

# Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting, held on 12th May 2011 at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall, Millfield Road

**Present:** Cllrs Mills (in the Chair), Reid and Eakins. County Councillor Anne Dale was present with 11 members of the public including Mrs Linda Shepherd for the VHT and Ms Jen Stephenson for the First School. One member of the public made a brief appearance towards the end of the meeting.

**1. Welcome and Apologies:** Cllr Mills welcomed all present and reported that Cllr Dunhill had offered his apologies.

**2. Cllr Reid** gave a demonstration of the use of electricity monitors. It is hoped that members of the public will avail themselves of these monitors which can be borrowed, with a surety of £5, so that energy expenditure levels can be checked in homes and offices to help identify potential economies.

**3. The minutes** of the APM of 2010 were approved.

#### **4. Chairman's Report:**

She commented on the busy year - due partly to the low number of Councillors - and thanked the Councillors for their work and also other members of the village for the help given to the Council. She referred to the Millfield Road bridge and the decision of the County Council (now made permanent) to impose a weight limit of 3 1/2 tonnes. She reported that the Parish Council had obtained and was publishing a survey of work to be carried out on the bridge both immediately and also in the long term.

The Council was considering alternatives in respect of the Marchburn weir. These included no action, expensive restoration of the weir and reduction of the weir in either one or two stages. The Council had been advised by the director of the Tyne Rivers Trust and a member of the Environmental Agency at a meeting attended by some of the riparian owners and would give further consideration to the implications as to cost and liability of reducing the weir by 30 cm.

The Council had submitted a revised planning application for a smaller car park at the village hall, reducing the loss of amenity grass area beside the hall, which was used for village activities and weddings etc

The Spinney, ie the little wood opposite the Church, which belongs to the Council, had been opened up by cutting back weeds, and tree stumps. A path had been covered in wood chippings to suppress weeds. The suggestion that a path through the Spinney be used to enable schoolchildren to walk to school from the Old Playground had been dropped.

The Council had been concerned that some of the traffic passing through the village appeared to exceed the speed limit, endangering people crossing the main road near the corner of the Wellington. The Council therefore decided to install two interactive solar powered speed warning signs as a reminder when a vehicle exceeded the speed limit one at the foot of Whiteside for West bound traffic) C. Cllr Anne Dale kindly offered to provide much of the funding from her County Council allowance.

The Council had asked the County Council to re-site the existing sign at the main road entrance to Millfield Road and to provide a second sign to improve visibility to a driver turning into the road. It wished the double yellow lines at the east end of Church Lane . and at the main road end of Millfield Road to be extended. The Council had asked the County Council to install a new street light at the west end of Millfield Road bridge.

The newly installed mirror at the exit to Hollin Hill Terrace that had been stolen and the mirror at the foot of Sandy Bank had both been replaced.

The playpark was monitored on a weekly basis; bushes between the single tennis court wire netting and the playpark had been severely cut back. Although the damage from moles continued throughout 2010, the position in 2011 had been better.

The planning group of the Council had considered 22 planning applications during the year and its recommendations had been reported in the minutes of the Council meetings

The following policies had been introduced and approved during the year, (a) a Covenants policy (b) a formal complaints policy for any member of the village not satisfied with the way the PC had handled a particular matter and (c) a vexatious correspondence policy to enable the PC to attend to its work without entering into repetitious correspondence.

The Chairman concluded with the comment that the Councillors had given a considerable amount of time and thought to the work of the Council, but were aware that some of the decisions reached may not have pleased all members of the Parish. She reminded the village that If they were not happy with the work, they should apply to join the PC and contribute to the decision making.

There was some discussion from the floor on the Chair's report, much of which had already taken place at the recent Council meeting concerning the survey on the bridge, the problem of emergency vehicles having access to Marchburn Lane and the priority of bridge repairs versus Weir repairs. One member of the public agreed however that the Council should be looking after the interests of the whole village and not those of a few residents.

#### **5. Cllr Dale's report:**

She reminded people that she was responsible for Mickley, Stocksfield and Riding Mill. The cuts of £45 million to the revenue budget were causing great problems to service deliveries. She mentioned concerns about grit bins in the snow, flooding on the Corbridge road and potholes being slowly repaired. She was concerned about speeding and would contribute £4, 500 towards flashing speed signs. She was working with the Sandy Bank residents to improve access/egress at the Nick. She is contactable by email and phone but has to fit responses into County policies. Locally, major concerns are school buildings and hospitals.

Cllr Dale was thanked for always attending meetings and helping whenever she could.

**6. The Financial report** was circulated for information. There were no questions.

#### **7. Broomhaugh C of E First School Report:**

There are 65 in the school at present with a full quota coming into reception this Autumn. Improvements to and maintenance of the buildings were a high priority with funding affected by the cuts. The school was only closed 2 days during the snow. The PTA remains very active, helping with school trips and buying books in particular. The Squirrels Club is essential but again, funding remains tight. Support teams for special needs children have been severely affected but there is a low impact

in Riding Mill. 41% of the children are from inside the village. The Church school admissions policy prioritises siblings, then Church and then the catchment area. Of the 65 children, only 16 bring packed lunches. The furthest child comes from Prudhoe and others are from Healey, Whittington, Corbridge and Stocksfield. At the moment there is also one bilingual Flemish speaker and a bilingual Norwegian child starts in the Autumn.

### **8. Report from the Village Hall Trust:**

The Village Hall Trust and in particular The Parish Hall, is very busy. To the usual societies and groups using the Hall, have been added The Bridge Club, The Photographic Society and The Yoga Group, with many additional casual bookings. Monday and Friday mornings are very popular in The Foyer Cafe and huge and sincere thanks must go to Val Thompson, Elaine Raeburn and their willing helpers for ensuring its success.

The Parish Hall Flat continues to be rented out. We have had the entrance to the new foyer block paved, a patio built and the drive tarmacaded. We intend to purchase a TV licence which will offer another dimension for those who want to watch events on a big screen (we are not providing the equipment). The Royal Wedding was the first event to be televised and, with the Cafe facilities running alongside, was a wonderful, sociable occasion.

Fund-raising was active in 2010 and we received large donations from The Bridge Club, The Photographic Society, the proceeds from Judith Anderson's musical weekend, the James Knott Foundation and the Parish Council. As we expect the roof to need replacing within ten years, we are always grateful for and actively looking for funds from other sources.

Fund-raising in 2011 has not been so concentrated, simply because we worked so hard last year. Having said that, we will be holding the Village Show in September, a jumble sale in October and the Craft Fair in November. Throughout the year, we have had several catering assignments, the Vicar's installation buffet, a Christening, meals for groups of hall users and a wedding at the end of this month. All of this requires energy and enthusiasm but especially lots of help - we are always looking for volunteers.

We have donated a day's money from the Cafe to Red Nose Day, hosted a Macmillan coffee morning and are about to have a coffee morning in aid of Multiple Sclerosis. Whilst it is commendable to support and give our facilities for these charities, I do think we have to be careful not to lose sight of our true purpose.

On Village Show Day, to obtain £750 matched funding from Barclays Bank, Pam Pryor is proposing to run a giant tombola (it is becoming increasingly difficult to sell lots of raffle tickets) so we are asking all hall users to donate something for the stall.

Lastly, may I say a huge thank you to everyone who supports us, offers help in any way, or is their organisation's representative on the Trust. Also, my thanks go to Rosie Cummings, Treasurer to the Trust, Val Thompson and her husband, Alan, who both do lots of extra work on top of Val's contracted hours, and to Pam Pryor, the Secretary of the Trust, who works hard trying to juggle bookings, working with the Charity Commission on our behalf and who gives me 100% support. Thank you all.

Mr Gibson congratulated Mrs Shepherd on the Parish Hall and the Trust. Cllr Eakins confirmed that the VHT would like a Car Park and Mrs Shepherd agreed as parking is an increasing problem.

### **9. Minor Matters: None**