

ANNUAL PARISH OPEN MEETING

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW 2016

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Firstly I would like to thank Rod Adams, Ken Barnes, Stuart Bell and Jim Sykes who were my fellow councillors for the four year term leading to the election last May. Sadly they decided not to stand for election for another term and left the council last year. The hard work and dedicated contribution they made to serve the needs of the parish is much appreciated.

Consequently the year had a shaky start as four new councillors needed to be found. I was re-elected in May but as I was the only nominee at that time, another two elections were called before four more people volunteered and were also elected unopposed to join me on the Parish Council, and the first meeting of the new council was finally held in August.

Meetings are held approximately every two months and Councillors give their time freely, representing the interests of the village at all times. They receive and consult documents between meetings, come prepared and readily volunteer to take on actions that come from those meetings. So we are thankful to Sarah Cannon, Tim O'Flaherty, Wendy Sanderson and Steve Walton for coming forward and enabling the Parish Council to be fully operational without the need for Harrogate Borough Council to impose any of their councillors on us to serve our parish. The new councillors bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from a variety of backgrounds all of which I am sure will be of great benefit to the council and the parish.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Amanda Kennerley the Parish Clerk for her consistent and dedicated contribution to the role. Having been in the position for nearly two years now she has proved herself to be an invaluable asset to the council.

CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

As of 6th March 2016 the current account stands at = £2342.02

Deposit account = £684.24

Road Maintenance Fund = £286.70

The Parish Council has a duty to cover all its costs and following a minor budget deficit last year the finances are now back in line and on budget. It was therefore agreed by councillors that it would not be necessary to increase the precept for the financial year 2016/17 as the budget could be confidently managed whilst still allowing for contingencies and new councillor training.

VILLAGE ROADS

At the Annual Parish Meeting last year the recent private road repairs were discussed and it was noted that, despite repeated requests from the Parish Council, the contribution towards the maintenance costs that all householders who use the roads to access their properties are obliged to make, was still outstanding from two households. Parishioners present at the meeting agreed to visit these households to further request the £35 contribution and although initially there was still reluctance and refusal from both parties their contributions have now finally been received.

The Parish Council was able to reclaim the VAT from the cost of the repairs to the road and reinvested it in the Residents Road Maintenance Fund which enabled monies to be available to redress the gravel road over the summer. Both private roads are now in a good state of repair and The Road Maintenance Fund now stands at £286.70. The Parish Council will continue to hold the Fund in a dedicated account on behalf of the residents but as agreed with residents at last year's Annual Parish Meeting, when repairs are required in the future, the householders themselves who are responsible for the maintenance of the roads will collect the monies required. It is hoped that the residents involved will get together to manage this.

The resurfacing of Greengate Lane finally took place in the New Year having initially been started in the summer. The delay was due to the need to wait for a new gas main to be laid. Although it appears not to have been their original intention, it is good to know that following requests and prompts from residents and Councillor Ivor Fox the Highways department postponed completing their resurfacing works and the gas board brought their planned works forward so that the new surface would not be dug up almost immediately after it was laid which seemed to have been the original plan. It is unfortunate however, that Highways could not be persuaded to also fully resurface Greengate Drive at the same time.

PLANNING

The Parish Council have considered and commented on five planning applications for properties within the parish this year and also submitted comments for the District Local Development Plan consultation. In addition to these, an 'Application for prior notification of agricultural development of land comprising a field of Market Flat Lane' was also received by Harrogate Borough Council. This type of application is not one that the Parish Council are made aware of or consulted on unless HBC assess it and deem that a full application is required. A number of parishioners sent objections to HBC regarding this application being treated in this manner and without any local consultation. Although HBC assessed the application and did allow it to proceed without notification, as they had actually failed to meet the necessary 28 day deadline required to submit their decision, it was consequently allowed by default anyway. The Parish Council wrote to express their dissatisfaction at the procedural error made by HBC in this case, also stating that it was regrettable that all the facts weren't considered before the deadline and that outcomes that may come to the fore in the future hadn't been noted. The Parish Council have requested that HBC keep them informed of any future correspondence concerning this application. It is the Parish Council's understanding that this has now become a civil law action between two Scriven area residents and the applicant.

PARK CORNER FARM

After so many years as an unused eyesore it is good to finally see the Park Corner Farm site nearing completion. Park Corner Fold is now a pleasing development and we welcome to the village, those who have already moved in. The Parish Council would also again like to remind everyone to take care when negotiating the mini roundabout being particularly aware of vehicles exiting the site and to not cut across the entrance on the wrong side of the roundabout into the path of oncoming traffic.

TRAFFIC ISSUES

Following the installation of a second VAS traffic monitoring system in July 2014 the Parish Council were finally informed by the Highways department that due to the low speeds recorded and no reported casualties in the area, the site does not meet the criteria for speed enforcement or highway improvement measures. The Parish Council therefore considered using the funds previously offered to the village by Balfour Beatty, to purchase and install a system independently. However, Highways confirmed that as they do not deem it necessary in this area they would not permit a unit to be installed. They informed the Council that as Scriven had been through the Speed Management Protocol they had been added to a random draw of 41 parishes for the use of a temporary sign in the coming years but as Scriven was drawn last it was unlikely that they would be offered a unit.

JACOB SMITH PARK

The Friends of Jacob Smith Park continue to work hard to manage and improve the Park in association with Harrogate Borough Council and a representative will be giving a report of their activities on their behalf this evening.

Scriven Parish Council maintain links with the Friends, attending their meetings to keep up to date with the activities in the Park and last year liaised directly with them to submit the park as designated Local Green Space within the Harrogate and District Local Plan. This was done as an extra precaution to protect the park from any future development.

Following the Boxing Day flood, the Parish Council wrote to Harrogate Borough Council to request that they bring forward the planned independent structural evaluation of the Park Boundary Wall. The wall is an important, key, historical feature of the parish of Scriven and its protection should be made a priority above other projects.

CRIME UPDATE

Crime levels are thankfully low in the Scriven area and the majority of those reported are auto crime often involving damage to parked vehicles. Theft and burglary also being a problem. The Police remind residents to check and maintain the security of their property and to call the Police if they witness any suspicious activity. New neighbourhood watch co-ordinators are always needed and anyone interested in getting involved is encouraged to do so. Please get in touch with the Parish Clerk for details.

COMMUNICATION

The Parish Council continue to operate and maintain their website to provide the parish with up to date news and information. Dates of forthcoming meetings, agendas, minutes and financial reports are all posted on the site and a 'Contact Us' section is included which enables easy contact with the Parish Clerk if you have any issues or concerns that you wish to bring to the Parish Council's attention. The site is visited regularly and already experiences a steady number of hits every week but parishioners are encouraged to use this facility as much as possible as new Council regulations stipulate that an online presence is increasingly important and the Parish Council are duty bound to inform people in this way. In addition the notice board in the village is also kept regularly up to date with notifications of meetings, minutes and other useful and important information of benefit to the village.

Newsletters are also produced approximately every six months and hand delivered to all households in the parish and immediate area, to keep residents informed of Parish issues and activities. Since November 2014 the newsletter has included personal WW1 stories of how the war affected the ancestors of present day Scriven residents. It is hoped to continue this until the November 2018 issue to mark the centenary. More stories are needed and if you would like to submit a piece for publication please forward it to the Parish Clerk at any time and it will be held until the next edition. The piece can be on any subject and does not have to be about Scriven. It is hoped that enough stories will be forthcoming to be able to publish one in each newsletter for the full four years and to ultimately be able to compile them in some way as a permanent record.

WAR MEMORIAL

A small gathering took place at the War Memorial in November to observe Remembrance Day and it was good to see an increased number of people attending. Thanks go again to local resident Mark Patterson who made a generous donation to the British Legion to provide a wreath for the village and continues to maintain the memorial. As the roof of the building is in need of repair The Parish Council have applied for a grant from the War Memorials Trust and it is hoped that if successful this combined with the money offered to the village from Balfour Beatty will enable a good quality lasting repair to be made.

Finally I would like to thank those Parishioners who have taken an interest in Parish matters and have contributed by attending meetings, discussing issues with Councillors or generally helping where they can. Particular thanks go to local resident Alfred Thompson of The Barn who generously provided the power for the Christmas lights again last year.

Scriven is an historic village and it is important to conserve its independent rural identity. The involvement of parishioners is the vital key to maintaining a strong community and an effective, working Parish Council to serve the needs of the village and achieve this.