



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2017

PARISH COUNCIL

I had not expected to be starting my report, yet again, with reference to planning matters but unfortunately, that is the case! An inordinate amount of time has been bound up with Parish meetings, Action group meetings and attending Planning Committee Meetings. Kirklevington Action Group have also continued to work tirelessly to consider a number of key issues surrounding the development and the Parish council have supported them. We are very grateful for the commitment of individuals and their efforts to oppose the increasing number of housing developments.

FINANCE

The budget for 2016/7 was agreed and we applied for a precept of £12,000.

The main areas of expenditure for 2016/17 have been as follows:

Kirkfest event Grant : £1000

AON Insurance: £990.43

CLCC Membership: £214.66

Planning Support (including the use of a Transport Consultant): £1354.90

Christmas Tree / Christmas village event: £665.65

Play area Inspection: £1220.29

Play area maintenance/grass/hedge cutting and repair to swings: £1360

PLANNING

The Planning application from Jomast, for the development of land South of Kirklevington, went to Stockton's Planning Committee in July 2016 but a decision was deferred. A subsequent meeting in September then approved the development. At this point, having looked into the Government's 'Call in' process, the Chairman spoke to our MP, James Wharton and the call in process was activated. Unfortunately we were subsequently informed, in October, that we had been unsuccessful in our bid to have the development stopped.

In the meantime, the Parish Council was approached in September by Theakstons about their proposals for 100 executive homes on the land south of Yarm School playing fields. Once again, the Parish Council and KAG (Kirklevington Action Group) started the process to object to this development. Strong opposition was raised at the Planning Committee in late November but once again this development was approved. Until Stockton Council can show a 5 year housing supply and have a Local Plan in place, it is unfortunate that most of the housing developments will be approved.

In December, Duchy Homes held a consultation in the Village Hall about a small development within the Village envelope off Forest Lane. This still has not been to Committee. Whilst we had knowledge of a potential application for land to the West of St Martins Way, the Developers, Banks, did not hold their consultation evening until mid December. Their proposals for up to 90 homes have been met with strong opposition. To date this application has not gone to Committee.

A number of small developments are also in the pipeline. Braeside, Grove Bank and Springfield Grove and we will also be affected by these. The Parish Council are continuing to monitor the developments on Green Lane as the new housing estates are being built. In recent weeks, we have been made aware of a further potential development of 495 homes west of Morley Carr and opposite Tall Trees, Green Lane which is within Yarm Parish but will have a knock on effect on our Parish.

It feels at times as though we are being singled out for development in the South of Yarm. The impact on our road network, environment, services and quality of life is beginning to be felt!

KIRKLEVINGTON VILLAGE:

Once again, the Parish Council supported the annual Kirkfest event in June 2016. This has gone from strength to strength over the last few years and it was good once again to see everyone getting into the spirit of the week! In 2016, the theme for the scarecrows were based on 'Book characters' and there were some wonderful creations. The Church organised a Games afternoon in the Childrens' play area followed by an afternoon tea to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. Other activities included a Coffee morning, a 'Garden' competition and the School Fete. Unfortunately the Black and White Ball was cancelled due to lack of support.

The Parish Council organised the planting of a substantial number of bulbs around the village and along the main road; our thanks must go to those who turned out to plant them. They formed a beautiful display in recent weeks!

In November, we held once again a special Parish Remembrance Day service in the Church which was followed by a wreath laying ceremony. This was well supported and wreaths were laid on behalf of the Mayor of Stockton, the Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee, and the Church.

In December, our village Christmas event was well supported by many families, with carols round the Christmas tree with Kirlevington Ladies Choir leading the singing and refreshments afterwards in the Village Hall. The children were delighted to meet Father Christmas and receive a selection box.

It was very concerning that on Christmas Eve morning, the Christmas tree was vandalised by a group of youths. The tree was destroyed, together with the lights and surrounding barriers. The Police were notified and despite photographic evidence and recognition, the Police to date, have been unable to prosecute anyone.

The Play area continues to be maintained via Parish Council funding. This is a well used village resource and is much appreciated by families in the village. This year it has been necessary to repair some of the furniture; our thanks to Graham Tebbs for painting some of the other furniture.

The Parish Council is looking into the purchase and siting of a Defibrillator machine for use in the village. The PC has progressed CCTV in the vicinity of the Village Hall and we are now finalising arrangements for its installation.

There has been a number of continuing minor issues this last year. Apart from the Christmas tree we have also had posters advertising village events removed on a number of occasions. We have had a number of complaints about inconsiderate parking in Forest Lane and Springfield Grove, near the pub and also the school, in Ash Grove and around The Green. With an increasing number of children in the village, we need to be aware of safety issues.

There has also been an increase in the number of speeding vehicles on Forest Lane and cars using the village as a 'rat run' through to the A19. We have commissioned a monitor for use in the village which not only shows numbers of cars, etc., but also speeds. The Parish Council are currently considering purchasing the monitor for ongoing use.

The number of reports of dog fouling is once again growing; we continue to tackle this issue.

Whilst our community bus has continued to run, albeit on a reduced timetable, we will be faced with withdrawal of this service in the near future because it is not being widely used and lack of funds. No additional funding from SBC to continue the service appears at this time to be forthcoming. The Parish Council are continuing the liaison and discuss with SBC, along with Maltby and Hilton Parish Councils the future of the service.

We have a lot of positive feedback from people in the parish about our work and where there are issues, we do our utmost to address these. We all take our roles very seriously and give over and above in time and commitment. We were sorry to lose Steve Ward from the Council, for personal reasons; we must thank him for his hard work and commitment over the last few years. We co-opted David Bell towards the end of the year; he has been an asset on the planning front.

I must thank Ruth, our Parish Clerk, and all of the Parish and Ward Councillors, particularly Elsi Hampton, for their continued support, commitment, hard work and enthusiasm. It is with regret that I will be tending my resignation as Chair of the Parish Council at the next meeting; I have been on the Council for 9 years now and have been Chair for 7 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time but fighting the large number of Planning Applications we have been faced with, has taken up a tremendous amount of my time. Many of you will know that I am training as a Reader for the Church and this now must be my priority. We need 'new younger blood' on the Parish Council and would encourage those who have time and interest to put themselves forward for this diverse and interesting community organisation.

Kate Brown, Chair. May 2017