

Bishopton Parish Council

Parish Meeting 18th May, 2016

Chairman's Annual Report

In 2015 Bishopton Parish Council started the year with a full complement of Councillors but unfortunately Angeline Keightley had to leave us in October. Angeline had been a Councillor for more than 4 years and her contribution was greatly appreciated particularly during the village celebrations of the Queens Jubilee. As we approach our AGM we are pleased to say that the final place on the Council is about to be filled. Our clerk continues to be as efficient as ever in both financial and clerical matters, in many instances going above and beyond to ensure the Council runs smoothly and is well informed.

We have delivered a number of information/consultation flyers this year and are making use of the ever increasing e-mail list of residents. We have had continuing contact with Cllr Brian Jones and since the last election Cllr Doris Jones and Cllr Steve York. They attend our meetings and help in any way that they can. We send our sincere congratulations to Cllr Brian Jones who is going to be our Mayor for the coming year. We hope that there will be some occasions when he can join us in his official capacity. The Council is represented at the Darlington Association of Parish Councils and PACT meetings. Recently we have been represented on the new Liaison Committee for Lambs Hill Wind Farm. Residents have attended a number of the monthly meetings and Councillors are always pleased to answer any queries that they have and listen to concerns. If possible the Council will try and help in matters that are brought to it and if fact have done so this year on a number of occasions.

We continue to support the Village Hall and are very pleased to see how successful the new weekly Coffee Morning is. We also support St Peter's Church where we can and this year paid for repairs to the clock.

Registered Village Green

We were at last able to replace the old posts and chain at the Cenotaph area with new wood effect plastic ones that require very little maintenance and we hope will last many years. There are still some areas in the village that require work but cannot be completed until renovations to nearby houses have been finished.

Maintenance of the Village Green has been fairly smooth this year following the large amount of work done last year. The grass cutting by DBC was much improved. Any help that residents can give to keep the Village Green tidy is much appreciated and our annual litterpick, which also relies on volunteers, is essential to maintain the look of the village and surrounding area.

We arranged for DBC to trim some trees that were encroaching on site lines and also had the suckers taken from the base of a number of trees.

As reported last year due to the lack of volunteers we are having to pay for some jobs to be done but an ex Councillor Geoff Baines very kindly did quite a few jobs for us – refurbishing the noticeboard being one of them.

Planning applications.

A number of planning applications were received during the year and the PC considered them and responded to DBC accordingly. All planning applications are now viewed on line and we have contacted DBC about the poor visual quality of the plans as well as some documents being missing.

Highways Issues

Our speed monitoring equipment has been used all year and has been shown to remind travellers as they enter the village to slow down. This is not the case in all instances but the situation is constantly monitored and our statistics reported to the Police and Highways Department.

Parking at the school is an ongoing problem and one that is monitored by the Police. We also had complaints about inconsiderate parking in certain areas of the village and responded accordingly within our powers. Many of the paths in the village were slurry sealed by DBC this year.

Local Bus Service

We now only have a bus that runs to Darlington on one day of the week and none to Stockton. Despite concerted efforts by our Clerk to engage with bus companies in Stockton we have been unable to move forward with any proposals.

Financial

David Thorman is our responsible Financial Officer and will report separately. We are very grateful to Peter Wood for his help at audit time and whenever we need financial advice.

Playing Field

For many years (nearly 50 that I know of) residents have complained of a lack of facilities for children in the village. The PC has tried many times to find a solution to no avail. However, at last we have the opportunity to do something. A local farmer has kindly agreed to lease a piece of land to the PC. This would provide an area for ball games and also a small children's play area. It is the plan to have it fenced, grassed etc for use in the Spring of 2017. The PC has enough funds to get this off the ground but will need to look at funding for equipment etc. We are in the process of consulting all residents and if a majority are in favour we hope that you will support us in what will be an exciting venture for the future children in our village.

Cenotaph

Our Cenotaph has been given Grade II listing this year and this will protect it for future generations.

Other activities

The Parish Council again provided a Christmas tree for the village and paid for Fishburn Brass Band to come and play carols for residents around the tree. It was a most enjoyable event and well attended.

Skips were provided Bank Holiday times and well used by residents.

A poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday was provided and placed on behalf of residents by the Parish Council.

Fly tipping has been reported on a number of occasions and the dog warden contacted when responding to residents complaints of dog fouling.

In response to a request from a resident we are looking into the possibility of helping to set up a community buying group for the purchase of heating oil.

Finally I would like to thank all Councillors for their support and help over the year and a special thank you to David Thorman our clerk who has made a tremendous difference in the efficiency of the Parish Council.

Lindley MacMahon, Chairman