

BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
ISSUE No 26 **JAN – MAR 2016**

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Storm Desmond is now long gone, but its effects are still with us. It could be some time yet before things are back to normal for the many who suffered damage to property and their way of life but, as always, remarkable stories of courage and determination have emerged. Fortunately, Beetham parish escaped relatively lightly. That said, making good the damage throughout the county and South Lakeland District will be costly. Funding has been promised from central government and will be seen in the way of grants available to those who have suffered loss but, inevitably, the substantial overall costs will be reflected locally in increased Council Tax bills. The County Council, as previously reported, was already facing escalating costs of some of the general services it provides and was struggling to balance its budget. It now has to make very difficult decisions on what it can realistically do over the next few years.

Land issues continue to take up much of the parish council's time. Proposed agreements for the parish council's car-parking plots at Slackhead have come a step nearer with general approval of their detailed contents by all concerned. It is hoped this matter can now be concluded without further delay. Work on maintaining Sandside Cutting has been agreed and will be undertaken as soon as practicable. The parish council's project to improve the appearance and usefulness of the apparently abandoned site at Dixies, Sandside, whose owners were unknown, has been halted by the emergence of (still unidentified) parties claiming ownership and their alternative plans for the site. More information will be reported as soon as it becomes available.

Also on the subject of land matters, everyone will now be aware of the eventual success of Fishwick's planning application to build a crematorium at their Beetham Hall site, a proposal widely opposed at the time it was made. The outcome of a similar proposal by other parties for a crematorium at Junction 36, so not in Beetham parish, remains unresolved. Plans by Dallam Tower Estate to open up a small site on Mill Lane, as a car park for the sole use of Beetham residents, were turned down by SLDC, although it would certainly be useful to have more parking facilities for visitors to the village, as the parish council had requested.

The Public Inquiry into the parish council's application, on behalf of residents, to change the status of some paths in the Hale area to Public Rights of Way has now begun. The initial hearing took place at Storth Village Hall on 17th March and the inspector's decision is expected within the next month or so.

The parish council is supporting a move to extend the availability of defibrillators in the parish. West Ward (Storth/Carr bank) is adequately covered in this respect but there are no such facilities at all in East Ward (Beetham/Hale/Farleton). Volunteers are required to operate such equipment although training needs are minimal. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you are interested in being involved. A proposal to set up a community transport scheme in Beetham was abandoned due to lack of demand. Storth's community shop/post office has been saved from closure; it was launched in a new form on 24th March and with increased opening hours, much welcomed by local residents. Parish Council grants given in 2016 were for Storth Playing Field Association (£1,000), AONB (£700), Heron Theatre (£500), Morecambe Bay Partnership (£200) and Royal British Legion £60.