



## Colton Parish Council

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# Chairman's Annual Report for 2009/2010

## Overview

With the sort of weather that confuses the arguments over climate-change, the last year has been a challenging one for residents and Councillors alike. Much of the council's effort has been put into trying to get our fair share of the support and services that ought to be made available by the principle authorities and, I believe, we have been at least partially successful. There is always room for improvement,

And, talking of climate change, I particularly welcome the work that our new councillor John Taylor, and others, have put into researching renewable energy options for the parish. I feel confident that this will bear fruit in due course; it is an important new role for parish councils.

The ordinary work of the Council continues uninterrupted; we have also been considering topics as diverse as smart-watering, the condition of our green roads and fell-sides, what to do with old telephone boxes and the legal definition of a caravan, as well as a wealth of less stimulating, but nonetheless important, matters.

## Changes to the Council

We were sorry to lose Peter Harrington early last year following his resignation due to ill health, and we thank him for his work over several years. In June, we co-opted John Taylor to fill the vacancy left by Peter and, I believe, the Council has continued to function well, a view supported by comments from elsewhere.

Following the County Council elections last year, we also said goodbye to Cllr Ted Walsh who had served us so well for a number of years and our thanks go to him. We were joined by Cllr Rod Wilson who has already picked up the cudgel on our behalf on many occasions and is proving a worthy friend and ally, especially in relation to issues concerning the Highways department.

## Activities of the Council

### ***1. Parish Council Lengthsman and Highway Steward.***

We continue to be supported by both Adam Tyson, our Highway Steward, and Chris Slater, our long-standing Parish Lengthsman. They have had some interesting conditions to cope with, both floods and ice bringing new challenges to our extensive road network. Our thanks go to Cllr Penny Lovegrove and our clerk for acting as the contact points for both.

### ***2. Community involvement***

The Council has provided impetus in establishing a working group for the new Community Plan: 'Colton 20-20', ably led by Cllr Brenda Fishwick, which has begun the process of gathering opinion. A successful and well-attended community meeting was held in January here in Rusland, and further events are planned. Julia Wilson of ACT (Acting for Communities in Cumbria) has provided the group with guidance and support in embarking on this new Plan, and we are awaiting the outcome of a bid for funds to support the process.

The Council has produced four editions of the newsletter this year, hand-delivered to every member of the community and, through the now voluntary efforts of the clerk, has maintained the widely-admired parish website.

### ***3. Wider liaison and consultation***

This year, we ended our association with the Grange & Cartmel Community Board and became part of the newly-formed High Furness Local Area Partnership (LAP). Although still in its formative stages, we are keen to work with this grouping of parish councils to achieve greater collective

influence and to gain information and knowledge which will help us maintain our Quality Parish status.

The Council responded to 21 paper consultations this year, covering topics ranging from Bluebird speeding down Coniston Water to the siting of nuclear power stations. Included in these were important submissions concerning the future of the National Park: i) the developing Lake District National Park Local Development Framework and ii) to Defra's revised policy guidance for National Parks. Thanks are due to my fellow councillors for putting in voluntary time to complete these sometimes onerous tasks.

#### **4. Planning**

Councillors have attended a variety of events and training courses which have helped to better understand what is expected of parish councils by the planning authorities. This year the Council reviewed 28 planning applications. We raised objections to 2 of these and expressed concerns about 2 others.

#### **5. Meetings**

The Council held nine scheduled meetings during the year and two extraordinary meetings, one on green road and off-road vehicles and one on the Bouthrey Bridge reconstruction. Member attendance at scheduled meetings averaged 77% over the year, lower than in previous years due mainly to illness and work commitments. As mentioned earlier, we are helped and supported by Cumbria County Councillor Rod Wilson but also by SLDC Councillor Colin Davies, to whom we are most grateful. Most meetings are also attended by our local Police Officer, John Baldwin, and/or our new CPSO, Diana Wilcock; their presence is educational as well as comforting.

The dates and venues for meetings for 2010/2011 are available and can be viewed on our website ([www.coltonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.coltonparishcouncil.org.uk)), on the notice boards, or hard copies can be obtained from the parish clerk. They are also published in the newsletters. Minutes of meetings can also be obtained from the Clerk or can be accessed via the website.

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

Our Finance Working Group has overseen the introduction of updated budgeting procedures and has recommended a precept which the full Council has approved. This shows an increase of 6% to provide some funding for Colton's Community Plan projects. A summary of accounts is attached.

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

I would like to thank all of the members of Colton Parish Council for their help 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 over 40 meetings in the past year, have commented on over 21 consultations and have represented the Council on 10 outside bodies, all in their own time. I would particularly wish to thank the new Chairman of the Bouth Village Green Voluntary Committee, John Osborne, and his colleagues for their dedication and hard work, especially given new arrangements regarding inspections and maintenance.

Lastly, I must mention our hard-working clerk who continues to keep her head above water, despite the deluge of correspondence (averaging over 45 items per meeting), organising and managing meetings and, the biggest challenge of all, keeping us, the councillors, on the straight and narrow. On top of all this, and studying in her own time, she has recently completed and submitted her portfolio to become a qualified clerk, essential if we are to maintain our Quality Parish status. Many thanks are due to her from us all.

Cllr Colin Barr  
March 2010

**Officers of the Council 2009-2010**

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

**East Ward:** Cllr Chris Potts; Cllr Ken Dean; Cllr John Taylor (co-opted June 2009)

**Central Ward:** Cllr Anne Robinson; Cllr Penny Lovegrove; Cllr John Watson

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**DRAFT Summary of Accounts 2009/2010**

<b><u>Receipts</u></b>	
Balance brought forward	1157.92
Annual Precept from SLDC	9024.00
Return of VAT	342.13
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>10524.05</b>
<b><u>Payments - summary</u></b>	
Insurance	468.06
Annual Fees for services:	
Audit Commission fee	155.25
Information Commissioner fee	35.00
Ordnance Survey License Fee	62.96
CALC Subscription	187.00
SLDC Election expenses (for May 08 elections)	170.00
Bouth Village Green & Playground:	
H&S Annual Inspection	72.45
SLDC Monthly Inspection fee (for 08/09)	85.54
Equipment servicing	70.72
Maintenance & repair expenses	100.00
Parish Lengthsman's salary	1386.00
Clerk's salary	3722.25
Clerk's office expenses & allowances	490.53
Clerk's travel expenses	54.00
Councillors' travel expenses	178.00
Training course fees	60.00
Room hire	110.00
Newsletter publishing expenses	81.44
Community Plan Event (Jan 10) expenses	63.09
NALC - fee for return of Quality Parish portfolio	8.82
Purchase of book: Local Council Administration	59.05
Poppy wreath for Remembrance Service	15.00
Finsthwaite Clock maintenance grant	125.00
NW Air Ambulance grant	50.00
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>7810.16</b>
<b><u>Balance</u></b>	
Total income	10524.05
Total payments	7810.16
<b>TO CARRY FORWARD</b>	<b><u>2713.89</u></b>