

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2015/2016

Welcome to all parish residents who have come to our Parish Assembly tonight, particularly those representing parish community organisations. My task is to review the main activities and issues which have concerned the Parish Council over the past year. This will be followed by reports from parish groups and organisations. We have a high level of community support available within our parish and we are grateful for the efforts of each of these groups. But more of that later.

At this time, everyone's thoughts continue to be with those who have been so unfortunately affected by the early 2015 December flooding as a result of Storm Desmond. Thankfully, only a few properties in Beetham parish were affected and there was no personal injury or loss of life. Beside this, all other news seems trivial, but life goes on and there are other events to report.

Land matters continue to be an important issue for us all and take up much time of the parish council. Objections to Fishwick's proposal to build a crematorium at its Beetham Hall site were submitted by the parish council, the AONB Partnership and by local residents. These contributed to the planning application being rejected by SLDC. However, an appeal to this decision was submitted by Fishwick's and the government inspector granted the appeal. No doubt, many residents of Beetham will be unhappy about this decision. The parish council is not aware of a proposal to request a judicial review, no doubt because of the potential financial liabilities should the decision again be in Fishwick's favour.

Mill Lane in Beetham continues to cause concerns for the parish council with the safety of walkers being put at risk by user vehicles, particularly large vehicles accessing the Corn Mill. The parish council have contacted Dallam Estate, the land owner, suggesting the creation of a separate pedestrian way running alongside the road in the adjacent field. However, no positive response to this suggestion has been received from Dallam Estates.

There has been grindingly slow progress with resolving the Stanley Street parking problem, which can only get worse with the withdrawal of the Beetham School playground (albeit for the most genuine of reasons) as an overspill car park for Heron Theatre patrons. Progress has also been slow with formalising agreements for the Parish Council garage plots at Slackhead, but hopefully these will be signed in the near future.

Through the year, plans were developed for improving the visual appearance of the Dixies car park and ensuring the site defences against the sea were sound. However, these plans are now on hold since the Parish Council were informed that Dallam Estates had been contacted by the current owner with a proposal that they purchase the site.

A disappointment during 2015/2016 has been the failure to set up a Community Transport Scheme in Beetham to mirror the successful schemes already operating in Storth and Arnside. The Parish Council provided primary funding to help Age UK initiate and maintain the scheme and a small number of volunteer drivers were identified. However, there has been a

lack of interest from residents in Beetham, Slackhead & Hale regarding use of the scheme and Age UK have decided to close the scheme. I feel sure the Parish Council would look favourably were attempts made in the future to restart a Community Transport Scheme in Beetham.

Streetlamps within the parish continue to be an issue. Electricity Northwest have removed two lamps in Back Lane, Hale and one in Storth Road, Storth. Neither of these lamps could be replaced for technical reasons. The Parish Council continues to accumulate funds for replacing those lamps which may be removed in the future and where technical difficulties do not apply, although not all lamps that currently exist may be considered necessary. Each situation will be dealt with on its merits.

Finally, on a positive note, the public enquiry into whether a number of paths through Burntbarrow Woods could be designated as public rights of way (ROW) ruled in favour of the applicants with the Inspector's compromise suggestions being accepted by both the applicants and the land owner. A public meeting on the similar issue of the Hale Marble Quarry paths was due to be held in October 2015 but was deferred until March 2016 due to illness of the Inspector. The inquiry meeting was held on 15th and 16th March in Storth Village Hall and we now await the Inspector's decision.