

STANTON AND THORNTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Report of the Chair for 2008/09

Last year was a relatively quiet period for the Parish Council. The highlights were achieving a Silver Gilt Award for Kell Gate Green & Stainton Quarry and maintaining a Silver Award for the two villages in the Northumbria in Bloom competition and receiving an Environmental Award in the Calor Village of the Year competition and also an Environment City Award (£100) for the Quarry & Kell Gate Green.

The pattern of 6 meetings of the Council in alternate months to the Community Council now seems established and working well. In addition, there is the Parish Assembly shared with the Community Council meeting in March and the Parish Council Annual Meeting in May. The attendance record of Parish Councillors at Council meetings remained high at 76%.

Following the previous year's Public Meeting about the development on the Riversley House Care Home site, permission was granted by Middlesbrough Council's Planning Committee after the plans had been modified to provide off road parking facing Cedarwood Glade. Conditions of the permission retained the beech hedge and protected the appearance of gardens facing Hemlington Rd. The slump in the housing market has meant no progress beyond demolition but there is a new planning application with revised plans now being considered. Following the previous year's Public Meeting on the review of the Stainton & Thornton Conservation Area, the consultation period for 'restricted development rights' is not expected to begin until Reviews are completed for all 5 residential Conservation Areas in Middlesbrough.

During the last year, the Parish Council welcomed the adoption of the new Local Development Framework and the Ministry Inspector's decision in favour of mixed development on the Hemlington Grange (hospital) site and no housing development nearer Stainton until at least 2023.

Every Parish Council meeting agenda has an opportunity for Public Participation but most public input is made at the Community Council meetings. Steady progress was made during the year to achieve 'Quality Parish Council' status eventually. The Parish Council is now represented on the Middlesbrough Council's Standards Committee by P/Cllr. R. Macmillan.

Despite the increasing costs of running the Parish Council, it was decided in December to maintain the Precept at £5000.00 for the next financial year.

Expenditure by the Parish Council

A major expense for the Council every year is the funding of the quarterly Village Newsletters which are delivered free to every household. The second largest expense continues to be the purchase of plants for the winter and summer floral displays in the beds, troughs and planters all around the villages. The third biggest expense is the £300 contribution to the Village Gala organised by the

Community Council in July. Then there is a fourth regular expense for the installation and removal of the Christmas Lights around Meldyke Square. The Parish Council also continues to provide raffle books for all the village organisations because it is cheaper to buy these in bulk and reclaim tax. This last year, it was also possible to buy replacement planters outside the Post Office, replace the handle on the Thornton village pump, pay for a garden design feature at the bollards between Meldyke Lane and Quarry Drive and to buy additional Litter Pickers for the volunteers before each judging of the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

Identifying Community Needs

The Parish Council plays a role of identifying priorities for road and pavement repairs. In the last twelve months, I'm sure this contributed to the resurfacing by Middlesbrough Council of most of Cedarwood Glade, Fawcett Avenue and High Rifts and the provision of a pedestrian refuge for crossing Low Lane opposite the Sporting Lodge. Also, during the year, litter bins were eventually replaced outside the Post Office and at the entrance to the footpath from High Rifts to the Stainton Way footbridge following reminders from the Parish Council. A new dog litter bin at the entrance to the Quarry was repositioned because its scarlet colour was too obtrusive. The yellow lines alongside the churchyard on Hemlington Road have not yet appeared and there is no decision yet to reduce the speed limit to 50 mph on Low Lane. Unfortunately, when traveller's horses were tethered in various parts of Stainton Wood, it took three months of urging for an injunction without any apparent effect. The horses left eventually and the ground has since been rolled to even the surface and the fence repaired by the Quarry Management Group.

The Parish Council also continues to express any community objections to planning applications. During the year, an objection was made to a new dwelling in the garden of No.9 Cedarwood Glade and demolishing a pitch roofed garage. However, the reason for the first refusal by MBC was overcome in a revised application and permission was later granted.

New Access to Parish Council Information

During the year, the Parish Council adopted the 'model publication scheme' for requests that might be received under the Freedom of Information Act. Also the Parish Council took up the offer from Middlesbrough Council to have its own web site as an extension of the Middlesbrough Council web site. This is being regularly updated with Minutes etc. by P/Cllr. J. Holmes.

Thanks for Support

I would like to thank the other members and the Clerk for their support and hard work during the year. The Parish Council joins me in thanking the Newsletter editor, Mr. Peter Byers and all the numerous volunteers who deliver them. Also all the other volunteers who plant, weed, water and photograph the floral displays, and those who join the Litter Picks. I feel sure the support of all these volunteers contributes a great deal to the good quality of our life as residents of the Stainton & Thornton parish community.

Cllr. Maelor Williams, Chair of the Parish Council

2008/09