

## CAISTER PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019 – 2020

Caister Parish Council conduct their meetings on the first working Monday of every month at the Council Hall with meetings commencing at 7pm. Members of the public are encouraged to attend and there is time allocated on the Agenda for questions from the public. There are also Borough Councillors in attendance when they are available, they too will take questions from the public. Members of the public may ask questions on any subject and Council will endeavour to find answers or refer the question to the Clerk to be investigated and answered at a later date.

The Council year of 2019 – 2020 will go down in history. As far as I am aware this year is the first time the Council has been forced to suspend all activities due to a pandemic. When the shutdown was ordered in March the Council were at that time looking forward to upcoming events such as the Caister Carnival, the D Day Anniversary and all the events that make Caister special.

Unfortunately, since the end of March Council has been unable to hold any functions or meetings of any sort and we are still awaiting news of when “normal service” may resume. When that time does arrive, it may be some time before the Council is able to carry out “normal” service.

Since the beginning of the “lockdown” Caister Parish Council organised “Caister Streetcare” which resulted in dozens of Volunteers coming forward to help people unable to leave home to do their shopping and ensure the occupants are well and report any concerns to the Council Clerk . The organisation was the brainchild of a couple of Councillors and was supervised by Cllr. Kevin Wood. Many thanks to the Volunteers who came forward to help, you did Caister proud.

The events which took place prior to the end of March this year, were of course unaffected, and once again the Village Carnival last June was a massive success. Although the weather conspired to affect the annual function “Light up Caister”, the event still made its mark and was very well supported. The children’s Christmas film was another outstanding success for the Council, and I only wish the Hall could accommodate all those who wanted to attend, but the Council are constrained by Health and Safety rules, and many who left it too late to order tickets, were left disappointed. Book early this year.

Caister in Bloom continues to ensure that the residents and visitors to Caister are given a display to make every day seem like a summer's day, and as we move towards the end of June the village looks as though it is ready to start again after the lockdown. Caister in Bloom is run entirely by Volunteers and their efforts are very much appreciated by all those who enjoy the displays.

Some of the effects of the lockdown have proved quite popular with residents enjoying peace and quiet and empty roads, and some glorious weather. The lack of traffic on the roads also added to the sometimes-eerie silence around the area and the absence of people on the streets turned the Village into a ghost town on some days.

At the time of submitting this report some of the lockdown measures are in the process of being relaxed and our hard-hit businesses must be looking forward to being able to start serving the residents and visitors once again. Having been out of action, many of the local shops and services are in dire need of our support, therefore the Council would remind the village of how vital our local shops and stores are to our way of life.

As we all begin to return to some sort of normal life, I feel we should all remember that it will probably be a “new normal” and that things may be very different in the coming weeks and months. The pandemic may have affected our way of life, and affect our future, but it will never affect the resolve of the Villagers and Councillors to make Caister an even greater place to live.

Stay safe and please support your Parish Council.