

Winston Parish Council

Annual Report 2014/2015

During the past year there has been 12 Ordinary Meetings of the Parish Council plus the Annual General Meeting. In addition to the normal business of the Council, the following are the main issues which we have dealt with during the last year.

With regard to the legacy left to Winston by Mr Robert Robson of Highcliffe Edge, we decided to give a donation to the three organisations within the Village i.e the Village Hall, the Playing Fields and the Millennium Green Trust and to purchase a bench seat which has been located on the verge adjacent to the Playing Field with an appropriate plaque in memory of Mr and Mrs Robson.

We reviewed the grass cutting carried out by C A Stamp and were pleased with the work that he had done during the previous year. It was therefore decided to renew his contract as he agreed there would be no cost increase.

A complaint was received about the condition of the public bench seats at Little Newsham/ South Cleatlam and we undertook repairs to return them to a usable state. It was also brought to our attention that, following repairs to the road between the two Villages, the verge was left covered in grit and a gully had been sealed over. We contacted Durham County Council and they carried out the necessary repairs and cleaned up the mess left in the area.

We also contacted Durham County Council about the road leading down to Winston Bridge. A drain had previously be laid under the road to try and alleviate the problem of water running off the adjoining fields causing an ice hazard during the winter and subsidence had occurred along part of the road surface. DCC Highways Department inspected the problem and patched the area.

The Planning Application for repairs to the roof at St Andrews Church was sent to us and we were pleased to give our full support to the proposed works.

We were also informed about some damage to the boardwalk on the Teesdale Way between Winston and Gainford. This was reported to the appropriate department at DCC and repairs were carried out.

Concern has been expressed about the growth of ragwort in the field adjacent to the Bridgewater Arms. We are now progressing this in accordance with Defra guidelines.

During the year various changes have been made to compulsory standard documentation which we are required to have in place. The National Association of Local Councils have updated their model Financial Regulations to give greater emphasis to financial controls, accountability and transparency and we have

amended our Financial Regulations accordingly. We have also amended our Standing Order in respect of the "Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014" which allows members of the public to record in either audio or video format Parish Council Meetings.

The provision of a defibrillator for Winston has been raised and we have taken on responsibility for trying to obtain finance to cover the cost of the machine and training in its use. If we are successful we will be looking for volunteers to undertake the training.

Due to concerns expressed by local residents we continue to monitor the situation with regard to the reprocessing plant at Hill Top Farm. Mr Ian Bainbridge and Mr Rory McKibbin of Agricore attended our meeting in September 2014 and gave details of the current position with regard to the operation of the plant and the actions they had taken to deal with issues raised by the local community. Mr Mike Tweddle from Durham County Council Environmental Health was unable to attend this meeting, but came to our meeting in October. He confirmed that he, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, visited the site regularly to ensure that they were complying with current regulations. Councillors stressed their concerns and those of local residents about the increased production and the related increase in heavy vehicle traffic through the Village. We will continue to monitor the situation.

We are pleased to report that with the exception of one isolated incident of a horse being put in the Playing Field there were no problems with the Travellers during the Appleby Fair period.

The new Parish Council website is now up and running and all documents relating to the Parish Council can now be viewed on the website together with other information relating to Winston and South Cleatlam. Our thanks go to Jane Ayre for the amount of work she has put in to establish the site and keeping it up to date.

Our congratulations also go to Jane for obtaining the CiLCA Qualification (Clerks working for Town and Parish Councils) which enables us to work towards the new Quality Status for Parish Councils.

The Parish Council is always keen to be aware of any issues which may affect the local community and therefore have representatives on the Teesdale Local Councils' Forum, the Smaller Local Councils' Forum and the Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum and attend the Teesdale Action Partnership Meeting when appropriate.

Currently we are one member short on the Parish Council and I would encourage anyone who has an interest in joining to contact myself or any of the other Councillors.

Members of the public are always welcome to attend Parish Council meetings which are held at 7pm on the second Thursday of each month and, with prior written application, raise any issue of particular concern.

Mike Taylor

Chair-Winston Parish Council