

Stainton & Thornton Parish Council

The Annual Report of the Chair for 2011/2012

In the 12 months since the last Annual Meeting, the Parish Council has met for the usual 6 meetings and, as in previous years, the Parish Assembly in March was a joint event with the Community Council. At the October meeting Mrs Angela Cooper was co-opted as the seventh member of the Council. Attendance at Council meetings averaged 87%.

Highlights of this Parish Council year were the villages achieving a Gold Award for the first time in the Northumbria in Bloom competition in September and becoming the first Parish Council in Cleveland to achieve 'Quality Parish Council' status in November. The Chair of the Cleveland Local Councils Association presented a 'Quality Parish Council' certificate at the December meeting.

Other events of note during the year were Kell Gate Green and the Quarry Nature Reserve maintaining the Green Pennant, the Northumbria in Bloom Gold Award and Best Conservation Project Gold Award and getting an Evening Chronicle Award. Also, to commemorate the royal wedding of Prince William to Catherine Middleton, a tree was planted in the Quarry with a suitably worded commemorative plaque.

Despite unanimous local opposition from residents and from the Parish Council, the Planning Committee of Middlesbrough Council decided in December that they were minded to approve the planning application for 106 mainly 4-bedroomed houses on land at Rose Cottage Farm. Planning permission, however, depends on acceptance by the Highways Agency which has not yet announced its decision.

Services provided by the Parish Council

The quarterly issues of the Village Newsletter that are delivered to every household were funded by the Parish Council as usual. Since December, the size and content of the Newsletter was reduced and a different Printer used in order to achieve a reduction in the cost of producing the Newsletters.

New LED bulbs were bought for the Christmas Lights and these were 'Switched On' by our centenarian, Mrs Lenny Tye in November. The Parish Council was fortunately not charged for the erection and dismantling of the lights this year. Suitable crates were purchased and the Council is grateful to the Memorial Hall for finding storage space for the lights and to the Community Council for funding spare bulbs.

The Parish Council continues to supply free raffle books to village organisations and also pays for the Portaloo as a contribution towards the running costs of the village Gala Day in July. To commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Parish Council has purchased a crab apple tree and appropriately worded plaque for the formal planting in June.

As the leaseholder of the land known as Kell Gate Green, the Parish Council arranged to carry out major repairs to the brick wall along Thornton Road. The Council is grateful to the Community Council and The Friends of S & T Green Spaces for sharing the cost of this expensive repair.

As in previous years, the Parish Council funded the purchase of both winter and summer flowering plants for the various displays around the villages. Another highly praised 'Portfolio' was produced by Mrs Revett and Mrs Burton this year for the judging in the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

Monitoring Services provided by Middlesbrough Council

Early in the Council year, Middlesbrough Council finally carried out resurfacing of Chapel Garth, Maltby Road, part of Seamer Road, Thornton Road and part of Strait Lane all of which had suffered potholes and earlier patching. The Parish Council expressed particular concern when the resurfacing of part of Hemlington Road linked to the construction of 21 houses meant rerouting of the daytime bus services and the loss of the evening and Sunday bus services for a number of weeks in July. There remains concern about damage to the 'Green' in Meldyke Lane caused by large refuse and delivery vehicles.

The Parish Council did not object when the underused bus service through Thornton was discontinued in July.

Planning Matters

In December, Middlesbrough Council gave the Parish Council a presentation of the Land Use Masterplan for Hemlington Grange in which the number of houses to be built over 15 years had increased to 1400 houses. The site reserved for a new Police Headquarters took up a large part of the remaining land designated for employment purposes.

The Parish Council objected to a small number of planning applications during the year. These were a) the application for 106 mainly 4-bedroomed houses at Rose Cottage Farm; b) for 375 houses at Brookfield with roundabout access onto Low Lane and c) the application for 'change of use' for an 'agricultural' building into a dwelling behind 42 Cedar Drive. This latter application was eventually granted after appeal by the applicant to a Ministry inspector.

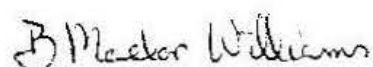
The Parish Council also commented on sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Administration

Because of some expensive projects not anticipated in recent annual budgets, the Parish Council found it necessary to increase the precept again by £500.00 to £6,500.00 for 2012/13. This automatically means a small rise in the Council Tax for every household in the parish area.

The Council is grateful to P/Cllr J Holmes for Minute taking in April and hopes that the Parish Clerk, Mrs Muriel Newbould, is making a full recovery following her hip operation.

I would like to thank the other Parish Council members and the Clerk for their support and hard work during the year. The Council also thanks all the volunteers who produce, distribute and deliver the Village Newsletters and the other volunteers who plant, weed, water and photograph the floral displays throughout the year. This support contributes a great deal to the good quality of our lives in the Stainton and Thornton community.



Maelor Williams
Chair of the Parish Council 2011/12