

BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
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At this time everyone's thoughts will be with those who have been so unfortunately affected by the early December flooding as a result of Storm Desmond. As you all know, unprecedented amounts of rain fell on Cumbria as a whole, causing havoc in a great many areas, including Kendal and certain parts of our parish. Homes have been ruined and lives disrupted, and all just before Christmas. Thankfully personal injury and loss of life seems to have been minimal, but that is not to diminish the devastating effect generally. Some outstanding examples of bravery and public spirit have shone through, as they always do, and meaningful and practical measures to help those most in need have been quick to appear from all sections of the community, including local and central government organisations. Nevertheless, it will be a long time before things return to normal. Beside this, all other news seems trivial, but life goes on and there are other events to report.

Financial problems continue to demand drastic action at both national and county levels. Of course, the proposed remedies are not always popular. In particular Cumbria County Council's need to find still more significant budget savings threatens even the so-called blue-lamp services – ambulance, police and fire. The police presence is already less in evidence and Arnside Fire Station is one of a number of local stations marked for closure, causing serious concern among residents currently dependent on their services. Many voices have been raised in protest, but will they be heard? Needless to say, Council Tax levels are bound to rise, affecting just about everyone.

There has been grindingly slow progress with formalising agreements for the Parish Council's garage plots at Slackhead and the Stanley Street parking problem, which has never been solved, can only get worse with the withdrawal of Beetham School playground (albeit for the most genuine of reasons) as an overspill car park for Heron Theatre patrons. It remains to be seen what the effect on this situation will be if Dallam Estate are given planning permission to create a new 'residents only' car park in Beetham village; certainly those residents nearest to the proposed site are not happy.

But there are some more encouraging things to report. The broken handrail, on the footpath between Burntbarrow and Shaw Lane has been replaced, free-of-charge, by a local contractor – and a very good job he has made of it. And Beetham WI's offer to fund the provision and maintenance of four planters at the entrance to the village is nearing realisation, after some minor problems with siting. In addition, the Speed Indicator Device (SID) offered on loan to the parish by SLDC, will be in action on the B5282, between Guard Hill Lane and Friar Cote Bridge in March/April 2016. Finally, the inspector's decision on the Buntbarrow Woods Public Right of Way dispute found in favour of the applicant group of mainly local residents which, after some modification, was accepted by the land owner.

On the other hand, there are a number of current items where it is not possible to report progress. The decision on the planning application for a new crematorium at Beetham Hall, Mill Lane safety problems and the Dixies site improvement project. However, the good news is that the application of Mrs Margaret Knowles to join the Parish Council as a co-opted member has been approved, with formalities to be completed at the January 2016 meeting.