

West Life

The Newsletter of West Auckland Parish Council
No 20 – Summer 2011



CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2011

First I would like to thank the Parish Councillors for their effort and time which they have voluntarily given to help the village and also Sharon, the Clerk, who does a great job in keeping us legally correct in our work. I would also like to welcome Martin Roberts back to the Parish Council as a co-opted member, the next elections being in May 2013. The PC endeavoured to improve areas in the village, but many of the issues raised by residents have been the remit of DCC. We have had several meetings with DCC to discuss the cemetery, the Nursery, the Memorial car park, landscaping for the East end area, unadopted roads and many other issues that can be found in the minutes, which are available at the Post Office for public perusal.

The car park has now been completed and is a great improvement and worth the money the PC invested in the project. It is hoped that the double yellow lines on the A68 will relieve the traffic congestion in the area. The PC looked into traffic calming measures for Staindrop Road and Copeland Road but found they are too expensive. However there is a scheme in place for speed checking and any resident can volunteer to help with this programme. Obviously the more people who volunteer their time, the more effective the scheme will be. If anyone wishes to put their name forward please contact a Parish Councillor. With the sad event of the closure of the Village Centre, the PC allowed two toddler groups to use the premises in Monteith Close. The Walking Group now meet there before and after their walks and the Craft Group also use the premises.

The broken kerb stones around the Village Green have been repaired and the PC are in the process of arranging new signage on the Green to prevent illegal parking which turns the grass into mud in the winter months. Last winter the bad weather caused many problems for residents, but despite our efforts, the PC was unable to get any extra snow clearance. As a result a meeting was arranged with representatives of DCC and hopefully this situation will not be repeated this

winter. If we can get volunteers to clear paths and spread grit in streets, DCC can provide the necessary insurance cover and equipment. Please, if you are able and willing to help, give your name to the Clerk. Due to cut-backs DCC are no longer able to cover all roads.

It was very disappointing that the Sports Hall at Oakley Cross had to close but many avenues have been explored to find a solution by the School and the PC but no solution has yet been found. The PC are also trying to have the bottle banks on the A68 removed, which are now unnecessary with the recycling process in operation and they cause damage and danger especially with broken glass.

Earlier in the year there was a National Litter Campaign and a litter pick was arranged in the village but unfortunately very few people gave the event their support. Thank you to the few people who did take part and filled several black bags with litter. I would also like to thank DCC, who provided help with equipment.

Christmas Hampers were delivered to Devonshire House and Roslyn House on behalf of the village and a wedding day card was sent to the royal couple.

The PC would like to do much more for the village, but most of our time is spent co-ordinating meetings and information with outside agencies. This is very frustrating and time consuming, as has been seen in the time it has taken to implement and complete the new car park. However, we will continue to try to improve areas listed in the Parish Plan where possible. If anyone has requests or suggestions, please put them in writing to the Clerk for consideration, or better still attend a meeting on the first Monday of every month at 7pm at Monteith Close. This is a Village Parish Council and the input of residents is essential if it is to be successful. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Hazel Charlton (Mrs) Chairperson.

OAKLEY CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL – ARTS AND SPORTS HALL

In 2003 after a successful bid the above was built with the proviso that the facility was to be used by other schools and the community. To finance the Sports Hall, as the school was not allowed to use its budget for any community groups, both Wear Valley District Council and Sport England gave donations. This enabled 2 people to be employed for 3 years to operate the Hall outside school hours. As there was no further funding available after the 3 years the Head Teacher agreed with the 2 outside groups using the Hall for them to open and close the Hall and pay a fee of £10 per session. However the members of the School Finance Committee have been informed by the County Education Finance Officer that this arrangement was illegal for the following reasons:-

- a) No one other than personnel employed by the school could be key holders as this practice rendered the school's insurance policy null and void, not just when they were using the premises but after they had locked up and left the premises.
- b) The charges made were totally out of keeping with the costs of running the hall.
- c) The practice could also have adverse effects on the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Therefore, the Finance Committee agreed unanimously that until all of the above could be addressed all out of hours activities be suspended immediately. At a following meeting in October 2010 the Education Department Officer explained that the following actions were required:-

- a) A person would have to be employed and be on duty the whole of the time the building was being used.
- b) To calculate the cost of running the Hall per hour.

The cost was calculated using Durham County Councils recommended costs and including the costs of a warden the cost would have to be £18.00 per hour.

The 2 outside groups were informed of the outcome of the meeting and the costs involved. The School and the Governors regret this action but it is the only legal way forward in order not to damage the School's Finances. The hall is available for hire at the new rate of £18.00 per hour.
John Ferguson Chairman of School Governors.

The Parish Council are still considering various options of seeking funding to re-open the sports hall to our residents as this valuable facility was well used.

METAL THEFTS

There has been an increase in metal thefts in our village. This is believed to be a national problem due to the increase in the price of scrap metals thus causing crime rates to soar. Police, VOSA and other agencies are clamping down in our area and are pulling all vehicles containing scrap metal that are visiting our two scrap yards ie Tindale Crescent and Shildon. This is happening on a daily basis for the next few months to come. Vehicles pulled to date have been prosecuted for several offences including illegal use of red diesel (which is only for agricultural and off road purposes), inappropriate insurance and non compliance with regulations of waste licence plus several other motoring offences and theft. Advice to householders is to use Smart Water to postcode all their valuables which police will scan at the scrap yards. Anyone with problems ring 03456060365.

COPELAND ROAD SCHOOL

The school has been chosen to pilot a junior road safety scheme, which if successful will be rolled out countywide.

SCOUTING NEWS

Scouting in West Auckland and St Helen Auckland, the most important news at the moment is the formation of a new Young Leaders Group which will meet 14 to 18 year olds, as well as training the young people for leadership roles they will follow the activities of Explorer Scouts. These activities include many outdoor projects such as gauge walking, hiking, go ape high ropes courses, skating, rock climbing to name a few. Details of this exciting new project can be obtained from John Bake on 01388 832312. This section is open to both ex scouts and anyone new to the movement, so why not follow Bear Grylls and give us a ring.

THE BIG LOTTERY

The Area Action Partnership (AAP) is working with the Parish Council and Cllr Rob Yorke in an attempt to gather the views of the residents to see how the one million pounds allocated to South West Bishop Auckland Area can be utilised. The aim of the award, to be spent over a ten year, project is to enable people to make their communities a better place to live. Details of any progress will be made available over coming months. Anyone is welcome to become activity involved. Please contact Angelina Maddison, Bishop Auckland & Shildon Area Action Partnership, Old Bank Chambers, 45 Market Place, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 7NP Telephone : 01388 761563 Mobile : 0775 3779975

ST HELEN RAINBOWS, BROWNIES AND GUIDES



We meet on Mondays term time at St Helen Parish Centre. Guiding is special as it is “girl space with no boys around,” and is open to girls of all abilities.

Rainbows (Age 5-7) Mondays 5-6pm

Being a Rainbow is all about learning, developing self-confidence, building friendships and, of course, having lots of fun! They follow a programme called the Rainbow Jigsaw, which involves a wide range of activities and games.

The Rainbow Jigsaw has four areas: Look Learn Laugh Love

Brownies (Age 7-10) Mondays 6-7pm

Brownies follow a programme called the Brownie Adventure. The name reflects the world of exciting opportunities. Brownies become a member of a six such as Badger, Fox, Mole, Squirrel, Hedgehog and Rabbit and follow a programme called the Brownie Adventure, which includes challenges and fun.

Girls can participate in a wide range of activities at their regular meetings, and at special events, day trips, sleepovers, camps and holidays. They can find themselves trying out arts and crafts or recipes, and playing energetic games. Girls can also work towards Brownie interest badges covering many different hobbies and activities from science investigator to circus skills.

The Brownie Adventure is divided into three areas: You - Community - World

Guides (Age 10-14) 7 15-9pm

Guides do everything from adventure sports to playing fun games, and taking part in community action projects to the performing arts. Girls take part in a wide range of exciting activities at their regular meetings, and at special events or holidays. Guides work together in small groups or “Patrols and, with the support of an adult Leader, choose and run some of the activities themselves using Go for It! Resource packs.

The Guide programme is divided into five areas:

- **Discovery of new experiences and challenges**
- **Healthy lifestyles**
- **Global awareness**
- **Skills and relationships**
- **Celebrating diversity**

Girls can work towards Guide Interest Badges covering many different hobbies and activities from Film lover to Independent living. They can also gain Challenge Badges that recognise their participation in guiding over a period of time. The badges build towards the Baden-Powell Challenge Award. If you have a daughter who is interested, or you may be interested in becoming a helper or have some skills that you could demonstrate to the girls one evening, please contact Diane Farrer on 07776 076459 or by email diane.farrer@googlemail.com.

MEMORY LANE

Many thanks to everyone who gave names of the Coronatio Committee members.

Can you remember these shops?

F.D. Stones & Son, Butcher, Front Street

C. Wheel, Sweets & Tobacco, Front Street

D. Lamb, Greengrocer, Front Street

J. Welsh, Chemist, Front Street

R.M. Laskey, Fruit & Vegetables, New Street

W. Dowson, Grocer, Front Street

Wilkinson's Butcher, Station Road

Shamva Studio, Photographer, Mill Bank

J. Sutton, Shoe Repairs, Front Street

MEMORIAL HALL

The Memorial Community Association, are holding an **AUTUMN FAYRE** Saturday the **15th of October at 1.30 pm** at the Memorial Hall on Darlington Road, West Auckland This is to raise funds for their Senior Citizen's Party on the 3rd of December. Admission is 20 pence.

There is Tombola, Bric A Brac, Books, Crafts & a Cake Stall, with locally baked produce. There's also a Raffle with prizes donated by local businesses, plus Tea and Scones for sale, to keep you going.

Everyone welcome – please attend and support your village !

HERITAGE OPEN DAY WALK

Saturday 10 Sept 10.00am **'Historic Buildings of West Auckland'** - a guided walk organised by the Parish Council and led by Martin Roberts around the green at West Auckland to look at the great houses, former farmhouses and cottages, including the Manor House, Old Hall and many other village houses. The walk will start in the car park on the green in front of the Old Hall and will last approx 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

WEST AUCKLAND JUNIORS U13'S

We have now come to the end of the season in the Russell Foster Premier League for 2010-11 which has the reputation of being the strongest junior league in the northeast and have played 28 games, winning 22, drawing 2 and losing 4, finishing with 68 points tying with Fulwell FC but as they had a better goal difference this resulted in us finishing 3rd in the League out of 15 teams.

This is a great achievement for our team who are competing against large districts.

VERY WELL DONE!!!!

HANDY PERSON

You will be pleased to know that if you live in County Durham and are over 60 or have a disability or vulnerable in other ways there is a handy-person service provided by Durham County Council. The service carries out small repairs and home maintenance including: replacing light bulbs and cords, trimming and fitting loose carpets, mending leaking taps etc. A charge of £10 per visit is made to cover labour costs. This charge will not be made on jobs taking 30 minutes or less. To ask for help from the handy person service or to find out more information contact 0191 3753705 or by email to the following address

handyperson@threerivershousing.co.uk

Please contact one of the Parish Councillors if you have any concerns of suggestions about any issue within the village. The Parish Council meet on the first Monday of the Month at 7pm at the Community Rooms at Monteith Close, and the meetings are open to the public. Come along.

Parish Councillor Contact Numbers

Jack Bell	834839
Hazel Charlton (C)	832464
Ed Farrer	832810
Pauline Fenwick	602230
John Ferguson	832019
Colin Mairs (VC)	833616
Valerie Raine	833534
Lynn Rielly	833032
Martin Roberts	833214
Andy Turner	606021
Keith Tweddle	832974
Billy Robinson	833663

The Parish Clerk, Sharon Hall **834360** can also be contacted on email:

sharon.home@bopenworld.com