

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of **Shincliffe** held in Shincliffe Primary School, High Shincliffe, Durham on **Tuesday 21 May 2013 at 6.20 pm.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Cook (in the Chair) and Councillors Duell, A Lee, G Lee, Lightley, Lovell and Olechnowicz.

**APOLOGIES:** were received from Councillor Hudson and PC Cockburn.

### **1. Minutes**

It was **resolved:** That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 May 2012 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **3. Parish Council Annual Report**

This report is about Parish Council activities in the period April 2012 to end of March 2013. During this period there were 11 monthly meetings of the Parish council, plus the Annual Parish Meeting (May 2012) and meetings of the Horticultural Committee

Councillor David Shearer was co-opted into a casual vacancy on the parish council in June (to be filled until the local elections in May 2013), otherwise membership of the Parish Council was unchanged. County Councillors Jan Blakey and Mac Williams continued to represent the Parish.

During 2012-13, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England reviewed the electoral arrangements for Durham County Council following the formation of the unitary authority. This review impacted on Parish/Parish Wards. Legislation dictated that if a parish was to be divided between different County Divisions it must also be divided into parish wards so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division. Furthermore, amendments were made to the names of parish wards and, in order to establish electoral equality, to the number of councillors in each ward. These changes came into effect for the Local Elections on 2 May 2013. The effect of these changes on our parish was as follows:

- Shincliffe parish ward returning 6 parish councillors
- Bell parish ward (the old Cape site housing development) returning 1 parish councillor

In June, the council was awarded Quality Parish Council status which reflects the increased professionalism required of councils in providing a quality service to residents. Thanks go to the Clerk and councillors for their hard work.

The council purchased a Community Notice Board. It was erected in Ancroft Garth to replace one which used to stand there. The key holders are: John Lightley, Tel: 384 7900, Barbara Watson, Tel: 386 6051, and Ken Hampton, Tel 386 7027.

Revised versions of the Shincliffe Walks leaflet were produced our thanks to DCC.

After many years of asking a permanent speed visor was erected at the top of Shincliffe Bank on the A177. Thanks to DCC who paid for this to be done.

### Finance

The Parish precept for 2012/13 was £12,696.00 p.a., (this included a £696 double taxation grant) however, partly as a result of the change in electoral arrangements summarised above, we had to raise the 2013-14 Parish Precept (Tax) by 17% which generates a total of £14,040 for the parish to cover the loss of the double taxation grant and to ensure funds are available for elections in both parish wards (Shincliffe and Bell). The Council started the year with a balance of £11,752.77 total

income was £13,706.50 and total expenditure £15784.99. A balance of £9674.28 has been carried forward to 2012/13.

### Community Activities

There were a number of very successful Diamond Jubilee celebrations throughout the parish, all of which were well attended. The council made contributions towards the newsletter to cover the cost of publicising events, the Community Meal and Jubilee cake, and paid for the Jubilee tree and Commemorative plaque.

Unfortunately, The Shincliffe Show (usually held in September) did not take place again this year. Our hope is that it can take place next year.

Both the Church and the Community Association continued to publish their regular newsletters, distributed to all residents in the Parish. SCAN was issued in spring and autumn while SSMN was issued in summer and winter. These are a useful source of information about forthcoming events and local services.

The History Society continued to offer a varied monthly programme of talks and discussions which were well attended. Mid-week coffee mornings held in the Village Hall were also well attended, while our local primary school pupils continued to provide concerts for residents and family members.

Unfortunately attendance at the Youth Club declined despite the efforts of the new leaders, and the decision was made to close the youth club again. The recreation grounds are very well used and proving popular with families. The two existing halls in the village offer reasonable facilities and are both available for hire. The Women's Institute is well established and meet monthly. Their facility is also used by others for Keep Fit and Slimming World. The Church Hall is home to The History Society, Wigglets, Pilates, Carpet Bowls, Baby and Toddler group, Parish Council meetings (4 times a year) and Coffee and Company.

### The Environment

Two litter picks were held during the year and we had sufficient volunteers (must be 18 or over) to help clear the pathways and verges. The Parish Council Gardens Competitions were held in the spring and summer while the Parish Council itself also won a number of awards due to the efforts of Marc Platts, the Horticultural Committee and residents. In both the Village and High Shincliffe, the appearance of the gardens and properties is a credit to all who have contributed to this.

Dog fouling has been a major problem. We have received many complaints on numerous occasions and have had to enlist the help of our Neighbourhood Wardens in talking the problem. Hopefully, dog owners will behave responsibly and clean up after their pets in the future.

The stile at the bottom of Shincliffe bank was repaired/improved; and some more of the Old Mine site was cleared thanks to grants from Durham County Council.

### Roads and Paths

The winter was again much less severe than previous winters. Salt bins were well maintained by the County Council, but pot holes which haven't been repaired have not only increased in number but also in size and depth which cause damage to vehicles and injury to pedestrians. We know the County Council road maintenance budget has been dramatically reduced but local improvements are needed now.

The new housing estate on the A177 at Bowburn (on the old Cape site) remains in Shincliffe Parish. It was decided over twelve months ago that the residents would be better served by Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council (i.e. Bowburn) who also supported the proposal that our boundaries should be adjusted accordingly. We are waiting to hear from Durham County Council.

### Bus Services

Bus services have been an area of concern for the parish, in particular the withdrawal of services on Sundays and the erratic appearance (or not) of buses timetabled to stop in the parish. Arriva, the county councillors and the county council have helped resolve some of the issues.

### Crime

The incidents of reported crime in the Parish remained low. PC Cockburn attended Parish Council meetings to give reports and answer queries.

### Durham Area Action Partnership (AAP)

Our Parish Council is in the Durham AAP. Councillor John Lightley served on the Board as a representative for all parish councils in the Durham area. This provides useful opportunities to influence AAP policies, to find out more about County Council activities, and common parish problems and co-operation with other parish councils.

### Looking Ahead

1. The new Parish website to be hosted by the County Council is to be set up when time allows.
2. Arrangements for snow clearance in the Parish still need to be improved.
3. Rat running through Shincliffe village is under consideration
4. Playground equipment for the parks is in need of repair. New equipment would be advantageous if funding can be obtained. High Shincliffe Park Regeneration group in conjunction with the Community Association are currently raising funds to tackle this issue.
5. Meteorological mast (50m) has been approved in the parish. Residents are concerned about this leading to the erection of a wind turbine.
6. Horticultural budget has had to be cut due to increased costs of plants and labour. Alternatives which may be beneficial in the future include: sponsored beds, community volunteer involvement, alternative - more perennial planting.

### In Conclusion

May I thank the Clerk, all Councillors and residents for their efforts and support throughout the year.

#### **4. Draft Council Accounts 2012/13**

Opening Balance was £11,752.77, total income was £13,706.50 and total expenditure £15,784.99. A balance of £9,674.28 has been carried forward to 2012/13. Full accounts to be approved at the parish council meeting.

#### **5. Observations of County Councillor**

The former County Councillors did not submit a report.

#### **6. Resolutions**

There were none.

#### **7. Any Other Business**

Vote of thanks was proposed and seconded to Councillor Cook for her work as a Chair.

**The meeting terminated at 6.25 pm**