

Chairman's Report April 2018

Membership of the Council

Craig Nicholson succeeded Hamish Phillips as Vice Chairman and he has provided valued support to me and advice to the Council.

Mike Sherriff resigned as a member of the Council. The vacancy was advertised and as a result Chris Savory was appointed. Chris has been instrumental in developing the speed watch scheme on Houghton Road. Just before the end of the year Alan Earl was co-opted to the Council following the vacancy being advertised.

Precept. For the past year, the level of funding raised through the Council Tax was held at previous year's level of £40,540. For the coming year, the level will increase marginally to accommodate increased activity by the Council.

Activities of the Council

The **Houghton Summer Fair** was held again. Attendance was good especially as the weather was poor. Sarah Kyle coordinated the Council's efforts and had strong support from local community groups, including the Rainbows and Guides and the Scouts. This support was much appreciated by the Council and the community and contributed to a successful event. This year's Fair is being again being coordinated by Sarah Kyle, the Clerk to the Council. This year the Fair will combine with Houghton School's 60th Birthday Celebrations and plans are well laid. We hope for better weather.

The Summer Play Schemes in Houghton and Crosby ran again with funding from the Council. Attendances were down slightly on previous years in Crosby but much higher in Houghton. Parents have already been surveyed about their suggestions for this year and another programme will run this summer.

The Council's **grant scheme** attracted a range of applications, slightly lower than in the previous year and it was possible to support all eligible applications.

Work within the Council

Over the year there were 11 meetings of the Parish Council and additional meetings of its working groups.

The Council has continued to support the Crosby Flood Group in its response to the **Flood Reports** and the Groups response to better provision for the community. Progress with the leading agencies has been slow and the Parish Council wrote to Rory Stewart and the Environment Agency to gain some clarity on proposals and timescales. A meeting was held in response to the correspondence. The meeting involved the Rickerby and Low Crosby Flood Groups with the MP and representatives of the Environment Agency. The meeting confirmed that a scheme for Rickerby would be brought forward, as part of the Carlisle scheme and that a scheme for Low Crosby was in preparation. These were confirmed with subsequent Environment Agency consultations early in 2018.

The Council has been engaged in registering the land it holds within the Parish and the Clerk has taken the lead in this with Craig Nicholson and Alan Lightfoot.

Flooding on the Green continued to cause problems and Tony Coles with residents and the County Council Highways appear to have found easement on this following some jetting of the drains.

Last year's Report referred to the production of the **Community Plan** which will run from **2017 to 2021**. Activity from the Plan has included two community meetings, one at Brunstock and the other at Houghton, both in the Autumn. At Brunstock the need to improve the Common area was the focus of attention, including clearing the pond area, possibly filling the pond in, creating paths and providing some seating. Work has already started and further local discussions are planned. In Houghton the focus of discussion through a drop in session was street lighting improvements. The County Council had produced suggestions, the community had the opportunity to look and respond to these. Changes were made and work is now in progress. The Houghton drop in also provided the chance for the local community to comment on planning developments including Hadrian's Camp.

Planning applications

There was another outline application for a significant development on the **Hadrian's Camp** site for over 200 houses. The Parish Council held a meeting in Houghton for local residents to give the Council the opportunity to hear their views. The meeting was helpful and informative in enabling the Parish Council to put forward a substantial objection. The application is still being considered by the Local Planning Authority. This will be one to watch over the coming months.

Finally thanks to fellow councillors for their time, effort and support over the last year. The Council's thanks are due to District Councillors, Marilyn Bowman and James Bainbridge and County Councillor John Mallinson for their advice, support and funding to the Council.

I hope this Report gives a clear message that the Council and its members are very much about doing work within and for the community. Yes there are meetings, it is the doing that is more important. If you feel that you want to do something for the community, then please step forward and join us.

Finally and not least thanks to Sarah Kyle, the Clerk to the Parish Council for her support and advice on the Council's business.