

Lartington Parish Council

Annual Report and Newsletter

May
2014

This has been a busy year for the Parish Council with much to report – and much to be excited about!



Lartington Village Hall?

Not quite – but what use is a telephone kiosk without a telephone?

Turn over to find out.

Lartington Lane Caravan Site

Whilst our worries about road safety are a matter of record, we also have other concerns regarding the environmental and economic impact of the proposed development of this site. We were annoyed, therefore, when a well researched and presented case documenting our concerns was dismissed by DCC Planning Committee – although we were supported by local councillors.

Having considered making a request for a Judicial Review of the decision, we were pleased when Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning, agreed to meet with us to discuss our concerns. This gave Stuart an opportunity to explain the constraints within which planners work and for us to show that we think carefully about the planning issues which confront us and try to ensure that the opinions we give are measured and should be properly considered. Whilst judged a very successful meeting, we are not holding our breath!

Annual Parish Meeting

to be held at
The Methodist Hall
Cotherstone

Tuesday 13th May 2014
at 7.00pm

Local Electors are cordially
invited to attend

Footpath Improvements - and Village "Green" Disappointment!

We were rather more successful in meetings with the DCC Footpaths Officer, Elaine Crowe. The state of the footpath (or bog) at Cat Castle was our most urgent concern and we have successfully applied for a small grant to stabilise the area around the stile. Elaine also helped with waymarking the route to Cat Castle and negotiated with Lartington Estates to repair stiles on the route. We are grateful to them both.

We were disappointed, however, in Lartington Estates' response to proposals to improve the land on the south side of the village, sometimes called the Village Green. The Heart of Teesdale Project was prepared to make a substantial grant (up to £10000) available for a number of projects associated with this, including some shrub and small tree clearance in a bid to improve the health of established and important trees. In rejecting these proposals, the Estate insists that the trees are in good condition – we hope that they are right!

Community Speedwatch Revisited - and please park considerately

Traffic speed through the village has always concerned us – the introduction of a speed limit being something for which we campaigned over many years.

We were then the first Parish Council to work with Durham Police on a Community Speedwatch project – an exercise that we asked to be repeated last September. Traffic was intermittently monitored over a week – resulting in the issue of 19 advisory letters and one ticket.

We also have some concerns regarding the parking of vehicles on the footpath through the village. This forces pedestrians, often with pushchairs, to move on to the road – **so please don't do it!**



The application for a Premises Licence for Lartington Hall led to a call for a Special Meeting to discuss residents concerns regarding the matter.

Whilst not objecting to the original application to convert the Hall into a Wedding and Conference venue, the Council has always taken a strong interest in measures designed to ensure that the impact of the development on residents is kept to a minimum. It was for this reason that close attention was paid to proposals in the application dealing with the playing of music, dancing and to conditions regarding the sale and consumption of alcohol.

Having carefully considered the proposals presented by the applicants and listened to the concerns of residents, it was determined that the Council would not object to the application but would write to the Licensing Authority to ensure that residents concerns were a matter of record and making it clear that the Council would apply for an immediate review of the Licence should issues of noise and nuisance occur.

The Hall is an important building, however, which must be put to good use and which should make a very important contribution to the local economy. We really do hope that measures are now in place which will allow both the business to thrive and residents to sleep!

Future Parish Council Meetings

July 8th 2014
September 9th 2014
November 11th 2014
January 13th 2015
March 10th 2015

Meetings usually start at **7.30pm** and will usually be held in Cotherstone Methodist Hall.

Agendas and minutes are placed on the noticeboard whilst they will be emailed to you if you register with us –
lartingtonpc@gmail.com.

Two matters of routine council business.

Firstly, Council Meetings have been hosted in private homes for some time but new reporting regulations make this untenable. Future meetings will probably be held in Cotherstone Methodist Hall.

The Council also judged that it was necessary to make a substantial increase to its precept (rates!) for the first time in many years, largely due to a desire to significantly increase the number of hours worked by the clerk and to align the hourly salary with national minimum recommendations.

What's this about a Village Hall? And what has that got to do with the telephone kiosk?

We haven't got a Village Hall – and very soon we won't have a telephone kiosk. Actually that isn't strictly true – we will have a telephone kiosk but it won't have a phone in it! We hope, however, that it will contain something very special – a defibrillator.

Most of you will know that this is a very important little piece of life saving equipment that most other villages in the Dale have got but we haven't because we haven't got a Village Hall to put one in. We have now!

The kiosk is little used and BT and have agreed to sell it to us for a £1. That's the easy bit!

The defibrillator and the case in which it sits will probably cost about £1300. Richard Bell has kindly granted us £200 from his Councillor's Budget whilst Glaxo have given us a further £50. We do have some reserves, gleaned from money left over when we wrote the Parish Plan and then saved when Alan Heavisides kindly donated the Notice Board, which we will put towards the project. We would like to raise, however, a further £500 to mak the venture truly viable. Suggestions and donations will be very welcome whilst we will be discussing ideas for money raising at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The installation of the defibrillator will be worthless, however, if people do not know how to use it and we will be arranging training sessions with the North East Ambulance Service in due course.

