

Appendix 1

**Chairman's Annual Report to the Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 23 April 2008**

This is my second annual meeting as Chair; also my last, as I am standing down from that role. It falls to me to make an annual report on the Council's work in 2007-08. Our last annual Parish Meeting was on 25th April 2007.

Meetings:

There have been 17 full council meetings and over 30 other meetings attended by some or all councillors over the last year.

Changes in the composition of the council this year:

Eleven councillors were re-elected unopposed in May 2007. One councillor did not submit a nomination. Councillors Mitchell, Moorhouse and Lear resigned during the year and are thanked for their service. Councillor Margaret Moorhouse, in particular, has given over 25 years service to Steeton-with-Eastburn, and we would like to express our sincere appreciation to her for her dedication. Councillor Karen Pickard replaced Councillor Mitchell in December 2007 and is warmly welcomed to the council. The other two resignations are more recent, and replacements are still being sought.

Visitors to Council meetings this year have been:

The Manager of 'The Willows' Independent Hospital; a Police Inspector and a new PCSO; the Director of the Aire-Wharfe Community Housing Trust; a Neighbourhood Police Officer from the British Transport Police and a Police Chief Superintendent.

Financial report

The amount of the precept or Parish Council tax had been unchanged in the year 2006/7. The council has set a budget for 2008/9 with a modest increase of £1.18 or 7.7% for a Band D property. This raises the Parish Council precept to £16.48 for a Band D.

The Council's budget for 2008/9 is £26,575. This includes amounts earmarked for various projects, including play and youth provision and disabled access to the Bowling Pavilion. Then there is the Clerk's salary and other administration costs as well as the Parish Plan. The reserves stand at around £14,000.

The accounts for the year ending 31 March 2008 are available on the website. Please note that any local community group can approach the council for help with funding projects.

Parish Council Charter

The Council, like other Parish Councils in Bradford, signed a charter with Bradford Council that sets out the working relationship between the two levels of local government.

Application for Parish Council Quality Status

The Council's application for Quality Status was completed in March; this takes the form of a portfolio of evidence. The application has been submitted for consideration, and the result of the application should be known in June. If successful, this bid will enable the Council to have more discretion in what it spends its money on and how it provides for the community.

Major issues discussed by the Council during the year:

Eastburn Playing Fields.

As reported last year, the Parish Council is now the trustee body of the Eastburn Playing Field Association, the AGM of which took place just before this meeting. A Steering Group for the development of the site was set up, and a site meeting was held with a number of local residents last autumn. A possible site for a push-bike skills area was considered. Children from Eastburn school have been involved in providing ideas for the development of the playground area.

Unfortunately some problems and delays have been experienced in developing the Eastburn site. Bradford Council Parks and Landscape Department promised last summer to provide technical help for the development of the site, but later in the year withdrew from this work. The Parish Council complained about this treatment, which caused a delay of some months, when action was expected but in fact nothing happened. Technical help in the development of the site is now being undertaken by Bradford Community Environment Project, who will produce plans. Drainage of the football field will take priority and it is hoped that this can be completed in 2008/9.

Parish Plan

Councillor Mullen is the Chairman of the Parish Plan Steering Group.

We had a very good response rate of 25% (over 450 returned) when the questionnaires were sent out in April 2007. Thanks to all those who took time to complete a questionnaire. The Rural Housing Enablers team also sent out a Housing Needs questionnaire.

The prize draw from completed questionnaires was held in October 2007. Two winners were duly drawn at random and were later presented with goods and vouchers from local services and some wine from the Parish Council.

We have both a quantitative analysis of 'tick box' responses and a more impressionistic qualitative report on the handwritten comments. A separate questionnaire for 7-11 year olds was also distributed through the schools, and the results analysed.

These analyses will form the basis of the Parish Plan document, which will set out our vision for the future of the Parish. The present state of this document, which includes a report of the survey and plans for action in a number of areas, is that chapters on different topics have been drafted and redrafted by members of the Steering Group, and the document is now near to completion. It should be published by the end of the year. Members of the public will be able to consider the draft plan at the next Neighbourhood Forum Meeting, which will be on 8th May, at Eastburn School.

Crime Here the main areas of concern have been traffic, speeding and youth issues. Councillor Blagden has continued to attend the Police Ward Tasking Meetings regularly, and both reports from this to the Council, and reports Council concerns back to the police. Liaison with the Police has been good. The Parish now has an extra PCSO, and an extra Police Constable. Speedwatch has been deployed at various times and places. Crime figures are reported regularly to our meetings. It has been agreed that a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team should attend PC meetings whenever possible.

Youth work

Meetings with Bradford youth workers have been held over the year, and two evening sessions for young people were arranged by them and Councillor Thompson, held in St. Stephen's hall in March. Unfortunately, despite advertising, no young people attended. What is now being explored is the use of a youth vehicle from Bradford Council's Youth Service; this could come into the parish weekly over the summer months. It would contain facilities and activities for young people.

Traffic and transport

The Council initially objected to the de-trunking of the Aire Valley Trunk Road, and sought assurances that funds would be available for its adequate maintenance. Our objection was later reluctantly withdrawn.

In response to representations from the Council double yellow lines were painted on Station Road; a box junction was painted in at the junction of East Parade and Station Road; the 30 mph limit on the Keighley Road was moved further back towards Hawkcliffe; and the junction between Thornhill Road and the Skipton Road was modified to make it safer.

The Council asked for a puffin (pedestrian) crossing on the Skipton road near the junction with Thornhill Road, but was told by Highways that the number of pedestrians crossing at that point was not sufficient. However, a crossing is still a possibility, paid for by the airport sale 'windfall' money, and is under consideration.

Land at Ash Grove, Steeton

The Council was left some land at Ash Grove, just off East Parade, in a legacy some years ago, and following some legal complications, the land was eventually conveyed to the Council's possession in early 2008. We plan to seek advice from a local estate agent, on how to sell the land and maximise the Council's income in selling it, so that the money raised can be used to benefit the community.

Bowling Green Pavilion

A ramp has been purchased to enable wheelchair access to the building. The door has also been widened, and some electrical work has been done.

Local Development Framework consultation documents

These documents came from Bradford Council, and have been studied and discussed by Parish Councillors, who decided to recommend an option with moderate housing development with some employment opportunity. The documents will form the basis of planning policy in the future.

Quarterly newsletter

The newsletter continues to be delivered with the Keighley Target in Steeton, and is delivered by hand in Eastburn. It can also be downloaded from the website.

Finally I would like to thank all the councillors for their commitment over the year and our knowledgeable and hard-working Clerk.