is superb because he knew exactly what was required in this situation, and the pipes are now sturdy again.”

Our sincere thanks go to Malcolm Kerr for the time and effort he has put into this project and to Hazel Liddington for helping him onsite.

The past year has had its ups and downs, but I am delighted to say that most of what we set out to do has been achieved or is in hand. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the allotment committee, in particular our vice chair, Cllr Kay Thomas, the secretary of the Elmcross Allotment Association, Julie Smith, and to the Clerk for all the time and support they have given me over the past year, which has made my job a lot easier and more enjoyable.

### A report from the Halls Committee Chair.

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Halls Committee report this year will be brief as it deals now with just the Parish Hall.

Throughout the past year a number of maintenance tasks have been undertaken to maintain the standard of the facility and all of this has been achieved well within budget. In addition, the hall is used by community groups and small businesses, providing a useful and popular venue for community events and meetings.

Over the next 12 months we plan some additional work and would like to look at the carparking area for a refresh subject to costs and budget.

Cllr. S Fraser-Burton

Chair Halls Committee

### DCC Report - Ockbrook & Borrowash Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 13th March 2024, (Cllr Robert A Parkinson)

**Budget 2024 to 2025**

At a meeting of the County Council on Wednesday 14th February 2924, DCC set the net budget for 2024 to 2025 at £714.8 million and agreed to a council tax rise of 4.99% meaning a rise of £73.75 to £1551.73 for a Band D property.

The [**Revenue Budget Report 2024 to 2025**](https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=1362) sets out the current financial position and includes the impact of external factors beyond DCC’s control which are putting finances under huge pressure, including higher than expected inflation, rising fuel and energy costs, a continuing increase in demand for services, especially adult social care and children’s services, and an employee pay award agreed nationally but funded locally.

There is an in-year (2023 to 2024) overspend which is forecast to be £34.1 million by the end of the financial year, partially offset by tight cost controls that were implemented from autumn 2023 on non-essential spend and to be mitigated with funds released from earmarked reserves.  There is also a predicted funding gap of around £40 million for 2024 to 2025.

The Revenue Budget Report contains a number of budget savings proposals to support a balanced budget for the term of the 5-Year financial plan up to 2028 to 2029.  The total savings made by implementing the proposals would amount to approximately £66.6 million by 2028 to 2029.

The Council heard that, whilst DCC has set a balanced budget for 2024 to 2025, the financial position remains challenging and that difficult decisions must be made in the months ahead.  Final decisions have yet to be made on all the budget savings proposals, many of which would see some services changing, reducing or stopping if agreed.  Some proposals will need to be considered separately at future Cabinet meetings and be subject to full public consultation or engagement where appropriate, giving residents the chance to have their say before final decisions are made.

The Revenue Budget Report states that, in order to continue to maintain a balanced budget in the medium term, if the savings proposals detailed do not go forward, savings will need to be found from other service areas.

Council Leader Councillor Barry Lewis and Deputy Leader Councillor Simon Spencer reassured residents that all efforts were being made to protect vital services, especially around social care for adults and children.

They both previously welcomed extra social care funding announced by the government earlier which amounts to an extra £7.6 million for Derbyshire in 2024 to 2025.  However, they added that the extra funding was not enough to cover spiraling costs and rising demand, and they had been left with no choice but to push forward with the budget savings proposals and to increase council tax to the maximum allowed by government.

Councillor Lewis said:

“We have always been a well-run, stable and efficient council which has worked hard to balance our books while continuing to provide high quality, vital services to residents who need them.

“It is down to this continuing strong and efficient financial management that we have been able to set a balanced budget for the year ahead, although we know that tough decisions lie ahead.

“The challenges we continue to face are far greater than experienced before and are down to external factors simply outside our control.

“We believe the budget and council tax we have agreed will help us to protect vital services for older and vulnerable people and children which is a priority, but we acknowledge the rise in council tax will not be welcomed by residents with already stretched household budgets.

“We will continue to lobby government for extra funding following success on this in recent weeks and will continue with our call for the significant costs of placements for children in care to be addressed.”

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Budget Councillor Simon Spencer said:

“A lot of hard work has gone into setting a balanced budget for the year ahead but the challenges are far from over as we must make some very tough decisions in the coming months.

“We have received extra money for social care but continue to lobby government for extra funding and for a multi-year settlement which would be very welcome and allow us to better plan for future years.

“Doing our best for Derbyshire residents is at the heart of what we do and while the financial pressures are immense we will continue to work hard to protect the services so many people rely on.”

## **Appendix 3 –** Reports from Outside Bodies.

### 147th Derby (3rd Ockbrook & Borrowash) Scout Group

We are based at 67A Kimberley Road on the corner of Deans Drive Playing Field.

We currently have 65 young members and 14 active leaders.

Our age ranges are :-

* Beaver Scouts 6 – 8 years old
* Cub Scouts 8 – 10.5 years old
* Scouts 10.5 – 14 years old
* There is also an Explorer unit [Pennine] (14 – 18 years) affiliated to the group.

As members of the largest uniformed youth movement in the country of which there are 7,500 groups, we are keen on outdoor activities, camping and hiking etc.

Our aim is to prepare “Young People with Skills for Life”.

We own our Headquarters and the land it sits on.

We have a waiting list for joining and are actively seeking new adult volunteers. If you wish to add a name to our waiting list, please contact us at [bosun@147scouts.co.uk](mailto:bosun@147scouts.co.uk)

YiS

Nigel P Tattersall (Bosun)

Group Scout Leader

147th Derby Scout Group (Charity No. 520639)

We prepare young people with skills for life.

### Borrowash In Bloom 2023-24.

OUR PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST REPORT

* Big Clear Up of Weeds, Debris & Litter along the RHS Judges route with Ockbrook and Borrowash Neighbourhood Network and new Parish Councillors.
* Sponsor Signs replaced on all of our planters.
* A new barrel was installed at the top of Cole Lane.
* Several new sponsors were welcomed.
* RHS EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM awarded a Silver Medal for our displays and a ‘Special Mention’ for our sponsorship signs created by our local ‘Sixpence Designs’.
* We took over the two Parish Council Spirals outside ‘Your Plaice’ and ‘Birds’.
* Our volunteers maintained watering throughout the summer.+
* We were accepted by the Co-Op Local Community Fund for a year and have received funding by them.+
* Attended Remembrance Service.
* Attended Christmas Lights Switch On.

PLAN FOR 2024

* We are looking to enhance our watering sustainability during the summer.
* We hope to replace the planters along Victoria Avenue especially after we had one destroyed by a van crossing the verge and pavement. The new planters will be ‘self-watering’.
* During this Olympic year our planting will reflect the colours of the Olympic Rings: blue, yellow, black, green and red.
* All of our plants will continue to be sourced locally from Collyers.
* We will be joining in the Scarecrow Festival.
* We continue to explore with the Elvaston Castle Trustees the potential for a William Barron display at the bottom of Central Avenue.

NEEDS & WISHES

* We need and welcome more volunteers to help in our work. Volunteers do not need to be gardeners and they can commit to as much or as little time as they can.

FURTHER INFORMATION

* Further information about Borrowash in Bloom can be found on Facebook, on our chalkboard in the Co-Op doorway, or you can join our volunteer WhatsApp group.

### Ockbrook In Bloom, Proposed Activity Report for 2024.

Objectives.

The main objectives of Ockbrook in Bloom are to enhance the appearance of the village, utilizing the work done by the Bloomers since its set up in 2019, as well as engaging the community to participate and enjoy the various events organised by the committee members.

The Wider Community.

We have successfully involved the local primary school, Redhill Academy, together with The Ridings preschool in several ventures: this year, in collaboration with Borrowash in Bloom, we are again hosting a Scarecrow Trail with the theme of The Olympics which are being held in Paris in July and August.

In 2022 we jointly held a Scarecrow Trail, which was highly successful, and raised welcome funds which we split equally between the two villages. We hope to again reprise this success and plans are well advanced, with the event being advertised locally, on Facebook and posters to encourage more people to take part.

In 2023 we held, again jointly, an Open Garden event and were privileged to have the High Sheriff of Derbyshire visit both villages and she followed this up with a further visit at Christmas on behalf of Rendezvous.

Our activities will be limited due to the number of volunteers we can recruit for the various projects and tasks proposed. These projects are outlined below under the following headings:

* Floral displays.
* Flower beds/planters, hanging baskets and bridging baskets.
* Hedges and footpaths.
* Fund raising and events.

Floral Displays.

The floral displays will comprise Pelagoniums, Fuchsias and Busy Lizzies: the colour theme for this year is pink/purple blooms. We hope to alleviate problems of watering by this selection as it was a problem last year with the Begonias.

There are several areas in the village at which planters etc. are situated, these are as follows:

Hanging Baskets.

* All Saints Church
* The White Swan
* The Queens Head
* The Royal Oak
* The Apple Tree (some 30 in total)
* A couple of small troughs at the Preschool.

Barrels (wooden and metal) and Troughs.

* Green Lane
* Victoria Avenue (metal barrels alongside the cricket ground)
* Moravian settlement (rectangular wooden planters)
* Redhill School
* The White Swan
* The Royal Oak
* The Queens Head (some 70 containers, 50+ wooden and 12 metal in total).

The following areas are currently being maintained by Ockbrook Bloomers: some of these were previously tended by Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council employees.

* Victoria Avenue and East bound slip road including the War Memorial.
* Area adjacent to the entrance of The Queen’s Head.
* Triangle section outside The Cross Keys (currently under development).
* All Saints Church yard path borders and tidying of cemetery area.
* Sensory garden at The Royal Oak.
* Wildflower verge and seat outside Far Lane Allotments.

We try to encourage all households to maintain verges adjacent to their homes, however, recognising that this is not always possible we shall endeavour to maintain the verges along with public land in the following areas only:

* Victoria Avenue
* Green Lane ( from The Cross Keys to the Ridings junction)
* The Moravian Settlement (right hand side ascending around the planters)
* All Saints burial ground

Available manpower is likely to restrict our ability beyond sweeping and litter picking and perhaps light hedge trimming. As a result, we would seek to understand the Parish Council’s needs and will then determine if we can make any contribution, All Saints Church’s footpath will be swept as necessary. At present Ockbrook Bloomers and All Saints Parish Committee have been engaged in tidying and planting Spring bubs in the cemetery area.

Engagement Within the Community.

As mentioned, both Redhill Academy and Preschool are involved with plans to celebrate the Olympics. Last year a few members worked with pupils from Redhill to produce a vegetable garden which we hope to build on again later this year.

Moravian Church Well Dressing.

This event will again be held at The Moravian Church from the 22nd to 29th June 2024 to raise funds for charity. Discussions have taken place with Reverend Joachim Kreusel who is very happy for this event to be held I the Church grounds and good progress has been made so far for this event.

Fund Raising and Events Planned for 2024.

The following events are essential to enable us to continue our work:

* Tabletop sale at The Queens Head, Wednesday 11th April.
* Well dressing at The Moravian Church, 22nd -29th June.
* The scarecrow trail (in conjunction with Borrowash in Bloom) 29/30th June.
* Village produce show (circa September).
* Christmas Fayre, Sunday 24th November at The Royal Oak.

From a financial aspect we have been successful with contributions from people who have sponsored memorial plaques in many of the barrels and also from several generous donations from businesses in the village.

Lesson Learned/Future Plans.

We have identified some areas where we need to rethink our strategy and to this end we have tried to use recycled items wherever possible.

We have also endeavoured to adopt a replacement programme of plants and grow more of our own as far as we can.

Finally we shall endeavour to recruit more volunteers through advertising, Facebook and posters around the two villages.

Report prepared by Charles Phillis and Maureen Overton.

05/03/2024

On behalf of Ockbrook in Bloom.

### Ashbrook Youth Group - Report for the Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting, 13th March 2024.

Youth group has now been up & running again since September 2021 after closing in 2018 due to problems with the building.

Starting with weekly attendance of around 30 young people, we now have over 250 members, a regular weekly attendance of around 60 & a massive 78 enjoyed the 2023 Christmas party!!

The youth group is open to young people in our community for school years 5 to 11, with most of our regular cohort ageing from 10 to 14 years old.

Every week we have access to the outdoor MUGA, which allows our users to take part in games such as football & basketball, along with the usual activities including a pool table, table tennis, Xbox, board games & crafts.....& the ever-popular tuck shop!

Tuck shops offers crisps, chocolate bars, drinks, pot noodles & depending on season, items such as loaded hot chocolate, Slush & ice poles.

Seasonal activities can be seen from some of our photos, with young people taking advantage of the opportunity to create Christmas cards & decorations, Valentine, Easter & Mother's Day cards. As well as creating Halloween decorations, Bonfire night treats & decorated biscuits.

Alongside our weekly activities, we have also been able to enjoy fully funded trips for our young people to Rollerworld & the Skytrail at West Park in Long Eaton.

Due to the continuing cost of living challenges to families, during the 2023 school, summer holidays we were also able to provide hot food, at no cost, to our users – hot dogs, pizza & a chippy tea were all enjoyed & sourced from businesses in our community.

The youth group is run by 2 experienced, first aid trained Leaders with the support of 4 regular, dedicated volunteers & additional Committee members.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ockbrook & Borrowash Parish Council & the Ockash Trust for their continued financial support in delivering this valuable community provision.

Leaders – Liz & Kerry

Volunteers & Committee – Christine, Kay, Lisa, Jess, Jono & Chris

### Elmcross Allotment Holders’ Association, Annual Parish Report, March 2024.

Around fifteen years ago, gardeners in Britain were advised to choose plants for arid conditions including hot dry summers because of the effects of climate change. Yet less than five years ago, when it was suggested by one allotment holder at a bi-monthly Elmcross meeting that we should turn to growing rice, and despite the gales of laughter such a remark generated, the idea did not seem so far-fetched. Since early last summer, despite a promising spell of hot, dry weather, it has hardly stopped raining: plots on both Shacklecross and Elm Street have been regularly inundated with standing water over autumn and winter, jeopardising crops and making preparation for the coming season, including winter digging, a non-starter. Extracting winter vegetables from the quagmire elicits a squelch followed by a slurp, as February has been the wettest on record. For home gardeners, allotment holders and farmers alike, climate change has done us no favours while food security becomes an increasingly pressing issue.

Fortunately, there is far more to cultivating a plot than the hard slog of preparing ground, pruning and planting. We are a growing community where relationships are formed and flourish, with plants and produce shared not only amongst gardening friends, but with our local community. It is five years since we attached a couple of ‘help yourself’ boxes by the Elm Street gate, offering spare fruit, veg and plants to passers-by which all promptly disappear as if by magic. Now Shacklecross too has installed a similar system which is proving just as popular, and no wonder. Wonky, home-grown fruit and veg may not be the prettiest, but it is certainly the freshest and tastiest, boasting in most instances organic sources. Working with nature fosters a more respectful attitude to how food chains work; companion planting and spraying with garlic solution or soapy water rather than pesticides deter rather than decimate insect populations. Pity they do not work with the persistent problem of pesky pigeons!

Currently, both sites have full tenancy while the waiting list remains in double figures, and it is gratifying to see plots swiftly changing hands rather than lingering into dereliction. There can be no doubt that allotment gardening becomes more desirable year on year, but success depends greatly upon hard work and dedication although the benefits extend far beyond tasty, organic produce.

**The Highton Cup**

This year, the Highton Cup was won by a long-standing gardener who was determined to find increasing enjoyment and peace from spending more time on his plots. His efforts definitely paid off! The trophy itself takes the form of a massive silver cup, comparable in size to the FA Cup, and was given by the late Eric Highton, founding member of Elmcross, in memory of his father Elijah Highton, both of whom held allotments for many years on Elm Street, and is awarded for the best kept plot over the two sites. Eric always described his plot as a ‘little piece of heaven,’ a sentiment with which most ‘plotties’ resoundingly agree.

**Erewash in Bloom**

Elmcross continues to enter this competition on an annual basis, although it is now judged solely upon photographic evidence. A friendly rivalry between the two sites has ensued for near on a decade with the occasional tie saving face. However, this year Elm Street was awarded Best Allotment site, while an imposter must have relegated Shacklecross to third position. Nevertheless, we can all take pleasure in the recognition of our combined community efforts, although there are few volunteers to attend the prestigious awards ceremony at Morley Hayes!

**AGM**

As well as bi-monthly Elmcross meetings, we hold our AGM in autumn at the Royal Oak, which is well-attended. First comes the business of reports which sums up the view of the gardening year from three perspectives: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Next comes the election of officers where there is rarely any change. Most members appreciate the efforts of the status quo, which includes the Seed Secretary who performs an excellent personal service in providing seed catalogues (supplied by Kings through our affiliation to the National Allotment Society), collecting and collating orders and delivering discounted requirements to members’ doors! This year a vacancy for Show Secretary was filled by a volunteer, so we can eagerly look forward to the reinstatement of our Annual Show, a delightful social event for the end of summer with its colourful classes of fruit, veg and flowers – preserves may also be included and there is even a hint that a barbecue may follow!

Following the necessary business of the evening, the Highton Cup is awarded with certificates for the runners-up, while other trophies, photographs and NAS gardening magazines are on view. New membership cards are distributed, tote subscriptions made, seeds swapped; a buffet is served and the proceedings rounded up with a quirky gardening quiz, all in a warm spirit of camaraderie and good humour.

Attempts to reinstate the annual Elmcross summer barbecue have met with less success since the pandemic, but this year on a rare , dry summer’s evening Elm Street hosted a picnic with invitations to all, including ‘nearest and dearest.’ Although those attending brought their own sandwiches, under the gazebo a table groaned under the weight of sharing plates, which included a tray of home-made scones filled with jam and fresh cream, created by one of our most generous gardeners who is always ready to help anyone. Volunteers also contribute to keeping our two sites functioning; communal areas and grass paths are mown, hedges trimmed, the water supply drained and turned off in October and reinstated in spring to coincide with British Summer time. One resourceful tenant on Shacklecross has carried out repairs to standpipes using materials already to hand and thus saving money for our landlord in cash-strapped times; tenancy agreements were also delivered by hand in this spirit. Free horse muck is regularly delivered to Elm Street while gardeners on both sites can order excellent quality manure from Hooks farm at very reasonable cost. We would like to thank Dan and family for providing this service and for topping the main track on Elm Street – no more worries of damaged exhaust pipes to contend with! Collyer’s also continue to support us, allowing Elmcross members a 10% discount on all goods. Our appreciation and thanks go to all those who go out of their way to help others and maintain these beautiful Parish assets. The new groundworks contractor has made an appreciable difference, taming external hedges and trees thus increasing light levels, whilst we have also benefitted from the resulting logs and chippings.

Finally, our thanks go to the Parish Council for recognising the importance of allotment sites and to Sarah Cresswell in particular, whose enthusiasm, practicality and can-do philosophy in her role as Parish Council Allotments Chair have resulted in resolutions to long-standing issues and concerns, enabling gardeners to carry on enjoying their own ‘little piece of heaven.’

Julie Smith, Secretary

Peter Ball, Chair

Elmcross Allotment Holders’ Association, March 2024

### 3rd Ockbrook Brownies, Guides and Rangers

This past year has seen a busy one for Ockbrook Brownies, Guides and Rangers

February saw our rangers sleep in Wollaton hall with Girlguiding Nottinghamshire, they slept with Titus the dinosaur.

We went on our first international to Disneyland Paris in May, taking 45 Brownies, Guides and Rangers. It was an amazing experience for all and something we are hoping to continue to be able to do.

A trip to Cadburys world followed with lots of chocolate being eaten.

July saw our annual summer residential, this year to Wales. We went to Cardiff, played in the beach and swam in the sea. A great experience for some of our girls who had never been to the beach.

A ranger only sleepover followed for our 13+ girls giving them more independence and opportunities.

Remembrance Day was well attended this year, something we are always very proud to be a part of.

The guides loved litter picking and leaflet dropping trying to engage with the community they are based in.

The rangers learnt some life skills including how to fillet a fish whilst the brownies learnt some cooking skills.

More recently we’ve gained 2 new brownie helpers, a DofE volunteer who loves it that much she’s decided to stay, a young leader and a leader in training. All these young members are an asset to our leadership team and are doing really well.

We love the variety our units bring and can’t wait for another fun filled year which includes an action-packed adventurous holiday, a theme park trip and lots of fun activities along the way.

We do have spaces in Brownies, Guides and Rangers if anyone is looking to fill a Thursday evening!

Bex, Hilary, Tregi, Freya

### Ockbrook Redhill WI, 52nd Annul Report, 1st April 2022-31st March 2023.

This is the 52nd Annual Report of Ockbrook Redhill WI. Another year of uncertainty! At our last AGM numerous people were nominated for the President’s position but no one was willing to take on the role. Our adviser Nancy Hawksworth told us that if no one came forward to become President, then our Institute would have to close. She returned in June to hear that Steph Clubb had shown interest.

**New President** – On the 7th of June it was proposed that we co-opt Steph Clubb onto the committee with a view to her becoming elected as our president at the meeting the following week. This was passed unanimously. At the same committee meeting we heard that Janet Pinchbeck, Sue Walker and Helen Rigley felt that it was time for them to step down from committee.

On the 3rd of November sadly, Steph Clubb resigned from the WI with immediate effect. In her words, she has decided that she was the wrong person for the WI as it stands.

I’m sure we all valued the work Steph had put into our WI, not only as president, but her produce demonstrations and other contributions over the years. We were extremely sad to see her go.

Also, sadly, joint secretary Julie Bailey decided to step down from her role. We all valued the effort and enthusiasm Julie put in and were sad to see her step down. Our committee meetings have been mostly face to face a couple have been held via zoom.

Membership at the end of the year 31st March 2023 is 39 two of whom hold dual membership. We welcomed 5 new members .The average attendance over 11 meetings was 22. The average attendance at committee meetings was 7. The Committee members from 1st April – 31st March 2023 were as follows:

* Treasurer Denise Archer
* Vice President/Outings Secretary/WhatsApp Sue Maclaine
* Assistant Secretary – No-one appointed but Sue Walker took minutes for the members meetings.
* Committee Minutes Secretary Linda Aldred
* Vice President Press Officer and Facebook Michelle Dymond
* Registration Officer Margaret Scott
* Competition Judy Langworthy
* Programme Secretary – Sue Maclaine
* Sick Visitors As when needed a WI member with a connection to the individual will visit.
* Craft Leader – Michelle Dymond
* 50/50 Club Janet Pinchbeck
* New Members/Visitors - Rosemary Brown
* Refreshments and Birthday flowers Ann Ramsden
* Raffles and Prizes Committee members Boards - Committee members will provide boards as and when needed.

After lockdown we were meeting at The Moravian Lecture Hall but were told in early November that only 30 people could meet there so we quickly booked The Parish Hall for our Birthday party and subsequent meetings.

**Programme** – The programme was pre-arranged by Helen Rigley up to November 2022 and then Sue Maclaine took over.

**50/50 Club** – This has been ably run by Janet Pinchbeck and we have 40 members and friends who now pay up front.

**Press Officer & Facebook** – These roles have been taken on by Michelle Dymond promoting us in Inside’72 and latterly she has been doing our Newsletter.

**Birthday Flowers** – We give everyone celebrating a birthday a small posy of flowers . The committee have recently agreed that every decade reached is an important birthday. So if we are made aware of a member’s birth year we will acknowledge it with a small gift.

**Trips**

* In May 15 of us attended a meal at the Queen’s Head.
* In June 16 members attended Garden 34 at Duffield.
* In July 3 of us plus 2 dogs enjoyed a morning walk round Elvaston Castle.
* 7 members joined Richard Felix on one of his Ghost Walks in October.
* In November 5 of us enjoyed an afternoon tea at Breadsall Priory.
* In February 13 members enjoyed a curry at the Tamarind in Spondon.

Hopefully there will be more outings to follow.

**Produce** – Steph Clubb and Janet Pinchbeck arranged our Produce meetings and Steph Clubb demonstrated.

**Craft** – in March ideas were forthcoming to make a Scarecrow for the village competition in June for the Platinum Jubilee.

**Derbyshire Link** – All of our members with email receive ELink which is funded by the WI. There are. Members who still choose to receive a hard copy of Link and we facilitate this by them paying a top up fee of £3.30.

**Showtime** – This was organised by DFWI being held at the County Show at Elvaston Castle.

The WhatsApp Group is one of the ways we keep member’s informed. More importantly Michelle produces an informative, colourful and professional newsletter each month which gives members a full picture of what’s going on in our WI. Many members have sent their praises for the publication. Facebook page followers have increased due to the sterling work of Michelle.

Wenda Web and Margaret Scott continue to be on the DFWI Show Team and Margaret is also on the Recreation and Training Team, she is also a DFWI trustee.

Denise Archer has done an excellent job keeping our finances in order and as moved us forward with online banking.

We would like to thank all members of the committee and institute members for your support throughout the last year. It has been a difficult time, coming through resignations and changes in committee. We moved our meeting venue twice whilst still trying to carry on as normal as possible . Sue Maclaine and Michelle Dymond reluctantly agreed to be vice joint Presidents to keep our institute going. We have both had too much going on in our private lives apart from taking on Social Events Officer, Speakers coordinator, Harrington group reps, MCS rep, Social Events Officer, Communications/ Social Media/ and Craft leader. We have just about managed to keep our heads above water, although this year has produced many challenges which have sometimes been difficult to deal with. I hope that next year will run more smoothly and that our WI will go from strength to strength.

### The Ockbrook and Borrowash Community Food Bank.

The Ockbrook & Borrowash Community Food Bank was set up in May 2020, soon after the first Covid-19 Lockdown. It grew out of an initiative begun by the Vicar to support local people in need throughout the lockdown. Local people supported this immediately, with donations of food, finances and time volunteering.

Since November 2022, the Food Bank has been based at the Borrowbrook Homelink, on Chapel Row in the centre of Borrowash, where customers can come to collect food parcels they have requested, enjoy a hot drink and a chat.   In addition to offering a range of non-perishable items, after joining the Co-op’s Foodshare scheme in 2022, we are now able to offer our customers fresh items each week, such as fruit, vegetables, salad and bread which have just passed their sell-by dates.

Over the past four years we have support nearly 50 households across the parish, including a few in neighbouring areas.  The cost-of-living crisis saw a marked increase in the number of people needing support each month, but since last autumn, we’re pleased to report that have begun to level off.

There have been two main collection points at which people have dropped off donated items for collection:  Borrowash Co-op and the Parish Hall in Ockbrook.  However, following a recent meeting, the Food Bank Team (Rev Tim, Sarah Cresswell, Dan Bailey and Fiona Dimelow) decided they would use some of the financial gifts given over the last few years to purchase items for customers for the foreseeable future and the donations points would, for the time being, cease to operate.

We are grateful to the many individuals and groups who have proffered such amazing support to this local initiative over the last few years, including Borrowash Co-op, Church Wilne Rotary Club, Borrowbrook Homelink and  Ockbrook & Borrowash Parish Council.

We hope that the time will come when there is no need for a Food Bank locally, but whilst there is a need for our service, we will continue to offer this practical support.  As we do that we are deeply grateful to all who continue to generously support this local initiative run by and for local people.

### Report for Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday, 13th March 2024, By Ockbrook and Borrowash WI

Ockbrook and Borrowash WI continue to meet on a monthly basis at the Ashbrook Centre and our membership is very consistent, with 34 members currently, which is an increase of 7 from this time last year.

Our weekly Chair Yoga classes have proved popular. Our Chair Yoga Instructor, Carolyn Collinson is instrumental in the success of the group, with her yoga skills and wonderful sense of humour. There is a 50/50 split of WI members and people from our local community taking part and a number of friendships have been formed at the social sessions which take place after the exercise classes. Our 2 objectives when we formed this group were that it would provide reasonably priced exercise opportunities for our WI members and the local community (as there was little available at the time) and that we would provide a social opportunity for people to mix and make friends. We feel that we have achieved our objectives and are extremely proud of the service we provide.

At our WI November meeting, following some advice from our floral experts in the WI, all our members produced a wreath, which they were able to take home and put on their front doors ready for Christmas. It was a good evening and everyone was pleased with what they had made.

In December we held our WI Christmas Meeting and enjoyed a lovely buffet organised by the WI Committee and were entertained by the Draycott Sounds Choir, which created a really Christmassy feeling.

At the WI March meeting our two speakers will be talking about Historical Hats and we are looking forward to making Spring hats in social time and then wearing them at the April meeting.

We have a new programme in place for 24/25 with interesting speakers and an opportunity for our members to observe demonstrations and then have the opportunity to make an item themselves.

None of this would be possible without the Parish Council, The Ashbrook Centre and the staff who work there, so thank you very much.

Pauline Atkin and Jackie Flint

Joint Presidents

Ockbrook and Borrowash WI

### Borrowbrook Home Link , Annual Report to Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council, March 2024.

We continue to support the older adults of our parish in living independently in their own homes by providing helpful information from our office, located in the heart of Borrowash. Our bright and cheerful magazine is full of interesting articles, advice and local news. The magazine remains a positive and welcome addition to our activities for our members and their families. The Easter cards, birthday cards, Christmas cards and newsflyers continue as per norm.

The Monday Warm Space and Lunch supported by the Coop (Food store) and the Ashbrook Trustees continues to grow in numbers and remains very a popular meet up for our seniors. We are able to help our seniors in the Parish with a low cost and tasty hot meal, this will help their pensions go further in these times of rising costs, as well as an opportunity to meet friends for a chat.

In 2024, we are looking to reach out to more local seniors by developing a home visit befriending service. We intend to start with a small number of visits and build a team of volunteer befrienders. We hope that this will become a key service that we can offer in the future.

Borrowbrook continues to be a key member of our community by joining with other community groups. In this way we can help our members stay linked in with their community. The local support from both local businesses and families throughout the past year has been incredible.

We continue to offer a home to our local Food Bank at our premises on a Wednesday morning and promote their service in our magazine. This is working well and growing awareness of our small charity.

During 2023, the continuing impact of Covid pandemic has affected our funding, as the general demand for grants has grown substantially. However, it has been a positive year for our small charity.

We are also very fortunate to receive continued donations and support from individuals, churches, groups, pubs, shops, clubs and organisations from around the parish which keeps our charity ticking over. Both our Parish Council and the Derbyshire County Council continue to provide vital grants towards the running costs of Borrowbrook Home Link. These grants are not only significant in keeping our charity running but they also act as a signal to other funding sources that we are a worthwhile organisation which can be trusted to spend money wisely.

Although financial constraints obviously have some effect on how we run the charity we are committed to ensure that we do everything we can to keep Borrowbrook going for both the active older adults and those unable to leave their homes. We try to help all our seniors to feel a part of the community and a valued member of our society.

Our staff, trustees and loyal team of volunteers stay committed to reducing loneliness and improving residents’ wellbeing.

Rachel Page

Project Co-Ordinator

### Church Wilne Rotary Club

Church Wilne Rotary Club and Satellite section endeavour to support as many local  Charities and organisations as possible.

We raise money at events and collections in various ways which include our Christmas collections around the villages and static collections at supermarkets. We hold several other fund-raising events over the year to raise funds, our annual Horse ride event being the largest of these.

We are always looking for like-minded people to come and join the club as either a full member or be a Friend of the Club.

Please see below the money Church Wilne Rotary have donated  in the last 12 months to local and Derbyshire charity/organisations.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Roberts President RCCW

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Where spent | Who to | Club/group | Amount | Totals |
| Local (Ockbrook, Borrowash, Draycott Breaston) | - | - | - | - |
| - | Ockbrook/Borrowash food bank | M | £1,000 | - |
| - | Senior citizens afternoon tea | M | £760.00 | - |
| - | Breaston U14s football club kit | S | £500.00 | - |
| - | Friends of St Chads | M | £1,100.00 | - |
| - | Canaan Trust | M&S | £625.00 | - |
| - | Ridings Preschool | M | £400.00 | - |
| - | Borrowbrook Homelink | M | £400.00 | - |
| - | HomeStart Erewash | M&S | £2,800.00 | - |
| - | West Park School | S | £750.00 | - |
| - | VIP (pensioners club) | S | £389.40 | - |
| - | EcoGreenhouses (all local schools) | M | £500.00 | - |
| - | Easter bunny run | S | £587.26 | - |
| - | Contribution to defibrillator at Bartlewood Lodge | M | £200.00 | - |
| - | Odyssey Collaborat | S | £500.00 | - |
| - | Lynette tree sculpture | M | £500.00 | **£11,011.66** |
| Derbyshire | - | - | - | **-** |
| - | Derbyshire Air Ambulance | M | £2,461.13 | **-** |
| - | Derbyshire Asbestos Trust | M | £1,000.00 | **-** |
| - | Derby County Community Trust | M | £50.00 | **-** |
| - | Derbyshire Blood Bikes | S | £501.64 | **-** |
| - | Treetops Hospice | M | £2,020.00 | **-** |
| - | Derbyshire Mountain Rescue | M&S | £2,520.00 | **-** |
| - | Derby Downs Syndrome | S | £250.00 | **£8,802.77** |

### Ockash Trust Report for Parish Meeting March 13th 2024.

This last year the Ockash Trust has continued its work in supporting the needs of children and young people in the Parish.

Applications are made for Awards and Rewards. This last year, Awards have been granted to Ashbrook Junior School, Borrowash Youth Group and the Borrowash Youth Development Football Initiative, with other group grants currently in the pipeline. Individual applications have been for a variety of confidential needs.

Rewards are granted to children who have gone above and beyond. This last year our Rewards have included rewarding a child supporting a sibling through cancer treatment, another child who took the initiative to raise money for an oversees charity appeal and a child who made specific outsourcing achievements against the odds. This child gained such self-confidence, that to our knowledge he hasn’t taken his medal off since his presentation!

Throughout the year we have also worked on raising community awareness of Ockash. As part of this we invited all Yr3-Yr 6 children at the Ashbrook and Redhill Schools to design a new logo for us. The winner was appropriately rewarded, and our new logo is now in use on our newly designed posters etc.

This year we have given nearly £1,700 In Rewards and Awards. We need to raise money to divert it to where it is needed. We try to organise events that are fun, and community based. These include The Bargain Trail, The Duck Race, the Ockash Trust Quiz and the Pre-Christmas Toy Sale. These fundraisers plus donations and grants are our only sources of regular income. On occasion we do benefit from small donations from people who have been touched in some way by the Trust, and this year in particular we were so touched that the family of the late Lynette Shandley chose Ockash as their preferred charity for donations in Lynette’s memory. We were also very grateful to be gifted over £2000 by the Coop as part of their Local Community Fund.

Our small group of Trustees and volunteers give of their time freely. We would like to thank all local businesses who have generously supported us in a myriad of different ways. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join our Trustees or offer help at any of our fundraising events.

Sadly, after being a part of Ockash since its formation in 1998, Huw Morgan is standing down from the Trust as he prepares to move out of the Parish. Huw thanks all past and present Trustees and Committee members for all their hard work across the decades, and he takes with him a host of happy and positive memories. So, you see why we need new members! We can easily be contacted via our website or social media. We also have leaflets around the villages should anyone wish to learn more about the Trust.

Thank you to everyone who supports the Ockash Trust in whatever way, as we continue to support children and young people in our community.

Val Bulman (Co Chair) & Huw Morgan (Co Chair)

### Borrowash Repair Cafe Report.

The seeds for this community initiative were sown in mid-October 2022, after Sarah Cresswell had a short informal chat with Gwen Lovegrove (Bookings & Lettings Officer for Borrowash Methodist Church) to find out if the church hall happened to be free on a Saturday morning once a month. The idea of setting up a Repair Café turned out to be something that Gwen had also been thinking about and she immediately agreed to help set it up. Following our chat, Sarah contacted the co-ordinator of the Wirksworth Repair Café who kindly sent us copies of their policies and paperwork which saved us a lot of time when it came to designing our own forms. Sarah also spent an afternoon at a Derby Repair Café session with a member of the organising team, which was really helpful.

In early November we had our first Steering Group meeting to discuss how to move the project forward. At this meeting, it turned out that Jackie had a lot of experience of writing risk assessments and offered to take care of the health and safety side of things for us. What a stroke of luck! Gwen contacted insurance companies and liaised with the church and Fiona volunteered to run the monthly café. Sarah drafted a constitution, which, once agreed and signed enabled Huw Morgan, with his knowledge of all things local, to submit grant applications to our local Co-op and Central Co-op Funeral based in Borrowash. Both were successful and provided the funds necessary to cover our initial set-up costs (public liability insurance, Repair Café International membership fee, venue hire, refreshments, spare parts, printing, volunteer lanyards and other stationery).

To make it work we needed a team of willing and able volunteer repairers. The steering group, all of whom have lived in Borrowash for many years, spread the word as widely as possible and in mid-November, an informal meeting was organised at the Methodist Church Hall for anyone interested in volunteering. About 20 people attended, most of whom signed up to volunteer straight away (no arm twisting necessary!) either as repairers or to offer general support at monthly sessions and most are still involved now.

By the end of November 2022 with a business bank account open and a WhatsApp group to keep volunteers informed of developments, it was time to take the plunge and announce our grand opening on Saturday 21 January 2023 less than three months after Sarah and Gwen had met for the first time. There was still a lot of work to do for us all, but the steering group were determined to be as ready as possible for the big day.

Two weeks before we opened, we finally found a Borrowash-based PAT tester willing to offer her services for free and a second meeting was organised to give volunteers the chance to see the layout we were planning, answer questions and take on board any suggestions.

The big day arrived, our volunteers arrived early to set up their stalls, feeling more than slightly apprehensive about how things would go. Would anyone come along and if they did, what was their level of expectation going to be?

By the time the doors closed at 12.30pm everyone breathed a huge sigh of relief. We'd done it! 36 people had brought items in to be repaired, were delighted with repairs and were happy to make voluntary donations before leaving. We asked them to post some feedback on our board and the comments summed up their satisfaction - 'Absolutely fantastic idea! Can't wait to break more stuff so I can come back!' and 'Thank you to Dave for going above and beyond to try and fix my sewing machine.' Other people just popped in to see what it was all about, soak up the atmosphere and enjoy a cuppa and a chat.

In February 2023 we held the first crochet session in our creative corner. More volunteers came on board to help teach beginners and it was so successful that we started a Crochet Cafe in April (and another WhatsApp group, of course!) which meets each month, alternating between Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Last year the Crochet Café teamed up with Borrowash in Bloom, to create flowers, bees and butterflies, poppies and snowflakes for their seasonal displays. They also created a very special display in memory of Lynette Shandley, one of our valued experts, who died very suddenly last summer, which was displayed outside Borrowash library, near where she lived.

In addition to offering repairs, we also set up a ‘wire amnesty’ to collect all old electrical wires which are taken for recycling and generate some money for us. This has been very successful and has raised over £60.

In December we paid for a buffet, supplied by a local caterer, as a thank-you to our amazing team of volunteers for the time, skills and level of commitment they have shown right from the start. Our first year has been amazingly successful and the organising team are enormously proud of the added value that Borrowash Repair Café has made to our community. Thanks to the voluntary donations made by those who visit us, we are now completely financially independent and are able to pay the rent for the Friday Crochet Café sessions.

In 2024, we will continue to look for more ways to encourage people to re-use and recycle household items. In January, we brought two ReFactory recycling collection boxes – one which takes blister packs, the other dental hygiene products. Once full, they will be returned to the ReFactory who use them to make a variety of items which they sell to the public. Later this spring, we will be organising a Big Bike Bash - an outdoor event at the front of the church (weather permitting, of course) for anyone who wants help getting their bike back into full working order before the summer.

### Village Charity Committee Report.

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

Some of you may be unaware of a small number of charities within the village. These charities have fallen dormant over the past few years but the Parish Council have revived them with significant work being undertaken by our Parish Clerk Sarah Kitchener.

As a result of the research undertaken, new trustees and a Chair Person have been appointed and a decision to close the Samual Alcock Charity was taken based on there being no remaining funds and no activity for some number of years.

The William James Charity, supporting those in need within the parish has been resurrected and registered with the Charity Commission. The work of this charity can now recommence.

The Burial Ground Charity which was set up to support the Belmont Cemetery has also been resurrected and registered. This will permit the trustees to apply for funding to support the work to clear and refresh this closed cemetery over the next few years.

Cllr. S Fraser-Burton

Chair of Joint Charities

### Ockbrook and Borrowash Community Choir Report.

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ockbrook and Borrowash Community Chior was formed in 2022 to assist the churches of the parish and to gather together singers, both experienced and those without a history of choral singing. It has grown over 2023 to include some 30 voices and has provided choral support for four services within the parish, including the Nine Lessons and Carols Service.

We have, for the second year, also included carol singing around the pubs to raise money for the Development Football Team.

We are always keen to include new singers and welcome all ages. Experience is not necessary. The choir only rehearse in the weeks before an engagement as many people are busy and unable to attend weekly rehearsals. If you would be interested in singing with us, please let me know and I will add you to the communications for 2024 events.

Steve Fraser-Burton

Choral Director OB Community Chior

[Steve.fraserburton@live.co.uk](mailto:Steve.fraserburton@live.co.uk)

07977 067252

### Ockbrook and Borrowash Gardeners Club.

For over three decades, Ockbrook & Borrowash Gardeners’ Club has provided a warm and friendly welcome to all who have an interest in maintaining and improving their garden. Advice and support are available for fruit, flower and vegetable growing and all aspects of horticulture.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month – September to June – at 7.30 p.m. at St. Hugh’s church, Borrowash. There is a speaker followed by refreshments, a raffle and the sale of plants.

We have a varied and different programme every year with talks and trips. This year, there have been talks on : - seasonal colours for the garden, specific families of plants, the flora of NW USA and one entitled “sustainability / a new way to garden” – which did test our thinking and ideas.

Knowing that gardening ( if only pottering ) can help with mental health and well-being, we would welcome new members. Please come and join us or visit for a taste of what we do. Currently, visitor’s fee is £4 per meeting but joining our club ( annual membership is £ 8), this reduces to only £3 and offers a 10% discount on all purchases from Collyer’s nursery in Borrowash.

Jane Markwell

Secretary