

Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 2015

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.

Our efforts this year have focussed on the purchase of the defibrillator and the kiosk in which it was housed - the kiosk was a bargain for a £1 (which BT didn't even bother to collect!), the defibrillator rather more expensive. Its purchase was made possible by the generosity of many local residents and the use of a significant amount of the Council's reserves. The support of the Ambulance Service was vital in securing the most appropriate model at a significantly discounted price whilst the training session that they delivered was both well attended and much appreciated. A vital piece of life saving equipment that we judged sensible to have in the village, we will be quite happy if it never needs to be used!

The council also secured Parish Paths funding to stabilise the footpath at Cat Castle. DCC Footpaths Officer, Elaine Crowe, was extremely helpful to us in preparing our application and we hope to work with her again in the coming year to secure funding to improve paths through Deepdale and in the Pecknall area.

Traffic speed through the village continues to concern us - the introduction of a speed limit being something for which we campaigned over many years. We continue to work with DCC Highways and Durham Police to try to make this as effective as possible. We were grateful to the Highways department for painting a SLOW warning on the entry to the village from Bowes and to PCSO Liz Finn who carries out a Speedwatch operation whenever she can. The council is absolutely determined to apply as much pressure as we can to ensure that the speed limit is obeyed.

Finally, two matters of routine business.

Firstly, there have been significant changes in council roles this year. After many years of service, Richard Champion and Joyce Cross stood down as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively - although both remain active on the council. We are grateful to them for their commitment to the council and the community. Sharon Parsons Munn has become Chair with Mike Whetstone assuming the role of Vice Chair. Sadly, a combination of business and family commitments forced John Wilkes to resign from the Council. We are grateful to Kate Hinchliffe for her willingness to fill the vacancy created by John's resignation and look forward to working with her for many years to come.

Secondly, we are happy to report that there has been NO significant change to the precept (rates) we raise - the cost of the council to a Band D property continuing to be just over £20p.a. This compares favourably with other local councils and is significantly below many areas of the county. We hope that this report provides evidence of value for money!

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

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