



Coxhoe Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report

2014 - 2015

Presented to the

Annual Meeting of Parishioners 6th May 2015

Introduction

Since my last annual report given on the 6th May 2014 I must firstly give my personal thanks to all members of this council, our supporting members from Durham County Council and to all those volunteers, groups and organisations who are a vital part of our community. It is through our collective efforts that this council has made progress for the benefit of our community. Furthermore, I must thank those individuals who have attended our parish meeting throughout the year, raising issues and concerns that affect their lives. This additional input is also a vital part of making sure our council works for its community.

Following the resignation of Councillor K Stokoe a new members was recruited with OCarole Hogarth from Quarrington Hill joining the council to give more representation for Quarrington Hill. I am pleased to say that her interest, commitment and efforts have contributed to our council.

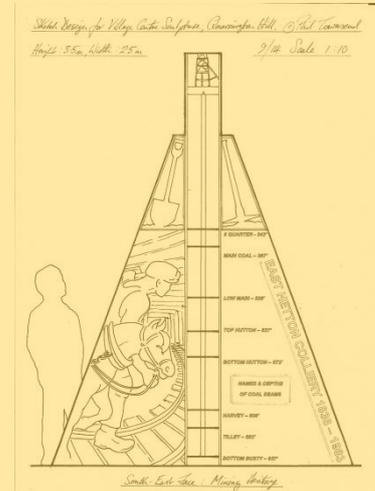
What have we achieved?

Listed below are the actions and progress that have been achieved that were set out in the action plan for the parish which was designed to achieve the priorities of our Parish Plan 2:

- With continued financial support the Active Life Centre has become an established sports and recreation facility working tirelessly to provide, improve facilities and offer new opportunities. Its long term future and sustainability is now realised and the centre will continue to play an important role in our community. The council will provide financial support to help them continue into the future.
- By working in partnership with a mixture of other local organisations to develop and agree a Children's and Young Peoples Strategy grant funding has been secured to support the development of a Children's and Young People's Strategy. Adding further support to this theme, the council has budgeted funds to employ a Youth Worker to provide increased opportunities and services to cater for the needs of our young people.
- The Environmental Award winning redevelopment of the village green in Coxhoe was completed in 2014 with a Pit Wheel erected, seating installed and footpaths landscaped to depict our industrial heritage. Since then further plans for the village green have been published and external funds to support the next stages will be sought. Bulbs planted in previous years now provide a welcoming display in spring. These works were achieved by joint working with the Coxhoe Community Partnership, Coxhoe Banner Group, Coxhoe History Group, Groundwork and Durham County Council.



- The future of Coxhoe Village Hall has greatly improved with the new management committee working to secure the Hall's long term viability. Improvements to the fabric of the building continue and user interest is growing. The range of activities they are able to provide is also helping our community. Financial support will be provided to assist their ongoing efforts to provide worthwhile facilities in the community.
- Plans to join up Coxhoe Village Hall and the Co-operative car parks have not progressed as intended but this plan remains in our vision.
- Environmental improvements are planned for Quarrington Hill. The siting of 3 sculptures has received planning approval and the parish is currently negotiating the transfer of land with the County Council. The larger of these sculptures will stand in the central area at the entrance to the small industrial estate. Several funding bids are submitted to help finance this and their outcome is awaited.
- The council is currently in discussion with Durham County Council to transfer the Allotments in Quarrington Hill to parish ownership.
- Quarrington Hill Community Centre has been transferred from Durham County Council to ensure its long term viability and the provision of a range of activities for the community. The centre receives financial support from the council in its efforts to cater for its local residents.
- Negotiations with Durham County Council to transfer the Kings Wood in Quarrington Hill continue. Local interest from the Kings Wood Community Action Group to save and develop this nature reserve for the community will play an important role in ensuring the nature reserve is maintained for local people.
- The council continues to work with Durham County Council Highways on issues such as parking restriction and general highways and transport issues that prevail in the parish.
- The council continues to share community safety concerns with the local police and other wider issues with Durham County Council Neighbourhood Wardens at the monthly meetings.
- Dog fouling remains a problem as well as fly-tipping. These issues are reported frequently. The parish has agreed to purchase 4 additional Dog Bins in the parish to help eradication this nuisance and will be sited at hotspots in the parish.
- Your council continues to work in partnership with Durham County Council planning department to tackle untidy buildings. Furthermore, we are consulted on all planning applications and publish these on our website to keep our community informed and frequently provide comments on such.
- The council retendered its grounds maintenance and provision of hanging baskets and floral displays to ensure value for money. The new contracts will run for 3 years. Summer floral displays through planters and hanging baskets along the main routes in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill are well received by our community.
- The council is also working towards accreditation for the Quality Award (Foundation Level). Furthermore, the parish council is now registered as the lead organisation to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that will supersede our parish plan.
- The parish council's website site and Facebook page have many followers and carry a wealth of information concerning the activities of the council and its wider community. Posts are regularly made and comments received. It is run by a volunteer who gratefully manages the site with expertise and it is a local council website that has been used as a model when other councils have developed theirs.



The above list provides a snapshot of the main areas of work that the council has progressed and continues to work on.

Finance

We have prudently managed our budgets this year to leave us in a position to address future projects whilst making clear progress on the priorities in the Parish Plan. Our Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 will be posted in the Website for all to see and the opportunity exists for any parishioner to examine our financial records by appointment after conclusion of auditing.

Conclusion

Partnership working continues to bring about real change in the community and the work of the two village partnerships, the directors of FLiC, the management committees of Coxhoe Village Hall and Quarrington Hill Community Centre are all to be commended. They continue to work tirelessly in a volunteer capacity to drive and achieve improvement. I thank them very much for the work they do and reassure them that the parish council fully supports all your efforts. Likewise, our County Councillors continued to support the parish council in our endeavours for which we are truly grateful.

Finally, I would sincerely like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors, all of who give up their time freely, energetically and keen commitment and thanks to our Clerk Geoffrey Price for his guidance.

Paul Dodsworth

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Chairman of Coxhoe Parish Council

Parish Councillors and Parish Clerk:

Councillor Paul Dodsworth (Chair)
Councillor Kay Simpson
Councillor Tony Rowe
Councillor Tony Plews
Councillor Wendy Lavelle
Councillor Carole Hogarth

Councillor Stuart Dunn (Vice-Chair),
Councillor Barbara Hepplewhite
Councillor Colin Thirlaway
Councillor Keith Pounder
Councillor Thomas Gorman
Council Clerk Geoffrey Price