

BEETHAM PARISH ASSEMBLY

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 15th March 2012 at Storth Village Hall.

Present were Cllrs Ken Blenkharn (in the Chair), David Clark, Brian Meakin, Chris Noble and Bob Pickup, the Clerk John Scargill and six electors.

1. Opening of the Parish Assembly and welcome - Chairman, Cllr Ken Blenkharn, welcomed those present and especially Digby Singleton for standing in as speaker at the very last minute.

2. Apologies for absence – Cllrs Duckworth, Harvey and Jupe.

3. The minutes of the previous Annual Assembly, held on 17th March 2011, were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr Meakin (Cllr Blenkharn not having been present at that meeting)..

4. Chairman's Review of the year 2011/12. Cllr Blenkharn reported that the Parish Council was continuing to take a close interest in all land matters including the recent, and ongoing, land allocations related to SLDC's Local Development Framework strategy, although few plots within the parish boundary appeared in the most recent list of favoured sites. The Parish Council would be making an official response to these proposals before the public consultation deadline of 17 April 2012. Sandside Cutting now enjoyed public right-of-way status, which should give it a higher profile, but permissive paths elsewhere in the parish continued to be under threat of closure by land owners. The Environment Agency's decision to terminate operation of some land drainage pumps in the Lyth and Winster valleys would have little impact outside that immediate vicinity, but local proposals to replace this service with an Internal Drainage Board covering a much wider area had caused concern because of the implications for resident Council Tax payers who were unlikely to see any benefit. This year's winter weather had so far been mild compared with the previous two years but a supply of grit had been delivered and the Parish Steward was standing by in case of need. Various plans were afoot within the parish for celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June, including the creation of an attractive public garden out of a small overgrown plot of land beside the A6 at Beetham. Finally, the Chairman thanked the Parish Clerk for his contribution to the smooth and efficient running of parish council affairs.

5. Presentation on the Teddy Heights Nature Reserve by Digby Singleton. Mr Singleton gave an interesting insight, from hands-on experience, into how this reserve was managed and how the butterfly and bird population was protected and encouraged. He then answered question on this subject.

6. General questions. Cllr Meakin started proceedings by outlining central government's long-term plans for a new nuclear power station on the west coast of Cumbria and the problems associated with linking its electricity output to the National Grid. Questions on this subject were followed by questions on Local Development Framework land allocations within the parish and the Council Tax implications of proposals for a local Internal Drainage Board. Finally, in answer to questions, the results of research into land ownership west of Langdale Crest were summarised.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm and was followed by refreshments and informal conversation between councillors, presenter and members of the public.