

Bishopton Parish Council **Chairman's Annual Report 2022-2023**

As Chair of Bishopton Parish Council for the last year, it is my duty and privilege to record the work done by the Council over the past year. We continue to deal with the after effects of Covid 19 Pandemic which prevented our completion of planned projects and are close to bringing all back on track for completion in the coming year.

An ongoing requirement of the Council is to scrutinise and comment on the large number of planning applications submitted to Darlington Borough Council each year.

While the presumption in development control is usually to support proposals, the Council must also look at the wider community view and try to strike a balance between these occasionally competing interests and review and comment on all applications. The Council is aware of its responsibility in supporting local occupancy conditions and developments in keeping with local architectural style on all and will continue to monitor all planning applications with the interests of the whole community in mind.

A few particularly contentious applications have appeared before the Council again this year, perhaps the most notable being the proposed change of use of existing farm land and their submitted planning application for 24 proposed holiday cabins opposite the Bishopton Lake Centre.

The application is being vigorously fought by the Parish Council and at this time Darlington Borough Council have not made any decisions on the application. It is hoped that DBC will endorse the Parish Council opinion that this application should also be refused.

The application for a Glamping site on land at Outhouse Farm has been rejected by DBC due to various issues with safe access and egress.

The Parish Councillors endeavour at all times to protect the interests of the Parishioners at all stages and are actively involved in the Bishopton Village Action Group Steering Group and are currently preparing an Objection to the excessively large Solar Farm proposed by a European conglomerate which will surround the village and damage this noted Conservation village

Environmental issues remain very important to the Council. The Parish works on improving and tidying roadside verges and footpaths. The Highways Department and Street Scene are regularly pressed by the Council to maintain and repair roads and drains within the parish, as well as remove waste left by Fly Tippers.

Darlington Borough Council are reviewing plans to deal with Parking in the village and heavy traffic on Mill Lane, it is expected that the results will be introduced in the near future.

The council is supported in this task by the residents of the village who regularly carry out Litter Picks and clear leaves from footpaths

The parish council and Playground Association have enjoyed a large amount of success in obtaining funding from Banks Community Funds and other donations and fund-raising events for the Playground. Crowdfunding with the aid of Calor Gas was also carried out successfully with money pledges coming from London, Australia and America. The resulting funds have been used to purchase and install play equipment, including a large slide, Inclusive roundabout and Quad seesaw.

The Parish Council has also managed to obtain funding from Banks Community Fund to replace worn out planters and benches for the village green and the purchase.

The trees on the village green have been pruned in accordance with the tree survey report carried out by DBC.

Beware of Horses signs have been installed in the village by DBC and repairs are ongoing to the Village Green, expected completion will be July 2023.

Our future plans for enhancements to the village include, refurbishing the Bus Shelter, adding another Defibrillator to the West end of the village, New Speed and signage to each end and centre of the Village, increased planting throughout the village green to expand the bulb planting already carried out and a new survey to identify residents needs and aspirations regarding facilities and equipment in the village.

The Parish Council have taken over ownership of the village Bus Shelter and are currently sourcing funding grants to repair and upgrade the shelter to continue its use as a bus stop and free library.

There has been an increase to the 2022/2023 precept but has been kept as low as is possible and is generally in line with other public bodies and the Council remains conscious of its duty in spending public money responsibly and tries to keep its costs to a minimum.

My thanks to Ward Councillor Brian Jones for his continued support of our issues in the Parish and for his reports to Council meetings. We would also like to thank Brian Jones for the support he has provided over the last 24 years and I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a happy and long retirement.

We also take this opportunity to thank Parish Councillor Sarah Harker who is leaving the council for all of her time and efforts serving the people of Bishopton.

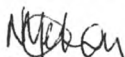
My thanks also to the PCSO Andy Cusick for keeping us informed with statistics of any crime, incidents or RTC's within our area.

I conclude by thanking my fellow Parish Councillors, Vice Chair Geoff Preston, Deborah Leatham, Phillip Watson and Sarah Harker for their support and hard work. Lastly, but by no means least, I thank our Clerk Les Foggett for his excellent, speedy and efficient management and organisation of Parish

Cllr Norman Melaney
Chair of Bishopton Parish Council.

Les Foggett
Clerk to Bishopton Parish Council

Signed



Signed



11th May 2023