

ANNUAL REPORT FROM DAVID ROBERTS THE CHAIRMAN

OF THE BLINDCRAKE PARISH COUNCIL

TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TO BE HELD ON

24TH MAY 2010

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.

The significant event which affected us all in the Parish and throughout West Cumbria in the last twelve months was of course the floods on the night of the

19th and 20th November 2009 and the consequences. The inconvenience and cost to a large part of the local population caused by the closure of all the River crossings save at Papcastle, was considerable. The situation was made much worse as a result of the packed ice which formed on untreated roads over Christmas and into the New Year. The Church at Isel was flooded and substantial damage caused and it will be sometime before the Church is open for services again.

2. MATTERS OF NOTE SINCE THE LAST ANNUAL REPORT

(a) Seat at the Reservoir

This seat was completed last year with wooden slats having been installed.

(b) Blindcrake Village Sign

A new “wall” sign has been constructed on the ghyll road entrance to the Village. The cast iron sign will be attached shortly.

(c) Beware of Children Signs

New signs have been commissioned and installed.

(d) Boundary Hedge between Redmain and the A595

This hedge, which was a regular cause for concern and comment, has been cut back.

(d) The Pound on the Village Green at Blindcrake

This has required some tidying work this year.

(f) Fly tipping

There have been some incidences of significant fly tipping in the area, which should always be reported to Allerdale Borough Council. They appear to be prompt in dealing with fly tipping. Rubbish continues to be jettisoned from passing vehicles throughout the Parish; favourite items seem to be beer cans, soft drinks plastic bottles, cigarette packets and fast food wrappers.

(g) Public Footpaths

A meeting has been arranged to see if members of the local community are interested in establishing a Footpath Group.

(h) Grit Boxes

The Parish Council has resolved to purchase three grit boxes. It is hoped that the County will supply a further three. It is proposed that these grit boxes be placed at strategic points. It is anticipated that such grit boxes would help in tackling the problems in the Parish should we have a repeat of last winter's heavy snow and ice.

(i) Parish Notice Boards

New purpose built metal notice boards have been purchased and will be installed during the summer in Redmain, Isel and Sunderland.

(j) Planning Matters

Various Planning matters came before the Parish Council during the year. Considerable concern was expressed over the proposal for a large agricultural building on the southern approach to Blindcrake, which was opposed by the

Parish Council. The largest proposed development will be the improvement on the Moota Motel site where the owner is proposing to construct a new Hotel.

(k) The Village Green

A new contractor has been appointed this year to cut the Village Green. The cuttings will all be removed for this season and the condition of the Green will be monitored.

(l) Infrastructure Maintenance

Throughout the year individual items regarding problems with specific drains, blockages, ditches, potholes and road surfaces were drawn to the attention of the Parish Council. These have been addressed with the appropriate authorities on an individual basis, including the question of the lights in Blindcrake Village itself. The Parish Council has major ongoing concerns regarding the state of the roads in the Parish including that Park Wood. It is understood that Park Wood road will be repaired using a new technique of crunching up and then relaying the existing tarmac with a new binding. The problem with the roads is far more general and obvious to us all. The road surfaces are breaking up in all sorts of places. Potholes are forming, and the edges of the roads are degrading, narrowing the width of the highway. It is clear that the roads in the county including our Parish have not been maintained on a sufficiently regular basis to preserve the quality of the road surface. The Parish Council has raised these matters on a regular basis with the County Highways Department. Lack of funds is generally the response. Unfortunately in the current economic climate that response is likely to be repeated. The Parish Council is to draw up

a detailed list by reference to a plan of all those areas on the Parish's roads which require attention.

(m) Low Farm

The Parish Council was dismayed at the continuing lack of progress on the Low Farm site. A detailed letter was submitted to the National Park Authority setting out, in clear terms, the Council's views and the requirement for action to be taken. This resulted in a representative of the National Park Authority attending the Parish Council meeting on the 29th March. It is understood and hoped that a clear plan of action is now being formulated by the National Park Authority to exercise its enforcement powers regarding this eyesore. Unfortunately the Parish Council has to rely on the Planning Authority and in certain circumstances Allerdale Borough Council, to exercise powers which they have to enforce Planning Regulations.

(n) Highway Stewards

On a brighter note the Parish Council feels that the re-introduction of Highway Stewards has been an extremely positive development and has resulted in real and practical action and improvement. It would be a great shame if that new system were to be interfered with.

3. CONCLUSION

It will be interesting to see what the new government has in mind for Parish Councils and local government generally in view of the plan to decentralise. We shall have to wait and see. In the meantime the Parish Council would

always welcome feedback from parishioners and is always interested in hearing of suggestions for new plans and projects which would benefit your community.

Dated 24th May 2010
David Roberts
Chairman Blindcrake Parish Council