

Winston Parish Council

Annual Report 2018/2019

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 issues which we have dealt with during the last year.

One of the main issues we have been dealing with this year was the planning application for the proposal to build 16 houses on the land adjacent to the Bridgewater Arms. The Parish Council submitted an objection last year and Cllrs Cook, Fenwick and Smith attended the Planning Meeting to reinforce the points we had raised. Following this meeting the Durham County Council Planning Authority made the decision to refuse planning permission. The appellant has now submitted an appeal which has been passed to the Planning Inspectorate. In order to ensure that our objections received due consideration we forwarded a copy of all our submissions to the Inspectorate and we now await their decision.

We would like to express our appreciation to Mr Ian Dalton who raised a petition to protect the chestnut tree adjacent to the entrance to the Bridgewater Arms. The petition was well supported and resulted in a Temporary Tree Protection Order being issued, which has now been followed by a Permanent Protection Order.

There was a problem last summer with the Travellers on Winston Corner. This area is an official stopover area and as such is only open for a limited period at the time of the Appleby Horse Fair. A number of Travellers arrived two weeks early and stayed after the closing date. Durham County Council Gypsy Roma Traveller Service was informed and did visit the site. An eviction notice was served when the Travellers failed to leave, but they did move prior to enforcement taking place. It has now been agreed that eviction notices will now take place much sooner than was previously the case and this dealt with the group that arrived on site prior to the Easter weekend.

I reported last year on the introduction of the Data Protection Regulations which would have had serious financial consequences for many of the small local Councils. Following lobbying of the Government it was agreed that Councils with an income of less than £25,000 would be exempt from the requirement of employing a Data Protection Officer, which most smaller Councils could not afford. We did however have to revise all our documentation to ensure we were complicit with the regulations and I would like to express our thanks to our Clerk, Jane Ayre, who undertook this task.

At our meeting in January Cllr Helen Pattison tendered her resignation from the Parish Council due to personal circumstances. We were very sorry to hear this and all Councillors expressed their thanks to Helen for her service and dedication over many years.

The vacancy has now been filled by Tom Rixon who attended our meeting in March for interview and was offered the position of Councillor and accepted.

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.

The Parish Council website continues to be updated with all documentation relating to the Council.

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, the Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum, the South West Durham Travellers' Forum and attend the Teesdale Action Partnership Meeting when appropriate.

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