



Coxhoe Parish Council

Chair's Annual Report

2015 - 2016

Presented to the
Annual Meeting of Parishioners 4th May 2016

Introduction

This is my first annual report as Chair. I must firstly give my personal thanks to Paul Dodsworth who it was a privilege to work alongside for many years as his Vice Chair. Paul worked tirelessly for the communities of Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill and made a huge and positive impact on both communities. I also have to thank 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 such progress for the benefit of our communities.

Particular thanks are also due to our Vice Chair Carole Hogarth for her commitment and involvement in many projects but also for stepping in for several weeks as unpaid acting Clerk during the Clerks absence.

Furthermore, I must thank those many 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. I also thank Tony Rowe and Tommy Gorman for their service as councillors and welcome Ron Mayo and Anne Murphy to the Council who were co-opted to replace them.

What have we achieved?

This year has been a year of delivering on our commitments. Members have rolled up their sleeves and actually delivered on a lot of things we've been talking about for some time. Listed below are some of the actions and progress that have been achieved towards delivery of our Parish Plan 2 Action Plans:

- After 3 years of talking about it the Parish Council have made good on our commitment to residents of Quarrington Hill to take on ownership of Kingswood and pass day to day control back to the community through Kingswood Partnership. We are delighted so many residents are keen to be involved to achieve their objectives to keep the wood as a wood for public use and to help maintain and improve it. I also must thank them for their assistance with other community improvement schemes.
- The Parish Council has continued to provide support to the Active Life Centre, Coxhoe Village Hall Committee and Quarrington Hill Community centre to improve facilities and activities available and provide grant funding to help cover costs.
- The Council's Children and Young People's Strategy has been a major focus this year and will continue to be next year. Amanda our Youth Development Worker is now using the report prepared by Investors in Children on the views of our children and young people about the facilities and activities currently on offer to them and outreach work she has done to ensure this research turns into action. The Parish Council has committed significant resource to employ a team of youth workers to ensure that youth sessions that would be lost due to enforced budget cuts to DCC are replaced by sessions provided by the Parish Council and if possible so that there is no loss of service to young people of our area. New jobs will be advertised in May 2016.
- The council is also working towards achieving accreditation for the Quality Award within the next few months.



- The council continues to work with Durham County Council Highways on issues such as parking waiting restrictions on the Front Street to allow access shops, and around Sanderson Street and near the doctor's surgery which should be introduced very soon.
- Easter Saturday saw the unveiling a mining memorial on the Village Green in Quarrington Hill by Cllr Jan Blakey and Roberta Blackman-Woods MP, and event that was enjoyed by many residents. Planting and 2 further sculptures at entrances to the village are still planned.
- The Parish Council will complete the purchase from DCC of over a dozen key areas of green space around Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill including the Village Greens within the next few weeks. Our aim is to seek residents' views living close to them and on how they should be improved as green spaces.
- The Parish Council will also take ownership of the enlarged Quarrington Hill Allotment site, which working in partnership with Tarmac, DCC, Kingswood Partnership and a lot of hard work of the allotment tenants will see over £30,000 improvements at a cost to the Parish Council of just £2,000! A huge thank you to everyone involved in a fantastic partnership project.
- The Parish Council provides all of summer floral displays through planters and hanging baskets along the main routes in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill, which are well received by our community. We will be reviewing these and Christmas lighting this year so would welcome your views on this.
- Dog fouling remains a problem as well as fly-tipping. These issues are reported frequently, please keep the reports coming. The Parish Council has provided additional Dog Bins in the parish to help eradicate this nuisance and will continue to highlight the problem.
- The Parish Council has now held several open meetings for residents to get involved in establishing a neighbourhood plan, to make sure their views are taken on board and shape how our villages evolve over the next 10-20 years. Your views matter please make sure they're heard.



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 2016 will be posted in the Website for all to see and the opportunity exists for any parishioner to examine our financial records by appointment with the Clerk after conclusion of auditing.

Conclusion - Finally, I would sincerely like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors, all of whom give up their time freely, energetically and thanks to our Clerk Geoffrey Price. It has been a very busy year for the Council and next year promises to be every bit as challenging as we look to welcome new staff and services to our Council.

Stuart Dunn

Coxhoe Parish Council Chair

Parish Councillors:

Councillor Stuart Dunn (Chair)
Councillor Kay Simpson
Councillor Ron Mayo
Councillor Tony Plews
Councillor Wendy Lavelle
Councillor Anne Murphy

Councillor Carole Hogarth (Vice-Chair),
Councillor Barbara Hepplewhite
Councillor Colin Thirlaway
Councillor Keith Pounder
Councillor Eric Thompson