

**BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**  
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Parish Council meetings are continuing remotely via Zoom and are likely to continue in this way for some time to come, despite the possibility of returning to normal face-to-face meetings sometime later in 2021. Even the Annual Assembly will be held remotely in 2021 which means, of course, that there cannot be the usual ‘presentation’ on a selected subject of interest to parishioners nor, indeed, the informal gathering afterwards for refreshments and chat. Hopefully things will return to normal by 2022.

Although we are now well through the winter season, again without serious snow and ice problems, there remains the threat of flooding. At Sandside this is largely related to tidal surges from the Kent estuary and resolving this problem would require major road works at and around the B5282/Storth Road junction – unlikely any time soon due to financial constraints at Cumbria Highways. The problem at Beetham is closely related to water levels in the River Bela and water feeding into it from surrounding higher land. Whilst this also seems to be a long-running saga at least there are stirrings from the responsible authorities, Cumbria County Council and the Environment Agency, with a remote public meeting planned for Tuesday 6 April 2021. This will pick up on issues raised at the last public meeting held at The Heron Theatre in 2018. We will keep you informed about how to tune into this meeting and its outcome.

Trees are a key feature of our attractive parish, but they are also a great responsibility and need regular care and attention. The cost of this attention can be high and the parish council accepts its responsibility for trees on its own land at Sandside Cutting and Slackhead and sets aside substantial funds annually for this purpose. Ash dieback is a disease currently damaging trees nationwide but has to be dealt with, by felling or drastic thinning, which sometimes removes the welcome screening they can provide from less attractive man-made objects. Thankfully most regrow in time.

A current cause for concern is leachate from the now-defunct Slackhead refuse tip. The possibility of this leachate containing contaminated materials has been brought to the attention of the responsible authorities, with a request for urgent inspection and correction as necessary. We will keep you informed.

Signs directed to recreational anglers at Sandside are now on order and should be in place before the summer. The response has been good for funding a new Speed Indicator Device for the A6 at Beetham, where traffic speeds have long been a concern and it is hoped to bring this project to fruition in 2021.

Beetham PC’s budget for 2021/22 has been set and its precept requirement lodged. SLDC’s power and maintenance charges for parish highway lighting have increased by 68% in the last three years. Together with the above-mentioned funds needed for tree care this has resulted in a typical (Band D property) precept increase of £3.82 (7p per week) for the parish council’s precept requirement for the year 2021/22.

The local government reorganisation is now at the public consultation stage with all four proposals on the table.