

Chairman's Annual Report for 2017/2018

This year has been a year of transition for the council with significant changes in councillors, a new Chairman, Vice-Chair and the Parish Clerk appointed shortly before the start of the year. At present we have vacancies for two councillors. This has resulted in a challenging year, but despite this we have progressed on numerous fronts and we start the current year in a much more stable position.

Changes to the Council

The year started off with the resignation of Colin Barr our Chairman. Colin had been a councillor for fourteen years, the last ten as Chairman. His knowledge, experience, commitment and leadership will be sorely missed and we owe him a great deal of thanks for his positive contribution to the parish and the parishioners over the past fourteen years. Also at the start of the year after a number of years on the council Vanessa Champion our Vice-Chair resigned. Vanessa played a major role in the development of the Community Plan which sets out the policies and action plans for the future of the parish and we thank her for this and her overall valuable contribution to the council. I replaced Colin as Chairman and David Hoyle replaced Vanessa as Vice – Chair. Also during the year Walter Oates resigned after a year on the council. This created five vacancies and during the year three of these have been filled by Fiona Baxter, Graham Jarvis and Marion Brown. Together they bring a wide and varied experience which will be of significant benefit to the council. Despite these changes we still have two vacancies for councillors with Finsthwaite and Lakeside being under represented.

Activities of the Council

In such a year of change of councillors it has been a case of 'holding the fort' .However, we have made progress on a number of fronts.

- We have replaced our old outdated unsupported website with a more modern version.
- The nomination of 'Assets of Community Value' resulted in both The Manor House at Oxen Park and Stoney Hazel Wood at Rusland being agreed and included on the register.
- Our lengthsman, Archie Workman, has had an exceptionally busy year with the adverse weather conditions causing significant flooding, which as always he has manfully resolved. He is also now digitally mapping the parish drains and we now have a more direct contact with highways which will hopefully lead to better responses to issues.
- Superfast Broadband is now available in Newby Bridge, Finsthwaite, Bouth and Spark Bridge with Oxen Park due shortly. We must thank Mike Postle for his work in achieving this and his continuing efforts to achieve better connectivity in remaining areas of Colton, Nibthwaite and parts of Rusland.
- We continued to participate in the Rural Crime Initiative with Satterthwaite PC but withdrew from the aspect that included the provision of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras with the councillors expressing concern over the policies and procedures required and the legal implications of ownership of

supporting the CCTV aspect on the scheme. We still continue to support the Rural Crime Initiative.

- Community Plan. For most of the year due to the changes in councillors we did not progress the plan but towards the end on the year we have re-allocated the portfolio-holders and expect to make progress during the year. As part of the plan we gave community grants of £850 during the year.

Liaison and consultation

We continue to be a well connected and involved council and our clerk has brought a total of 300 items of correspondence to our attention and we responded to 11 formal consultations, including the Lake District National Park Local Plan and various local and national consultations. The council made the decision not to continue with the parish newsletter and have replaced it with the Colton Parish Link email facility which currently has more than 100 subscribers. We also contribute to three local newsletters each month and our old unsupported website has been replaced with a more modern version. We were represented at 13 external meetings during the year and we are represented on 11 outside bodies.

Planning

This year the council reviewed 33 planning applications. We supported nine and objected to seven. This is an unusual high number of objections but the reasons for objection were based upon the applications not being in line with our community plan. Four of these objections were supported by the Planners and three rejected.

Meetings

The council had nine scheduled meetings during the year. Member attendance averaged 88% which is higher than last year. We continue to receive good support from Cumbria Police, representatives attended 3 meetings and sent reports to five more. Representation from the principal authorities were three for the District Council and three from the County Council.

Budget for the coming year

Our Finance Working Group which oversees our formal budgeting procedures has recommended that there should be no increase in the 2018/2019 precept as there is currently a surplus. This has been approved by the full council. A summary of the accounts for 2017/2018 is attached.

Chairman's thanks

I would like to thank David Hamer of the Bouth Village Green and Playground Committee for the good work in keeping the parish council's only open space in good order and Alan Lovegrove for his continuing monthly safety inspections of the facility. I would like to thank Mike Postle for his continuing excellent work on Broadband, and Bobbie Dobson for carrying out the internal audit. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and support over the year in my first year as Chairman and I am sure my fellow councillors will join me in thanking our clerk Karen Birch who has supported us throughout the year.

Despite this being a year of change in regard to councillor membership a lot has been achieved over the year and I believe we are in a better shape now at the start of the current year to support the parish ongoing.

Cllr Ken Dean

May 2018

Officers of the Council 2017/2018

West Ward: Cllr Colin Barr (resigned); Cllr John Milburn; Cllr Fiona Baxter

East Ward: Cllr Vanessa Champion (resigned); Cllr David Hoyle (Vice- Chair); Cllr Walter Oates (resigned); Cllr Graham Jarvis

Central Ward: Cllr Ken Dean (Chair); Cllr John Watson; Cllr Marion Brown

Clark: Ms Karen Birch: 3 Home Farm Cottages, Grizedale, Ambleside LA220QN

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