

Norham Parish Council

Chairman's Report for 2016-2017

Another year in the life of Norham Parish Council started with George Straughen and John Urwin being elected as Chairman & Vice Chairman, at the 2016 Annual General Meeting & ended with the sitting members being elected, unopposed, at the Council Elections on May 4th 2017.

In between, progress has been made in some areas, including:

Electronic Speed Sign

An electronic speed sign has been installed near Norham School. This alerts drivers entering the village from the west of their speed & hopefully has an effect on the problem of traffic speeding through the village. We are aware there is still a problem and some road markings and reminder 30 signs may have to be considered. The Parish Council will work towards having speed signs installed at the other entrances to the village.

Public Conveniences

The Parish Council continue to maintain the public toilets & regard them as a vital asset, especially as we are committed to promoting the village. Towards the end of the year, the toilets were inspected & materials purchased in order to redecorate during 2017.

Village Leaflets

Many of the leaflets which we hope will attract people to the village have been distributed, although there are still some left.

Public Footpath

The footpath from South Lane to the bottom of the Castle Bank has been added to the Definitive Map. This should help with maintenance as it is now a N.C.C. public footpath.

Parish Website

The village/parish website continues to improve, which again we hope will promote the village, but is also necessary for the Council to comply with legislation regarding posting information.

Seat and Bench Plan/Register of Assets

Thanks to a lot of work by Councillors, and especially our Council Clerk, we now have a comprehensive list & location plan of the parish's fixed assets, including seats & benches. This will be useful for inspections, maintenance & insurance purposes.

Areas where less progress has been made, include:

Joint Neighbourhood Plan

After some initial promise, the Joint Neighbourhood Plan with the Norham & Islandshires Parish Council Association, seems to have become bogged down with very little to report.

Mobile Phone Mast/Public Phone Box

There seems to be little prospect of a new mast to improve the mobile phone provision in the village. With this in mind, the council has argued that the public phone box should be retained, especially in case of an emergency.

N.C.C. L.E.D. Street Lighting/Undergrounding of Cables

As mentioned in the last Chairman's Report, the opportunity to coordinate the provision of new street lighting with the undergrounding of cables on Castle Street has been missed. Many new lights are in position, although some are still to be changed & there is no progress to report on undergrounding of cables.

Car Parking

Car parking is still causing a problem in many areas. We would urge consideration for others when parking vehicles.

As always there are causes for optimism, including:

Community Development Trust

After an initial approach from the Parochial Church Council, preliminary meetings are taking place to set up a Development Trust which would look at ways to improve parish life & the Church's involvement.

Riverside

David Foreman & his team of volunteers continue their good work in improving & maintaining the riverside.

War Memorial

The War Memorial has been registered as a listed building. We would like to thank John Grahamslaw for his on-going work in maintaining the memorial.

Parish Clerk

Victoria Craig has completed her first full year as Council Clerk. On behalf of the council and parish, I would like to thank her for all her efforts throughout & especially for formalising our statutory obligations regarding Codes of Conduct, Freedom of Information, Risk Assessments etc.

Your work is appreciated.

Volunteers

The council would like to express thanks to the many volunteers in the parish who do things to contribute to parish life & who seldom get recognition.

Councillor Dougie Watkin

We would like to thank N.C. C. Councillor, Dougie Watkin, for all his assistance over many years. He regularly attended meetings, provided advice & did what he could to help the council & individuals. We will miss his input & wish him well for the future.

G. Straughen

Chairman