

<p style="text-align: center;">CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 1st April 2014 Presented by Councillor John Peebles Chairman of the Parish Council</p>
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I have again had the privilege of being elected by my fellow members to chair Crigglestone Parish Council for the past year.

The first upheaval of the year was the resignation of Jayne Venables our RFO due to a move out of the area. After another selection process Joanie Massey joined us as RFO and Assistant Clerk. In the time she has been with us she has proved a more than capable and versatile RFO and Clerk to the Village Institute Committee.

On the 31st July we had the "Love Where You Live" event in Betty Eastwood Park. This was organised by Helen Walker from the WMDC in conjunction with the Parish Council. A number of partners took part. It was well attended in spite of the dreadful weather for some time. At this event the award of a grant of £5,664 from the Big Lottery Fund was announced and a plaque displayed on site. The grant was to upgrade 1.3 kilometres of footpaths within the park using recycled materials.

Hall Green Community Association has played a great part in community spirit. First was the gala that they organised in conjunction with the Hall Green Sports Club. This proved to be a very successful event. I had the great honour of opening it, and then later the Mayor of Wakefield Cllr. Brian Holmes and his consort Cllr Janet Holmes attended the event. Following that in December was the switching on of the Christmas tree lights totally organised by the Hall Green Association. This again was a tremendous event and the children's choir from Dane Royd School were brilliant with their carol singing. Other Christmas trees were installed at the Nelson and at Newmillerdam all with support from the District Council.

Once again this year the hanging baskets came in with very good comments and praise. I hope that this can continue over the years.

Congratulations must go to Newmillerdam Community & Conservation Association, when in July they were awarded Gold in the Yorkshire in Bloom. At the presentation they later received a further award for best community work. Well done to all who helped achieve it.

The Parish Council has received complaints as to the noise issue from the M1. This is now on going and councillors have been meeting the Highways Agency and others to try and address the problems that we are having.

There has been a serious problem of flooding for many years on Hollingthorpe Lane. Councillor Wainwright along with neighbours and pressure from the Parish Council managed to get the WMDC to take action to alleviate the problem.

Remembrance services were once again well attended at Newmillerdam, St James and Crigglestone Cemetery. Further to that, Cllr Wainwright received a request from a family member for the name of WW1 Private Alfred Hewitt, who was drowned in France on 6th December 1915, to be added to the Cenotaph. This has been agreed and his name has already been added to the memorial in the church. He lived at Calder Grove, then after his marriage, at Durkar.

In November Mike Tivenan, a member of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee, died. Mike was also Secretary of the Friends of Betty Eastwood Park. Along with other members he did a great amount of work in the park. A bench to commemorate him is to be installed in the park.

Prior to the church hall at St John's Calder Grove closing, Keith Wainwright put on a display of the Parish in the past as only Keith could do. This was a great success with the proceeds raised going into the alterations at the church.

Three grants were awarded in the year: Calder Grove/Durkar Fundraisers for Wakefield Hospice for costs incurred for Christmas concert; Friends of Betty Eastwood Park for insurance costs; and Hall Green Chair Exercise Group for help towards their annual rent.

There were three contenders for the Parish Hero Award 2013. It gave me great pleasure at the January meeting of the Council to present the award to Kevan Norbury in recognition with his work with the young members within the Parish. He has been a uniform leader of the 45th (Durkar) Scout Group for 20 years and Group Leader since 2012. I wish him well and hope that his work with our young friends may continue. There were two runner ups, Tony Betts and Christine Platten: both give a lot of time within the parish.

The Health & Safety and Finance Committee has approved the recommendation of the RFO that there be no increase in the Parish precept again this year. Under the localisation of council tax benefits, a precept top up grant from Central Government was given to all Local Authorities to pass on to Town/Parish Councils. Wakefield Council does not intend to pass this grant on. Within the whole of Yorkshire, Wakefield is the only Authority not doing so. A letter to this effect has been sent to Mary Creagh MP expressing our disgust.

Once again the residents of Durkar are suffering severe inconvenience at the hands of development. Amongst others, drainage/sewerage has been an issue over many years in planning matters and has been the subject of objections in Durkar Lane and Denby Dale Road East. But then what do we as Parish Councillors know about such matters, this will not keep us silent.

The Parish Safe Scheme is very much ongoing, with regular meetings with the Police and our priorities given to them. The main one always seems to be speeding. Crime figures have gone down slightly, so with a good police presence this can only be a good thing. I thank all officers who patrol the Parish to keep us safe. My thanks to Inspector Richard Clare for his help over the past few years. Richard is moving on and I wish him all the best in his new post.

Residents can still keep in touch with Parish Council news by visiting the web site. There is also the Wakefield Express and the Parish Link, and Newsletters about three times a year.

My thanks to our three District Councillors for the help that they have given over the past year.

I thank all members of Crigglestone Parish Council for their input and support, also for the time that they give on the various committees. Thanks to Peter Daniels the Vice Chair for his support over the year. And lastly to both Janet our Parish Clerk, and Joanie our RFO/Assistant Clerk, my thanks for the apparent ease with which they make this Council run smoothly.

J Peebles

Chair Crigglestone Parish Council