

## Annual Report for the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

The Council continues to meet bi-monthly, meetings usually being held on the second Tuesday of the month at Cotherstone Methodist Hall. Agendas and minutes are routinely placed in the noticeboard and can also be found on the council's website - [www.lartingtonpc.co.uk](http://www.lartingtonpc.co.uk).

There are a number of issues which have concerned us this year.

We are pleased to be able to report a measure of success in persuading Durham County Council to both investigate and address the problem of flooding on Lartington Green Lane, which has severely affected a small number of properties in the area. DCC have admitted that there is a problem and proposed a plan of action to resolve the issue in the forthcoming financial year. Recent investigations may lead to modification of these proposals but we have left DCC in no doubt about our position in this matter and it will remain at the forefront of our concerns until we are satisfied that flood relief measures are both in place and work!

Our footpath network is also much valued and we have worked to protect and improve it in recent years. Unfortunately funding for footpath improvements is no longer available but we do work closely with DCC Footpath Officers to ensure that the network remains open and that fallen trees etc are removed if necessary. The Council did not object to the recent diversion of Footpath 43 in the area of Lartington Hall and is pleased that this has now been completed to a satisfactory standard.

We have considered a number of planning applications, mostly of a minor nature, which we have been happy to support. Although usually disposed to support applicants in their ambitions to improve the circumstances in which they live and work, we place a high value on the qualities which make our Conservation Area so special and will always reference our responses to this and the planning legislation which protects it.

Traffic speed through the village continues to concern us - particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times. A recent speed watch exercise showed that 15% of vehicles passing through the village at this time were travelling in excess of 35mph. Most of the transgressors are local people - and this is simply not acceptable. Local volunteers will continue to conduct Speedwatch exercises at these peak times and we will continue to press the Police for their support in this matter. We would rather a few speeding tickets be issued than a child knocked down.

Finally, two matters of routine business.

Firstly, May 8th will see the formation of a new Council. It will look much the same as the old one! We are pleased to report that the outgoing Councillors were all prepared to allow their names to be put forward for election and the absence of other nominations means that there will be no contest. Although not wishing to appear self-satisfied, we can be proud that Lartington has never had a problem in finding residents who are prepared to represent their community. Many Councils will have vacancies, a few will not be quorate whilst there are a small number for which no-one at all was prepared to stand.

Secondly, we regret to report a small increase in the precept (rates) we raise - the cost of the council to a Band D property rising by just under 5% to £22pa. This still continues to compare favourably with other local councils and is significantly below many areas of the county.

Although too small to provide any direct services, we hope that this report again demonstrates that the Parish Council continues to work hard to ensure that the interests of local people are well represented and that the agencies charged with providing the services that they need are held to account.

Sharon Parsons Munn    Chair

*Ian C Jerred*    Clerk