

**ANNUAL REPORT FROM DAVID ROBERTS THE CHAIRMAN**

**OF THE BLINDCRAKE PARISH COUNCIL**

**TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON**

**16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2011**

**1. Introduction**

As Chairman of the Parish Council it is my duty to present an Annual Report to the Annual Meeting of the Parish which we hold every year. This is not the same as the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council although for convenience the meetings are held on the same date. The Annual Meeting is an occasion when the Electors for the Parish area are able to meet and discuss matters of importance to them. Where appropriate resolutions can be passed on a vote. The majority of resolutions which might be passed at an Annual Meeting would be persuasive on the Parish Council. The Annual Meeting is therefore a forum where Electors in the Parish can make their views known. This is of course in addition to the part of every Parish Council Meeting, when the proceedings are adjourned to allow parishioners to bring matters to the attention of the Parish Council. In addition your Parish Councillors are available to be contacted at anytime throughout the year. Their contact details are shown on the Parish Newsletters.

**2. Matters of note since the last Annual Report**

(a) Roads, Drainage and Potholes

The Highway Steward System worked well. There are changes to “two man” working but we are assured that this will not affect the service delivered.

After a great deal of pressure and help from Eric Nicholson the Park Wood Road was completely re-surfaced.

Drainage and flooding of properties remains an issue. The main problem areas have been pointed out to a Highway Engineer. The difficulty is that there is a lack of funding to address the problems. The Village Hall flooded in November 2009 and again in November 2010. Highways did address the problem by digging up a section where the pipe work was damaged and blocked. Potholes are the bane of all our lives. One can see the infrastructure crumbling. The cost of putting the County’s roads into an acceptable condition appears prohibitive in the current economic climate. The Parish Council would urge all landowners to maintain their ditches to an appropriate standard. Tackling a few problem areas could make a huge difference, and help minimise damage especially in winter frost.

Grit boxes have been ordered and we are awaiting delivery.

(b) Conservation area

It is 10 years since Blindcrake Village was made a Conservation area. There was a statutory survey and subsequent display and consultation in December. Few if any tangible benefits which we were lead to expect have materialised.

(c) Low Farm

This is one issue where one might have thought the National Park Authority would have pursued a robust course of action. The Parish Council has been pressing the NPA for years to

exercise its statutory powers. It is understood that there are monthly meetings to monitor progress which still proceeds exceedingly slowly.

(d) Village Green

The grass is being cut to a good standard. Notwithstanding the recent prolonged dry spell, the green remained sodden. Examination of the sump under the pound identified no obvious outlet. This suggests that the water was simply finding its own way on to the green and causing the problem. It is proposed that an interceptor drain is fitted where the pipe work enters the sump so that the water is taken straight to the existing drains and not into the sump itself.

The pound walls were being undermined and damaged by two self seeded trees. With the permission of NPA these have been removed and the wall is to be repaired. A one half metre slot will be made on the green side to allow children access into the pound without having to go on to the road. Fencing will be placed to separate out the children's area from the recycling bins.

Kerbing will be fitted at the corner of the green adjacent to the sign post to protect the green.

(e) Bus Services

The Council explored issues of the long School bus journey for the children of Sunderland. Also the question of diverting a service bus off the A595 through the Village a couple of times a week has been canvassed: neither is likely to change.

(f) Royal Wedding

The Parish Council purchased commemorative mugs for all children in the Parish under 19 years. These were presented at a very successful event organised by the Community in the Village Hall. A reminder also that the Queen celebrates her Diamond Jubilee in June 2012.

(g) Miscellaneous Matters

The Ghyll Road sign was completed. The new notice boards erected. Blindcrake Village. Street lights were all made to work. Police re-organisation is unlikely to have any adverse effects on rural policing. Locality plans for the area are being discussed as part of the proposed devolution of power from other levels of Government. Broadband speed and connection remains poor, due to aged infrastructure. The Parish continues to operate a website which all are invited to visit.

(h) Conclusion

2011 has been an election year. Rachel Gerrard and Marisa Soppitt retired and did not stand for re-election. Les Waite and Mary Stocks, two long serving members were not re-elected. The Parish Council would like to thank them all for their valuable contribution to the business of the Parish over the years.

Dated the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2011

**D.Ll. Roberts**

**Chairman for the Blindcrake Parish Council**