**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT TO THE OUTSEATS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2013-MARCH 2014**

*(presented by Jane Marsden at the Annual Parish Meeting on 28 April 2014)*

**Parish Council activities**

The Parish Council held full meetings in every month of the year except August and December, plus Finance committee, Planning committee and Transport committee (the latter is joint with Hathersage parish) meetings as required. I express my appreciation to the Councillors and Clerk for their work for the benefit of the community, and also my thanks to our County and District Councillors and the Police for their support.

Outseats Councillors have also represented our parish on various other committees - Heart for Hathersage, Memorial Hall, Churchyard, Church Charities, Burial Ground, Allotments, Hathersage Gala, Stanage Forum, Hope Works Liaison - as well as attending meetings of Hathersage Parish Council (HPC) and its Recreation and Swimming Pool committees and sub-committees. An increasingly close working relationship with HPC led to a joint view that we could work even more effectively for the whole village if we were one parish instead of two. The law requires that any changes to parish council boundaries must be by the mechanism of a Community Governance Review (CGR) carried out by the District Council, and also that this must be triggered by a petition of electors. I am pleased to say that the majority of Outseats residents signed the CGR petition that we launched, and it was submitted to Derbyshire Dales in February; Hathersage electors submitted a similar petition. Hopefully, whatever decision the District Council reaches can be implemented to coincide with the May 2015 parish council elections.

Newsletters from Outseats Parish Council have been distributed quarterly to every dwelling in the parish. Suggestions on how their content might be improved are always welcome. These newsletters, plus Council agendas and minutes, can also be viewed at www.hathersage-outseats.org.uk. Residents are reminded that they are welcome to attend council meetings and to speak in the open-forum element, where they can highlight any issues.

**Changes to the Council**

In May, David Palmer, of Hill Lane, filled the vacancy for a Councillor. We were all greatly saddened by the death in October of Councillor Simon Taylor, of Cannon Fields. Simon’s vacancy has been filled by Nick Williams, who has quite recently moved to Jaggers Lane from Aston - where he was also a parish councillor!

**Finance**

The Outseats precept for the year, funded from residents’ council tax, was £15,138; added to other items, this gave a total income of £16,223. Expenditure was £12,967 (an improvement on the budgeted £13,706), enabling approximately £3,000 to be added to our reserves. The extreme funding pressure which the County and District Councils are currently experiencing carries the possibility that the parish may have to take over the funding of some items in future, so it is prudent to build our reserves – these now stand at £13,400.

Outseats Parish Council’s principal spending during the year consisted of:

* contribution to Hathersage PC’s costs £6156 (swimming pool £3150, playing-field maintenance & repairs £1791, village caretaker £1035, millennium garden grass-cutting £120, website hosting £60)
* staff costs £2305
* admin expenses £779
* staff & councillor training £554
* grass-cutting etc in Outseats £438
* insurance £303

Donations made by the Council were to Bakewell & Eyam Community Transport (£400), Hathersage Allotments Group (£300), Hathersage churchyard (£260), 1st Hathersage Scouts (£100) and Heart for Hathersage (£75).

For the year 2014-15, the precept has been set at £15,294, with budgeted expenditure of £14,635. From 2014-15, central Government has abolished the requirement for small parish councils such as ours to be externally audited. Instead a new Transparency Code is being introduced, requiring parish councils to publish on their websites the information which used to be audited. Our 2013-14 accounts will be externally audited, as previously.

**Byways and Footpaths**

The Council has been in continual contact with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) over the future of Long Causeway. We have been keen to ensure that DCC’s repair works, carried out in their role of highway authority, do not cause damage to this sensitive environment, and we warmly welcomed PDNPA’s decision to place a permanent Traffic Regulation Order on Long Causeway to ban all motor vehicles. However, the process of imposing this Order is not yet compete, and is not legally straightforward - we wrote to Patrick McLoughlin, MP to urge a review of its needless complexity.

The condition of Hurstclough Lane just east of Hurst Brook had become very poor, and we were pleased to be told by DCC of repairs planned for 2014.

Several issues about condition and accessibility of footpaths have been pursued during the year.

**Stanage Forum**

Several Parish Councillors have been involved in the process of updating the Management Plan for the PDNPA-owned Stanage & North Lees Estate, which is now starting to be implemented.

**Fire service**

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue (DF&R) proposed to replace Hathersage fire station by one at Bamford crossroads. While, at first sight, this might have appeared to offer Outseats a fairly similar service, Councillors made representations that the paucity of housing near the new location would make recruitment of retained firefighters difficult and that DF&R had no credible strategy to address this. We now understand that DF&R have no plans at present to implement this proposal.

**Heart for Hathersage**

The Council has been supportive of Heart for Hathersage in their continuing development of proposals for village-centre improvements, and is pleased that the project now has so much momentum.

**Hathersage Swimming Pool**

We are pleased to record that the pool had a very successful year in 2013, attracting a high number of users. It was featured in the national press and on TV, with many people complimenting the staff and management committee on the running of the pool.

**Transport issues**

Because of the lack of carparking spaces in the village on busy days, such as summer weekends, the Transport committee tried hard to identify a suitable site for an overflow carpark, but no workable solution emerged. A review was also undertaken of the lining-out of Oddfellows Rd carpark, to see whether more spaces could be obtained, but this was found not to be possible.

The committee pressed DCC to help with the issue of inconsiderate parking by visitors (which has caused obstruction to other traffic at various places in the village) by creating more yellow-line restrictions. DCC didn’t do so, though they did design extra yellow lines around the Station Rd/Station Approach/Dore La junction - which have yet to be implemented, but a version of them hopefully will be during 2014.

A particular outbreak of inconsiderate parking was on the day of the Hathersage Hilly triathlon in 2013, for which inadequate carparking provision had been made by the organisers. A constructive dialogue with the latter has since led to what appears to be a better carparking plan for the 2014 event.

Although DCC stated that they were unwilling to undertake any capital works to address the safety issues arising from the pinchpoint on Main Rd (outside the chemists’), DCC did, at the committee’s request, improve the road markings on the approach.

The Transport committee felt the new A6187 cycleway between Hathersage and Bamford to be an ill-thought-through and poorly-consulted scheme. There has therefore been a continuing dialogue with DCC, to seek to correct the cycleway’s various deficiencies, and these discussions are continuing. More positively, National Cycle Route 6, which passes through Outseats (from Ringinglow towards Bamford, via Upper Burbage Bridge, Hook’s Car, Dennis Knoll and Bole Hill) had new signage during the year.

PDNPA’s new draft Peak District Cycle Strategy shows a strong desire to encourage more cyclists into the National Park. Although the parish council supports this in principle, a likely consequence will be to overburden the already-stretched car-parking capacity - as so many cyclists arrive by car - and thus we have pressed PDNPA that the Cycle Strategy must include provision of more car-parking.

Network Rail’s proposal to construct a new loop-line between Hathersage (near Kettle House) and Grindleford, to allow fast passenger trains to bypass slower freight trains, was felt by the committee to be unacceptably sited, especially because of the damage its construction would cause to the local environment. Following the representations of the committee (and others), NR has conceded that a different location might be better; we await to hear from them what this might be.

**Other matters**

* It was good to see that an Outseats resident was one of the winners in the *Blooming Dales!* competition to find the best gardens in Derbyshire Dales.
* After the heavy snows of early 2013, we fully restocked the parish grit-bins ready for the winter just past – but they were not needed!
* Residents’ complaints over the District Council’s inadequate advice of revised refuse-collection dates over the Christmas period were pursued with Derbyshire Dales, resulting in assurances of earlier and better-targeted information in future.

**Contact address**

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