

# BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Over recent years, a regular and often dominant feature of parish news has been traffic speeds. In particular this issue has related to the A6 where it passes briefly through the East Ward of our parish with a traffic speed limit of 50mph, although other parts of the parish also suffer from a traffic speed problem albeit to a lesser extent. Concerns about the structure of the Bela bridge, where the A6 passes over the river, led to a major project to improve road safety at this point. The work took many months to complete, during which a temporary traffic speed limit of 30mph was imposed. Though routinely ignored by motorists this reduced limit produced at least some respite for, and was welcomed by, local residents! However, the project is now complete and we have a splendid new and safe superstructure to the bridge. With the project complete the original 50mph speed limit has been automatically restored. The hope now is that the A6 traffic speed limit at Beetham can be permanently reduced to a more tolerable level of say 40mph and the parish council is following the formal and protracted procedure, involving other agencies, needed for this.

Traffic within Beetham village is also a problem. The parish council has undertaken a detailed survey of traffic movements and speeds, which has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities and suggestions for increased traffic calming measures in Church Street, Stanley Street and Leighton Beck Road are under consideration.

Beetham village war memorial is in need of some TLC and a project is underway to deal with this, taking advantage of grants available from the War Graves Commission. Similarly, it is hoped to replace the broken metal gate which currently acts as the entrance from the Stanley Street ginnel into the field and permissive path to Slackhead. Access to the public footpath from Beetham to Hale which is located behind Stanley Street properties is of concern to residents anxious to protect their privacy. The Beetham stocks are an iconic feature of the village and attract visitors from far afield, but their condition has deteriorated badly over the last few years. It now has to be decided what action to take. The options seem to be to repair, replace with new or remove altogether. The parish council would welcome village opinion on this issue and is willing to go along whatever turns out to be the preferred route. Please let Parish Clerk John Scargill have your comments, preferably by email.

Nothing much has been heard recently about the proposed major development at Sandside. Investment by the developers must already be significant and it is assumed that, in due course, they will come back with modified proposals. We will, of course, keep you informed. Similarly, The Ship Inn and its future seems no nearer resolution. Against this there is now a Community Hub at Storth, thanks to a grant from Westmorland & Furness Council (WFC) and the active involvement of local residents.

The first year of WFC as our immediate higher authority is now behind us. The huge task of their taking over responsibility from SLDC has, on the whole, been achieved successfully although not without problems of communication both with and within the new organisation. In a major and very much welcome development for Beetham Parish, WFC has agreed to take over responsibility for all parish street lighting – provision of lighting units together with their maintenance and power supply. This has historically been a large sum in Beetham Parish Council's annual expenditure budget (almost £3,000 or 12% in 2022/23) and has a knock-on effect on precept requirements. This reduced outgoing will enable your parish council to cover its other expenditure inflation increases and even consider some new worthwhile projects whilst holding precept requirements in check.

Beetham Parish Council now has an energetic and focussed group of members – but one vacancy remains in West Ward (Storth/Carr Bank). Anyone who might be interested in joining the team would be most welcome.

JRS 10/06/24