

Darrington Parish Council

Annual Chairman's Report.

2015/16

Once again I am pleased to report that the Parish Council have had a productive year. Established events such as the Scarecrow Competition, the Feast and Fayre stall and The Christmas Carol service went well again. The new tree lights were a great success, even if the tree was not entirely straight. Thanks to the Brotherhood Church for donating the tree and to all the local businesses who donated to the lights.

The new councillors have proved their worth by not only helping with projects but leading them. The Feast and Fayre stall and Scarecrow Competition were both organised by the new team. Thanks also to the people at the Village Store for their input.

One new event was organised by Councillor Hoyle. A litter picking day was held and the village received a good clean up.

We have had a number of problems to deal with recently, the Golf Club driving range project caused some concern, but after organising escorted tours around the site everyone seemed to be content. As the people at the Golf Club pointed out, they did nothing more than agreed in their planning application. They went through due process with their application; they consulted local residents and posted notices as required detailing what they were going to do. I can't emphasize enough that it is important to look at planning applications and make an objection at the time if you feel that a proposal will adversely affect you. To wait until the project is half built before registering an objection is unfair and not very likely to succeed. We look at every planning application in our parish at our meetings and give everyone an opportunity to comment.

Complaints were made about parking at Ripon Farm Services. The grassed areas were in a very poor state, and off loading of heavy machinery was causing inconvenience to residents. After expressing our concerns to the management they seem to be attempting to improve things however, no long term resolution has been found yet.

There was some concern at the smell emanating from the pig farm, but after inviting the owner Peter Batty to address the meeting he assured residents that he would do everything in his power to alleviate the problem. It was suggested that a log be kept of bad smell days and this was duly organised. Judging by the low number of reports to the log it would appear that the situation is much improved.

Our two perennial problems persist; overhanging vegetation throughout the village and inconsiderate parking, particularly on Sotheron Croft. We have no power to control parking,

but have asked the PCSOs to keep an eye on it. As for the overhanging trees etc, we do have the right to have them trimmed and pass on the cost on to residents, but we really don't want to do that, so once again I make the appeal to all residents to keep their vegetation in order.

One item which we decided not to pursue was the setting up of a "No Cold Calling Zone". We did look into the possibility, but it was complex and had cost implications which we believe would not have been justified.

The precept was raised by 5% for the forthcoming year, which will bring in an extra £600 or so. We will use this along with some of our reserves, to pay off part of the PWLB loan that we took out a few years ago for the street lighting scheme.

An "Open Garden" event will take place in the summer which we hope will be a popular event; details will be made available later.

Our main project this year is the regeneration of the Church Orchard. Working with Rev Judd and the people at the Church, the land has been cleared and wall rebuilding and landscaping are ongoing. This should bring a valuable asset back into public use and I would like to thank everyone who has worked to make this happen, particularly Peter Batty and his lads and Philip Morrell for their heavy equipment and labour.

The saddest news this year is the resignation of Roger Farrell who was one of our longest serving councillors. Roger was chairman when I joined and he taught me all about parish council ways. I will miss Roger's level headedness, but understand his need for more time to travel. He has certainly done his bit for the community and I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks on behalf of the parish council and the whole community.

To conclude, the coming year sees the Parish Council in a sound financial state and councillors maintain a resolve to work towards improving benefits for all residents.

Michael Britton ` Chairman DPC.