

Nether Wyresdale Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2017 – 2018

- Firstly, I must thank all the other councillors for their commitment to Nether Wyresdale over the past year. They are all very busy people and we all have several other responsibilities. We are so lucky that we have a good spread of expertise which has served us well. I am particularly sorry that we are losing Sanjeev Prashar but fully understand his reasons for having to resign. I know that we are all keen to recruit a replacement councillor, preferably from the Lower Dolphinholme part of our parish – I know we are always conscious this it is all too easy to make this parish very 'Scortoncentric'.
- I also place on record our thanks to our Wyre Borough Councillor, Val Wilson who has always gone out of her way to keep us up to date with things. We were happy to welcome Shaun Turner as our LCC Councillor and have been grateful for his input though he does have many other 'hats to wear'. We were also very pleased to welcome Cat Smith MP to a recent NWPC meeting as well meeting her earlier in the year to look at planning issues in the parish. We wish her well with her imminent birth.
- A few weeks ago, as chairman, I met Cllr Val Wilson together with Wyre BC Chief executive, Garry Payne to conduct a 'Ward Walk'. We looked at many of the issues in this small village including serious congestion caused largely by the lack of car parking within the village centre. We discussed lack of transport provision and outlined the 'Scorton Taxi' operation. We ended up at the regular Wednesday morning 'Chatterbox session' in the Chapel where people were very forceful in explaining issues as they saw them. In particular, it was agreed that the matter of the Health Centre being shut on Garstang Market day was a nonsense and needed priority. The Chief Executive knew the new CCG board and thought they would be much more sympathetic to changes.
- I really must thank Melanie Harben for serving as our clerk so conscientiously in spite of the fact that she and her family have all experienced almost insurmountable medical pressures in the past couple of years or so.
- The most contentious issues we have faced have related to planning matters especially relating to the application on Tithe Barn Lane and the belated production of the new Wyre Local Plan. I know that sometimes people making the applications have felt the villagers have been against them personally, but I think it is important to note that we do respect anyone's right to make any planning submission and equally it is the right of others to object as they think fit. It should not need to become a personal matter and I hope we can all recognise this situation.
- There are plans to set up a working group of interested parties in the community to examine how the village centre can be enhanced. This was agreed in principle some time ago but with other pressures this has not been progressed. Cllr Paul Drinnan has spoken to Mike Howes and it has been agreed to get together in the near future to draft some ideas. Hopefully this will include moves to install a couple of 'Blue Plaques' in the village of Scorton.
- Bikes and Barrows has once again been a great success at the early May Bank Holiday amid spectacular weather. We are very grateful to this year's chairman, Mike Howes and his committee for their outstanding hard work. Although the full accounts are not quite available yet, I can report that, so far, something around £12,177.72 has been raised after expenses so the account currently stands at approx. £19,667.84. A few items of income and expenditure are still due to be settled. As always car parking in the village is a major issue and this needs to be addressed before plans for future years can be made. It would be a great shame if some issue such as this jeopardises the whole event. There will be a 'wind down' meeting at the chapel on Thursday 7th June at 7.30. All welcome.
- The mowing of our village playing fields has finally been resolved in that we have now appointed local contractors to mow on a regular basis and especially before village events. Cllr Sue Atkinson has had to spend a considerable amount of time on this matter but it now seems to be running smoothly. The contract is expected to be reviewed annually. This new scheme saves the school

money and hopefully puts us in charge ! Whether it was the original intention to carry the full cost of the mowing ourselves I am not sure, but I feel that this is a proper use of the precept to provide this facility for residents and visitors.

- Now that our village lengthsman, John Slinger, has settled into the role I think we are all pleased to note that he is often taking the initiative and is 'listing' jobs as he moves around the community. He has also taken on the maintenance of the village 'gateways' established by Max and Angie until Max's untimely death last year. I think we may need to look at whether the lengthsman needs any extra time in the new year. We thank Cllr Annie Collinson for acting as his line manager as necessary. We must place on record our sincere thanks to John for his hard work and commitment to the Nether Wyresdale Parish.
- As always, the state of the local roads has been a major cause of concern and unfortunately I am not aware that there has been any significant improvement in spite of promises to that effect. We know that our LCC Councillor, Shaun Turner is also Chair of Highways at LCC and has been chasing matters hard however, apart from some patching there is still real concern.
- We have routinely attended the LAPTC Wyre Area Committee held at Shared Approach offices at Kenlis. This contains representatives of all the rural parishes in Wyre and this has been very useful in sharing common concerns. These have included such topics as the Wyre Flood forum, the reorganisation of the Clinical Commissioning Group and the developing planning structure. It is a good forum in which we can share the concerns of the rural communities.
- Finally, I must say that for a small Parish Council, I think everyone has pulled their weight and we have made real progress on a number of matters.
- I am pleased to wish Cllr Sue Atkinson every success with her forthcoming term of office and look forward to working with her.

James L. Cottle

30th May 2018