**Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council**

**Annual Parish Meeting – 22nd May 2024 – Chairman’s Report**

Good evening and I am delighted to welcome you all to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Once again it has been a great honour to preside as Chairman of Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council for the last year, a role which I continue to enjoy enormously.

My previous reports seem to have had a familiar theme in the difficult times faced by us all and this year has been no exception bringing the Parish Council challenges, but also many achievements. The Council continues to work closely with the local authority to achieve a common goal, but Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council remains autonomous in its decision making.

The Parish Council is not immune to recent general increases in costs. Whilst it has been necessary to increase our share of the council tax precept by a small amount this year, this is still quite modest, and we continue to look for best value in the way that we deliver our services.

Parish Councillors continue to attend the NATS meetings whenever possible. It is always disappointing to see acts of vandalism throughout the Parish, just recently we have seen the destruction of the double litter bin on the New Generation Park and theft of one of the wheelchair access gates on Millenium Green – this has fortunately been returned. The handles from the Outdoor Gym in Keadby also had to be replaced. All this results in a reduction in funds for the Parish Council to be able to spend on Parish improvements and inevitably impacts residents.

Traffic and speeding remain one of the biggest concerns of village life with continued unacceptable driving behaviour through both villages. Safety Critical Traffic Management is a standing agenda item for both Althorpe and Keadby and we were extremely disappointed this year to learn that the proposed 20mph limit through Althorpe was not going to take place after changes in Government legislation. We are also seeing issues with parking in areas of Keadby, heavy vehicles driving over verges, unacceptable potholes. The council fully intends to keep pressure on the Highways Department to resolve as much of this as we can, and we have a meeting next month to review all the current issues.

The Parish Council have reviewed a number of planning applications in the last year ranging from domestic extensions to industrial applications. The Role of a Parish Council regarding Planning Matters is to represent local views and to add value to the process by providing local knowledge and raising areas of concern. Much time and consideration is spent prior to comments being forwarded to North Lincolnshire Planning Department.

The Parish Council continues to work closely with the large organisations persistent on industrial development within the Parish, making it clear we are not a dumping ground for such installations and heavy traffic is not acceptable. These include:

* SSE Keadby 3 – the future of which is still unknown
* The Harmony Energy Battery Storage System – work on this is not due to start for a number of years
* The proposed solar farms on the outskirts of Keadby

As always, flood defences remain a top priority and we have been assured by the local authority that budget is in place for any remaining top-up works. We will also watch with interest the North Humber – High Marnham – North Lincolnshire National Grid upgrade.

Following concerns over the poor condition of ONGO properties in Althorpe, raised over a year ago, a programme of works was put in place. Councillor Mike Russell is to be congratulated for spearheading this campaign and making the lives of some of our residents much easier.

Rollout of the Full Fibre Build by Quickline has finally taken place in Althorpe and many residents are now benefiting from the new service. The build has used existing chambers and ducting where possible, and access of the fibre to homes will be via the same physical route that the existing copper uses.

It was pleasing to see so many residents attending the Remembrance Day service in November and I was pleased to be able to lay the Parish Council’s wreath at the Althorpe War Memorial. The Remembrance tributes in both Keadby and Althorpe continue to grow each year and we get comments far and wide on the impact of these.

With the 80th anniversary of D-Day less than a month away, we have another opportunity for the community to come together again. A grant of £240 has enabled the Parish to commemorate this important event in history and we owe our volunteers a vote of thanks for their work to ensure the continued success of these events which residents support and value.

This year Reverend Paul Wilson introduced himself to the Parish Council as Rector of Epworth and West Butterwick and Rural Dean of the Isle of Axholme. His role is that of an oversight ministry with local people taking on more responsibility. The Parish Council will be working closely with the Church on developing a very natural and simple garden of contemplation within the consecrated ground in Althorpe. Details of this will be shared over the coming months as the working party develops its plans.

The Parish Council continues to contribute to the Spring in Bloom scheme which this year saw a donation from North Lincolnshire Council of £146. Councillor’s Sharp and Smith continue to do a great job in maintaining these for which we are very grateful.

It has now been more than 10 years since the start of the SSE Windfarm funding and during this time, Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council has received over £200,000.

This past year has seen the renovation of Keadby Church Hall into a much-improved community building and we look forward to seeing it being used to its full potential – well done to all involved.

We continue to work with local associations and groups in the Parish and are happy to be able to support them through the Section 137 annual donations along with the SSE Micro fund. This year, this particular fund has been able to support:

* Materials to make poppies and to buy another silhouette of the unknown soldier, for the entrance to Keadby
* Donation for the Keadby Christmas lights switch-on
* Kit and equipment for the U8 football team
* Donation for the Trentside Ladies Club
* Donation to help restock The Village Pantry in Keadby

The Parish website is regularly updated, and you can find us on www.keadbywithalthorpeparishcouncil.org.uk. The Parish Council notice boards are in prime position and continue to be read by many passers-by with relevant information updated regularly.

I would like to say a big ‘thank you’ to my fellow Parish Councillors who continue to work extremely hard on behalf of the community of Keadby and Althorpe in support of the work of the Council. Whatever is put before Councillors is dealt with thoroughly and diligently. These Councillors are unpaid volunteers, intent on ensuring that Keadby with Althorpe can withstand the challenges of the ever-changing world and we are fortunate to have a full complement of Councillors.

Since our last annual meeting we have recruited four new Councillors who will all bring their experience, attributes, and new ideas. Welcome to Councillors Diana Keeble, Erika Davis, William Phillips and Richard Pask.

I continue to pay tribute to our Parish Clerk, Bob Haynes, whose knowledge and expertise enables us to proceed correctly and legally. Bob works tirelessly for the Parish and its communities. Thank you, Bob!

Earlier this year we were immensely saddened to learn of the passing of Councillor John Briggs. John was a tremendous supporter of our Parish, and we will miss him enormously. Of the many tributes that were paid to him, the phrase ‘ferocious in his support for local people’ really stood out to me, that was John in a nutshell.

We are fortunate to have the support of Councillor Julie Reed and I would like to thank her for her presence and help at our meetings. Julie consistently takes the time to listen to concerns we have raised and does everything she can to help resolve them.

Once again, I would like to thank George Potter who continues to maintain the villages in good order.

Finally, I sincerely hope that the year 2024-25 will bring a more settled world, and that the community of the Parish of Keadby with Althorpe will remain a safe, caring community that we can all be proud of.

*Kathryn Russell, Chairman, Keadby with Althorpe Parish Council*

*22 May 2024*