

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2019/2020

The objective of the Annual Parish Review is to review the main activities and issues which have concerned the Parish Council over the past year..

Beetham Parish Council now has a full complement of nine councillors following the co-option of Brian Dean from Beetham and Becky Dewar from Storth. Because of the variations in population density within the parish, the parish area is divided into two Wards - East Ward represented by 4 councillors and West Ward represented by 5 councillors.

The potential for flooding in Beetham has again been a major concern during the past year. In particular, residents of Parsonage Fold, Beetham live under constant threat of a recurrence of the dreadful consequences of Storm Desmond in 2015, with other areas in Beetham and the wider parish apprehensive of their ability to withstand a recurrence of such and even less extreme conditions.

Another flooding issue in Beetham is frequent surface water flowing across Leighton Beck Road, in the area of the double bend about 400m west of the junction with Stanley Street, Beetham, particularly in the winter when it can, and does, freeze. The flow is almost constant at certain times of year, emanating from springs on private land to the north (and higher) side of Leighton Beck Road and making its way across the road into what was known as the school's sports field. The longstanding water-surface problem in Leighton Beck Road is now actively being investigated by Cumbria CC Highways experts, although there is no simple solution.

The Beetham Flood Resilience Group is now up and running, led by Mrs Linda Dean, a Beetham resident. Useful contacts have been made with similar neighbouring groups, including Kendal, and Beetham PC has promised funding assistance when this came to be needed. Unfortunately, but as we already knew, the Environment Agency hold out no hope of being able to undertake any major works for the foreseeable future, so efforts must be concentrated on precautions which can be implemented by local residents.

Better news regarding the installation of defibrillators within the parish. The defibrillator in Beetham has now been installed in the BT telephone box and linked to the national ambulance system. In addition, plans are well advanced to install a defibrillator in the BT telephone box at Carr Bank. Whilst we hope they will never be needed, we must all appreciate that, if it saves one life, it will have been worth all the effort and cost involved.

The parish council has agreed to support efforts to improve the visual aspects of Beetham village. To encourage this, the application to be submitted in April 2020 for the Cumbria in Bloom competition will be funded by the parish council.

Traffic issues have continued to cause concern. A shortage of car parking at Beetham crematorium continues to represent a worrying road safety issue on the A6 when two or more funerals overlap or a large number of people attend a specific cremation. Additional temporary parking has been installed by Fishwicks to resolve this problem. The wall rebuild on the B5282 at Sandside has resulted in many criticisms from the public, with Highways citing cost as the reason why aesthetic issues had to be sacrificed. Hopefully the appearance of the concrete base will improve with time.

Another traffic problem concerns Stanley Street in Beetham. As Beetham residents are already aware, there has long been a shortage of parking space for their personal vehicles and those who live in Stanley Street have to contend with extra parking demand when there are evening performances at the Heron Theatre. The Parish Council has considered a number of options to solve this problem but, like so many of the problems it is asked to deal with, there is no easy answer. Stanley Street is a public highway and the suggestion of making it a ‘residents only’ parking zone would require it to be policed – which cannot be done in the evening.

The new handrail on the path between Burntbarrow and Shaw Green, Storth, provided by an anonymous donor, has been warmly welcomed. Residents will also be delighted that a new bus service between Arnside and Milnthorpe has been launched by a local group. A Beetham PC member has agreed to join the steering committee of this group. In addition, a reduced bus service from Arnside to three locations (Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale and Morecambe) has been introduced.

The danger of traffic exiting Storth Road at its junction with the B5282 has long been obvious. A convex mirror to improve the visibility of vehicles approaching from Arnside has been purchased and this will be installed by end-March.

Finally, a survey of the trees in Sandside Cutting was done early in 2018 and many identified for attention – some urgently. However, it proved surprisingly difficult to find specialist workmen willing to undertake the job and the contract was not placed until mid-2018. Tree felling was carried out in March 2019 and 2020. The parish council plans to fund tree felling annually to remove potentially dangerous trees and improve the visual appearance of the public footpath.