BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
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Just when we thought the Beetham traffic calming problem had been resolved, we find it is still with us! What began as simply a speeding issue on Stanley Street developed into the comprehensive village scheme requested by residents generally at a public meeting in the Wheatsheaf to discuss the matter. In due course a revised plan of the work was displayed by CCC Highways at a special presentation in the Heron Theatre, although this was poorly attended. Work was finally completed in October - but, unfortunately, not to everyone's satisfaction. The scheme will now be re-examined to see if modifications can easily be made.

The other big and long-running matter has been the land allocations proposals by SLDC as part of its Local Development Framework plans. These proposals attracted widespread reaction from the public during the consultation process – so much so that more research is now needed to address issues raised. In Beetham parish, the special considerations that apply as a result of its location in an AONB are fundamental to any development and must be fully taken into account.

As you may be aware, high-speed broadband should be with us by 2015; this is considered to be essential for local businesses to maintain a competitive edge and should be welcomed. An attractive bench has recently been placed on the grass verge, opposite Storth Primary School, by Les Elbourne in memory of his late wife Margaret who was active in the village and particularly in the school; Les hopes the bench will provide a welcome place to rest and reflect for passers-by and residents alike. After many months of effort by a wide range of people, including children from Beetham School, an interpretation panel has finally appeared at the Friar Cote Bridge end of Sandside Cutting; this displays highlights of the parish's abundant glorious natural features along with routes for viewing them. A real oak frame for the panel has been funded by the AONB. A similar long-awaited panel should soon appear at Hale.

Due to the very wet summer, flooding at vulnerable locations has been widely reported. Often this is the result of blocked drains and so relatively easily rectified, although the sheer magnitude of this year's problems have sometimes meant delays in carrying out the work. Other locations suffer from poor basic drainage systems, which are much more serious and difficult to correct. Due in part to current financial restrictions at all levels, but particularly as they affect CCC Highways, these basic faults often cannot, unfortunately, be given high priority for attention.

Financial constraints are always a feature of the budgeting process that all councils have to handle and have a direct impact on the Council Tax eventually paid by electors. The parish council has recently completed its budget for 2013/14. Subject to an anxiously awaited central government decision on cut-backs as they affect local councils, Beetham has been able to hold its precept (ie its subsidy from SLDC) at about the same level as this year, whilst maintaining all the important local services it provides. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the difficult financial times we are now experiencing are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

We were sad to hear that our long-serving and highly valued parish council member Ian Duckworth had decided to stand down. The parish council would like to place on record its sincere appreciation of Ian's immense contribution to council work over the years and wish him a long and happy retirement from parish council affairs. It has been necessary to try to fill the casual vacancy created by this event and we are indeed fortunate to have received applications from two excellent candidates. We expect to be able to report the eventual appointee in our next Newsletter.

JRS 18/12/12