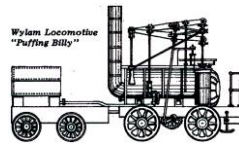


Wylam Parish Council



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



Foreword

from

Chairman of Wylam Parish Council, Anne Francis.

Potholes, planning, pathways. Speeding, road markings, road signs. Grass cutting, trees, vegetation. Dogs, cyclists and most importantly, the Public.

These represent some of the issues that have been discussed by the Parish Council during my first term of office as Chairman. It is fair to say that not all have been resolved as speedily as we would like and I am aware that some solutions have failed to satisfy some members of the community.

Setting aside financial and time constraints, I can assure you that we endeavour to take a fair and balanced view before agreeing on a solution that we feel will be acceptable to the majority of our residents.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my Vice- Chairman, Tom Martin and my fellow Councillors for their wisdom and support throughout the year. My thanks also go to Diana Carney, Clerk to Wylam Parish Council, whose support and commitment has been invaluable.

Wylam Parish Council welcomes views from residents on any aspect of life in the Parish. Please contact the Parish Clerk or members of the Parish Council. Contact details are given on page 1 of this report.

Introduction

This Report describes the main achievements of Wylam Parish Council during 2014/15.

About Wylam

Wylam is a thriving village of some 2,000 people. It is well-served by a Post Office, a good selection of small shops, public houses, cafes, the popular Wylam First School, churches, a branch Library, doctors' surgeries, sports and community facilities.

George Stephenson, often referred to as the "Father of Railways" was born in Wylam in 1781. The work of several early nineteenth century railway pioneers, among them Timothy Hackworth and William Hedley, designers of the Globe and Puffing Billy locomotives respectively, was also centred here.

Wylam is close to Hadrian's Wall and the Sustrans Hadrian's Cycleway passes through the village. Walkers enjoy the section of Northumberland County Council's Tyne Riverside Country Park which runs along the banks of the Tyne at Wylam. The Wylam Haughs Local Nature Reserve and the Wylam Railway Museum are both managed by the Parish Council and attract many visitors.

Wylam Parish Council

The Parish Council office is located at Wylam Institute, Church Road, Wylam NE41 8AP. Tel: (01661) 852498. Email: wylampc@btinternet.com. The office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12.30 and 4.30pm.

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

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

Chairman: Councillor Anne Francis

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Tom Martin

Councillor Stephen Barlow
Councillor Ruth Creighton
Councillor Maureen Gillis
Councillor Brian Japes
Councillor Tony Mitcham
Councillor Bill Nicholson

County Councillor for Bywell Ward

Councillor Paul Kelly

Parish Council Staff

Clerk: Mrs Diana Carney

Village Handyman: Mr. Matthew Hadden

Village Tree Warden: This voluntary post is currently vacant.

Council Assets

Wylam War Memorial

Hagg Bank Play Area

Bus shelter (Charlie's Corner)

Public open spaces: the location of these is shown on a map at Wylam Institute.

Litter bins throughout the village.

Major Achievements 2014/15

1914 - 2014 Commemoration of the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War

War Memorial Cleaning

In readiness for the 1914 Centenary commemorations, the Wylam War Memorial was professionally cleaned at a cost of £2,298.00 in April 2014.

Poppy Display at Charlie's Corner

In May 2014 700 poppies were planted by a group of volunteers, organised by the Parish Council.

"Lest We Forget" Exhibition

In September 2014, the Parish Council was pleased to provide volunteer stewards for this exhibition at the Falcon Centre. The exhibition was the result of extensive research by local residents Aubrey Smith, Philip Brooks and Roy Koerner which had revealed the stories behind all the names of First World War servicemen recorded on Wylam's War Memorial and on plaques within the Falcon Centre and St. Oswin's Church.

Remembrance Sunday 2014

Following on from the "Lest We Forget" exhibition, Remembrance Sunday on 9th November 2014 was especially poignant, as it was Wylam's chance to honour the men from the village who gave their lives in the service of their country during the First World War. We were delighted to welcome a Dutch couple who joined us to pay their respects to a relative from Wylam who died in the conflict. We are grateful to the County Council for issuing a Road Closure Order.

Wylam Post Office

Following a robbery in February 2012, Wylam Post Office was saved from closure by means of a generous grant of £500,000 to the Parish Council from the Reece Foundation, a Wylam-based charity. The grant enabled the Parish Council to purchase the building containing the Post Office. The Sub-Postmaster, Steve Loveday, was appointed in December 2012 and the Post Office continues to be one of the social and economic hubs of the village.

Litter Pick

This annual village tidy-up, organised by the Parish Council, was held in March 2014. This year volunteers representing 5 village organisations and members of the Parish Council took part. The Parish Council donated a total of £100 to the participating organisations. A skip was hired and parked in the Country Park Car Park, and volunteers were provided with protective gloves, litter pickers, and refuse sacks.

Tree Work & Floral Displays

The Parish Council spent nearly £3,400 on floral displays and necessary tree and gardening work during 2014/15. Floral displays in tubs throughout the village and in front of the Wylam sign at the southern entrance to the village are renewed twice a year, usually in May and October. During the summer months, hanging baskets add to the pretty appearance of the village.

Tree and gardening work during the year has included commissioning of a professional Tree Risk Survey in respect of five large trees near the river bank at The Plantation. The survey concluded that the trees posed a risk to the public and they will be felled in Autumn 2015. The paths through The Haughs Nature Reserve have been strimmed three times, and the Parish Council's hedge at Holeyn Hall Road has been trimmed and the specimen trees therein have been crown lifted.

Provision of Poop-Scoop Bags

The Parish Council funds the purchase of around 12,500 poop-scoop bags each year. These are made available to local dog walkers in packs of 15 at Wylam Institute, The Spar shop and Wylam Library. The Parish Council is grateful to Judith Beveridge, who has organised the distribution of the bags and made sure that the distribution points are well-stocked.

Ovingham Cemetery

Councillors Maureen Gillis and Stephen Barlow represent Wylam Parish Council on the Ovingham Joint Burial Committee. The Parish Council contributes around £5,000 each year to fund maintenance at the cemetery and its Lodge and Chapel. We are especially grateful to Maureen Gillis who has been largely responsible for the formulation of new Terms of Reference for the Committee this year.

Grass Cutting

The Parish Council pays Northumberland County Council to cut grass in the areas of public open space in the village owned by the Parish Council and to

maintain Hagg Bank Play Area. The Parish Council is also grateful to the Wylam resident who voluntarily kept the grass at the War Memorial in trim during this Centenary year.

Planning

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning matters. A total of 19 Planning Applications have been reviewed by the Parish Council to date. 2014/15 saw the submission (and following refusal, re-submission) by Gentoo of an application to develop the Wylam Hills Farm site for a mixture of private and affordable housing. The Parish Council submitted detailed comments on both applications. A decision on the application has not yet been made. The Parish Council has liaised with NCC's Planning Compliance Officer to clarify issues relating to public amenity land on the Dene Estate.

Advisory 20mph Speed Limit

This important road safety measure was introduced in April 2014, thanks to a petition raised by the Wylam Road Safety Group with the active support of the Parish Council and County Councillor Paul Kelly. The effectiveness of the speed limit has been monitored by the County Council and anecdotal evidence suggests that, along its central stretch from the junction of Main Road and Ovingham Road to Wylam Bridge, traffic has noticeably slowed down. In a separate initiative, a temporary 20mph speed limit was introduced along the length of Wylam Wood Road, which is used as a shortcut to Prudhoe while Ovingham Bridge continues to be closed. This was in response to residents' concerns about drivers speeding along this very narrow road and mounting pavements especially when accessing The Crescent. County Councillor Paul Kelly has confirmed that, following a change of policy by the County Council, thanks in large part to the actions of the Wylam Road Safety Group, the advisory limit will soon become mandatory and further traffic calming measures will be introduced.

Highways, Footpaths and Drains

Each year, the Parish Council submits its priorities for inclusion in the County Council's Local Transport Plan. This year the Parish Council has asked for the non-skid surfaces at Holeyn Hall Road and the north side of Wylam Bridge and Wylam's 30mph gateway signage to be renewed. A separate, detailed report, usually targeting the condition of highways and drains in the village is sent to Local Services for their attention.

Resurfacing and new drainage for Wylam Allotments access track

This major project was carried out by Charlton Drainage on behalf of the Parish Council in January 2015 at a cost of £5,351.87.

New village notice boards

Village notice boards at Station Road, Tyne Riverside Country Park Car Park and the Jubilee Field, which had been showing their age were replaced in January 2015. Header boards for these with contact details for the Parish Council will be ordered soon.

Play Area Safety Inspections

Annual inspections of equipment at Wylam's two play areas at the Jubilee Field and Hagg Bank are funded by the Parish Council. In addition, Northumberland County Council officers inspect the play equipment each week, free of charge.

Grants and Donations

The Parish Council gives financial support to a number of local clubs and organisations, including Wylam Institute and Wylam Community Playing Field Association. A further £2,500 was donated to Wylam Institute towards repair and maintenance and £465 to St. Oswin's PCC to part-fund automation of the Church clock chimes.

How Your Money is Spent

Each January, the Parish Council sets a Budget for the next Financial Year and this determines the Precept which will be demanded from Northumberland County Council. The Precept for 2014/15 was £36,500. £15,000 of rental income received from Wylam Post Office was transferred to the General Account to enable the Precept to be held at its 2013/14 level.

**Table 1: Wylam Parish Council:
Income 2014/15.**

Precept	£	36,500.00
VAT Refund	£	1,765.31
Bank Interest	£	60.83
Allotment Rent	£	400.00
N. Powergrid	£	138.27
Sale of souvenirs	£	200.00
NCC(Ov'ham Cemetery)	£	982.01
Post Office rent	£	12,000.00
Returned cheques	£	197.39
TOTAL	£	52,243.81

Source: WPC Accounts 2014/15
(Unaudited)

**Table 2: Wylam Parish Council:
Expenditure 2014/15.**

Staff	£	9,816.02
Administration	£	7,376.46
Publications	£	1,754.44
Open Spaces/Equip	£	17,522.22
Joint Burial Precept	£	4,590.00
Wylam PO	£	4,024.76
Grants/donations	£	6,879.11
Museum	£	1,488.00
TOTAL	£	53,451.01

Source: WPC Accounts 2014/15
(Unaudited).

**Table 3: Wylam Parish Council:
Proposed Expenditure 2015/16.**

Staff	£ 12,000.00
Administration	£ 7,540.00
Publications	£ 1,800.00
Open spaces/equip	£ 15,200.00
Joint Burial Precept	£ 5,000.00
Grants/donations	£ 7,626.00
Museum	£ 1,200.00

Source: WPC Budget 2015/16.

Anne Francis
Chair

Signed:

