

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO OUTSEATS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING **FINANCIAL YEAR 2010-2011**

This report was given to the Annual Parish Meeting by the Chairman, Jane Marsden, on 18th April 2011.

Parish Council Activities

I would like to express my appreciation to the Councillors and Clerk who have worked hard for the benefit of the community and I would also like to thank the County and District Councillors and the Police for their reports and support.

The Parish Council held meetings every month last year, apart from August and December. There was also a Planning Committee and a Finance Committee meeting.

During the year, the Councillors have represented the Parish Council on committees including Recreation, Joint Transport and the Village Website. We have had representation on a number of other committees, including the Memorial Hall, Churchyard, Church Charities, Burial Ground, Environment Group, Allotments Group, Forum for Ancient Byways, Operation Blackbrook and Lafarge Liaison. We have sent a representative to each meeting of Hathersage Parish Council and had a representation on the Stanage Forum. Councillors have also attended several discussion meetings, including those held by the Peak Park Parishes Forum, Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), Derbyshire County Council (DCC), Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC), Derbyshire Constabulary, Hathersage Area Police, Derbyshire NHS and Friends of the Peak District.

Council has given consideration to several consultation documents received during the year, including the PDNPA's Local Development Framework Core Strategy, its Planning Guide, Parish Charter and its appraisal of Hathersage's Conservation Area; DCC's Local Transport Plan, its Minerals Core Strategy and an assessment of surface water flooding in the Parish; Defra's consultation on Governance of the National Parks; NHS Derbyshire County's consultations on Pharmaceutical Needs in the area and on Podiatry and Health Visiting Services at Hope Clinic; Network Rail's Northern Route Utilisation Strategy and Bakewell & Eyam Community Transport's survey on the use of its services. The PDNPA has also consulted Council on five planning applications this year. Council's policy of informing neighbours of the application and carrying out a site visit where necessary, before making recommendations to the planning authority, has been complied with on each occasion.

We have kept residents informed of our activities by displaying Council Minutes on the noticeboard at the junction of Jagers and Coggers Lanes and producing newsletters during the year, which are delivered to residents' homes or by email where appropriate. The new village website is now up and running, so the information on the noticeboard is also available to everyone electronically at www.hathersage-outseats.org.uk

Four further Councillors have been trained in the "Power of Well Being" in the past year, the Clerk and Chairman have attended Training Days arranged by the Derbyshire County Training Partnership and three Council representatives attended training on planning rules provided by Peak District National Park Authority. The Clerk has also obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the nationally acknowledged qualification in the local government sector.

Changes in the Council

During the year, Graham Markham decided to stand down as a Councillor and it was gratifying to note that a number of candidates put themselves forward for the vacant post. It was decided that Bill Hanley was the most suitable candidate and he has since been co-opted onto the Council. Bill is a resident of Outseats, living on Coggers Lane, and I would like to welcome him to the Council.

Finance

Council's precept for the year ending 31 March 2011 was £10,501 and the total expenditure was £13,329. The biggest payments this year were a contribution of £3,150 towards the running costs of the Swimming Pool, a contribution of £1,390 towards the cost of employing the village caretaker and £530 for grass cutting in the Parish and keeping the Bund Wall tidy. Staff costs accounted for £2,068, with other running costs (insurance, room hire, audit charges, travel and expenses, newsletter costs, etc) amounting to £1,243. Other significant costs included subscriptions totalling £330, staff training of £150 and £196 for the purchase of grit salt. In addition to those above, other contributions to village expenditure included £343 towards the website, £100 towards the salary of the Clerk to the Joint Transport Committee and a £120 contribution to the Police to buy a CCTV camera sited on the Outside shop in the Main Road. Donations made by the Council include £260 towards the Churchyard, £390 to Bakewell & Eyam Community Transport, £80 to Careline in Hathersage and £50 to the Luncheon Centre.

Last year, the Council's principal objective was to keep the precept charged to every household in Outseats at the same level as the year before, given the economic climate. This was only made possible by a significant reduction in the Council's reserves and this is not sustainable for a second year. Furthermore, the financial burden on the Council has increased (for example, the lack of delivery of grit by DCC last winter meant that the Council have had to make their own provisions) and this situation is only likely to increase in the coming years, with further cuts by central government. Therefore, an increase in the precept has become inevitable. The Council have done everything possible to keep this increase to a minimum, with minimal increases planned to this year's expenditures and reductions made where possible. So, for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2011, we have set a precept of £12,048. The only significant increase from last year's budget is an additional £800 has been set aside for replacement playpark on the Playing Field; the Council's total budget for the year has been set at £13,102.

Once again, Council hope that residents will understand that it has had to be prudent at present and hopes that it can fully fund additional areas as the economic climate improves.

Swimming Pool

There has been considerable debate in the village in the past year regarding the Swimming Pool. The Pool was originally left as a gift by Mr Lawrence to the residents of Hathersage and Outseats, so while Hathersage Parish Council are the Trustees for the Pool, Outseats Parish Council take an active interest in how it is run and in its long term future.

Outseats Parish Council regard the Pool as a wonderful asset that should be cherished for its value to the village and local communities and one that is unique within the National Park and Derbyshire. Furthermore, the Council are very supportive and appreciative of the large amount of voluntary time and effort put in by the Recreation Committee and others to protect, conserve and maintain it.

The essential repairs currently required for the pool were explained in a leaflet included with the village Christmas card delivered to all houses in Outseats. Outseats Parish Council support the recommendation made by the Recreation Committee that a fibreglass lining is the best solution to protect and maintain the pool for a number of years to come; the reasons for this include that it will provide a medium term solution that is affordable now, it will ensure that the pool opens for at least part of 2011 (important for tourism and the revenue support from Derbyshire Dales District Council), that it protects staff jobs and ensures continuity. We also feel it is important that the Pool is able to be open in this, its 75th Anniversary Year, and the current plan is that the repairs will be completed in time for the Pool to open by the end of May.

However, this is only the first stage in the repairs needed to the Pool. In the next few years extensive refurbishment/replacement of the plant and filtration system will be required and finding the funding for this is going to require considerable time, effort and resourcefulness. Furthermore, Government cuts may threaten the grants that the Pool currently receives, so alternative ways of finding funding may be

required. No doubt further capital expenditure will also be required in the years to come, to maintain the Pool to a standard that everyone in the village wants. I am pleased to note the improvements that have been made in the last year include the new toilets that were in place before the beginning of the season.

The challenges that the Pool presents need the whole village to pull together if we are to maintain and enhance this wonderful asset. With this in mind, I am happy to note that a new group has recently been set up to help with the Pool's fundraising requirements and that a Business Plan for the Pool is being developed to help with this.

75th Anniversary of the Pool

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the Pool and plans to celebrate this milestone are well under way; the main events will take place over the weekend of 23-24 July. The Council hope that everyone in the Parish can attend an event.

Grit and Grit Bins

Almost all of the residents of Outseats live on a steep hill, so it is important that we have sufficient grit bins in place and that they are regularly filled with grit in bad weather. This service should be provided by DCC, but in the winter of 2009/10 they were unable to keep up with demand on the major roads, let alone the side roads in Outseats. The Council decided to obtain a quantity of grit for times of emergency, when DCC do not deliver as required, and we did this during the summer. This proved to be a very sensible decision during the bad weather experienced in December, and a number of residents have commented to me and to other Councillors that they felt the process worked very well.

The Council continue to look for ways to further enhance the snow and ice clearance process in the future. At the moment, before the Council can really make the enhancements we want, we need to ensure that our insurance will allow us to do this; so this is being investigated at present. Once this matter has been resolved, we hope that we can start to look for volunteers to take our snow and ice clearance procedures to the next level. We will communicate any planned changes through a newsletter in the summer or autumn. In the meantime, I am happy to note that we were able to provide extra grit bins to the residents of Ranmoor Hill and Cliffe Lane. These were all made using bins that were kindly donated, thus saving the Council's limited budget.

Traffic in the Village

Outseats Parish Council send three representatives to the Joint Transport Committee (JTC) and I am happy to note a big success by the JTC this year. Vehicle activated signs have now been placed both at the top of the village on the Sheffield Road and by the railway bridge on the Castleton Road. The police report that these have had a significant effect in reducing the speed of traffic through the village. Furthermore, local residents have volunteered to make speed checks in the village at random times and these are also having an effect. The JTC continue to lobby DCC Highways to install new double yellow lines on Station Approach and to improve the parking on School Lane. In addition, JTC are in discussion with DCC regarding the road markings on the A6187, to try to make turnings such as the one to Riverside Garden Centre safer for all road users. Following a meeting with DCC Highways, an alternative footpath has been made into the school.

One disappointment was that DCC finally offered JTC a new "Hathersage" sign for the entrance into the village near the Millstone Inn. Despite DCC's promises for a real improvement, they ultimately offered a replacement that was really no better than the current sign. Therefore, the JTC decided it was better to decline this expenditure, given the current economic climate.

Footpaths and the Long Causeway

I would like to thank John Woodisse for his work as our Parish Footpath Officer during the year.

Regarding the Long Causeway, the Council has joined with other parish councils in the Peak Park that have similar issues with unclassified highways, to form the Forum for Ancient Byways (FAB). The intention is that our combined voice will be more effective in getting action to be taken, especially by DCC. One of our Councillors has also been involved in Operation Blackbrook, a police lead operation to monitor use by motorised vehicles of off-road routes like the Long Causeway. Following lobbying by FAB, DCC Highways found £71,000 to pay for repairs on Long Causeway, Chapel Gate and Brough Lane. The Council have monitored these repairs and have ensured that strain gauges have been attached to the Causeway to monitor if a worrying bulge in the dry stone walling is increasing. The Council have also been in active correspondence with DCC regarding Long Causeway's proposed designation as a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT); we have ensured that the route's poor state and its ancient archaeology are not forgotten in DCC's considerations.

Another issue the Council have dealt with this year has been Sat Nav systems sending unsuitable traffic down inappropriate routes, including Hurstclough Lane. We have corresponded with DCC Highways and our local MP on this matter.

Hope Valley Railway Users Group

The Council would like to thank HVRUG for their continued efforts to improve the regularity of service on the line to Sheffield and Manchester. It is hoped that their tenacity will soon mean that an extra rush hour service is added on the line and they already have plans for ways to further enhance the service. We will also support HVRUG in their survey of all Hope Valley residents that is planned for later in the year.

Trees on the Bund Wall

The Council have received complaints from residents about the trees on the Bund Wall; in particular, certain residents on Cliffe Lane have lost light to their houses. We have spoken to the Tree Officer at PDNPA about this and he has recommended that the trees be crown-lifted. We believe the owner of the trees to be DCC, so we are currently working with them to resolve the problem.

Saturday Waste Collection

As the financial year comes to an end, the Council are sorry to note that DDDC may be planning to end the regular Saturday Waste Collection in Oddfellows Road Car Park from April 2012. The Council consider this an important service to local residents and one that will be really missed; we also note how far away all the Waste Depots are from the Parish. We therefore plan to take this matter up with our new District Councillors once the local elections have taken place in May.

Village Website

I would like to remind everyone about the village website, which can be found at www.hathersage-outseats.org.uk. This is now fully up and running and we hope that it can become a valuable source of information on what is happening in the village, as well as providing information on local clubs, societies, amenities and businesses, on the activities of the parish councils and on other matters of interest. This can only happen if everyone makes use of the website and puts current information onto it (particularly in the "What's On" section) and I hope that residents can do this in the future.

Parish Council Meetings

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that an open forum is held at the start of each Council Meeting for members of the public to raise any matters of concern. The Council welcome attendance by all our residents. The dates and locations of all Parish Council meetings can be found on the village website.