

Parish Council Chairmans Report

14 May 2018

The Parish Council held 12 meetings over the 2017/18 year all of which were scheduled in advance and mostly held on the first Monday of the month. In all 36 members of the public have attended during the year.

The Council has over the year arranged a number of presentations / speakers including

- 1) Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Chair; Carl Lis – this provided a real opportunity for the Parish to develop a relationship with the Park Authority at the highest level. Carl discussed some of the issues affecting the Park area and suggested ways for our Parish to better integrate and access funding.
- 2) David Evans of Friends of the Lake District gave a presentation on the Westmorland Dales 'Hidden Landscapes' Heritage Project. This 4 year project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and "aims to unlock and reveal the hidden heritage of the Westmorland Dales, enabling more people to connect with, and enjoy and benefit from this inspirational landscape". The Council had responded with various proposals for inclusion in the project.
- 3) Sonia Hutchinson from Cumbria Association of Local Councils – CALC is supporting Parishes in the Eden District with the devolution of services from Eden District Council. In our Parish Council case; footway lighting and the play park.

Planning

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications in the Parish. Twelve planning applications have been considered over the year, down from 18 and 21 over the preceding two years. Of the 12 applications; 7 were from Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and 5 from Eden District Council. The Council has supported 7 of the applications, objected to a further 3 and supported 2 applications which were amended resubmissions.

Generally the PC's focus on new housing has been to promote local occupancy / affordable housing and this has also been heavily promoted with the Park Authority as a key priority in their Park Management Plan which is currently being refreshed.

Finances

The Council had £16,693 of income against a budget of £14,882. Expenditure in the year was £14,722 down £1,202 on budget. Overall we have made some savings with the budget underspent by £1,971 at year end. There are some works outstanding which could not be completed during the year and these will be carried forward into the 2018 - 2019 year.

Following banking issues the Council had moved its banking facilities from Natwest to Barclays.

The Parish Council Precept for 2018/19 had been set at £21.98 per chargeable household as compared to the previous year at £20.92. This equates to an increase of £1.06 or 5% and provides the Parish Council with £9,300 of income. The Council

As a taster some of the key issues discussed and actioned over the last 12 months include

Crosby Ravensworth Primary School – The headmaster Duncan Priestley, had attended a meeting to update councillors on the schools successes and flag up concerns over the declining roll at the school. The viability of the school, if the roll continued to decline, was a major concern to all as were the shortfalls in income associated with the declining roll. All Councillors agreed their support for the school and as an example have been working to influence priorities through the YDNPA management plan consultation.

Footpaths – Considerable work had been undertaken by Councillor Holroyd working with YDNPA to prioritise footpaths and bridleways in the Parish in need of improvement.

Work has also been undertaken on developing interpretative signage / maps to be erected at the bus shelters in both Crosby Ravensworth and Maulds Meaburn. A

grant application was made to the YNNPA Sustainable Development Fund and £5,950 was awarded to the project. The grant also covers the preparation and printing of a footpath leaflet which includes 6 local walks. The Council would like to thank the group involved Jill Winder, Gail Gravett, Mark Fallon, Annie Kindleysides, Betsy Bell, Steve Holroyd, Gordon Bowness and Councillor Holroyd along with all the volunteers who tested the walks. The work is progressing well.

YDNPA Management Plan – The Council had responded to the YDNPA's consultation exercise on the next 5 year Management Plan, 2018-2023, flagging up our key objectives of affordable housing to support the local school, businesses and community sustainability, starter business units, improved accessibility; footpath and road signage, along with facilities for visitors and locals with mobility issues.

Emergency Planning – With the County and District Council cutting back on service provision and the emergency services coming under increasing pressure during severe weather events the Council felt it important to make our community more self-reliant and prepared. The Council had therefore commenced work on a Parish Emergency Plan and had been successful in obtaining a small grant from ACT to support the work. Apart from the Plan the key focus over the next 9 months will be to provide information and guidance through The Lyvennet Link aimed at ensuring our community is more self-reliant.

Emergency phone – The Council had worked with Maulds Meaburn Village Institute to install an external emergency phone available for the public.

Maud Syke and Stepping Stones – Works to clear Maud Syke and re-instate stepping stones across the Lyvennet in Maulds Meaburn following Storm Desmond were planned and the necessary Environment Agency Permit obtained. The works could not however be completed during 2017 as a crayfish rescue plan and further permit were needed and the Council could not get this organised before the end of the working window. This work is planned for 2018.

Administration - The administration of the Council was improved and updated with key policies developed including Equal Opportunities, Health + Safety, Freedom of Information and Data protection. The Council had also registered with the Information Commissioners Office.

Population of the website has continued and improved security introduced following a hacking incident.

Work had commenced on ensuring the Council is fully compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations which will shortly come into force.

Devolution of Services – With Eden District Council working to devolve footway lighting and the playground to our Council substantial time had been spent over the year considering the costs and liabilities as well as attempting to reach agreement with EDC on transfer conditions. Of the 10 footway lights the Council has resolved, with community input, to retain 4. Cumbria Association of Local Councils are supporting Parishes in the process. I can report that after a further year of dialogue we are no nearer reaching a conclusion that is acceptable to the Council. We have referred the devolution of services to Eden Member Services and requested a full Scrutiny review of the process.

Annual Parish Litter Pick – Keith Golding once again arranged this worthwhile project with 30 parishioners, young and old, attending and over 50 bags of rubbish removed from our local roads. The Council funded the bacon butty and coffee/tea at the Butchers Arms and EDC provided the equipment.

Flass - Ongoing vandalism, trespass and theft at Flass – PC Theole from Cumbria Constabulary attended and reported that a number of arrests and successful prosecutions had been made. The Officer had been able to confirm ongoing involvement and support for the owner.

Parish benches – The Parish now has an ongoing maintenance plan for these assets thanks to Mark Fallon and Andrew Woodward who have taken over the repair and general upkeep on behalf of the Parish. Their work and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Finally I am standing down as Chairman and would like to thank Councillors and Clerk for their support over the year.