

Chair's Report 2019 - 2021

I would like to begin by welcoming the new councillors to the Parish Council following the election on 6th, Christine Williamson and Geoff Martindale, and thank Jacqui Davison and Corrina Scott-Roy for their contribution during the time they served on the Parish Council.

This report unusually covers a two year period due to the pandemic from May 2019 to May 2021 and my thanks to Jen Hall the Vice-Chair, Isabel Hunter our Clerk and fellow-councillors for their unstinting work and support throughout this period. Thanks also to Colin Brunt who continued as internal auditor and to the Parish Council volunteers who saved time and money by undertaking minor repairs and maintenance work.

It would be remiss at this point not to acknowledge the excellent work carried out by Beadnell in Bloom and the Beadnell Community Volunteers last year.

Luckily the Stall-on-the-wall did a brisk trade following the first lockdown with a wide range of items for sale including a dingy, bikes and bric-a-brac in addition to the usual plants.

It would be easy to think the parish remained relatively unscathed by covid-19 however it was challenging for those living alone and/ or shielding for extended periods. Support was offered by many. The village pub, shop and other community organisations supplied vital services, a lockdown book club was started and we learned to communicate and participate in activities in ways we had not explored before. Sadly as last year progressed we all learned of family, friends, acquaintances or colleagues whose lives had been touched by covid-19.

The quiet of the first lockdown was replaced by the influx of an unprecedented number of visitors over the summer, many unfamiliar with country ways, resulting in a number of issues for residents. Northumberland County Council has predicted it may be even busier this year and it is pleasing to see the County Council have taken steps to manage visitors and support coastal communities in the short and long term.

Proposals for coping with overnighing motor caravans and extended bus services to reduce use of private vehicles will be discussed with the Parish Council in the coming months.

The Parish Council adopted the practice of holding remote meetings a year ago and thanks to Stephen Rickitt and the pragmatic NALC advice has managed to navigate the covid-19 related legalities allowing councillors to carry on with the normal business of the Parish Council.

The Beadnell Conservation Area was designated in February 2020 by Northumberland County Council and the hope is this will assist in protecting and enhancing the character of the area.

There have been a number of planning applications and in many cases the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been applied. It is now four years since the

Neighbourhood Plan was “made” and currently the three parishes involved are considering with the County Council and our county councillor Guy Renner-Thompson if there are policies that should be reviewed and updated.

Two sizeable developments are under-way in the village. The two storey café /restaurant planning application opposite the car park has been approved and work may commence later in the year. Once operating the car park and toilet facilities will be available to the public during business hours.

There has been a lull in Northumberland Estates’ Kilns development of 45 principal residency dwellings recently. It is hoped there will be no significant delay to the 2 year construction schedule and completion will be by the end of 2022/ early 2023. The village’s fishing heritage and two local families, The Dixons and The Douglasses, with long-standing connections have been acknowledged by roads at the Kilns development being named after them.

During the Local Plan consultation last year the Northumberland Parish Councils in the AONB backed a submission to support a lower affordable housing threshold in the north coast AONB and this will now be backed by Northumberland County Council.

The Parish Council also participated in the Library Services consultation last year - and the possibility of reinstating the X18 bus route through the village will be revisited with NCC and Arriva later in the year.

The Parish Council continues to manage and maintain two playgrounds and at Meadow Lane playground landscaping and planting work following completion of the build on the old school house site has been undertaken under the guidance of Jen Hall with thanks to David Smith, volunteers and neighbours for their contributions.

As far as the cemetery is concerned we now have electronic records to work with and there has been some success in the efforts to trace family members. This is fortunate as some of their family memorials were in need of attention.

The County Council car park improvements have been completed thanks to the efforts of Iain Robson of the AONB and our county councillor Guy Renner-Thompson. These included reorganising and remarking offering a safer environment for the boat launch service and the public.

As has been mentioned many times by the Parish Council, there are a relatively small number of properties in the parish paying Council Tax and hence the Precept raised for the Parish Council. In March 2020 the Parish Council decided to approach holiday let property owners registered for Business Rates, and thus not paying Council Tax, for a voluntary contribution to the Parish Council equivalent to the amount of the Precept. There was a 27% response raising over £2,000 in donations. The exercise was repeated at Easter this year and already over £2,000 has been received.

The Parish Council Community Survey consultation which closed at the end of January produced many useful comments and ideas which the Parish Council will be considering further in the near future. Initial feedback and a full list of comments received are available on the Parish Council website.

There were a number of wide-ranging areas of concern to the respondents, for example, concerns about further new development, concerns about coastal erosion, concerns relating to the number of visitors, parking and congestion in the village, the loss of community feeling and so on.

Lastly, I look forward to working together with councillors in a constructive manner for the good of the community in the years to come.

Alison Nation

Chair of Beadnell Parish Council from May 2019 to May 2021.