

STAINTON & THORNTON PARISH COUNCIL. The Annual Report of the Chair 2017-2018.

As in previous years and in line with our constitution, the Parish Council held six business meetings, an AGM and a Parish Assembly. The attendance by councillors at the meetings was over 85% over the year and absences were mainly due to holiday commitments. This year saw the retirement of our Clerk, Mrs Muriel Newbould, who attended her last meeting in July. A very big thank you to Muriel has been our Clerk for 30 years.

At our August meeting and following and some discussion, Jim Holmes (the current vice-chair) stepped down as Parish Councillor and was appointed Parish Clerk with effect from 1st September 2018. Because of the current rules of Parish Councils, any serving councillor who takes on the role of clerk is not allowed to be paid for one year, in order to prevent a conflict of interest. This would have ramifications on our finances as we had already budgeted for the clerk's salary for a full year. (see comments further in this report).

It was decided that the precept for this year should be frozen at the same base line level per household as 2016-2018 at approximately £9.23 per household. This meant that because of the extra new house being built in the Parish and subject to the Parish Council levy, the total precept for this year would be over £7000.00 and included the central government grant (see the Clerks/RFO report for exact figures). This means that because of the extra housing, the saving of the clerk's salary and fiscal financial responsibility, finances remain very healthy. We have set aside some contingency funding to cover the cost of a potential election, as elections to the Parish Council are due in May 2019.

With Jim stepping down as councillor to take up the roll of Parish Clerk and in response to the notification of a vacancy for a councillor, at our December meeting, a local resident, David Fewtrell, had put his name forward to be considered for co-option onto the Parish Council and at our December meeting was officially co-opted onto Stainton & Thornton Parish Council as councillor until the current term expires in 2019.

After persistent representation to Stagecoach N E and following the appointment of a new MD, a new bus hourly bus service, 13a, began on the 20th November and although it currently does not go to Coulby Newham but does go into town, it is providing a valuable and much needed service for the village. Plans are underway to increase the frequency and route for the service during 2018-2019. Following a successful trial of a Monday and Friday free bus service to Tesco at Coulby, the free Monday and Friday service is now a permanent one.

The Parish Council continue to financially support The Friends of Stainton & Thornton Green Spaces by donating £200.00 pa and this year have agreed to further donate up to £500.00 pa in order that the group maintain the village assets such as seats, notice boards, footpaths, signposts etc. The Friends Group are still awaiting the £20,000.00 106 monies from Taylor Wimpey/MBC. Despite pressure being brought to bear on everyone from the Chief Executive of MBC downwards, MBC seem reluctant to part with the money. The council will keep up the pressure till the funds are received.

Planning, once again dominated most of the Parish Council meetings, with Phase 3 of Rose Cottage Farm getting well underway following the granting of planning permission to build 172 3, 4 and 5-bedroom houses. The Care Home, Montpelier Manor, has been built and opened, but the planning

application for the 64 assisted living apartments on the same site was successfully opposed and planning permission was refused by MBC. We are still awaiting a decision by the new owners, the Methodist Care Home Housing Association, if they are going to appeal the decision. No further planning application for the site has been received.

We were eagerly awaiting the “preferred options” report from MBC for their new Local Plan, as several proposed sites for housing development in the village have been put forward. The one preferred option that will have the greatest effect on the village is that of Stainton Vale. The land around the Sporting Lodge, Stainton Low Wood and Stainton Vale Farm is one option that MBC are considering for housing. Display boards outlining the new Local Plan will be on display in the Memorial Hall from the 11th to 18th June 2018 with a drop-in session attended by representatives of MBC planning department on Friday 15th June between 2.00 and 4.30 pm. The other contentious site is that of The RDA Unicorn Centre. This site, although they currently hold a 79-year lease, has been designated a potential business park. Both the Parish and Community Councils will strenuously object to both proposals.

At long last the Hemlington Grange site is now being developed with the Police Community Safety Hub being completed and handed over on May 4th. It is hoped to be fully operational by October 2018 when the Ladgate Lane site closes. Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon continue to build their houses on the Hemlington Grange site and a new entrance to the site on the Stokesley Road has been created. Once the site is further developed, traffic lights will be installed at the junction.

Due to a lack of new volunteers, the Environment Committee decided not to enter Northumbria in Bloom this year and in order to attract new volunteers, they have renamed themselves the Green Finger Gang. The Parish Council will continue to support the group financially in order that they can purchase plants etc. for the beds troughs and planters throughout the villages.

Thanks go to Councillor Angela Cooper for producing and editing the village newsletter and to Florence Rix and her team of deliverers for delivering the newsletter. A special thank you to Alan Conroy who organises the putting up and taking down of the Christmas Lights in the square and to the Memorial Hall who provide the electricity to run them over the Christmas period.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the Parish Councillors for their help and support throughout the year.

Alan Liddle- Chair.
Stainton & Thornton Parish Council.