

## Norham Parish Council

### Chairman's Report May 2015 - May 2016

At the Annual General Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015, George Straughen was re-elected as Chairman with John Urwin as Vice Chairman.

The Council received the Chairman's Report which included a list of improvements which the Council agreed could be used as a framework for Parish Council action. These were:

- \*Greater capitalisation on the history of the village.
- \*More floral efforts throughout the village, as well as gateways.
- \*Forming a working group of volunteers for village improvement projects.
- \*More use of Church for community based activities.
- \*To look at traffic safety aspects around the school & bus stops.
- \*To look at how to safeguard & retain the services we have, i.e. shops, pubs etc.
- \*To look at undergrounding cabling for the village to improve aesthetics.
- \* To look at car parking in the village, especially Castle Street & St. Cuthbert's Square.
- \*To look further at a village website.
- \*To promote the village with walk boards/history cards.

Progress has been made with some of these items but there is still a lot to do.

Norham Castle is one of the main village attractions. We would like to thank David Foreman & his team of volunteers for opening & closing the gates of the Castle during the summer season. Thanks also to Terry Hume for cutting the grass between the car park & the Castle.

Speeding traffic continues to be a problem. The council is in the process of having a vehicle activated sign installed near Norham School & has agreed to try to get similar signs at other road entries into the village.

We have not had any further discussions with Scottish Power Energy Networks regarding undergrounding of cables, but Northumberland County Council is in the process of up-grading street lighting throughout the County. As the current lights on Castle Street are fixed to electricity poles, we will pursue a coordinated programme of new street lighting on lamp posts & undergrounding of cables.

Car parking in the village can still cause a problem. The Council would ask for consideration to others when parking.

The village website is up & running. This is something we should promote to encourage people to visit Norham, which in turn will support our local services.

Play Areas & Equipment - We started this council year with play area equipment being inspected by Mr. Alan Carter, but for various reasons, we are now carrying out weekly inspections ourselves & organising independent inspections as required.

Stone Planter - There is now a stone planter at the bottom of the Castle Bank. We would like to thank Billy Widdrington for building the planter with no charge for his labour and Jim Blythe for planting the flowers. This is an attractive feature as you enter the village.

Notice Board - A new notice board has been fixed outside the Village Hall. We would like to thank Ian Simpson for providing his labour free of charge.

Neighbourhood Plan - After some discussion, the Council agreed to join the Norham & Islandshire Parish Council Association Neighbourhood Plan.

Parish Council Clerk - After several years in the post, Janet Heywood decided to step down. We would again like to thank Janet for her good work and advice. Victoria Craig took over as Council Clerk in November and the Council, especially myself, would like to thank Victoria for taking the position & making it an easy transition.

Public Conveniences - From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the Parish Council took over the cleaning & maintenance of the Public Toilets. We have been fortunate to have Sheila Penman as contracted cleaner. We hope this arrangement will ensure the toilets remain open for use as they are an asset to the village.

Riverside Project - David Foreman & his team of volunteers deserve thanks & praise for the work they are doing to improve the riverside walks.

The Council would like to thank John Grahamslaw for keeping the War Memorial so tidy and County Councillor Dougie Watkin for his on-going support and assistance.

Thanks also to the many volunteers who do various things for the Parish without much recognition.