

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2017/2018

The Chairman, Dr Brian Meakin, reviewed the main activities and issues which have concerned the Parish Council over the past year. This was followed by a presentation by Lucy Barron, Manager of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Group explaining all their work on maintaining and improving our local environment

The AONB Development Plan Document (DPD), referred to at last year's Parish Assembly has now been approved by Lancaster City Council and SLDC. The plan will now go forward to a planning inspector for final approval. Importantly, the two sites which created much concern, namely B79 and B116, are not being proposed for development in the current version of the plan.

Land matters again occupied much of the Parish Council's time. Following planning permission to build a crematorium, the Beetham Hall site is now in routine use and provides a sorely needed facility for the local area. The Parish Council is monitoring activity on the site to ensure all commitments made during assessment of the planning application are adhered to. Another development is permission from SLDC for the importation, storage and processing of reclaimed asphalt at Sandside Quarry. This will prolong the useful life of the quarry with a valuable recycling (so environmentally friendly) activity. The quarry management are known to be keen to minimise any impact on local residents and, moreover, have commendable long-term plans for the eventual responsible decommissioning of the site.

Another important planning issue concerns the field known as the Sports Field at Beetham. This field has been purchased by a local resident with the stated object of safeguarding its future from development. The purchaser's intention is to offer the lower half of the field to the diocese at cost for use as a playing/sports field for Beetham School and to provide much needed extra space for a wider range of school-related activities in the long term. The top half of the field is to remain accessible for occasional use by the school. The prospect of an eventual pedestrian/cycle path from the top to the bottom of the entire field, as a safer alternative to Leighton Beck Road, now seems more realistic. These exciting plans are fully supported by the school and by the parish council.

Issues relating to local footpaths include persistent and deliberate obstruction of the Beetham ghost footpath by nearby residents with the object of narrowing the roadway and slowing traffic. Not only is this practice illegal, but it is dangerous for pedestrians wishing to use the footpath to escape the traffic. There has also been a problem of overgrown and overhanging trees, particularly along the A6 footway linking the Heron Theatre with the war memorial in Beetham. It is important to note that parish residents are responsible for trimming their trees to avoid this nuisance to pedestrians.

A car accident on 2 October 2017 resulted in serious damage to the bus shelter on the south side of the B5282 at Carr Bank Road end and the remains of the shelter were removed shortly after for safety reasons. The intention is to replace the old shelter as soon as possible with a more modern equivalent. Permission from the parish council's insurers to proceed has now been confirmed, with the cost expected to be borne by the third party's insurers.

A Speed Indicator Device (SID) has been purchased by the parish council and is currently located on the B5282 to warn motorists of the dangerous junction with Green Lane. A second site near to the junction of the B5282 and Storth Road has been identified, but purchase of a second SID will be delayed until experience is gained with our first device and the necessary funding is available.

The BPC map board project is progressing well, albeit slowly in view of the amount of detail to be considered and space limitations of the board itself. Thanks must go to Arnside & Silverdale AONB for providing invaluable advice and facilities. The boards are expected to be installed before the 2018 summer season. The refurbishment and relocation of the Slackhead signpost has now been completed to provide an attractive historical asset at the Slackhead junction. The contribution of the Landscape Trust volunteers on this project is much appreciated.

The defibrillator project for Beetham village remains ongoing. The Stanley Street phone box is no longer the preferred location due to the prospect of continuing maintenance costs and Beetham School premises have been rejected by the local First Responders as being too far from the village centre. Beetham Parish Church Council were not prepared to allow the equipment to be sited in the church porch and discussions are now in progress to place the defibrillator in a protective box on the wall of the Wheatsheaf Inn.

Regarding superfast broadband, a cabinet carrying the main cables has been installed in the car park of Storth Village Hall. However, connection to the incoming optical fibre cable has been delayed by discussions with the local landowner to obtain permission to install the cable across a specific area of land.

A local resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, has provided a donation to permit the seat at Four Lane Ends, Storth to be replaced. The village much appreciates this kind donation.

There is disappointment locally with Natural England's proposal to route its coastal path across the bay, from Arnside to Grange, using the railway as a 'ferry', thereby totally bypassing a number of parishes higher up the estuary, including Beetham. It is hoped that Natural England can be persuaded to reconsider this decision.

Finally – a reminder of the availability of grants from Beetham PC to support selected local projects. Applications for 2017/18 were requested to be submitted by end-February 2018 so that they can be funded from the 2017/2018 budget. However, the parish council is willing to consider requests made within the 2017/2018 budget period.