

As Chair of Bishopton Parish Council (BPC) for the last year, it is my duty and privilege to record the work done by the Council over the past year.

### **Planning**

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

While the presumption in development control is usually to support proposals, BPC 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. BPC 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 BPC again this year, perhaps the most notable being the following:

1. The proposed development and building a huge Solar Farm from Brafferton to Bishopton through Little Stainton and Great Stainton – this, due to it being a National Infrastructure Project, is an application to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Residents are against the developer's proposals and the Parish Council is supporting their objections.
2. The change of use of existing farmland and their submitted planning application for 24 proposed holiday cabins opposite the Bishopton Lake Wind Sailing Centre.

The application is being vigorously fought by BPC/Residents and at this time Darlington Borough Council have not made any decisions on the application.

3. Glamping Application Redmarshall Road – Application is for the building of several Holiday Tents.

BPC has objected to the planning application on behalf of the Parish residents. DBC Highways have also objected to the proposed development on Road safety issues. Darlington Borough Council have not made any decisions on the application.

It is hoped that DBC will endorse BPC opinion that these applications should all be refused.

BPC Councillors endeavour always to protect the interests of the Parishioners at all stages.

### **Environment**

Environmental issues remain very important to BPC. 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. The council is supported in this task by the residents of the village who regularly carry out Litter Picks and clear leaves from footpaths.

Flooding is another prominent issue that is at times making it very difficult to access or egress from the village. BPC is in constant contact with DBC on the matter and has requested DBC to repair/unblock the Culvert on both sides of the T-junction on Redmarshall Road to the East End of the village. DBC have cleared the south side but have not been able to complete that side without access from the landowner. It is hoped that the issue will be resolved in the coming months.

Parking within the village together with Speeding vehicles are an ongoing concern. The Parish Council continues to seek a solution to the problems.

### **Projects and External Funding**

BPC 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. The resulting funds have been used to purchase and install additional pieces of play equipment, Fund raising is ongoing to achieve completion of the planned project and meet the planned maintenance costs.

BPC has also managed to obtain funding from Banks Community Fund for the provision of a second defibrillator to be install in May at the West End of the village, Installation, and power supply to same is being carried out by DBC, it has been agreed that DBC will fund the electricity supply costs.

BPC with financial help from Banks have been able to provide and support the Village Christmas Celebrations including, Christmas lights, Pantomime, Christmas tree and Carols around the Tree with Fishburn Brass Band providing musical support.

BPC finally managed to carry out Tree pruning to the Village Green Trees in accordance with the Tree Condition Survey carried out in 2022. We contacted DBC regarding damaged trees in the Church Grounds that required removal, and this was eventually carried out by DBC.

Our future plans for enhancements to the village include, refurbishing the Bus Shelter, adding another Defibrillator to the East End of the village opposite to House No 14 The Green , New Speed 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.

BPC 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.

### **Parish Precept**

There has been an increase to the 2024/25 precept, but it has been kept as low as possible and generally below 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.

### **Sincere Thanks**

My thanks to Ward Councillor Brian Jones for his continued support of our issues in the Parish and for his reports to Council meetings and we offer our very best wishes for his and his wife Doris in their retirement.

We also note the resignation of Sarah Harker from BPC due to family commitments and warmly thank her for all of her support and efforts during her time as a BPC Councillor.

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

Lastly, but by no means least, I thank our recently retired Clerk Les Foggett for his excellent, speedy, and efficient management and organisation of BPC business We would also like to welcome our new Clerk Mr Steve Rose to the council and feel sure he will be an asset to this BPC

I conclude by thanking my fellow Parish Councillors, Vice Chair Geoff Preston, Phil Watson, Debbie Leatham for their support and hard work.

**Norman Melaney  
Chairman  
Bishopton Parish Council**

**May 2024**