

Lartington Parish Council Annual Report and Newsletter

APRIL/MAY
2019

Making Lartington a Safer Place

..... was our priority last year and remains so this.

Our concern about highway safety and traffic speed hasn't changed but there are two other issues that we would also like your help with.

At this time of year, farmers are busy preparing their fields for crops or moving livestock. Both can result in heavy deposits of mud on the road, occasionally with awful consequences. Most of our farmers fully understand their responsibilities and try to clear up after themselves, for which we are grateful. If you do become aware, however, of mud on the road which you think might be a traffic hazard then Durham Police advise that the best thing to do is to ring them **on 101 with location details**.

Road potholes are also a safety hazard best dealt with quickly. The Parish Council does report them if we become aware of them but you may not know that you can contact Durham County Council directly if you become aware of one. If you believe the issue to be a dangerous one, then ring **03000 261 000**

Or you can do it online at <https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk>

The same number can be used to report a problem with street lighting, especially if the post is in a hazardous condition - each lamp post has an ID Number on it which you should note and report.



..should go without saying

Unfortunately some people don't. "Stick and flick" might work deeper in to the countryside but isn't appropriate on the village footpaths or on Lartington Green Lane. Please make sure that you are a responsible

dog owner and "Bag it - BIN it".



Have you found a Job, apprenticeship or college place - but not the bus that will get you there?

www.wheels2workcountydurham.org.uk/ might be able to help.

For a weekly payment of £25, this charity can loan applicants a moped with associated training, insurance and equipment for 6 (and sometimes up to 12) months. This is particularly designed to help people living in places less well served by public transport so if you know someone who might benefit, please encourage them to find out more.

Lartington Annual Parish Meeting

will be held at

**The Methodist Hall
Cotherstone**

**Tuesday 14th May 2017
at 7.00pm**

**Local Electors are invited to
attend**

Future Meetings will take place at 7.30pm

July 14th

September 7th

November 12th

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

Papers are also available online at

lartingtonpc.gov.uk.

Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 2019

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.

We have continued to work closely with Durham Police and their "Speedwatch" initiative and members of the Council have conducted frequent exercises – usually continuing to note a worryingly high proportion of drivers travelling significantly in excess of 30mph. We were pleased that, with the help of Cllr. Bell, we were finally able to persuade DCC to include the village in their "Speedvisor" programme – unfortunately the post arrived long before the "Speedvisor" but we should see this regularly in coming months.

We have considered a number of planning applications, most of which we have been happy to support. We were particularly pleased to support a number of plans to bring new life to redundant farm buildings at North Gill. It is a matter of record, however, that we felt it necessary to oppose the application to install electric gates at Western entrances to Lartington Hall as we believed that their installation would be detrimental to the open relationship between the village and the Hall which was so valued in the DCC Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2012 and that they could create traffic problems for those living in the area. Now in place, we hope that the use of these gates will result in the proper use of the eastern parkland route for vehicles taking guests to and from weddings and conferences at the Hall as was determined by planning conditions imposed in 2012. Whilst 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.

Data Protection is the other issue which has caused the Council concern. Residents will probably be well aware that new rules governing Data Protection have come into force and the Council's policies regarding this can be found on the website. Other than the Clerk's PAYE details, Members' Registers of Interest, and some addresses needed for routine contact we hold no personal data.

We have also become very concerned about the condition of the historic aqueduct over the lane to Cat Castle, a Grade II Listed structure, which is a rare example of its kind and which continues to leak badly. The structure forms an important piece of railway and indeed village heritage. The Parish council has been instrumental in liaising with the owner and Durham County Council with a view to instigating repairs to the structure. It is our understanding that a bridge specialist from Durham County Council has now carried out a survey and informed the owner of the necessary repairs needed.

We were sorry that Mike Whetstone had to resign from the Council due to increasing personal commitments but are grateful to him for his period of service. A vacancy was advertised and there was no call for election so the Council is able to co-opt as it sees fit. We would welcome, therefore, expressions of interest from anyone who may wish to join us.

Turning to matters of finance, we were pleased that our accounts continue to show a healthy reserve and that we have lived well within our means this year. In part this was because the Clerk's salary, the biggest item of expenditure, has remained unchanged for some time. In setting our annual budget, therefore, it was agreed that this be increased to bring it in line with the National Salary Scale but that there should be no increase in the precept raised – the cost of the council to a Band D property remaining at £23.15pa. This compares favourably with other local councils and is significantly below many towns and villages in 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

Your Council:

Richard Campion

Eric Crawford

Joyce Cross

Kate Hinchliffe

Sharon Parsons Munn

Marie Stephenson

The Chair and Vice-Chair for the forthcoming year will be decided at the Council AGM on May 14th.

Please do not hesitate to speak to any member of the Council if you have an issue with which you think the Council can help.

The Council does currently have a vacancy – please speak to any member if you would like to find out more about the work involved.