

# Stainton & Thornton Parish Council

## The Annual Report of the Chair for 2013/2014

The 2013-14 year has been a somewhat quiet period for the Parish Council. The cost saving measures of managing without a photocopier, continuing to use the cheaper printer for the Village Newsletters and not having to pay a £120 fee for the external audit have resulted in another year in which the Council's reserves have increased significantly. In 2012/13 the reserves increased by £985 and last year by £1425. Some of this was also due to £277 more received in donations and to the failure to produce the Welcome Leaflet to new residents within the financial year.

The most noticeable changes for the two villages during the year were the start of the Rose Cottage Farm house building development, the designation of the village roads as a 20mph zone and the provision of 3 wheelie bins per household by Middlesbrough Council.

The highlight of the year for the Parish Council was maintaining the Gold Awards standard in the Northumbria in Bloom competition. This year, 4 Gold Awards were achieved, - for the Village, for a Front Garden, for the Village Pub and for Kell Gate Green & the Quarry. Also, Meldyke Place, the elderly & disabled bungalows, achieved a Silver Award. Later the Thursday Morning Volunteer Group received an Award of Outstanding in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' competition. Particular thanks are due to Mrs Revett, Mrs Burton and Mrs Henderson for the production of another first class Portfolio for the judges.

The Local Government Boundary Commission confirmed that there should be no changes to the number of members or the boundaries of the Parish Council for 2015 and beyond.

During the year, the Parish Council met for the usual six business meetings with the Annual Meeting in May and the Parish Assembly, as in previous years, shared with the Community Council in March. The attendance at Council meetings again averaged 76% but 2 of the meetings had only 4 of the 7 Parish Councillors present due to long term sickness and holidays.

### **Regular Services provided by the Parish Council: -**

There have been four issues of the Village Newsletter again this year. These continue to be very informative and well received by the residents. There has been a varied format and the Parish Council is grateful to P/Cllr Mrs Angela Cooper for her work as editor of the Newsletters.

In November, the Christmas Lights were again erected under the supervision of P/Cllr Alan Conroy. This year, they were 'Switched On' by Mrs Revett followed by a Guitar Group Concert arranged by the Memorial Hall Committee.

Also this year, a new regular expense was agreed by the Parish Council. This was a grant of £200 a year to the Friends of Stainton & Thornton Green Spaces to pay for revenue costs which cannot be funded by other grant providers. (A similar regular grant of £100 was also agreed by the S & T Community Council.)



As usual during the year, P/Cllr Ron Dennison arranged the purchase and distribution of both summer and winter flowering plants for planting, watering and weeding by the volunteers of the Environment Committee in the various tubs, troughs and flower beds around the two villages.

The Parish Council continues to purchase raffle books in bulk (and then reclaim the VAT) as a service to any village organisation which would otherwise have to buy raffle books at a much dearer price.

#### **Planning Matters: -**

In August, the Parish Council objected to Phase 2 of the Rose Cottage Farm housing development for a further 36 houses because the semi-rural approach of fields on either side of Strait Lane would be lost for ever and even the unconfirmed Local Plan stated that further housing in Stainton was not required before 2018. However, MBC granted permission.

The Parish Council was more successful in getting the plans for the vicarage to become an office and home for a Bishop of Whitby modified to maintain the present safer access drive.

Following the loss of another two large trees at Stainton House, the Parish Council wrote to MBC to express concern about the loss of tree cover and the lack of visible replacements.

#### **Roads and Footpaths: -**

Requests for extra 20 mph road markings have been turned down until there is evidence from surveys and joint police/ volunteer Speedwatch events to prove that the traffic speeds are well in excess of 20 mph. 'Local Traffic Only' signs have also been requested to reduce drivers taking shortcuts through the two villages.

The Parish Council remains concerned that funding for extra lighting should be found to route the proposed footpath from Rose Cottage Farm to the Stainton Way footbridge through the field instead of alongside the busy roadway.

#### **General Matters: -**

A new Notice Board for Fawcett Avenue is being made locally but has been delayed. This was inadvertently paid for in advance. It has also been agreed that a new seat is purchased for the bus stop at Vernon Court. Lack of computer skills has also delayed the production of a New Residents' Welcome Leaflet. Two Parish Councillors attended a training course on the Freedom Of Information Act and the Data Protection Act in March. The joint Parish Assembly had a good attendance and participation with the speakers on Roads Maintenance & Infrastructure and the Fire Service.

Finally, I would like to thank the members, the Clerk and all the volunteers for their support in various roles throughout the year.

Maelor Williams, Chair of the Parish Council 2013/14.

