

Chairman's Report 2007/08

Good evening. Welcome to this the first annual Parish meeting of members elected in 2007. It has been my privilege and pleasure to have served as chairman over the last year and I wish to take this opportunity to thank my councillor colleagues for their support, assistance and hard work. I would also wish to formally welcome Mrs Diane Somers, who was co-opted onto the council to fill a casual vacancy. I am sure Diane will continue to find the position interesting and rewarding and I can reassure residents that she will work hard on their behalf seeking to protect their interests.

Can I also on behalf of Warmsworth residents and ourselves formally congratulate Ray Mullis on becoming our second independent ward councillor and wish him well for the next four years. You can count on the Council for continuing support in the future

Residents will now be aware that Ron Shinn has resigned as clerk to the council with effect from 1st April. I express the sincere thanks of Warmsworth, member councillors and myself for his help, advice and counselling, in what can sometimes be forceful debates. Ron is concentrating his attention to Edlington Town Council in the run-up to his retirement, but had offered to assist the new clerk in the preparation of the year-end accounts and to generally smooth the transition.

I am pleased to welcome Dennis Aitchison, our new clerk to the lions den. He follows a good act but I am confident that given the necessary time to settle in, Dennis will undoubtedly demonstrate his competence and ability for the benefit of the village in general and this council in particular.

I think it is fair to record that 2007/08 has been the most momentous and rewarding year that the majority of this council has experienced. We have seen the completion of what has only been a distant ambition for over five years. I refer of course to the construction of the new extension to the community centre. This was an aspiration expressed by residents in the "Planning for Real" community consultation exercise in 2002/03. Much has been written recently by me regarding this extension and I do not intend to go over old ground. What is generally not known however, is the contribution that our current ward councillor Mrs Georgina Mullis had in securing the SRB funding which has been used to partly finance the construction. A total SRB funding of £1.5 million was earmarked for Edlington but due to Georgina's doggedness, determination and persistence Warmsworth was allocated £100,000 of that money, which in addition to the extension has been used to fund improvements in the flower park.

Your council are extremely pleased with the results of the construction and our appreciation goes to Ara builders and its contractors for their professionalism and hard work. May I also express our appreciation to Mr Nicky Noonan, the director of the company for his cooperation, attention to detail and liaison he has maintained throughout the project which has resulted in very little disruption to centre users throughout the project. We now need the full support of residents and groups to fill the centre to achieve its full potential.

One unfortunate consequence of the new build is that it highlights the poor state of the older building. These are in dire need of some TLC and hopefully the council will in the

not too distant future carry out some refurbishment works to the decor and electrics which should improve the appearance of the two older rooms. We also continue our plans for improvements in the cottage which we started last year. Our new clerk is busy establishing an internet and phone connection into the cottage which will eventually form the nerve centre for the village website, which residents have requested. With the conversion of the old toilets in the centre to a storeroom, the playgroup will be in a position to transfer their remaining equipment from the cottage into the store. This will then release two further rooms in the cottage, which together with the old scouts equipment storeroom will allow the council to consider refurbishment and redecoration. Eventually we should be able to bring the cottage back to its original state and provide an enhanced asset for the village. All work will be carried out with the full involvement of the DMBC conservation officer to ensure the work is in keeping with its surroundings.

Whilst on the subject of improvements, I would wish to personally thank our three environmental warriors, Tracey, Chris and Diane who together with Tracey's mum Sue have done so much to improve the appearance of small neglected areas within the village. Their work continues to be noticed and is favourably commented on. It also brings some reflected recognition to the council and along with the group I fervently hope that their efforts generate a sense of pride in the village from our residents. Only by us leading from the front can we impress on residents their council's commitment to improving the appearance of the village for all our benefit.

On a similar issue I am pleased to report that the compilation of the village plan is nearing completion. The questionnaire results have been analysed and the main priorities requested by residents have been identified. When some additional information has been received the plan will be put together for printing and distributed within the village and to other outside agencies who can assist in implementing the priorities. It will also give us the necessary evidence to support funding bids to provide finance.

On other village matters, the renewal of the lease to the cricket club for use of the cricket field has been agreed. The lease still requires registration which will be undertaken in the coming months. The 2007 village gala was again a great success following the uncertainty about the state of the ground following the downpours we experienced. Localised problem areas at each of the entrances prevented the floats running onto the field, but use of the cricket club fence panels allowed us to permit lighter vehicles onto the field. These prevented the ground being cut up but resulted in some of the panels being damaged. The cricket club were compensated and the panels are available for the future should the need arise. Can I take this opportunity to thank all persons connected with the gala including the committee, school, residents etc who put in so much work to make the day a success. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

Restoration work has been carried out by the environmental group to enhance the appearance of the small garden near the play area. Assistance was provided by some residents and also the community support team. Further work is planned to tidy up the pathway at the top of the field bordering Holiday Inn, who have also carried out some improvement work of their own. Quotes are to be obtained to carry out further improvement works on the cricket field including removal of the longstanding mound of soil adjacent to the cricket club gate. The cleared area will then be reseeded.

A speculative planning application to site a temporary steel container on the field to house the gala equipment, was refused by DMBC planning. The siting of the container was strongly objected to by some residents.

Other planning matters included the granting of permission to develop the area of land at the junction of Beech Grove and High Road. This land contains "Grate Expectations" and adjoining residence and was originally refused permission. An appeal ensued and the inspector upheld the appeal following an inquiry and allowed the development to proceed. Many residents affected by the proposal were extremely disappointed by this outcome and they may rest assured that the council will actively monitor the situation to ensure their interests are safeguarded.

A similar situation exists with the development of the old colliery spoilheap along Lordshead Lane. Along with our clerk a resident expressed grave concerns at the potential impact of traffic from the development on the village at the planning committee meeting. The fears were disregarded and the development received outline approval. It is however a departure from the published plan and consequently has to go to the Minister for ratification. Again residents interests will be monitored.

The allotments continue to be well managed by the allotment association and the continuing success of the allotment site is testament to the dedication of the committee. We thank them for their efforts. Keyland, the owners of the site have indicated that they are not prepared to offer the allotments for sale to the Parish Council at the present time, following the councils refusal to relinquish part of the site back to Keyland. Following inquiry the council has been advised that it could obtain a CPO if Keyland became intransigent. They have indicated recently that they do not object to the allotment association seeking funding to erect new fencing along parts of the perimeter and have agreed to a new lease of the allotment site for a further five years at a rental of £1500. We must continue to maintain pressure on Keyland to commit to allowing us to purchase the site. We must be vigilant regarding the sale of the old reservoir site since my own opinion is we are likely to end up with a new landlord who may wish to try to enhance the development value of the reservoir site with the addition of the allotments.

The application to register Moses Lane as a right of way continues with residents being asked to lodge evidence of usage. This is now being considered in light of the evidence and we are confident of a satisfactory outcome which will protect the status of the lane in the future for the villages benefit.

Verge parking together with the school- run congestion are continuing to be a problem for residents. Regular contact regarding these issues are taking place with Community Safer Neighbourhood Teams who are monitoring the situation with a view to enforcement action being taken. Similarly representations on behalf of residents regarding litter, refuse, vandalism, anti-social behaviour etc will continue to be made until residents are satisfied their interests are being protected. All these issues were raised as concerns in the Parish Plan consultation.

That is all I have to say and I thank you for your attention.