

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2012/2013

This year has been a busy one, with some interesting developments. Some of the items dealt with have been carried over from last year.

Two of these are land matters. SLDC's land allocation proposals proved controversial and an inspector was called in to adjudicate. In particular, those relating to land in the AONB area, which has special, protected status, needed to be reconsidered – and treated consistently within the whole AONB. As this area spreads into two counties, involving two planning authorities, things will obviously take longer.

The other land matter involves drainage in the Lyth Valley and adjacent areas, including Beetham to a limited extent. Here, proposals by a local group for maintaining and improving existing facilities also proved controversial (particularly as regards cost) and are back on the drawing board. Hopefully they will be able to resolve the issues to everyone's satisfaction. Drainage in general came to the fore in 2012 due to the exceptionally wet weather, which affected many roads and properties. Some such problems are due to basic drainage shortcomings, requiring significant investment, and will take time to resolve in today's economic climate.

However, there are items of good news, with a number of improvements evident in the parish. The Bela River Garden, beside the A6 at Beetham, appeared from what was an untidy patch of scrub, and is complemented by a delightful bench and two attractive interpretation panels covering the history of nearby features. A similar panel, covering the much wider area from Hale to Sandside, including linking paths, is now in place in Sandside Cutting and will soon have a duplicate on Hale Green. Plans for a geology trail are at an advanced stage and preliminary ideas are being discussed for a children's play-park in Beetham village. And the Heron Corn Mill has received lottery funding for major development, which should attract more visitors.

Speed bumps in Stanley Street, Beetham, have gone some way towards calming through traffic, but other measures elsewhere in the village did not meet with general approval and have had to be modified.

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. Finally, I must mention Ian Duckworth, who retired from the Parish Council in 2012 after many years diligent service. We were very sorry to lose him but welcome his replacement, Steve Yates who joined in January 2013.