

Chair's Annual Report

I would like to reflect on the year from May 2025 for Smalley parish council.

Firstly I would like to our clerk, Kay, for her continued hard work and knowledge which all ensure the council runs well. I am also grateful for her invaluable support in my year as chair and for the guidance she provides to us all.

I would also like to thank all our councillors for their continued commitment to their roles. In particular, I would like to explicitly acknowledge those who have left the council in the last year. Our previous chair, Cllr Martin Gallimore, stepped down as a councillor at the the end of 2025, leaving a significant role to fill after several years on the council. More recently, Cllrs Stan Yeomans and Amanda Paget announced that they would also be standing down. We will all miss Stan's financial understanding and his contributions will be missed. Amanda's hard work on several community wide concerns have been valued by all involved.

However, it was pleasing to welcome Cllr Terry Pride back to the council after an absence of five years, co-opted in December. Thank you to Martin and to Cllr John Saddington for fulfilling the role of vice chair across the year. We have also been fortunate to have had our county and both our borough councillors as members of the council and therefore a fixture at meetings, although this has now ended with Cllr. Paget stepping down. In addition, the attendance of the police at meetings is also appreciated and their input valuable.

However, it is with significant disappointment that I must note the decision to transfer a significant portion of the parish to Heanor from 2027 that was approved by Amber Valley council, despite clear opposition from residents and from all at the parish council to this change. The transfer of nearly nine hundred homes will be a significant reduction in the size and population of the parish and will have a major impact on the village going forward. The amendment that will now see the boundary include Stainsby Meadow and the cricket and tennis clubs in the parish in future, whilst welcome, is minor in comparison.

There was also significant concern from all over a spate of fire setting in the last year and the assistance of the police and fire brigade in responding to and then working with schools to raise awareness of the dangers was welcome. Clearly something that will need to be kept closely under observation.

On a more positive note I can acknowledge the on-going work of Cllr Graham Rogers in carrying out monthly playground inspections and ensuring that issues and remedial works are carried out and also for the smooth running of the use of the football pitch on Dobholes by community and junior teams. His close work with Anthony in ensuring this is much valued.

Our new lengthsman, Trevor Ainsworth, has become a regular sight through the village litter picking and his presence and activity have been commented on by multiple residents. Our thanks for all he does in all weathers.

Cllr Jenny Ainsworth has been instrumental in the continued floral display in the planter, in organising a hedgerow restoration effort by the Woodland Trust at Taverners Plantation and her part in the work the Parish council was required to commission to cut back overhanging tree limbs at Taverners Plantation which had been identified as dangerous. The most pressing works have now been completed but which will continue to be an issue going forward.

Last summer saw the Parish council consider taking on The Bell. The pub was formally listed as an asset of community value and although the ultimate decision wasn't to take this forward we do look forward to its reopening under new management in the near future. The confirmation that the village will continue to have a post office when it transfers to the Premier, with increased opening hours, is also welcome.

The coming year will have challenges for the village but I am sure that the members of the council will seek to meet them appropriately, seeking as ever, the best for the residents of Smalley.

Cllr Lian Pizzey
Chair of Smalley Parish council

April 2026