



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

MAY 2011

THANKS

Thanks once again to my fellow councillors Frank Blackburn, Jack Davie, Kath Walton, Sue White, Phil Gerrard & John Watson for each contributing their time, energy, skills, enthusiasm and good humour for another year. My appreciation, also, to the continued excellent, dedicated and professional contribution of Keith Leppingwell, our parish clerk.

We have also very much welcomed the level of community involvement and support in the work of the council. Most notably at the Community Engagement Forum meetings, making their views known about traffic and other issues, but also in the many other contributions to the local community and environment.

Gillian Ivey, Sue Ryder and John McCartney also do an excellent job representing Whitley at district and county level.

PROJECTS

I'm very happy to say that some of our various projects are now nearing completion.

Our allotment site off Whitefield Lane is now up and running. This has been enthusiastically supported by local residents, and fruit and vegetables will once again be produced on this field, formerly part of the market gardening farming heritage of Whitley. Work should also soon be completed on the Daffodil Field Park project next to Whitley Farm Close, a delightful community park and open space for all local people to enjoy and appreciate. The council continues to oversee other play areas at the southern end of the village and the nature reserve on Gravel Hill Lane, and looks to promote and protect the local footpath network and local history. A planning application to modify and extend All Saints Church for community use has recently been approved, and we shall now look to determine the amount of support for this within the village.

Pressure from the community and the parish council regarding the levels and speed of traffic along the A19 has at last paid off. Once funding has been secured, two vehicle activated matrix speed signs will be erected on the A19 to raise awareness of the speed limit through Whitley. We cannot expect this to completely solve the traffic issues, but we have forced the authorities to finally acknowledge and address this problem for the community.

The council once again joined with Howard and Janet at the George & Dragon to provide an enhanced display of festive lights at Christmas. The council also provides a parcel to all senior residents at this time of year.

ONGOING BUSINESS

The council...

maintains a strong representation on many local forums and groups, notably Osgoldcross Forum and Southern CEF group and overall, councillors attend well over a hundred meetings annually representing Whitley. We also respond and contribute to various consultations, such as the Selby District Council Core Strategy & Development Site Allocation consultations.

involves itself in local and regional planning matters and planning compliance.

monitors and upgrades street furniture such as litter bins, seats, footpaths and lighting where appropriate.

maintains good communications with local police and supports police initiatives such as a public Alcohol Free Zone for the parish.

provides communication and feedback to the community via newsletters and leaflets and through the community website, supported by the parish council.

CONCERNS

Traffic issues and safety along the A19 have repeatedly been the main concern for residents of Whitley, but we can at last see some progress in this area.

The change of government has brought some changes that will, no doubt, have a local impact, such as the 'localism' bill. But there are also changes to the planning and development strategies for the area, which we have already seen in the new Selby Area Local Development Plan, something on we consulted with the community earlier this year.

Many residents were understandably upset and angry at the loss of woodland and trees at the Harron Homes/Tunstall Lodge development. The parish council objected strongly to the impact of this development and although were not successful in stopping it, the number of houses now being built is, in fact, substantially less than was originally submitted. Pressure to develop is increasingly a contentious issue for many local people. The parish council also has concerns about the impact of the ongoing expansion of the mushroom farm on Gravel Hill Lane, and is working to achieve the best outcome for local residents where it can.

OVERALL

I believe Whitley Parish Council continues to achieve much and maintains a business-like and responsible approach to getting things done as well as representing, and involving, the community.

Thanks to all

Simon Humphrey

Chair