

ABERFORD & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

NEW TERM OF OFFICE

There has not been an Election for Parish Councillors there were fewer candidates than vacancies. With the exception of Mrs Roberts who decided not to stand, the existing Councillors will continue for the four year term.

This has been the case for many years so hopefully residents are content that we are doing a good job! As there will be two vacancies then anyone interested can come along to a few meetings and, if they wish to join, then it is possible to be co-opted. In particular one of the vacancies is for the Sturton Grange Ward of the Parish which is the Garforth end. The precept from the City Council has been held for the second year running.

What Your Councillors Have Been Doing

Much time since the last Newsletter has been spent on the Master Plan – particularly by those Councillors on the Plan Sub-committee. Many extra meetings have been held and residents consulted in large and small groups. Grants have been made to the PC by Rural Action Yorkshire, Awards for All and the City Council so we could employ consultants to help.

Special mention should be made of Cllrs Gluck and Stainton who have given hours of unpaid time on the project. The PC has also been helped by several residents free of charge. It will soon be time to unveil the finished Plan for all to see and comment on. Pearce Bottomley, Architects at the northern end of the village, are involved in the Village Design Statement, also free of charge. It is hoped a

Village Design Statement will flow naturally from the Master Plan and this will be a document that will shape future development in line with the character of the village and go into more guidance on design aspects of new, altered or extended properties.

This Statement could be consulted by people before submitting applications and give the PC more policy control. It will provide supplementary planning guidance so that LCC will have to consider it.

In order to achieve this, lots of consultation has to take place and a lengthy process is anticipated (Thorner PC took 3 years to gain final approval).

Other things the PC has dealt with: footpaths/refuse collection/snow problems/conservation review – and more - as follows.

CONSERVATION REVIEW

Our Conservation Area had not been reviewed for many years – LCC are gradually updating them citywide.

It was good to have the views of residents and the results will be incorporated into our Master Plan and Village Design Statement.

Aberford Parish has many interesting features like the wide verges where drovers grazed their animals and buildings like Priory Park – known to old Aberfordians as 'The Almshouses'.

We want to preserve the well-loved features.

Boy Did It Snow!

One or two extra grit bins were obtained and all bins were filled. LCC assured us that they had robust arrangements in place if the worst happened – well it did – and they were wrong!

The PC tried to get help from LCC when the snow locked everyone in – eventually we asked a local farmer, Mr Phil Watson, to help which he did free of charge. Had the snow continued then it would have been 'every man for himself' with regard to LCC Highways except for the main roads. All Parish Councils had the same problem, so we have had joint meetings with our Ward Cllr. Matthew Robinson and LCC Highways to put arrangements in place for the future.

A list of farmer contractors within our Ward will be compiled so they can be called upon to help if necessary. We would like to encourage everyone who is physically able to clear the footpath along their own frontage – like in the old days. A small bag of grit sand is very cheap but worth the outlay in good neighbourliness.

LOTHERTON LANE/LOTHERTON HALL

LCC Highways have told us they will at last attend to the area of missing footpath at the far eastern end of Lotherton Lane.

This is where cars are often parked, sometimes up to 8 or more, probably to avoid the parking charge within the Hall itself. Parking in that area is dangerous both to walkers and drivers at that difficult T

junction. We hope Highways will complete the work, as promised, by end June this year.

Some residents have wanted to know what changes are being planned around the Hall as various stories have emerged from workers there. We have contacted our Ward Councillors, Garforth Councillors and Parks Department asking that we be

kept fully informed of plans well before they are implemented so that we can comment on them.

Aberfordians are very proud of their connection to Lotherton Hall through the Gascoigne family who gave it to LCC and we want to have our say on any changes being planned, as we are the nearest community to the Hall.

LeedsFest Tickets

Some tickets are being made available to residents of the Parish again and details are now published.

Cllr Mrs Broadley is again running the operation which is on very strict eligibility and payment timescale rules. Last year she had to chase up almost 20 people more than once for payment which involved a great deal of extra work.

These tickets are not just valuable to those lucky enough to get them but also to us as they generate £2000 per year to be spent for the benefit of residents.

So far we have purchased extra Christmas lights around the Church and the money from last year has yet to be allocated.

Allotments

We were asked by LCC to take on a derelict piece of land behind Beech View to provide allotments, together with the existing allotments behind Youngs Court. Cllrs agreed to this and Cllrs Mrs Jeffrey and Mrs Broadley have formed a Sub-committee to take things forward.

REFUSE COLLECTION

Problems were so widespread they were reported more than once in the Yorkshire Post – it was not just a plot against Aberford Parish!

Cllr Mrs Roberts – and the Clerk and others – emailed and telephoned many times in an effort to get some action. Ward Councillors were also drawn into the problem.

We did try our best to sort things out. We hope there will not be a repeat of the trouble which seemed to be due to new working practices and collections do seem to have resumed a regular pattern.

POTHoles

Roads everywhere have been left in a terrible state after the bad winter weather. LCC Highways have been concentrating on quick temporary repairs through the city.

The idea is that they will return to make permanent repairs as and when they can. Unfortunately some of these temporary repairs have proved to be extremely temporary indeed!

We shall continue to do our best to get holes on our Parish roads dealt with – let us know of any particularly bad ones which we may not have noticed.

Hanging Baskets

We will be having them – those who sponsored last year and experienced the literal ups and downs we had, can sponsor again for this year only at half the cost (£12.50 and £25.00 as opposed to £25.00/£50.00).

We will be asking new sponsors for the full amount. In any event we shall be underwriting the cost and hope to have a good show without problems as all the streetlamps are finished or will be shortly.

FOOTPATHS

We are now operating a Parish Paths Partnership with LCC – Cllr Mrs Jeffrey is taking the lead on this one.

All the public footpaths/bridleways within the Parish have been fully walked and surveyed. The PC received a small budget of £1000 from LCC for general upkeep, maintenance and urgent remedial work.

This work will be ongoing and we know the scheme has operated successfully in other Parishes. Let us know of any public footpaths/bridleways you feel need urgent attention.

GARFORTH PART OF THE PARISH

The path between the two estates has recently had a considerable amount of attention and the Cedar Ridge side should be dealt with soon following a recent meeting with the LCC Environmental Officer. Signs have been put up regarding dog fouling – please ensure it is not your dog and this applies to the field too. Litter, cans and bottles have been removed but creep back and

cannot all be blamed on the users of the Football Stadium. Recently the field was strewn with drink cans following a ‘children’s party’ – our thanks to the mystery litter picker who cleared up and removed the offending rubbish. The road sweeper has visited, at least, Cedar Ridge which should help if it rains.

Application forms for the LeedsFest tickets should be with you – please apply if you wish to go into the

draw – this end of the Parish did quite well last year.

With the increased activity in the area of the Industrial Park – hedge cutting – we have not pursued the speeding issues as we understand that, once the new roundabout is installed, the 30mph limit will commence at Junction 47 roundabout. At that stage we may consider seeking some form of electronic signage.

PLAY AREA/SEATS

These are inspected regularly and we carry out repairs as necessary. Please let us know immediately if you see anything broken. We will be improving the area next to the footbridge with new planting where we had to remove the alders.

DOG FOULING

Dog Fouling is again a problem in certain areas.

One is the walk up to the Triumphal Arch on private ‘Estate’ land. This is a permitted walk only. A farmer recently lost a calf in that area through it ingesting dog faeces from eating contaminated grass.

Additionally, when the grass on the approach to this walk is cut, the machine sometimes gets dog faeces on the blades which the operator then has to deal with – quite disgusting! Dogs have been let off the lead in this area even when animals are grazing – even the most placid and well behaved dog can give in to instinct when it sees animals.

Please clean up after your dog if it fouls anywhere, including on permissive and public footpaths, and keep it on a lead when there are animals grazing as permitted paths can be withdrawn which would be a great loss to all residents.

SCHOOL FIELD

This project drags on and on but not for lack of effort on the part of the PC, but because of drawn out action on the part of LCC Legal Department, discussions about the proposed high cost the PC was being asked to bear for drawing up of agreements – our Solicitor volunteering his services free of charge – and so on.

This project is one we are absolutely committed to so we shall keep trying to drive it forward.

LITTER

For the most part the village is tidy. Please encourage children to use the litter bins as we go into summer for cold drinks and ice cream/lollies generate wrappings on the way home from school.

We have continuous problems around the Parish outskirts and we do request one-off litter picks from time to time to try to keep on top of things.

Illegal Grazing of Ponies

Last year and this there has been a short-lived problem with one or two ponies being put onto Highways land at the northern end of the village. Cllr Jeffrey checked on the condition of the mare and foal and found they were a little thin but no immediate cause for concern.

We could not trace the owners but extra food and water was given by Cllr Jeffrey and a concerned resident and Highways and the RSPCA alerted. The ponies were moved after about 10 days, following a formal removal notice being posted by Highways.

Young Visitors

Some youths came to our March meeting which was quite brave of them! They were upset and felt the Police were unfairly targeting them and moving them on as they were not causing any trouble around the village.

They gave us a wish-list of facilities they would like to have, some of which we hope to fulfil when we can develop School Field. In the meantime we were able to put them in touch with the Football Club as football was on their list.

We understand that contact was established and we hope these young men will join and take advantage of the facilities there. Unfortunately we have had

several incidents of nuisance from other youths around the village, running across gardens, hiding in bushes, smoking in people's gardens, abusing private play equipment etc., Some elderly residents have been particularly disturbed and their fear is always that things will escalate if they try to take action themselves.

The police went up to school to talk to the younger children and have stopped and talked to groups several times during the evenings. It is not just our village which experiences problems from time to time, but parents can help by stressing good behaviour to young people.

Library

We made representation to LCC Library service about the number of stops which the Mobile Library makes in the village – in that their proposal was to reduce from 4 to 1 only.

We asked that no reduction be made but that at least 2 stops should be retained with our village being so spread out. It is not easy for people without transport to access library and information services, nor is it easy for the elderly or those with young children to use public transport to get to a library/information.

The date for determination of the LCC library exercise is 18th May so we may not know the outcome for this Newsletter.

PACT Police Meetings

Several of these have been held in the Hall but they were not well advertised and subsequently not attended.

Unfortunately we do not get a police representative to all our meetings now – just about 4 times a year but we do have good contact with the Police and will try to help any resident with a problem to access some help.

We are investigating the possibility of having a 'Cold Calling Zone' and will keep you informed.

– JOIN IN –

We still have several 'social clubs' in the village – although some of them are operating with much depleted membership in recent times. We have the Tuesday Club for older residents who meet for lunch in the Arabian Horse.

Bowling Club would welcome new members and this is a public facility, not a private one – bowls are available for anyone wanting to have a go. The Horticultural Society is active with a Show every year. Aberford in Bloom Group really do need more people to just give a few

hours here and there. The Football club is very active but with most people coming from outside of the village. Whatever your interest and whatever time you can give to the community then please get involved.

In years gone by we had a really big Gala every year and dances in the Hall. A large Charity Pony Show took place for many years in Parlington Park. In recent times these things have lapsed but WiFi and Xbox cannot replace joining in community activities – so please join in.

Our AGM/Regular Meetings

We now meet regularly in the Village Hall, every third Tuesday in the month at 7.30pm. Residents are invited to participate at the end of the meeting. Our Annual General Meeting will be held immediately prior to the May meeting so this will commence at 7.00pm. Please come and join us.