

Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council

A Report for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held at the Community Centre, Stocksfield
Monday, 26th April 2010, 7.30 p.m.

www.stocksfield.org

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th April 2009.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Speaker - Charlene Kane, Head of Stations & External Relations, North East – Northern Rail
5. Reports from:
 - a) Parish Councillors
 - b) County councillor
6. Financial Statement
7. Any Other Business

All Residents of the Parish of Broomley & Stocksfield are welcome to attend this meeting.

Station Car Park Improvements

We talked about the scheme to extend the station car park in our annual report last year, and the work is only now reaching completion. We reported last year that the terms of our grant from the DfT required that all work had to be completed by 31st March 2010. For the Parish Council this has been a particularly frustrating time and just when, at long last, the 'start date' was set for Monday 4th January along came the worst winter weather for years to create still further delay.

It was therefore to our relief that on 25th January Northumberland County Highways staff began work on the creation of an additional car park on the North side of the railway. This car park is now finished, except for the erection of a single 'street light' to illuminate the car park area. The absence of marked parking bays is deliberate. If any markings had been put down, two disabled bays would have been compulsory, and this was felt inappropriate for this area. Work to extend the main car park started on Tuesday 9th February. The contractors, JMD Developments, made such excellent progress that it is expected that all work will be completed before the end of March deadline. It is hoped that some small additional improvements, aimed at making the station more attractive, will also be carried out quite soon in partnership with Northern Rail. Thanks go to all concerned.

Transport & Highways

The weather dominated transport issues in recent months. Although the A695 was kept clear and frequently gritted during a period of exceptional weather, the pavements and side roads remained untreated for long periods. Many pavements were dangerous and unusable due to snow and ice. There were also a number of accidents on New Ridley Road due to parked cars resulting in single line traffic. The Parish Council raised their concerns with the County Council and would expect Northumberland County Council to be better prepared in future to deal with exceptional weather conditions.

The Vehicle Activated Signs continue to be a success and an additional sign will be erected on New Ridley Road shortly. We are sorry to report that the sign near Brumwell Court has been knocked down by a car, a replacement is on order.

We are constantly trying to improve road safety in the parish and also to upgrade the pavements. But the County Council's financial problems make progress frustratingly slow. - **John Davison**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



During the period April 2009 to March 2010 we have seen the bringing together of all of the responses to the Parish Plan and its production. The responses to the Parish Plan made various suggestions including some kind of village show. A very enthusiastic group within our community took this on board and as a consequence many of us enjoyed the Stocksfield Festival. This was the culmination of their efforts and the sincere thanks of everyone in Stocksfield is offered to this group of people who made a wish into an excellent event.

Recommendations received and included in the Parish Plan identified a shortage of parking spaces throughout the village. The Parish Council in partnership with Network Rail, Northern Rail and the Northumberland County Council, with a grant from the Department for Transport, has now brought about the creation of additional parking spaces to both sides of the station. This newly completed work will be officially opened on the 26th April and an exhibition will be staged in SICA on that day.

Branch End Play Area has also seen some changes this year with the creation of a path from a new entrance on the Main Road to the play area. A number of planters have also been erected alongside the path. An enthusiastic group of people is developing a community garden in the area adjacent to the new path.

It is good to see so many of the groups within our village continuing to thrive. The Local History Society has now more than 100 members and waiting lists continue for young people who wish to join some of our uniformed organisations. The Baptist Church is again responding to a local unmet need by establishing 2 new youth clubs, one for the under 13's and one for the over 13's.

May I, on behalf of the Parish Council express a sincere thank you to all of those people in our community who give of their time freely to offer such a wide range of activities to their fellow residents.

Finally can I thank on your behalf your Parish Councillors for their unstinting commitment to the work of the Council and special thanks to Margaret Williams who is our Parish Clerk. - **Ian Hall**

Sports Facilities & MUGA

The Parish Council continues to look after the facilities provided at the sportsfields. The fields are regularly used by our cricket, football and rugby teams and also by the Stocksfield Striders running group. This year the East field was the venue for the main events of Stocksfield Festival. Working with the sportsfield users, the Parish Council strives to maintain the facilities to a high standard for all to enjoy, but the football pitches in particular are suffering from over-use. We really need an additional pitch.

The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) continues to be popular in the evenings and at weekends, but there is scope for more use during the day. Bookings were severely hit by the recent bad weather. It would appear that most users of the MUGA are men and boys, we would be glad to hear from any ladies' football teams or other organisations which might enjoy the MUGA. - **Julia Sayce**

Thanks

The Parish Council is grateful for the time, effort and commitment put in by the County and Parish Councillors to making Broomley and Stocksfield the pleasant place it is to live and work in.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

A Report from County Councillor Anne Dale.



As I write this report the new Unitary Authority is still in its first year. The challenges are enormous and the Council needs to ensure that high quality services are delivered to the residents of Northumberland and that it rids itself of some of the bureaucracy that remains within the council structure and that the Council tax is kept down. The Council is run by a minority Liberal Democrat administration.

Local issues over the past year include gritting and salt bins during the dreadful weather, a pre-application for opencast mining for coal on the outskirts of Stocksfield by UK Coal, roads, pavements and gulley maintenance, the speed of traffic, closure of the Care Homes and planning. The work is always interesting and varied and I hope to help as many residents as possible with their complaints and concerns.

As Chairman of Broomley First School Governing Body, I was delighted that the School was given an Outstanding Ofsted report at the end of 2009 - the school is so well supported by the teachers, children, parents and governors.

I attend all the Parish Council and West Area Committee meetings and also the local Forum to ensure that your views are heard and raise any concerns you may have in the Village.

I have been able to help fund some of your projects in the Village out of my Members' Small grants Scheme such as road safety improvements, work at S.I.C.A. and Vehicle Activated Traffic signs for New Ridley Road.

If you would like further detailed information or have any issues please do ring me on 01434 673326 or e.mail: Anne.Dale@Northumberland.gov.uk

Our Village, Our Future - The Parish Plan:

Our Parish Plan, which was based on a range of consultation exercises with local residents, was published last year and provides a vision for the village's future over the next 10-15 years. The Plan, which is available on our website, has been circulated to key organisations and Elected Members within the county and the area, so that they have a clear idea of what local residents and businesses have identified as their key issues. This is particularly important, given the changes at the county level over the last year and the decisions that they will need to make over the next few years in the light of their current financial difficulties.

However, the work does not stop there! We have set up a Parish Plan Action Group, which has developed the broad recommendations from the Parish Plan into specific actions on the key issues. It will continue to meet to make sure that the plan does not become a paper exercise, but will actually deliver on these targets. We are lucky that we have incredible support from several "specialist" groups and community organisations in the village, which can take forward the plan on such topics as sport, environment and transport, and continue to ensure that Stocksfield is a vibrant village that can meet all our work, living and recreational needs.

Should anyone wish to see the full Parish Plan or the subsequent Action Plan, please contact the Parish Clerk or check the website: stocksfield.org. - **Steve Gleadhill**

Planning

It's been a quieter year for the planning group, we have met a little less often than usual. Perhaps in times of recession people are reluctant to commit to spending money on home extensions. The planning group though looks at every application, no matter how large or small it is, and passes any relevant comments on to the Development Management Group at Northumberland County Council. It is the County Council who make the final decision on planning applications, not the Parish Council. - **Dave Porter**

How your money is spent

Income April 2009 to Feb 2010

Precept	£54,400
VAT Refund	£2,736
Other Income	£2,587
Special Projects – MUGA	£3,563
Misc.	£4,566

Additional Expected Income to end Mar 2010

DfT Station project	£45,000
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Expenditure April 2009 to Feb 2010

Staff Costs	£11,023
Admin	£9,425
Grants	£6,460
Footpaths Gardens Environment	£9,320
Sports Facilities	£4,511
Play Facilities	£2,339
Planning & Transport & Highways	£2,154
Communications	£1,558
Special Projects	£10,677
VAT.	£3,025
Transfer to Savings Funds	£21,450

Additional Expected Expenditure to end Mar 2010

Station Project	£54,000
Other Costs	£5,400

Budget for 2010/11

Income:	Precept	£56,000
	General	£5,340
	VAT Refund	£3,000
Expenditure:	Staff Costs	£11,150
	Admin	£10,090
	Grants	£7,050
	Environment & Footpaths	£19,500
	Sports Facilities	£9,150
	Play Facilities	£5,420
	Planning	£100
	Transport & Highways	£615
	Communication	£2,050
	Finance & General Purposes	£100
	Special Projects	£1,700
	VAT.	£3,000
	Transfer to Savings Funds	£19,500

Play Areas

Both Branch End and Kate's Plain play areas continue to be popular and well used by all age groups, with people coming from the surrounding area to use the facilities. The play facilities at Branch End continue to be enhanced by the development of the community garden, making this area a desirable place to go for all.

It is anticipated that when money becomes available through the Housing Benefit Fund then this will be put towards replacing one or two pieces of older play equipment, which are nearing the end of their lifespan.

We would ask that people using these play areas respect others and ensure that they do not leave rubbish lying about, as this can be unsightly and dangerous. Also, please remember that both play areas are strictly dog-free zones. - **Diane Hinchcliffe**

Larger print versions of this report are available from the Clerk on request. 01661 843114. E-mail: margaretspsc@talk21.com