

CHAIRMANS REPORT

2013/14

This year has seen the Parish Council achieve stability with no changes to council membership; this has allowed us to extend our activities by joining with the Church to develop the Tythe Barn area.

Funds for the Tythe Barn project have been raised from private individuals, the Parish Council and the Church, but it has been the number of individual who have provided manual labour for the project which has been most heartening. We have had help from very young to octogenarians and every age in between.

Special thanks must go to local farmers Philip Morrell and Peter Batty for the use of their heavy equipment and storage facilities.

Many people have donated plants, one person has offered to pay for a tree and another has donated cash. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Parish Council, to thank everyone who has helped in any way. This is the essence of a good society where individuals and groups come together for the good of the community. This is real localism at work.

Fortunately we have managed to progress this project without compromising our other work. The scheme to replace all the old wooden planters with stone ones has progressed and is now almost complete. These new planters are much more expensive than wooden ones, but should last much longer. Unfortunately not everyone has the same community spirit and someone who recently ran into one of the new planters drove off and left the mess for us to sort out.

Unfortunately there are some individuals who don't care about our village and indeed some who wish to despoil it. We have had a number of incidences of vandalism this year and on one occasion 26 items were defaced with graffiti. As usual volunteers cleaned off the graffiti and will soon be repairing the planter at no charge to the community except for materials.

Every time someone damages our village I feel depressed that there are such people in our community, but my spirits are quickly restored when I see individuals giving up their time to put things right.

This year due to the sad loss of Melvin our village gardener we have had to rely on more voluntary help than usual, however, we now have a new gardener/handyman John who will no doubt become a regular face around the place.

The annual scarecrow competition will be held again this year and we hope to build upon last year's success.

One problem which has dogged residents over the past year has been inconsiderate parking. While some individuals have heeded previous appeals by parking their vehicles in their own drives some people persist in causing a problem. Unfortunately the Parish Council have no powers to enforce

considerate parking, but where an obstruction is caused, the local police have assured us that they will take action against vehicle owners.

Once again our finances are in good order and our external auditor has found no problems with our accounts. We have an annual budget of around £11,000 and we have a balance of around £7000 in our account at the moment.

We are never going to get everything right but unless you tell us we don't know how much we get wrong.

One thing that you did not need to tell us about getting wrong last year was the Christmas tree. It was a poor show to say the least. As a result we have decided to take the matter into our own hands this year; we are planning to have a smaller tree in a better location. We have already purchased lights, but we could do with some ideas for decorations.

I am aware that we do not please everyone in the village, but we are always willing to listen to new ideas or accept constructive criticism. Our meetings remain open to the public and parish councillors are happy to talk to individuals privately if preferred.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their efforts over the last year, without these volunteers nothing would happen. I should also like to thank our local Councillors, Geoff Walsh, Celia Loughran and Tony Dean for their continual support and advice. It is a perpetual struggle to maintain standards, but with the various groups now working together with help from individuals the future for Darrington Parish once again looks bright.

Michael Britton MA
Chairman DPC.