



## Colton Parish Council

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Clerk: Ms Mandy Lane  
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## Chairman's Annual Report for 2011/2012

### Overview

The last year has been a largely satisfactory one from the Parish Council's point of view in that a number of projects have been completed and others are progressing well. In general, we feel that that we are 'getting through' to a number of higher authorities and that persistence has paid off. Examples follow. We still see no progress as far as the Localism Bill and the Big Society are concerned, with little information having been forthcoming from central Government.

A particular highlight is in the excellent work that our new lengthsman, Tony Atkinson, has carried out, solving problems that have defied all before him. We are grateful to him and hope we can find sufficient funding to continue, and perhaps increase, his programme of work.

### Changes to the Council

There were no changes to the membership of the Council during the last year.

### Activities of the Council

#### *Perennial Issues.*

Last year, I suggested that it was difficult to believe that the new Better Highways initiative would be superior to the Highway Steward scheme. I think I have been proved wrong; communications with the Highways team are much better, most highway faults have been sorted out in reasonable time, although one or two notable exceptions remain. Grit bins, in general, were filled before winter and some more have been purchased/provided. As mentioned above, our Parish Lengthsman, Tony Atkinson started work in June last year and what a difference he has made; he has sorted out a number of long-standing flooding problems and nothing but praise has been reported about his work. We continue a programme of repairing and replacing notice boards.

#### *Progress with current projects*

During the last year we have continued the development of various initiatives and have completed others. The two ex-BT phone boxes have been refurbished successfully and thanks are due to David Oldham for his hard work. Having pressed hard for completion of the repairs to Bouthrey Bridge, we are pleased that this was completed before the seasonal window closed and have written to highways accordingly. Work continues on raising funds for the repair of some of the green lanes in the parish and an action plan has been drawn up to allow completion in 2012. The Bouth speed limit issue was partially resolved by the introduction of Slow markings and '20's plenty' signs. Car-parking charges have been introduced at High Dam and a monitoring period has started. Illegal motorised off-road activity is an increasing problem in our area, particularly concerning trail bikers, though the police have had a number of successes in the past year with issuing fixed penalty notices (fines). The problems associated with a certain field of pigs near Finsthwaite has been progressed through a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency.

#### *New Issues*

The Council has dealt with a number of new and interesting developments over the last 12 months. These include assisting the community of Bouth to partake in the future management of Old Hall Wood, playing a role in difficult negotiations between the community and Natural England over the plans to re-wet the Rusland Mosses, and helping to set up a further affordable housing needs survey.

### ***Liaison and consultation***

The Council has produced three editions of its own newsletter this year, hand-delivered to every member of the community, has contributed to the three local newsletters every month, and has maintained a parish website thanks to the voluntary efforts of the Clerk.

We continue to be involved with the High Furness Local Area Partnership (LAP), especially in relation to the potential delivery of super-fast Broadband.

The Council received 19 formal consultations this year, covering topics ranging from MP's constituency boundary changes to local timber haulage routes. It responded to 12 of these consultations which were felt to have particular relevance to Colton Parish.

### ***Planning***

This year the Council reviewed 29 planning applications. We raised objections to 4 of these and expressed concerns about 2 others. Of the 4 objections, one was refused permission, one granted permission, one was withdrawn and we are awaiting the outcome of the fourth. One application to which the Council did not object, was refused. This information can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

Councillors are increasingly confused about some decisions made by the Park Authority, especially in terms of consistency and adherence to policy, and have requested a meeting to clarify matters.

### ***Meetings***

The Council held nine scheduled meetings during the year and Member attendance averaged 79%; this statistic has been influenced by Cllr Fishwick's approved long-term absence. We are very grateful to County Cllr Rod Wilson for his help and support and for continuing to make a difference. We are also grateful to Cllr Colin Davies for attending; we wish him well following his imminent retirement from the District Council. Most meetings have also been attended by representatives from Cumbria Police and we are appreciative of the information they share, and their continued attendance in difficult times.

### ***Budget for the coming year***

Our Finance Working Group has continued to oversee our formal budgeting procedures and has recommended a precept which the full Council has approved. To ensure that existing commitments are met, and that we are not faced with a large increase in future years, a nominal increase of 3% has been approved. A summary of accounts is attached.

### ***Chairman's thanks***

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their active involvement and much-needed support during the last year, and also those residents of the parish who have assisted the Council in its activities. Members have attended meetings, have commented on consultations and have represented the Council on various outside bodies, all in their own time. As ever, we are indebted to the Bouth Village Green Voluntary Committee, John Osborne and Allan Lovegrove in particular, for their dedication and hard work in the up-keep of the Green and its playground.

We are very grateful to John Sargeant who generously gave his time to be acting clerk for two months last year. At a time when Parish Clerk vacancies are rising at an unprecedented rate, I would also like to thank again our own hard-working clerk, Mandy Lane, who has not only ensured the smooth running of the Council but has also had to cope with the introduction of a new PAYE scheme.

Cllr Colin Barr  
March 2012

## Officers of the Council 2011-2012

**West Ward:** Cllr Colin Barr (Chair); Cllr Ian Cunliffe; Cllr Brenda Fishwick

**East Ward:** Cllr Chris Potts (Vice-chair); Cllr Ken Dean; Cllr David Hoyle

**Central Ward:** Cllr Anne Robinson; Cllr John Watson; Cllr Vanessa Champion

**Clerk:** Ms Mandy Lane: Lilac Cottage, Oxen Park, Ulverston. LA12 8HG  
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## Summary of Accounts 2011/2012

Balance brought forward	4008.68
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	
Annual Precept via SLDC	9475.00
Travel re-imburement	14.20
High Furness LAP - Lengthsman grant	800.00
Return of VAT	551.48
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>14849.36</b>
<b>PAYMENTS - summary</b>	
Insurance	558.97
Annual Fees for services: Audit Commission fee Information Commissioner fee CALC Subscription	162.00 35.00 192.00
Bouth Village Green & Playground: RoSPA H&S Annual Inspection Maintenance	75.60 200.00
Clerk's salary	4626.48
J.Sargeant, Acting Clerk - expenses for December 2012	98.64
Clerk's office expenses & allowances	487.70
Clerk's travel expenses	68.00
Councillors' travel expenses	216.08
Room hire	207.00
Lengthsman services	1130.14
Notice boards (1 new plus maintenance of others)	911.54
Newsletter publishing expenses	
Grit bins - 3	306.00
SLCC - postage for return of Clerk's CiLCA qualification portfolio	5.00
Oxen Park phone box refurbishment	49.06
Nibthwaite phone box refurbishment	100.00
Poppy wreath for Remembrance Service	16.50
NW Air Ambulance grant	50.00
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>9495.71</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	
Total income	14849.36
Total payments	9495.71
<b>To Carry Forward</b>	<b><u>5353.65</u></b>

*Accounts updated for final year end on 20/4/12*