

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2013/2014

The first thing to mention must obviously be the change in the format of the Annual Parish Assembly for 2014. The purpose of the Annual Assembly is to provide an opportunity for residents to learn what has been going on in the parish as a whole. It is not a Parish Council meeting as such, although the Council usually organises it. Much more is actually going on than is covered in parish council business, so different parish groups have been invited to make a short presentation to tell you about themselves. We hope this will prove a popular format and attract wider interest.

But as Chair of Beetham Parish Council I do still need to tell you about the main issues dealt with by the Council in the last twelve months. These can all be read about in Parish Council minutes, but certain matters deserve special mention.

Street-lamps are certainly the priority issue and have involved much Parish Council time. As you probably know, most of our street lamps are sited on poles belonging to Electricity NorthWest. Electricity NorthWest have now decided this practice cannot continue for the future. New **self-standing** lamps cost about £1,200 each. The cost to the Parish Council of replacing all the present street lamps could be as much as £30,000 and it has been decided to provide for two new lamps per year for the foreseeable future. This cost will inevitably increase the parish precept and, in turn, the Council Tax bill for residents. Although Electricity NorthWest is being pressed at all levels to reconsider this change of policy, so far there have been few concessions.

On a more satisfactory note, I know that Storth Community Transport scheme is a great success (as you will be hearing later in this meeting) and a similar scheme is now getting off the ground, based in Beetham. I believe that Storth Community shop and post office also continues to flourish and I look forward to hearing this evening how other groups have been doing. Elsewhere in the parish more amenity work is being undertaken by the Parish Council so the effects of this should soon be seen in the form of more tidy areas of grass. Regular maintenance work continues in Sandside Cutting and on the Parish Council's other patch of land at Slackhead.

The Parish Council continues to monitor, and take an active part, in the development of SLDC's planning proposals under their Local Development Framework, which has important implications for the parish.

Finally, we were very sorry to lose Jessica Harvey as a valued and highly active Parish Council member, but I hope soon to be able to announce that the resulting vacancy has been filled.