

## Chairman's report

First I would like to thank my fellow councillors for your contribution this year and note the resignation of Tony and the co-option of Edward and Oliver, we are sad to have seen Tony leave, and would like to thank him after so many years of service. We are also very pleased that Edward and Oliver have joined us and hope they will continue their valuable contribution for many years to come.

We also need to welcome our new County Councillor, Chris Naylor and must thank Dan Morris for his service as a County Councillor and his regular and comprehensive reports and efforts he has made to support our frequent road repair requests!

Another notable change has been the sudden departure of our Clerk. This has been both a blessing and a trial, however the position has been filled on a temporary basis by Lorna, who we welcome with open arms, and would like to thank sincerely for the huge effort she has made in a very short time with great effect to stabilise the council affairs, improve our systems and offer valuable advice for the future.

The council remains financially secure and has contributed to both village halls during the past year, most notably with support for the new lighting at Leebotwood. Plans to support them further with internet subscription have been agreed in principle but without a value at the moment. The defibrillator at Leebotwood has been re-activated and registered with new pads and a replacement battery.

There has been concern over the hedges in Longnor impeding the traffic and pedestrians and owners of the properties have been advised where their hedges could be cut back to improve this.

Both parishes have noticeboards, a new one at Leebotwood and an older one at Longnor which has been treated during the year. The process of refurbishment of the bus shelters has also at long last been nearly completed with only the rear wall of one bus stop remaining to be mended. It would be a good idea to plan the treatment of the Leebotwood shelters during the coming year.

Again, we have had no permanent maintenance contractor and have employed tradesmen as they have been required. It is hoped that a maintenance contractor will be found to enable us to keep ahead of such tasks.

Current projects that we have worked on are the crossing and speed limit in Leebotwood and the repair of the footpath in Longnor. Both of these require external input from Highways and as a result seem to be travelling forward in a somewhat slow manner. There is a lot of local support for the crossing. We should note that either or both of these projects could consume a large portion of our reserves.