

# Yearly report by Councillor Andy Dunhill, Chairman of Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

## 2019/20 - A Very Different Year!

In early March the Government declared a period of lockdown due to the Coronavirus, Covid 19 pandemic. The Parish Council (PC) met with representatives of the Village Hall Trust (VHT) and the Church to discuss what plans could be put in place to help residents, especially those in the vulnerable sector. A group of volunteers were established, leaflets delivered around the whole Parish and plans developed. Suzanne Barker, who operates the central telephone number (manager of the VHT Halls) and Catherin Harrison (our PC Clerk) were established as the key points of contact. As a result, help has been provided to include – shopping, readymade meals, a weekly prescription run and someone to talk to.

For a time, we were unable to hold PC meetings in person and instead held them virtually. The Annual Parish Meeting has not happened and probably will not do so this year. Nor were we able to organise the annual litter pick.

As ever I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support, Anne Dale our County Councillor and most importantly Catherine Harrison, our Clerk, who tries to ensure that we all do what we should, when we should.

Our role is to maintain the Council's assets in the village and perform the duties required of a parish council. The key areas of activity this year have been:

*Sports Club* – The PC has agreed to project manage the proposed refurbishment works & submit any future grant applications. Northern Power has installed the electricity supply to the Pavilion, the cost of which was mostly covered by a S106 Grant from Northumberland CC. Internal improvement works to the Pavilion are nearing completion. The Sports Club hopes to start improvement works shortly, starting with the front elevation openings, followed by practice nets and then phase 1, subject to confirmation of planning consent. The container unit adjacent to the Pavilion is to be relocated.

*Website* – We have a new provider so do have a look at the changes. The content has been updated to make it accessible for all, a legal requirement for all councils. The walks section has also been updated and a new section for local history added. We intend to add a section on wildlife photos, initially those taken during lockdown but it would be good to continue this. Please send any photos to [ridingmillclerk@gmail.com](mailto:ridingmillclerk@gmail.com)

*Climate Emergency* – The PC declared an emergency and has set up a group to progress this initiative. A village meeting was held in Autumn where lots of ideas were put forward and it is hoped that some of these can be developed when circumstances allow.

*Millfield Road Bridge* – Maintenance works have been completed although a small area of painting is outstanding.

*Mill Pond Restoration* – A public consultation was held in the Millennium Hall in Autumn. The Tyne Rivers Trust, which is advising the PC, is to provide its final report and recommendations.

*Old Documents* – We have lots! All have been scanned by a specialist firm to provide a permanent and more easily accessible record.

*Tennis Club* – The Club has proposed to undertake improvement works to its facilities on Millfield Road. A planning application has been submitted for a new sign at the entrance and screening around the courts and has recently been approved. The Club also wants install flood lighting on the double courts which has proved to be controversial and has resulted in some heated argument at PC meetings. The PC supports clubs improving facilities for residents but clearly recognised that this would prove controversial to some residents. No planning application has been made and any work would be subject to grant assistance. Further details can be found on the club's website  
<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/RidingMillTennisClub>

*VHT* – As a result of the pandemic both halls have had to close resulting in a financial problem for the VHT. The PC agreed an additional funding package of an additional £500 per month up to £3,000 to help the VHT maintain the halls.

As I write this the easing of lockdown is starting, let's hope it is a success so that we can return to some level of a new normal. Enjoy the rest of the year.