

STEETON with EASTBURN PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Annual Report to the Annual Parish Meeting

22nd April 2009 Steeton Bowling Pavilion.

This is my first annual meeting as Chair. It falls to me to report on the Council's work in 2008-09. The last Parish meeting was held on 23rd April 2008.

There have been 13 full Council meetings this year and many sub group meetings including; the Eastburn Playing Fields Group, the Transport Working Group, and the Parish Plan Group. Latterly groups have been formed to address the issues identified in the Parish Plan.

The Council has seen quite a few changes over the year. Following the resignations of Margret Moorehouse and Diane Lear, two new Councillors were co-opted. Councillor Natalie Henson to represent Steeton and Councillor William Mitchell to represent Eastburn. Natalie is one of the youngest councillors in the country. Another resignation ensued in December when our past Chair Lorraine Harding resigned and was replaced by Councillor Roger Lambert.

2008 saw major events for the Council and the Parish. In April the Council was awarded Quality Council Status, which means that the Council is working efficiently, transparently and in the best interests of the Parishoners. In November there was the publication and delivery of the Parish Plan. The Plan has been formally adopted by the Parish Council. Cheryl and I presented it to Keighley Area Committee in March. The committee praised the steering group and thanked them for all their hard work. This Plan will now form part of how B.M.D.C. view issues relating to Steeton and Eastburn. Groups have been set up to work on specific areas identified in the Plan. These are Transport, Road Safety, Footpaths, a Community Facility and an update to the Website.

Finance

The full accounts for 2008/09 will be available on the Website.

The Precept for 2009/10 has increased by only 2.2%. This means that the precept for a band D property has risen from £16.48 to £16.84. The Council has tried to be prudent and keep the rise to a minimum.

The Budget for 2009/10 is £29,345

We have budgeted for youth and play provision, I.T. equipment and implementation of projects identified in the Parish Plan. We have received a grant of £6,500 from the Area Co-ordinator's Office to help in implementing projects identified by Parishioners in the Parish Plan.

The reserves at 31 March 2009 are approx £15,400. The levels of reserves have increased because the Parish Council has spent prudently, we have benefited from high interest rates on Bank accounts and some of our budgeted schemes have been paid for by Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Some of the reserves will be used in 2009/10 to limit the Precept increase and the remaining reserves carried forward will be approximately £12,000. This is the level of reserves recommended by National Association of Local Councils i.e. approximately 50% of Precept.

Transport.

Councillors have worked very closely with other organisations and agencies including Silsden Town Council, Planners, Highways, Metro, Northern Rail and the Area Co-ordinator's Office. Resulting from these meetings, chaired by Councillor Andrew Mallinson our ward councillor, dropped kerbs and an Informal crossing are to be

established at the top of Station Grove and across Station Road. Plans are also at an advanced stage for a footpath to be constructed on the eastern side of Station Road between the steps and the existing disabled access footpath. Part of the funding for this has already been secured.

Visitors

There have been a number of invited guests over the year, including representatives from the Police, Yorkshire Water and Bradford Council. A special meeting was called to allow representatives from Skipton Properties to give a presentation on their proposals for the Thornhill Road development.

Crime.

Once again speeding, inconsiderate parking and youth nuisance are major issues. Although the 30mph zone along Skipton Road has been extended towards Hawcliffe Corner there are still many drivers exceeding this limit. There are two councillors who assist the Police to undertake community speed watch. We now have a dedicated PCSO Lawrence Walton with responsibility for Steeton and Eastburn. Councillor Pam Blagden is the Parish Council's representative on the Police Tasking Group.

Youth

Following last summer's commencement of the youth program, there were initial teething problems caused by the late start of the service and the extremely poor weather. This year Youth Services are proposing a full programme of activities for both summer and winter. Some of the winter programme will take place in the Bowling Pavilion. Steeton with Eastburn Parish Council were the first Council to sign up to use the new Youth Outreach Vehicle Service.

Newsletter and Website

The Newsletter continues to be delivered with The Target in Steeton and by hand in Eastburn. The Website is to be improved and updated in response to suggestions highlighted in the Parish Plan. The Council have allocated funds to do this.

Eastburn Playing fields.

The steering group have been working very hard on this project and have had many meetings with designers from the Bradford Community Environment Project. They are now awaiting final plans with full costing. Bids have already been made for funding and other bids will be submitted once finalised costings are available.

Other Issues

Untidiness of public areas in the villages has been addressed. The Council has employed Joel Westbrook to attend to these areas. He is currently in the process of modernising and redesigning the Rose Garden in Eastburn. Raised beds are to be installed and these will be filled with a variety of plants. Two new benches have been purchased by the Parish Council and the two existing seats are to be refurbished. These will be installed once the other works are completed.

The proposed housing development in Thornhill Road has been a major issue for Parishioners in Steeton. This is not yet concluded.

Finally

I would like to thank Councillors for all their hard work and special thanks to the clerk Cheryl Brown.

David Mullen

Chairman