

DALTON-LE-DALE PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2003/2004

PRESENTED TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 6TH MAY 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure once again, to present the Chairman's Report, this time for the year 2003/2004. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the completion and dedication of the so-called Millennium Window for the Church, which was commissioned by the Parish Council back in 1998 and eventually brought to splendid fruition on the evening of Monday 1st December 2003, the Patronal Festival of St. Andrew. The window has been very well received, and the Council's grateful thanks are due to the many people who played their part, with great patience, in finally reaching our goal.

As usual, the year has been very varied, and with the co-option of Diane Gleghorn of Dalton Grange and Sharon Richardson of Dalton Heights, your Council is now back to its full complement of 9 members.

Both ladies serve as members for the Deneside Ward of the parish. Councillor Richardson's appointment followed the resignation because of working commitments, of Gerry Gustard, and I can not thank Gerry enough for his past services to the Parish Council and the life of the community. Perhaps his turn will come again.

During the year, efforts have been made to introduce a modest traffic calming scheme at Dalton Heights, to minimise the dangers at the junctions of Escallond Drive with Bowes Avenue and Galfrid Close. The County Council has carried out an estate-wide consultation process, but due to what it feels is a significant level of opposition, it has been unable to proceed with the project.

Road safety generally continues to cause concern, and a site visit by Police Traffic Management Officers has highlighted the need for some extra remedial measures on the Times Inn Bank and especially at the Overdene junction. These are currently being considered by the Highway Authority.

There are also concerns over the amount of debris which is finding its way into Dalton Beck. This is causing problems with the water flow, and in places is resulting in some bank sides being severely eroded, and strenuous efforts are being made to identify the organisations responsible for the

clearance of the rubbish and the general maintenance of the stream.

The Parish Council's Garden Competition, under its new title of "Dalton-le-Dale in Bloom" was successful, but with a very disappointing entry. In an effort to encourage more people to participate in this year's competition, an entry form will be incorporated in the Parish Newsletter which will be distributed shortly. An additional category has been introduced for 2004 - a "low maintenance" garden.

In early December, together with the Vice Chairman, I was delighted to attend the launch ceremony of the Bulmer North Forest, part of the Great North Forest project. The new planting covers a large swathe of land in the west of the parish, and will provide many opportunities for outdoor recreation. The commemorative tree was planted by Lord Clark of Windermere, Chairman of the Forestry Commission.

Your Council is now embarking on a programme of environmental improvements covering the whole of the parish. A working party has been set up, with the task of identifying those areas which would benefit from a "makeover"

In common with most parts of the country, there are concerns over the escalation of anti-social behaviour, which causes damage to property and generally blights peoples' lives. New legislation to combat this scourge has given the Police greater powers to deal with the nuisance, and a six month enforcement order covering Deneside Ward came into force at 5 p.m. on Monday 26th April. Controversially, Dalton Grange has been included in the Order, despite the Parish Council's request that it be excluded

The Community Association continues to progress with its efforts to provide a new hall for the parish. Planning approval is in place, some funding has already been achieved, and further applications are pending. Like the Millennium Window, it is an exercise in patience, but the Management Committee is working extremely hard to succeed in this venture. Work on the feasibility study has identified a surprising number and variety of uses to which a new hall can be put, and it will undoubtedly be a huge benefit to the whole of the parish. In the meantime, a well varied programme of events continues to be arranged. These are advertised in the Council's notice boards.

New members are always welcome.

As ever, I should like to pay tribute to, and thank the members of the Council for their support over the year. We all work well together for the benefit of the parish, and would like to think that we do this with some success.

Cordial relations exist with both the District of Easington and Durham County Council, whose officers are always approachable and helpful, and consultation meetings are held regularly, at which concerns can be expressed, and problems overcome.

Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk are available at any time to answer residents' queries and to bring to the Council any of their concerns, and of course, residents of the parish are entitled to attend any of the meetings of the Council, which are advertised as required by law on the various notice boards.

Thank you all

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Chairman of the Parish Council

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