

Witton le Wear Parish Council

**Annual**

**Report**

**May 2018**

Parish Council Clerk – Alan Dixon

 01388 609045

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## Witton le Wear Parish Council

### List of Contact Numbers for Witton le Wear Parish Councillors

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| DIXON. A (CLERK) | Tel: 01388 609045 |
|                  |                   |

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018**

We are now in the second year of our Parish Plan which provides our goals.

We continue to meet in the Community Centre on the second Monday of every Month (except August and December) commencing at 6.15 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to come along. If you wish to address the meeting, please inform our Clerk at least 3 days prior. Do come along to these meetings and see what is happening. This is the perfect way to communicate with us. You can also approach any Councillor at any reasonable time.

Some of you have also been using our new "Letters to the Editor" section of the Witton Word.

In general, the Parish Council exists to represent your interests in relation to threats and opportunities. If we have any plans which may be contentious, we seek public opinion before we act.

We have been tidying up the Railway Platform area and we have applied to have the Village Green fence refurbished. We continue to monitor and report defects. Our roads, like many others are in need of repair.

Our new Councillor is Philip Cowan, who introduced himself in the last issue of the Witton Word. I am sure that Philip will be an asset to the Council and we wish him well in his new role.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Our Responsible Finance Officer is our Clerk and his financial background is well known. We continue to obtain maximum value for money with all of our expenditure and we have been fortunate in the past to have many tasks carried out by volunteers.

Our full Financial Report accompanies this report. We have attempted to hold on to some funds in order to fund various projects, however, this may not be possible in the future due to new financial rules where we are not allowed to have more than 50% of our Annual Budget held in reserve.

### **TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT**

You may be aware that we tried to have a 20mph speed limit introduced into the Village, especially around the School approach roads and this was rejected by the County Council. Other areas have been successful in introducing similar schemes so we shall keep up our efforts. In this respect, you may see signs and volunteers around the Village carrying out traffic speed monitoring. We continue to try and obtain improved speed signs, including solar powered versions.

The remaining Railway Platform surface has arrived and is awaiting fitting (at the time of going to press - we will amend before going to print)

## **EDUCATION, LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT**

The Primary School continues to attract pupils. It is currently well attended and supported and has many social events. The School now offer after school pupil care until 6 p.m. and from September they will be opening a Nursery to provide day care for three-year olds until school age. Like all other Village social events, car parking is an issue which is difficult to resolve. After residential parking, there is unfortunately little left for visitors. This affects our money generating income potential, especially in respect of our Village Fayre.

We have an excellent cricket facility in the Village with a difficult to match setting. The Railway Platform continues to improve and many special train events are planned. There is the intent to repair the line to the east of the Village in order to facilitate the trains running to Bishop Auckland once again.

The Community Association organises a varied programme of events throughout the year, including coffee mornings and hosts the recently introduced Friendship Lunches.

The Parish Council is also committed to supporting the re-establishment of the Youth Club, perhaps with an extended age range. We have allocated some funds to support this.

Last year we held a very successful Village Fayre, which was opened by Sue Snowdon, Lord Lieutenant of Durham which raised over £1400 for the Community Centre. Due to the large amount of work involved and the short timescale, there will not be a Village Fayre this year, but we will be having a large Afternoon tea with some entertainment and a Grand Draw with some special prizes. That will be held on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2018. Next year, the Village Fayre will return and that will be held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2019.

The Village Voices is continuing to flourish under the directorship of Philippa Dearsley. During the last year they performed at the Village Fayre, Christmas Concert and at Durham Cathedral and more events are planned for the future.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

The Village still manages to support two Pubs, two Churches and a Community Centre. We have a mobile post Office, a Mobile Library with a mini-library in the Telephone Box, which houses our Defibrillator. We have a seasonal Train service to Stanhope and hopefully to Bishop Auckland in the near future.

Hopefully, you will have experienced improved broadband connectivity. We are managing to maintain our bi-monthly newsletter the Witton Word delivered through your door.

Thankfully, we have some public-spirited star Villagers who give up their free time to indulge in Village tidying and litter picking and also dog - fouling removal. We are deeply indebted to them.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Our Village Pathways continue to be monitored by Lynda Bentley and Eileen Kirkby and maintained by contractors. We receive funding from Durham County Council to pay for this work. The Witton Fly Fishers still monitor the river and river banks.

Work is imminent to install the new Church path. The Parish Council have allocated some funds towards this project.

We have a number of volunteers who maintain our Railway Platform area and we will be adding some additional plants this year. Hopefully the additional Platform flooring and creosoting will soon be completed. We are negotiating the removal of the current salt bin and the acquisition of a new Village /Railway Platform sign.

### **CRIME AND SAFETY**

We still enjoy a lower than average crime rate and we receive regular electronic intelligence through our Witton Word Editor. It is important to attend PACT meetings regularly and provide intelligence to the Police.

### **HEALTHCARE**

The NHS is still undergoing massive changes and increased demands on its services. New ways of delivering services are being tried as the service struggles to meet demands of an ageing population and replacement of retiring staff. This takes many years to achieve due to many years training to achieved qualified status. The current trend is to try and treat more ailments locally, rather than at Hospitals.

### **VILLAGE/PARISH DESIGN ISSUES**

Planning applications in the Village and the surrounding area are monitored on a weekly basis to consider what impact they would have on Village life. The Parish Council submit objections to any developments which are considered to have a detrimental effect on neighbouring properties or streetscape. This of course could also affect sale potential and property prices. All planning applications are listed on the Durham County Council portal and notices posted on the nearest lamp posts. Objectors have 21 days (from the date on the notice) in which to make an appeal.

The Community Centre is in the process of undertaking extensive improvements so please support this venture by supporting events and using the building as often as possible with all of your birthday and family celebrations.

Volunteers have done a really good job in tidying up the Platform area and east entrance to our Village.

The Parish Council have aspirations to provide two enhancing signs to our East and West Village entrances. We are undergoing the long process of establishing permission from Land owners (Highways and Railways) and the DCC Planning Department to erect these signs. If you would like to contribute any ideas towards the design of these signs, please contact a Parish Councillor.

Dates of forthcoming meetings to be held in the Community Centre, Witton Le Wear at 6:15p.m.

2018

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July

No meeting in August

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November

No meeting in December

2019

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May Annual Assembly Meeting

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May Annual General Meeting

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May Ordinary Meeting