

BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 19th March 2009 in the Heron Theatre, Beetham.

Present were Cllrs Ken Blenkharn (in the Chair), David Clark, Ian Duckworth, Jessica Harvey, Bryan Huck, Pru Jupe, Brian Meakin, Ian Stewart, the Clerk John Scargill and eight electors.

1. Apologies for absence – none.

2. The minutes of the previous Annual Assembly, held on 20th March 2008, were distributed and approved as a correct record.

3. Chairman's Review of the year 2008/09. Cllr K Blenkharn presented a comprehensive review of important events in the year. Special mention was given to the formation and work of the Sandside Cutting Working Group and the appointment of Bill Haddow as the parish's first Parish Steward. The parish had also had two weekly visits from its County-employed Highway Steward. There had been significant progress with improving parish furniture – with the acquisition of two new seats and new maps for the map boards by the Parish Council and additional items acquired with generous funding from AONB/Landscape Trust. The Parish Plan was now complete, the parish website fully operational and a quarterly Parish Newsletter being published. The Clerk had received an annual appraisal from the Chairman and his contracted hours of work had been adjusted to conform to nationally accepted guidelines. Attention was now being given to the registration of several small pockets of parish land and to aiming for Quality Parish Council status for Beetham. The council's full adoption of Freedom of Information requirements meant that virtually all information on the council's work was now available to the general public.

4. How your parish council is run:

- **the role of chairman** – Cllr Blenkharn outlined the principal functions and duties of his office as Chairman of Beetham Parish Council.

- **the role of councillors** – Cllr Meakin dealt with the main duties and responsibilities of individual councillors.

- **the role of the Clerk** - John Scargill – covered his duties as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of Beetham Parish Council and outlined a typical month of his work in this capacity.

5. The Parish Website. Cllr Meakin gave a slide presentation on the content and function of the newly launched parish website, which he had set up during the course of the year, and demonstrated alternative ways in which the site could be accessed.

6. Questions from members of the public. Questions were mainly regarding the duties of the newly-appointed Parish Steward and how his work was organised. In response, councillors expressed their satisfaction with the appointment and, in particular, with the appointee; urgent jobs were now able to be tackled without delay and to a very acceptable standard. There was no shortage of work to be done and it was envisaged that the role of Parish Steward would be a developing one. In answer to another question, the nature of the Highway Steward's function was elaborated. A final question concerned the work of CALC (Cumbria Association of Local Councils); this body was considered to be well informed on all matters of importance to local councils and fulfilled a very welcome and useful function of instruction and guidance for its members.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm and was followed by refreshments and informal conversation.