

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2016/2017

The Parish Council 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 change from the format over recent years which has included reports from parish groups and organisations. BT optical fibre is now installed to most green boxes in the parish, resulting in significant increases in download & upload speeds using BT Infinity 1 or 2. Paul Cretney, Senior Project Manager from BT will explain progress so far on this project. In addition, you may be aware of the on-going project of B4YS to bring superfast broadband to areas of our parish, notably the Sandside/Storth area. Significant progress has been made over the past year and we have invited Barry Ford of B4RN to explain the background to the project and the progress made so far by our local group B4YS.

Firstly, land matters occupy much of the Parish Council's time. After many months of effort, from both members and tenants, new rent agreements are now fully operational for all the garage sites off Leighton Beck Road, Slackhead. The Parish Council would like to thank all who have been involved in this saga for bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. Plans to improve the Dixies site at Sandside have been placed on hold pending the establishment of ownership. The Parish Council will continue with efforts to smarten up this high-profile site for the benefit of residents and visitors alike, but these can only progress with the support of the landowner.

The inspector has finally published his decision on the Hale Marble Quarry case, following the public inquiry held at Storth Village Hall some months ago. He has upheld the land owner's objection to Cumbria County Council's granting of public right of way status for a number of paths in this area, thereby bringing to an end many years of public use. Fortunately we live in a beautiful area and there is still much to enjoy. You will recall that the earlier inquiry, on a similar issue at Burntbarrow Woods in Storth, resulted in right of way status being confirmed for the disputed paths in that case.

Not too long ago, the parish council was instrumental in organising the installation of information map boards at Friar Cote Bridge, Sandside, and at Hale Green. These were generally well received. At its June 2016 meeting, it was agreed that the parish council would support the idea of additional panels, providing local information, to be sited in Storth, Carr Bank and Beetham. We are working with Ann Kitchen of the Bittern Community Interest Company, together with AONB personnel, to develop specific panels for these areas.

Defibrillators are often seen in public places these days. They are also held by many First Responder teams. However, the East Ward of Beetham parish has been identified as a local

area where they are not readily available, despite having several residents who have undergone training in their use. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the purchase of equipment and a possible location is under discussion. The telephone box on Stanley Street, Beetham is the most likely location. An alternative location is Beetham Primary School.

Two interesting historic features within the parish have come to our attention. The first is the original metal finger post at Slackhead junction, at the top of the hill, which is in a very poor state and in sore need of renovation rather than being replaced with a modern equivalent. The Parish Council has agreed to contribute funding and a plan has been developed with the Landscape Trust to undertake the necessary work. It is hoped that relocation and refurbishment of the signpost will be completed over the summer months. The other feature is an old stone seat just outside the Heron Theatre at Beetham. Due to road improvements over the years, the road level has gradually been built up so that the seat is no longer useable – although Beetham WI has taken advantage of this to adopt it as a base for an attractive planter. It was decided that, although restoration was a nice idea, a lot of manual work was involved and there was, in fact, little demand for a seat at that location. The seat will now remain as a suitable location for Beetham WI's planter.

Following planning permission to build a crematorium, the Beetham Hall site is now in routine use. 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.

Although Beetham parish is, thankfully, relatively crime-free, it is very close to the border between Cumbria and Lancashire. The A6, which passes through it, carries much of the traffic engaged in cross-border crime. Cumbria Police target this area in the hope of intercepting such traffic, but their appeal for active support from civilian volunteers has gone largely unanswered. The police would welcome volunteers from local residents to support their efforts against local crime. Additionally, Cumbria's Police & Crime Commissioner has agreed to meet representatives of the three local parish councils (Arnside, Beetham and Milnthorpe) to discuss general policing matters, including any concerns people may have. Beetham Parish Council will certainly be nominating representatives for this meeting.

Finally, the Parish Council continues to work towards maintaining Beetham parish as a desirable place to live and visit, whilst holding its expenses in check and avoiding the need to increase its Council Tax funding. However, we need the support of local residents to notify us of changes which adversely impact on our local environment. Please do not hesitate to

contact the Clerk or a local parish councillor if you become aware of unacceptable or anti-social activities within our parish.