

The Parish Council have achieved a good deal in the last financial year. At the outset we were aware that our finances in good order and this along with a carefully planned budget allowed us to release some capital for improvement schemes. Consequently it was felt that it would not be necessary to increase the precept above the current rate of inflation. The long term project to update the village planters was progressed by building new stone ones along the Western end of Estcourt Road. Though these were much more expensive than the previous ones the Council felt that a greater investment now would prove to be prudent in the long term. This project is ongoing and we hope to be able to build more planters in the coming year.

Closer ties with the Field Committee have seen the two groups working together to provide a much improved play area on the village field which will be an asset for years to come. It is anticipated that this closer relationship will continue to improve the village for all residents.

There are still groups working for the village and villagers who are reluctant to integrate with the Parish Council despite our best efforts to encourage a closer relationship, but I would take this opportunity to assure them that closer ties would benefit the village as a whole. The Parish Council is not a politically or religiously motivated organisation; it exists to facilitate improvements for everyone.

There have been a number of changes on the council this year and we regret to have lost the services of Hazel Crabtree who has been a great asset. Her individual efforts to promote closer integration with the Church and School were very much appreciated by us all. Hazel will be a hard act to follow. However, we have had two new people join the Council this year, Jonathan Jackson and Denis MorrisseyNewton and I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome them both. I have no doubt that they will prove to be equally valuable to our group. The forthcoming year is set to be a busy one, the Feast and Fayre will dominate the celebrations as usual but the Parish Council felt that it would be wrong not to mark the Diamond Jubilee of our Queen. We have commissioned a local craftsman to manufacture new notice boards out of solid oak which will be erected at either end of the village to commemorate the event.

Darrington is not a large parish and the precept is still one of the lowest in the county, the Parish Council does not spend large amounts of public money. We rely upon residents to contribute in other ways, many already do by organising events like the Feast and Fayre and using the proceeds to help the community. The village is not self cleaning, a number of residents take it upon themselves to pick up litter, and we are not exempt from graffiti, but as soon as any appears someone cleans it off. None of these services are paid for out of the precept, it's just the community looking after its self and long may it continue. To the people who provide these services freely and unquestioningly I should like to take this opportunity to say thank you on behalf of the Parish Council.

Finally, I should like to mention that we are trying to promote a Scarecrow Festival this year which is to be held in the week following the Feast and Fayre. As with any new venture it is not guaranteed to succeed, once again the Parish Council are hoping that residents will make the effort and with any luck it may become an annual event.

Michael Britton      Chairman DPC.