

BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
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Councillors (East Ward)

Mr K Blenkarn (Chair) 015395-63877
Mr D B Clark 015395-63341
Mrs P M Jupe 015395-62545
Mr W S Yates 015395-64129

Councillors (West Ward)

Mrs J A Harvey 015395-62970
Dr B C Meakin 015395-65722
Mr C H Noble 01524-762427
Mr R K Pickup 01524-761740
Mr I Stewart 015395-63391

Clerk

Mr J R Scargill 01524-782811

Website

www.beethampc.co.uk

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So – another parish council year begins and congratulations to both Ken Blenkarn and Jessica Harvey, who were re-elected as Chair and Vice-chair respectively at the annual meeting in May. They head a dependable and dedicated team who work hard for the parish, without fuss and often without adequate recognition. Parish councils are not always so fortunate.

The land allocations saga rumbles on, with the inspector's enquiry reconvening in June. The AONB will henceforth be dealt with as one entity, which seems a sensible step but, because this area spreads into two counties and involves two planning authorities, we must expect things to take longer than might otherwise have been the case. There are sure to be disappointments in store for some but, hopefully, the final outcome will please most.

You will all recall the warning in our April newsletter about the problem of parish-owned street lamps if utility companies carry through their new policy of disallowing each other, and local councils, from sharing the poles that carry their services. Following pressure from your parish council, Tim Farron MP was persuaded of the serious cost implications of this threat and the possibility of parish councils (and their electors) having to make the difficult choice between paying considerably more for their lamps, or doing without. This issue has now reached the top levels of government with Norman Baker (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister responsible for highways issues) and Eric Pickles (Secretary of State DCLG) taking the problem on board. Too early yet to celebrate, but at least we are being listened to. Watch this space!

On a smaller scale, the parish council would like to thank the small group of Beetham residents who clubbed together to make a very generous contribution to the cost of replacing the defunct street lamp on Meadowbank. Although this was not a shared-pole issue, the cost of replacing the lamp took many by surprise.

Unless you have needed to use it, you will perhaps be unfamiliar with community transport. The service previously provided by SLDC (and now taken over by CCC) has been supplemented for the last year by a local service offered by the Storth Community Transport Group. Run by volunteers on a non-profit basis, this service has clocked up 177 journeys, covering 2604 miles, since its inception. In an exciting new development it has been agreed that the parish council should actively support this very worthwhile project, with the added objective of extending it throughout the parish. Anyone interested in setting up a similar scheme, based in or around Beetham village, should contact the Clerk, who will put them in touch with those who can advise and offer practical help. The value of this service cannot be overemphasised; even those with their own vehicles may find themselves in need of such transport due to unexpected circumstances. Please support this real community project, as a volunteer or as a user.

As reported in the March newsletter, attendance at the 2013 annual assembly was disappointing. Consequently it has been agreed that the format of this assembly should be changed for the future, with local organisations being invited to present reports on their activities over the previous year. This should emphasise the fact that this assembly is not a parish council event, but an event for the community as a whole. If you or your organisation would like to take part in the 2014 assembly, please contact the Clerk.