



# BELLERBY

## NORTH YORKSHIRE

### Chairman's Report 2016-2017 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017

As in previous years Bellerby Parish Council still hopes to be "punching above its weight" for a relatively small village in rural North Yorkshire. The Chairman has ceased being a member of the 'Leyburn Town Team' which has now been disbanded with the remaining budget being allocated to a tourism film for the local area. We continue to attend the Wensleydale Area Partnership Forum for Richmondshire, and all Councillors and the Clerk attend various events and training as identified and in line with strategic priorities.

The Parish Council therefore tries to maintain a high profile and an excellent working relationship with Local and District Councillors and their Officers, helping to ensure good communication and Consultation in both directions,

We have had no further changes of members on the Council over the last year our newest recruit Peter Chilton has completed almost a year of service.

### Main items of note for the Year

- **Footpath to Leyburn.** Despite numerous set-backs, we have now received agreement in principle from all landowners on the proposed route. All landowners (or their Solicitors) have forwarded letters to the Clerk, and these can now be used as evidence of agreement when applying for additional funding. Unfortunately all previously identified sources of funding have been discontinued or substantially reduced, but we do have support from Highways, who will contribute match funding 'in-kind'. We will therefore have to make approaches to any agencies with suitable funding that fits grant Criteria.
- **Cross Keys.** A considerable amount of Parish Council time was taken investigating the possibility of the Cross Keys becoming a Community Pub, on the death of the previous landlord. As the takeover of the lease would have been extremely onerous for the Village in the short and longer terms, the best course of action was to consult public opinion. Obviously to do this advice had to be sought and options investigated to ensure that the community could vote in knowledge of all of the facts and possible implications. A vote was held using the electoral roll as eligible voters, with the result being extremely close, but not reaching the required levels previously agreed by the Parish Council. Fortunately the owner successfully negotiated a new 10 year lease with a tenant and the pub remains open.

- **Community Assets** Following the unfortunate situation with the pub, the Parish Council discussed and registered both the Cross Keys and the Memorial Hall as 'Community Assets'. This will at least mean that the Parish Council will be notified and given options should either of these premises be under threat for any reason. This registration allows the Parish Council a time-frame to consider Community management of either of the assets should the lease terminate or they become available for purchase.
- **Parish Newsletter** The Parish Newsletter was noticeable by its absence during the year; as circulation was held back pending the outcome of discussions with the remaining landowner for the footpath. As agreement has now been received, the next publication will resume in a few Weeks.
- **Best Kept Village** We continue to enter the 'Best Kept Village' competition and anticipate judging to be in June and July. The village was placed in 8<sup>th</sup> position last year (approximately mid-field), with judges' comments directed at the condition of the street furniture. Some has been repaired but procurement of maintenance and repairs continues to be a problem. Unfortunately there are also limited numbers of volunteers with the necessary time and skills.
- **Transparency Fund** Following an application, the Parish Council received a grant from the Transparency Fund towards upkeep of a website, and the transfer of relevant data to ensure that Council business is as accessible as possible to the public. All of the Parish Councils agendas, minutes, accounts and procedural documents are also uploaded to the County Council Open Data platform. Invitations were also extended to ALL village organisations and groups to enable them to also use the Village website facility to publicise meetings, minutes and agendas, applications for funding, calendars of events etc. Unfortunately there has only been partial takeup and so it will be publicised again.
- **Speeding** A competition for children to design posters to prevent speeding motorists was held and the successful designs made into semi-permanent signs. This was made into permanent signage and can be seen at various locations in the village.
- **Matrix Signs** The Parish Council failed in last year's bid for funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner's Community Fund for matrix signs for the village. However we have been fortunate in being invited to partake in the NYCC Matrix sign scheme. The Parish Council decided to participate in a new initiative of 'shared signage' and have a 2/3 annual share. This equates to two periods of 6 weeks sign placement per year, and was deemed the most cost effective means of addressing the situation.
- **Clean for the Queen** The Village held a 'Clean for the Queen' event on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June prior to the village event on the 10<sup>th</sup> July. Various volunteers assisted.

- **Village Maintenance** The Council remains satisfied with the grass-cutting contractors and a number of benches have been adopted by parishioners for annual maintenance. Some work still needs to be completed so that all village assets are well-maintained.
- **Cemetery** The cemetery is approaching capacity for burial plots, but there are still a number of places for people to inter ashes. At present it's assumed that burials will be transferred to Leyburn when no further space is available.
- **Highways Inspection** The Parish Council remains concerned about the possibility of flooding, and to help to address this, a site meeting was held with a representative from the Highways dept. Various areas were examined throughout the village, on Runs Bank and Moor Road with further investigations being taken. Where possible projects were identified to be included in future Highways work programmes.
- **Future Strategy** The intention had been to align Bellerby Community plan with Leyburn Town plan addressing similar themes and question areas for public consultation. However Leyburn Town Plan has been significantly delayed and this has not as yet been possible. It is believed that Leyburn Town Plan questionnaire will be available later this year.

- **Short, Medium and Long Term Goals**

Going forwards there is still a considerable amount of work to complete

- Consultation on the strategic priorities for the village and input into Leyburn Town Plan
- Development of a Community Plan for the Village
- Grant funding for the Footpath to Leyburn
- Address Parking issues
- Opportunities with the allotment area.

John Hutchinson

15" May 2017