

Beetham Parish Assembly

ANNUAL PARISH REVIEW 2022/2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Annual Parish Review is to review the main activities and issues which have concerned Beetham Parish Council (BPC) over the past year. Because of the variations in population density within the parish, the parish area is divided into two Wards - East Ward represented by 4 councillors and West Ward represented by 5 councillors.

This newsletter must begin with a tribute to our late monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. Her sudden death came as a shock to us all after a long and illustrious reign. Our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration has now ended. Beetham's 'Green Canopy' trees are now with us and planting will soon begin at selected sites; some may have already taken place. They represent a fitting tribute to a wonderful and dedicated lady who did 'long reign over us'.

2. PARISH ISSUES

Tree management is an on-going task for the Parish Council – and accounts for a substantial chunk of our annual budget. There is always something to do at the two parish council-owned sites – Sandside Cutting in West Ward and what we know as 'Plot 4' in East Ward. The latter runs off in a northerly direction from Leighton Beck Road and provides access to Fairy Steps via the Dallam estate. Trees on these two plots do, sometimes, pose potential danger to nearby property as well as to users of the sites, so have to be dealt with professionally. Our team for this purpose is made up of Dr Jennie Keighley, a professional arboriculturist based in Carnforth, and Scott Thwaites, a local tree surgeon. They work under the direction of the Parish Council.

2. EAST WARD ISSUES

2.1 BEETHAM

Planters on the verge at the A6/Leighton Beck Road junction in Beetham can no longer be maintained by Beetham WI members, who installed them a few years ago. Beetham Nurseries have generously agreed to take over this task in the future. Appropriate plaques will be attached in acknowledgement.

Sadly, the project to install an additional Speed Indicator Device (SID) on the A6 has had to be abandoned, mainly due to difficulties in obtaining the necessary permissions from the police authority.

A new commemorative bench, funded by Brian Dean's widow, has now been installed next to the Beetham war memorial.

2.2 WHASSETT

A new notice board has now been installed at Whassett after the old and badly worn board was finally put out of its misery by vandals.

3. WEST WARD ISSUES

3.1 STORTH

Following submission of a planning application to develop the brown field site at Sandside/Quarry Lane, significant effort has been devoted to preparation of a BPC response to be submitted to the SLDC Planners who will make the final decision on the application. These ambitious plans were for four new blocks of apartments, with car-parking and light industry units and include a café/restaurant on the brownfield site presently occupied by Willacy to store building materials. Additionally two smaller adjacent sites have been earmarked for individual housing etc - some 126 new dwellings and a small number of business units in total. Discussions have been held with (a) the owners of businesses on the site regarding their concerns about the proposals, and (b) the AONB team to identify their concerns about the impact on the AONB landscape, flora and fauna. In principle, BPC support development of the brown field site which was included in the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan published in 2019, provided concerns about the development are resolved before approval of a final plan.

Concerns within the community are also regularly expressed about the continued closure of The Ship Inn although formal "Asset of Community Value" status has now been granted to this much valued, and much missed, feature of Sandside.

Development of a wild-flower verge along Storth Road, near Four Lane Ends, is progressing. Planting of wildflower plugs took place in late September with assistance from the AONB and Storth School representatives. Hopefully, we will see growth of the planted wildflowers during Spring 2023.

The Parish Council's notice board in Storth Square is finally in place, with the Storth Village Hall board attached to one side. It is good that the central location for these boards could be maintained. Three new outdoor seats on Storth Playing Field have been purchased to replace the existing damaged seats, one funded by BPC in recognition of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and two by the Playing Field Management Committee. These will be installed when suitable concrete plinths are in place.

The permissive footpath along the embankment between Friar Cote Bridge and Arnside Station is a popular local facility, with dedicated parking and access for the disabled. During autumn 2022, it was badly blighted by cattle droppings along much of its length to the point where it became virtually unusable by walkers. Prompt action by the tenant farmer was welcomed, after being alerted to this problem by the Parish Council with the cooperation of Dallam Estate as landowner. Another well-used path is the one through Sandside Cutting. This is soon to be upgraded into a Tramper Path, at the suggestion and expense of the local AONB group.

The popularity of our area also brings its problems. Motorcar-borne visitors rather than walkers are thought to be largely responsible for increasing amounts of litter. One such location is Lovers Lane, just south of Sandside. The Parish Council is working with Dallam Estate to deal with this.

4. CONCLUSION

The year 2023 is an election year for Beetham Parish Council. In May 2023 all members of the Parish Council must stand down, but may offer themselves for re-election – although some may not! An election will only be held if the number of candidates exceeds nine, the total number of councillors on the parish council.

It could be that we may soon be searching for new blood. Might you be interested?