

Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council

Chairman's Report 23rd May 2011

Ladies and gentlemen and fellow councillors.

As Chairman of this Parish Council I present my annual report.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that as a result of Mrs Wendy Rice being recently co-opted onto the Parish Council we begin the new financial year with a full complement of councillors and on behalf of my fellow councillors and myself I wish her a very interesting period of office.

Next year in May 2012, there will be local elections for Town and Parish Councillors and as a result of our Clerk to the Council Mr. G Price being successful in attaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration the council can continue working towards Quality Status.

Attendance at events and meetings.

I have continued to attend the meetings of the Association of Town and Parish Councils at local, county and national level and have found them both informative and interesting, and it is reassuring to know that the county association is represented at the national level when changes are being discussed regarding the devolvement of decision making to the local level, i.e., planning matters. But there is still a lot of work to do regarding many issues. Attending these meetings has given me the opportunity to broaden my outlook and become more comfortable and au fait with county issues and whenever possible I have attended the charity events hosted by the Chairman of Durham County Council enabling me to socialise with our local County Councillors whereby my contact with them keeps them aware and proactive when necessary with issues affecting our parish. I personally convey my thanks to Cllr A Napier and Cllr E Bell for their support. I also feel there is a close relationship developing between ourselves and Seaham Town Council which I believe should be nurtured and again wherever possible I have attended local events for the Chairman's Charity. I must thank my fellow councillors and Vice Chairman Marian Oliver for representing the council on my behalf when I have been unable to attend. Your support has been very much appreciated.

Issues addressed.

The council is keeping an ever watchful eye on the fissure at the parish boundary with Seaham to ensure it is regularly monitored by appropriate agencies and also the cleanliness of the stream even though it is become more difficult to get remedial action from the unitary authority as the reorganisation is not complete as county staff vacancies are still not filled. With the help of Cllr E Bell we did get immediate action when massive erosion of the stream bank side appeared virtually overnight and there was the realisation that what we thought was soil was in fact a grassed over ash dump. The unitary authority will continue to monitor this area.

Parking will continue to be a problem in the Overdene Estate but with the continued co-operation of residents in South View it is manageable. Resolution to problems will continue to be explored always keeping in mind financial restrictions.

Ongoing issues.

Speeding on the B1285 is a continuing problem. How do we solve it? The Parish Council cannot, but we can ensure that our efforts to press the county into action are not in vain. The trees need to be cut back/pruned to improve visibility of signage. The council will continue to press the county to do such works and to make this section of road a safer place.

The provision of road markings and signage is an issue at Dalton Heights and the council has made representations to the county Highways section on this matter. The council was advised that no such works would be forthcoming and further representations on this matter would be ignored. We will continue to look for and take advantage of any opportunity to resolve this issue should such arise.

Environment.

The garden competition had suffered over the years with little interest. So this year we notified our resident that instead of an entry the council would select three gardens and provide a small prize for the efforts taken to beautify the parish. These were selected by the Clerk and I which proved to be an acceptable format that was well received. This process could be repeated in the coming year.

The floral display tubs were planted and tended throughout the year by a local resident funded by the council and the displays received good comments and the council intends to continue these displays.

It has been established that some trees have been felled on the Graham Way. This issue has been referred to Durham County Council through Cllr E Bell as this matter constitutes criminal damage and a police matter. But who has done it? Visits have been made by county officers but obviously no resident is prepared to make comment.

Cllr E Bell has donated £250 towards a seat for the Dalton Heights/Grange area of the parish and it will be sited this year.

Environment Sub Committee.

The council took the decision to form an environment subcommittee to concentrate on the bigger long term improvement issues, the idea being to embark on an ambitious five year project to improve identified areas of the parish; the village green being the first target. This is an expensive and complicated project which will be managed by Groundwork if the application to 'Open Space' for funding is successful. Through the good office of Cllr Hepplewhite as Chairman of the Community Association this could transpire and news of the funding application is due very soon. Whatever the outcome the project will go ahead but it will take longer if financial help is not available.

I re-affirm that it is the aim of all members of this council to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity for the benefit of all residents in the parish and I thank my fellow councillors and clerk for their support throughout the year.

Wendy Kennedy

Chairman of Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council 23rd May 2011