

Blackshaw News

Blackshaw Parish Annual Newsletter
April 2018



HILLTOP PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

After what seems like an interminably long and extremely snowy winter, the arrival of Spring finally sees us busy discussing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), which is one of the most important planning policies to affect our area for decades.

As you'll have read in the last newsletter, a NP basically means that at a very local level, we have a say in future developments in our area. The plan will have statutory weight once it has been completed and has successfully passed a referendum so it will affect local planning for years to come. You may also remember that in the last newsletter we said it would be out for consultation soon, but here we are a year later, and we are still waiting. It has taken so long largely due to delays in the Calderdale wide Local Plan with which it must dovetail. However, things are moving and the draft should be out for consultation at end of June. It will be revised mid August, after which Calderdale Council (CMBC) will then do statutory consultation. After more revisions and examinations the final version should be submitted mid November with the referendum happening mid December. So by the end of this calendar year, we should see the fruits of our labour adopted as a formal Neighbourhood Plan.

Blackshaw Policies

We have had the opportunity to create some parish specific policies and the PC has been discussing these in depth recently. The key issues for Blackshaw arising from the consultations are speeding traffic, on street parking, reviewing the 'village envelope', the need to support carefully sited and well designed new residential development, enhancements to the aesthetic character of the settlements,



and protection of key landmarks. There is concern about the number of burglaries and theft of vehicles, the maintenance of local footpaths, access to and from The Steeps area (including the level of inappropriate traffic), the siting of small scale wind turbines and the need to redevelop the Callis Mill site (see Section 8.0) and the Woodman public house site. Also, access to good broadband and improved water management including possible use of existing old dams and introduction of more hydropower are mentioned.

There are many more issues outlined in detail that will be included in the NP. If anyone would like to see the entire list of our specific policies, these can be viewed on the website <http://blackshaw.net/blackshaw-parish-council/> or please contact the Clerk by email or letter at the address listed on the back of this newsletter.

Blackshaw Parish Council usually meet on the 4th Monday of every month at 7.30pm in Blackshawhead Methodist Chapel. The agenda and minutes are published on the noticeboards at Blackshawhead Methodists and by the bus stop at Charlestown Rec. They are also published on the website *All meetings are open to the public and the press.*

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 21st May, 7pm in the Council Chamber at Hebden Bridge Town Hall

This meeting is more informal than our usual council meetings and aims to enable everyone in the Parish to contribute ideas and / or raise concerns. So please come along and let us know what affects you and how the Parish Council can help.

Annual Parish Council Meeting - to follow the Annual Parish Meeting, in Hebden Bridge Town Hall.

This is the business side of the meeting and will include:

- Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and representatives
- Planning Applications
- Accounts and Annual Return

This meeting is also open to the press and public.



Charlestown Allotments

Anyone who has recently visited the parish allotment site (next to the Old Woodman pub) will have noticed what a fantastic job the plottolders have been doing. We have one new plottolder starting this season, and she and everyone else are keen to get planting. If you would like to find out more, or be added to the waiting list (only 1 person on this) contact the Clerk.

Chairman's Report

The Parish Council has continued to be very active throughout the year, meeting once a month (everyone welcome to attend) in Blackshawhead and representing our area at external meetings such as the Town & Parish Council Liaison Group, the Ward Forum, and other meetings with Calderdale Council.

Some of the key issues for us this year have been:

Highways: We continue to push for the white lines to be reinstated to narrow Badger Lane and a 20 mph limit through Blackshawhead Village, both promised in previous years. The PC has a continued concern with speed and traffic volumes through Blackshawhead and inappropriate traffic on Mytholm Steeps. We have been in consultation with CMBC who put in additional signage to discourage HGVs from taking this route. However the gradient sign and removal of the maximum width sign, means that there is an ongoing

issue with vehicles that aren't classed as HGVs (towing vehicles for example), but which cannot handle the steep turns, especially in wintery weather. Pictured is a car transporter, just one of the many vehicles spotted. The PC is writing to CMBC to try and get this issue resolved, but things move very slowly (except the traffic!). The problems experienced in this area were exacerbated when CMBC adversely changed winter gritting without prior notice. The Steeps route is classified as a secondary route and therefore not a gritting priority. The PC have written to the MP (who agreed to put pressure on) and CMBC, to persuade them that this is used as a through route by traffic from Lancashire, and also that lack of gritting hugely impacts already isolated communities. Whether we will manage to get it re-classified and moved up the gritting priority list remains to be seen.

Broadband: The PC has taken a proactive role in attempting to resolve the difficulty with poor broadband access for our more isolated parishioners. Traditional telephone lines have been predominantly copper, however broadband is better suited to Fibre

Optical Cable and BT Openreach have embarked on Fibre enabling their cabinets. From a fibre enabled cabinet broadband can be transmitted by existing copper wires, the problem being that speed diminishes with distance, and beyond 1.4km speeds drastically fall off. The consequence is poor broadband availability in out-lying areas within which a large portion of our Parish falls.

The latest response from Openreach is to promote FTTP (fibre to the property). They list postcodes districts eligible,

with an over-rider that not all properties will be eligible and have a published price list running into thousands of pounds. A meeting with CMBC and Superfast Broadband resulted in a move towards finding alternative providers to BT, who would use wireless provision. CMBC are helping local businesses get grants which may cover the setup costs for this, and there have already been meetings with a company called Boundless Networks. More details on this will be posted on the various email lists and the website if and when things begin to move forwards.

Planning: One of the most important roles of the Parish Council remains as a consultee on local planning applications. We examine all those in our parish, and take care to reflect local views when considering each one. We also maintain pressure on CMBC regarding breaches of planning control and to this end have established a bi-annual meeting between the Chair and Clerk and Calderdales Head of Planning and area Officer to aid understanding of the Planning process.

As chairman I represented the PC at Remembrance Service at the Chapel and laid a wreath. I also attended the Village Carol Singing and the Carol Service at the Chapel which were enjoyable and well attended and raised monies for the Chairmans Charity which this year is Cancer Research.

Other issues such as the Neighbourhood Plan and floods are detailed elsewhere in the newsletter.

Roger Butterworth



Car transport on Steeps, Feb 2018

issue with vehicles that aren't classed as HGVs (towing vehicles for example), but which cannot handle the steep turns, especially in wintery weather. Pictured is a car transporter, just one of the many vehicles spotted. The PC

Community Grants

Every year the Parish Council allocates some of its budget to be spent under Section 137 of the Local Government Act, to benefit the parish or its community. In the last year, we have given grants to Richard Naylor Charities & Heptonstall Exhibitions (a charity giving grants to local pupils who are going onto University - for details of how to apply see <http://blackshaw.net/heptonstall-exhibitions-and-richard-naylor-charities/>), to the Great Get Together Day last June (see elsewhere in this newsletter) and a significant grant to Colden School for playground equipment that will be available to all children and families outside of school hours. Do you belong to a club or group who could benefit from a small grant? If so, please do consider applying, via the Clerk at the address overleaf.

Big Thanks!

At the time of writing it looks likely that our Vice-Chair Mick Davies may be moving out of the parish. Although not confirmed, we couldn't let the opportunity pass to thank him publicly for all his hard work on the parish council. He has chaired the Community Flood Resilience Group, the Neighbourhood Plan group, served as our Chair, served on the Allotment Committee and put many voluntary hours into our parish.

Who owns Oakville Rd?

Another issue that the Parish Council has been involved with, is to help

The Pen



the residents of Oakville Rd in Charlestown determine who has responsibility for the maintenance of the road and boundary wall. The ownership has been in dispute for decades. While the road is unadopted by CMBC, the residents' property deeds do not include it. It was probably owned by the railway along with The Pen, the village green area. At some point the Pen was sold to an individual by the railway company. The individual then offered the Pen in small plots to the houses opposite. They got together, opposed this, and registered it as a Village Green. However, who owns the road was not settled. Maintenance up to now has been done by one man voluntarily, and he's

now retired and can't be expected to continue this level of work. Papers exist that show that the PC and the residents hassled CMBC and the railway company to sort out amongst themselves who was responsible in the late 90s. A meeting between them is noted as scheduled in the year 2000, but there is no record that we have yet found on the outcome of this. It is likely recorded in the minutes of PC meetings, but as the West Yorkshire Archive Service (where PC minutes are logged) has still not reopened these are currently inaccessible. Councillors Sutcliffe and Davies are on the trail and we hope to help residents resolve the issue.

Mystery Hole

For almost two years, there has been a large hole surrounded by orange plastic fencing in the middle of Charlestown Rec rendering the football pitch pretty much unusable.

The Parish Council began trying to get to the bottom of the hole some time ago, by writing to Calderdale Council. They claimed that the hole was something to do with the Environment Agency flood works. Some time was spent tracking down the right people at the EA, who then were adamant that the hole was nothing to do with them. Back to Calderdale, where the trail went cold, until a visit to the Parish Council meeting by Andrew Pitts, CMBC's neighbourhoods coordinator. He agreed to investigate, and lo and behold, the hole was claimed by CMBC and finally the broken drain cover mended, the hole filled in, and the rec complete once more.

Colden School - on the up!

After a period of turbulence, including falling numbers and a departing headteacher, Colden School had some good news after a visit from Ofsted which labelled it to be 'good'. This is fantastic news for our community, at a time when small schools are under threat. Ofsted noted the dedication and commitment of staff and Headteacher Mrs Hetherington said, "Having Ofsted confirm that we are a good school means that we can now set about focusing on making Colden outstanding again." The Parish Council continues to support the school wherever it can (including a donation to the fund for new playground equipment) as we feel that having a thriving school on the border of our parish makes a

significant difference to the community.

CROWS

Guest speakers at the April PC meeting (23rd April) will be the Community Rights of Way Service. They have been doing sterling work in our parish, sorting out parts of the Calderdale Way recently in Blackshawhead, and, thanks to a contribution from Oakville Rd residents, repairing the steps up the hill beside Oak Villas.

Many of you will also know about the fallen tree which destroyed the old stone bridge in Colden Clough. The PC is keeping in touch with CMBC on this, who are facing a possible £12,000 bill to repair it!



Get-together

Last June, residents of Blackshawhead held a lovely community day in the sunshine (pictured left), in honour of the late Jo Cox MP. Thanks to Edith Bowman for organising.



Blackshaw Environmental Action Team continue to be very active. A grant from the People Postcode Lottery has

enabled improvements to the community orchard, with proper steps to the picnic table and the bench.

Thanks must go to BEAT for organising the six-monthly village clean-ups, the latest one happening as this newsletter went to press.

2018 Blackshaw Parish Community Award

The Community Award is given annually in recognition of a special contribution to the life of the Parish. It may be for some particular act during the year or for consistent engagement in community life over a longer period.



The inaugural award was given to Roger Munday last year in recognition of his longstanding work within the community of Blackshawhead. Roger was one of the people who after coming to live in Blackshawhead, set about creating a sense of 'village', a genuine community. He served on the Parish Council, doing two stints as Chair, and during this time, noticed how

Heptonstall had its own identity as a community and he aimed to emulate this. He started a newsletter called 'Village News & Views' and before long there was the village fete, a toddler group, sewing group, and lots of community celebrations and events. The village is now held up as an exemplar thriving community, with thanks in part due to Roger's tireless efforts.

2018's award

There are no rules for nomination. Anyone can nominate their friends, co-workers or people that they are aware of that have made a significant contribution to Parish life. Parish Councillors then meet to consider and determine the award winners for any year. The awards are given by the outgoing Chairman at the Annual Parish Meeting at Hebden Town Hall (see front page).

The closing date for nominations this year will be Friday 11th May. Forms are enclosed with this newsletter and can also be downloaded from the Parish website www.blackshaw.net and should be returned to the Clerk at the address below.

Floods

So much is happening to cope with floods and their aftermath just in and around our neighbourhood that it seems a good time to take stock. There are very significant sums being spent on major flood works in Mytholmroyd and more planned for Hebden Bridge. These will ease the problems but they won't remove them. In the meantime, the Environment Agency predict that intense bouts of flooding are set to become more frequent in Calderdale following a pattern of severe flooding over the past 10 years. Since 1910 there have been 17 record breaking rainfall months or seasons – with 9 of them since 2000.

We know from local experience that upland flooding is becoming more of a problem and help is available in the shape of equipment and supplies if we want to organise ourselves locally. So, please let the Clerk know if you are interested in getting involved in a local flood buddy group that can turn out when we have a local need.

Could you be a Parish Councillor?

It is quite likely that we will be on the look out for a parish councillor to be co-opted onto the council in the next few months.

It is a great way of putting something back into your local community. The council looks at local planning applications, has a say in wider development plans in the area, liaises with Calderdale Council about issues like roads and footpaths, and gets involved with community issues such as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

To find out more, or to apply to be co-opted, contact the Clerk, on blackshawclerk@gmail.com, or 01706 815155



Blackshawhead Fete 2018

This year's Blackshaw fete will be on Saturday 1st September. We need help with planning, setting up and taking down equipment as well as on the day. If you would like to get involved please contact Grayde Bowen at graydebowen@gmail.com or look out for details of our next meeting on <http://blackshaw.net/home/blackshaw-parish-fete-committee/> or if you don't have access to the internet you can call 01706 815155.

Keep in touch!

Don't wait a whole year for the next parish newsletter, why not keep up to date all year round. The website www.blackshaw.net not only has all the agendas and minutes of the parish council on it, but details of other local groups and activities.

There is also a very active Blackshawhead googlegroup which has everything from lost sheep, to loans of equipment, to news on local road closures, all posted by your neighbours. Oakville Road has a similar group, and for those of you in Charlestown there's Charlestown Shout - email the Clerk for details.

And don't forget the useful www.eyeoncalderdale.com, which has up the minute news on issues such as floods and traffic jams in the area.