

Burton in Kendal Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2015/16

Delivered by Alan Wren

If I had to describe the year 2015/16 in one word it would be 'steady'. With little personnel change to the council for the last twelve months, apart from myself being voted in as Chairman in May and Councillor Rowley's election to the position of Vice Chairman.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous Chairman Councillor Taylor for his three years of service to the parish in that role, and on a personal note for the guidance he gave me during my first few meetings.

During my research for this report, I looked back over the last couple of years of minutes and agendas, a noticeable trend in the decrease of consultation documents being passed on to us for comment as a council. With many bodies opting for an online option, with councillors being asked to respond individually rather than as a council. Another unfortunate decrease noted was the infrequency we have a police presence at a meeting, we do still receive an emailed report but the last time it was given by a PCSO was in June of last year. Thankfully we in Burton and the surrounding area are incredibly lucky to have such a low crime rate, but a more frequent visit from the local constabulary would be most welcome.

Something which never seems to decrease from year to year is the number of planning applications we receive, 2015/16 was no exception with the council being asked to comment on nineteen applications. These range from a small extension, the demolition of the redundant Old Station Inn and two of the three larger scale developments included in the Local Development Plan. During planning it was also noticeable that the Government's switch of subsidies on renewable green energy has changed with the steady increase in solar power solutions over wind turbines. With numerous solar array developments both within our parish and surrounding countryside.

The last twelve months have also seen several cuts in services with the reduction of street lights on wooden poles and the sad news of the loss of both the library van and the Age UK local representative. Both of these hit the

retired villagers most of all but thankfully the service of supplying reading material to the village has been saved and a facility which now exists in the memorial hall part funded by the parish council.

Some topics never go away and are visited most years. Parking, dog fouling and drainage are three regulars and we all have our favourite. Unfortunately parking is a subject we will visit many more times, all we can ask is that driver's park within the law and with the consideration for others. Hopefully we have helped alleviate some of the dog mess in the village with the provision of a poo bag dispenser fitted in the square. If this is found to be a success we hope to fit another at the other end of the village. With November's floods affecting Cumbria in such a devastating manor we must be thankful that no more than just a handful of households were flooded within the parish. The parish council will continue to maintain pressure on the authorities to improve the drainage within the village.

This year the council's finance working party advised the council that a modest precept rise of just under 2% was needed. This was in order to maintain the council's current financial footing. (The precept is the Parish Councils share of your council tax.) This figure was duly adopted.

Unfortunately the number of members of the public attending council meetings was disappointing again this year. I am hoping with some larger planning developments on the horizon, the number of parishioners attending meetings will increase. But it would be nice to see anyone with new ideas and suggestions or who was just interested in how the council works. So please do come along we don't bite!

It only needs me to thank my fellow councillors who give their valuable time to represent the parishes' interests on many organizations such as Burton Educational Foundation, Burton Recreation Trust, Local Area Partnership, Memorial Hall Management Committee, Quarry Liaison Committee, Burton School Governors, Fireworks Working Party, Lentsman Manager, Plane Quarry working Group, Playground Maintenance to name but a few.

I would also like to thank our local press representatives who sit through all of our meetings without yawning to much or dropping off to sleep, our Lentsman David Holmes for his tireless work keeping the parish in good order, District Councillor Cooper, District and County Councillor Bingham for their regular attendances and carrying our views and issues forward. I would also

like to thank Alison Cummings for auditing our accounts. Last but not least our Parish Clerk who works tirelessly chasing up various County and District departments by phone and email, looking after the finances and making these meetings run as smoothly as they do.

Alan Wren.