

# Stainton & Thornton Parish Council

## **The Annual Report of the Chair for 2012/2013**

The Parish Council met for the usual six business meetings as in previous years with the Parish Assembly shared with the Community Council in March. The attendance at Council meetings fell to 76% mainly because of long term sickness and holidays.

In the Northumbria in Bloom competition, the villages achieved a Gold Award for the second year running and The Stainton Inn also achieved a Gold Award. Kell Gate Green and the Quarry Local Nature Reserve achieved a Silver Gilt Award having earlier in the year maintained the Green Flag again.

In recognition of achieving 'Quality Parish Council' status in the previous year, it was agreed to increase the salary of the Clerk to the Council by another scale point. After an attempt to speed up the Council's old computer, it was later decided to purchase a new laptop computer for the Clerk.

Regrettably in October, the Highways Agency supported the approval of planning permission for 106 mainly 4 bedroomed houses on the Rose Cottage Farm site and for 350 houses off Low Lane on the far side of the Parkway which the Parish Council also opposed.

In the Local Government Boundary Commission review, the Parish Council proposed that the size of the Parish Council should remain at seven members and that the Parish boundary should also remain unchanged. The Commission has recently recommended support for these proposals.

Unfortunately, the tree planted last year on Strait Lane 'green' to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee had to be replaced. The Parish Council was grateful for the generous donation for this. Another tree was also planted in the Quarry to mark the Royal Wedding.

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

There were four issues of the Village Newsletter during the year. There has been no objection to the condensed content and, with the more economical printing, the cost of the Newsletter has reduced compared with two years ago. The Parish Council is grateful to P/Cllr Mrs Angela Cooper for her work as editor of the Newsletters.

Following the achievement of a Gold Award for The Stainton Inn, Mr Frank Buckland was invited to Switch On the Christmas Lights in November. After some initial circuit failure problems, the lights cheered the village throughout the festive season. The Council is grateful to P/Cllr Alan Conroy for the circuit repairs and arranging the erection, dismantling and storage of the lights. Unfortunately, Middlesbrough Council charged for the erection and dismantling and this is likely to continue in the future. The old transformer was sold. The smaller amount of electricity for the LED lights was again provided by the Memorial Hall and the Methodist chapel.

As in previous years, the Parish Council funded the purchase of both winter and summer flowering plants for the various displays around the villages. This work was coordinated by P/Cllr Ron Dennison with the support of the volunteers on the Environment Committee. Another highly praised 'Portfolio' was produced by Mrs Burton and Mrs Revett for the judging in the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

The Parish Council continued to supply village organisations with free raffle books following purchase in bulk and recovery of the VAT. The usual payment was also made for the Portalloo at the village annual Gala day at Kell Gate Green.

## **Planning Matters**

During the year, the Parish Council commented on the Issues & Option Stage of the Local Development Framework. Later, when the Preferred Options were publicised, the Parish Council accepted the need for Middlesbrough to maintain its present population and supported the increased housing proposed for the Hemlington Grange (hospital) site within the Parish. However, the Parish Council strongly objected to any further housing developments on land on both sides of Strait Lane for a number of reasons. The Parish Council also doubted the planners ability to defer such developments until after 2018 if these sites are approved as preferred options for housing in the LDF.

During the year, a proposal to protect the edges of the 'green' in Meldyke Lane with a rubber material were eventually rejected because the appearance in the Conservation Area may be obtrusive and the 'green' would be smaller.

More recently, the Parish Council objected unsuccessfully to another 73 houses having access from Low Lane on the other side of the Parkway. The Council has also recently objected to a planning application by the Diocesan authorities for extensions to the vicarage in the Conservation Area involving changing the route of the drive and the lack of adequate parking provision.

The Parish Council learned the details of the 106 agreement for the 106 houses at Rose Cottage Farm. These include protection for bus subsidies, a new footpath from the site through Stainton Wood to the footbridge over Stainton Way and for some minor improvements to local roads and roads further away.

After some discussion, the Parish Council has decided not to proceed with all the work involved in writing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish area mainly because it would have to have even more detail than the Middlesbrough Local Development Framework.

## **Changes introduced by Middlesbrough Council**

The Parish Council have noted the designation of all roads in both Stainton and Thornton as part of a 20mph speed zone. New street lights have been installed by MBC at the centre of Stainton but the request for a new street light on Pennyman Way 'green' is still awaited.

## **General Matters**

A new Code of Conduct was adopted by the Council prior to August last year. Work is continuing on updating the Asset Register and transferring assets to The Friends of Stainton & Thornton Green Spaces.

The Council have noted the action plan following incidents at the new Children's Home in Cedarwood Glade. Also, the Council is enquiring into the notices concerning the closure of permissive paths in the area.

Finally, on behalf of the Council, I would like to thank the members, the Clerk and the volunteers for their support in various roles throughout the year which contributes so much to the quality of our lives in the Stainton & Thornton community.

Maelor Williams, Chair of the Parish Council 2012/13