**Nolton and Roch Community Council report of Chair 2019-2020**

The past year (and a half!) has brought with it a host of challenges for all of us in our respective communities. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has affected everybody in ways that just twelve months ago would have seemed completely incredible. It has been to the credit of everybody involved in our community groups that people have shown such togetherness at such a difficult time.

The summer has seen a huge influx of visitors to the county. Campsites have been full to bursting point, and local hospitality businesses have struggled to keep up with demand whilst at the same time providing a safe environment for customers.

In respect of Nolton and Roch Community council, and in spite of the effects of the pandemic on our daily lives, we have continued to operate, making use of technology to conduct our business whilst our usual venues have been out of action. This has given meetings a different dimension. We have all had to learn the art of Zoom etiquette, as well as making sure we’re presentable from at least the waist up on a video call.

As far as achievements for 2019-20 go, this has been the year that Dave Smith stepped down as chair of one group, only to find himself chair of another, and the work that he and others have done towards developing a Community Land Trust has put us on a path to realising an initiative that has the potential make a huge difference to the community. I think it’s also fair to say that Dave stepped down as Chair of NRCC to lessen his workload… CLT appears to have ensured that this is not the case! Thanks must go to everybody involved in the group – It will be worth the effort I’m certain.

After several attempts to convince the administrators of the Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant that the School trim trail was a good idea with community support, it became apparent that we were fighting a losing battle against bureaucracy. On the plus side, our grant pot has now doubled in size so, provided we can navigate the red tape, a plan to improve the existing play area next to the village hall may well be deliverable over the next 12 months.

Nolton Reading room has seen a bit of a revival, with the award of a grant and the arrival of a new committee and several successful events.

We are also to be starting our own community orchard, edible garden and wildflower space at the Victoria Hall site this month after a successful Keep Wales Tidy grant application.

The highways grant that was scheduled to run this year, and would have allowed us to acquire funds to incorporate welcome signs and traffic calming measures in Roch have been deferred until 2021. It is to be hoped that we can make progress with this once the scheme restarts this winter.

The Newgale road development has gone very quiet, but provides us with a handy standing item during quieter meetings, and will probably ramp up again once the next bus floats off into Newgale campsite. We’ve had overhanging trees, blocked drains, disappearing phone boxes (and benches!), Alpacas, fly-tipping, broken speed signs, double-yellow lines, and planning applications galore.

Next year will now doubt bring more unique challenges our way, but we will tackle them with humour and pragmatism as always.

Alex Peach

Chair of Nolton and Roch Community Council