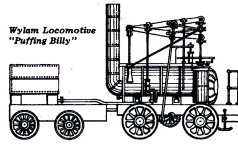


Wylam Parish Council



ANNUAL REPORT *2018-19*



Introduction

This Report describes the main activities of Wylam Parish Council during 2018/19.

About Wylam

Wylam is a thriving village of over 2,000 people, well positioned for the workplaces and cultural facilities of nearby Newcastle and Hexham. It is well-served by a good selection of shops, cafes and restaurants, public houses, churches, and sports and community facilities. It has a library, doctors' surgeries and a well-regarded primary school. Wylam retains a strong sense of community with a wide range of community-organised activities and events.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Wylam was home to collieries, a brewery and an ironworks. The work of several early railway pioneers, including Timothy Hackworth and William Hedley, designers of the *Globe* and *Puffing Billy* locomotives, was centred here, and George Stephenson - referred to as the "Father of Railways" - was born here in 1781.

By the end of the 19th century, industry had moved on. Wildlife, including salmon, heron and otters have returned to the river. Walkers enjoy the Tyne Riverside Country Park which runs along the banks of the river at Wylam. The village is close to Hadrian's Wall and the Sustrans Hadrian's Cycleway passes through.

Wylam Parish Council

The Parish Council office is located at Wylam Institute, Church Road, Wylam NE41 8AP.

The office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11.30 and 5.00pm.

Tel: (01661) 852498.

Email: wylampc@btinternet.com .

Website: www.wylamparishcouncil.org.uk

Council Meetings

The Parish Council meets on the second Monday of each month except August, at 7pm in the Centenary Room at Wylam Institute.

Parish Councillors 2018

There are 8 Parish Councillors, elected every 4 years. The most recent election was in May 2017. The next election will be held in May 2021.

Councillor Tom Appleby
Councillor Anne Francis
Councillor Jacqueline Henderson
Councillor Jos Joures (Chair)
Councillor Jim Martin
Councillor Colin Percy
Councillor Suzi Robinson
Councillor Keith Trobe

County Councillor for Bywell Ward

Councillor Karen Quinn

Parish Council Staff

Clerk: Marie Moore

Village Handyman: Matthew Hadden

Village Tree Warden: Liz Bray

Council Assets

Wylam War Memorial

Hagg Bank Play Area

Bus shelter (Charlie's Corner)

Public open spaces

Litter bins throughout the village

3-4 Laburnum Terrace, Wylam.

Areas of Activity 2018/19

Shaping the Parish

The Council's decisions, activity and expenditure was driven by a set of *guiding principles* (Annex A) and its agreed *priorities for 2018/9* (Annex B).

Roads, Road Safety and Footpaths

Each year, we provide village priorities for inclusion in *the County Council's Local Transport Plan*. This year both of our main priorities - resurfacing of Main Road from the shops to the Fox & Hounds and a solution to the problem of standing water on Main Road adjacent to the War Memorial – were included in the County Council's programme of works.

This year, in conjunction with Wylam Road Safety Group, we are *highlighting road safety issues* on Wylam Wood Road, in the area around the Fox and Hounds and the Co-op, and on Bell Road. We are also working with the County Council to improve signage for the 20mph zone and to discourage cyclists from using the pavement on the river bridge.

Flooding in recent years has led to a big *slide on the riverside path from Stephenson Terrace below Wylam Nurseries*. Discussions with Northumberland County Council on how this problem can be resolved are ongoing.

We spent around £10,500¹ this year on *improving the track from the western edge of the Jubilee field to the north-west entrance to Wylam Haughs Nature Reserve*. The track had become pot-holed and was frequently flooded.

We are aware that a number of other roads and footpaths in and around the village require remedial work. We report all such requirements to the County Council and maintain a log so that progress can be monitored.

Natural Assets and the Environment

We spent around £3,200¹ to *cut grass on the areas of public open space* in the village owned by the Parish Council and at Hagg Bank Play Area.

We installed *four new litter bins*: by the SPAR, at the west entrance to Jubilee Field, at the Algernon Terrace entrance to Engine Dene and at Ingham Terrace.

We fund the purchase of *poop-scoop bags* each year, which are made available to local dog walkers in packs of 15 at Wylam Institute, the SPAR shop and the library.

The *annual village litter pick* was held in March. There was an excellent turnout of volunteers. A skip was hired and parked in the Country Park Car Park, and volunteers were provided with protective gloves, litter pickers, and refuse sacks.

As part of *the maintenance of the Wylam Haughs Nature Reserve*, the paths were trimmed and tree work commissioned as necessary.

We spent nearly £1,600¹ on *floral displays and necessary tree and gardening work* during 2018/19. Floral displays in tubs throughout the village are renewed twice a year, usually in May and October. During the summer months, hanging baskets add to the appearance of the village.

Recreation, Sports and Culture

We provided grants of £3,000 each to *Wylam Institute* and *Wylam Playing Fields Association* to support the provision of facilities in the village for sports, recreation and culture, and paid Northumberland County Council £2,000¹ to maintain public toilets on the Jubilee Field. Regular safety inspections of play equipment at the Jubilee Field and Hagg Bank are conducted.

¹ excluding VAT

New improved signs will shortly be put in place on the Waggonway by Northumberland County Council to help ensure that this shared space can be safely used by cyclists, walkers and dog owners alike.

We also provided financial support (via a grant of £2,750) to the *Wylam Winer Tales festival*.

Industrial and railway heritage

We continue to maintain and develop the village *railway museum*, and have continued to press the National Trust to develop a positive role for *George Stephenson's Birthplace*. While there are still no plans for a permanent re-opening, we have supported the organisation of a few 'guided walks' that have included a visit to the cottage. We are keen to develop and *ensure the future of a strong heritage offering in the village*, and will continue to engage with other organisations and residents to ensure this is the case.

As part of this ambition, we have launched *new heritage project in collaboration with Wylam First School*, offering pupils a unique opportunity to research and document part of Wylam's engineering past. Artist and Filmmaker, Bryan Dixon, is leading the project "Celebrating Points Bridge", which will involve pupils working with archive materials, including photographs and maps; engaging with the local community to hear their stories and memories of the bridge; and seeking input from relevant experts. Scripts to Stage Theatre Company will support the pupils in creating a drama and movement piece reflecting the stories they uncover, which will combine with film in a performance event to be held at the Wylam Institute in the summer.

Planning

The Parish Council is a consultee on planning matters. A total of 13 Planning Applications have been reviewed by the Parish Council during 2018/19.

Councillors have made *representations to Gentoo Homes* throughout the year on regarding issues relating to the housing development.

Other Services

We contributed £4,320 to fund maintenance of *Ovingham cemetery*.

Following concerns raised by us and other concerned residents last year, there has been no further news on the proposed *closure of one of the village's GP surgeries*. We will continue to do all we can to ensure that locally-provided public services are maintained in the village.

The tenant who managed the *Old Post Office* left the property at the end of 2018. With the Post Office no longer providing its services via this building, we are currently considering our next steps.

Communication and Engagement

Information about the Council and its activities can be found on *our website* (www.wylamparishcouncil.org.uk) and *our Facebook page*.

We have arranged door to door deliveries of four issues of *Wylam Globe*, highlighting both Council and village news, over the year.

We have sought to *increase our social media presence*, for example by posting details of our meetings, agendas etc on 'What's on Wylam'.

We are keen to improve our engagement with the village. Residents are always welcome to *attend our meetings*, hear our discussions and ask questions. You can also visit *our stall at the Village Fare* or contact us via our *webpage or email, or phoning or dropping in our office during opening hours*.

Wylam Parish Council - Budget

How your money was spent 2018/19

We spent a total of £73,232 in 2018/19 against a planned budget of £56,474. There are three main reasons for this difference. We decided to invest £10,500² to improve the track from the Jubilee Field to the north-east entrance of the nature reserve with the Council deciding it was better value to incur more cost upfront to secure a lasting solution than to pay for work that would need to be revisited every 2-3 years. Our administration costs were also higher than expected, due to a large part to the costs of recruiting a new clerk and ensuring a smooth handover of responsibilities, and the costs associated with the tenant leaving the Old Post Office building. Our additional expenditure meant our VAT liability was higher than expected. We will, however be able to reclaim this amount back in the next financial year.

Expenditure (Budget)

Staff and administration	£25,402	(£20,774)
Publications	£ 1,430	(£1,500)
Property, Open Spaces And Equipment	£25,672	(£16,900)
Grants and donations	£ 9,762	(£10,300)
Ovingham Joint Burial Committee (OJBC)	£ 4,320 ³	(£5,000)
VAT Paid	£ 6,696	(£2,000)
TOTAL	£ 73,282	(£ 56,474)

Our income of £54,302 was broadly in line with expectations overall. We received less rental income than anticipated due to the tenant of the old Post Office leaving at the end of 2018. We received higher than anticipated income due to a new arrangement where we are compensated for the administration support we provide to the Ovingham Joint Burial Committee and from the VAT reclaimed on last year's expenditure.

Income (Anticipated)

Precept on council tax	£39,782	(£40,750)
Administration	£ 2,279	(£ 209)
Property, Open Spaces And Equipment	£ 9,358	(£12,400)
Grants and donations	£ 176	(£0)
VAT reclaimed	£ 2,707	(£0)
TOTAL	£ 54,302	(£53,359)

We managed the gap between expenditure and income by drawing on contingency funds and on our reserves. We anticipate restoring our reserves over the next 3 years.

² Excluding VAT

³ Wylam Parish contribution. Overall OJBC spent £17,912 and received income of £16,983