

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Assembly, held in the Fletcher
Hall of Hurworth Grange
on Wednesday, 20th
May 2015, starting at 7:00pm

Attendance

The meeting was attended by all of the twelve Parish
Councillors, the two new
ward councillors, representatives of most of the active
community groups, and
over forty other residents. Total attendance was 78
people.

1.

Welcome

The Chairman of the Council, Jean Peacock welcomed
everybody to the
public meeting and explained that there would be several
short presentations,
and Open Forum, when it is hoped that residents would
put forward their ideas
for the future of the village. Also there are ten tables
around the hall, each
representing a community group, which is active in
the parish. These include
the following:-

- Hurworth Community Association
- Hurworth Village Hall
- All Saints Church
- PACT and Police
- EPICH and Clervaux
- Tees River Trust
- Hurworth Country Fair
- Allotment Committee
- Hurworth Ward Councillors
- Hurworth Parish Council

This is an excellent opportunity for residents to find

out more about the many activities which are going on in this vibrant village.

1. Annual Assembly.

Chairman's Address.

It has been an interesting year – full of change.

There have been some significant changes in the make up of your Council.

In November three very worthy and valuable Cllrs left due to other commitments- Ken Pattison, Jeff Kemp, Tony Needham. They kindly timed their resignations to avoid any likelihood of this Parish being forced into a costly by-election.

We have since been fortunate to be able to fill those vacancies by co-opting three volunteer Lady Cllrs and now we have a full and balanced Council. Six female members and six male members. This has meant a Council with some younger Cllrs..

During the year the three Speed Traffic Monitors were installed and made operational. Data from the monitors is being downloaded and passed to Durham Police and DBC for analysis. The monitors are repositioned from time to time to ensure spontaneity. It has been gratifying to see from the local press that Middleton St George & Sadberge councils have now followed our initiative with speed monitors.

Your Council have made efforts to financially support village projects with donations to the Country Fair, the Village Hall, All Saints Church, Open air Concert, EPICH and other village senior groups.

An additional item of Exercise equipment has been installed at the Grange Play Area.

We are very fortunate in having a competent and dedicated Parish Clerk who allocates a vast amount of time, well above his official remit, to the Parish. He has assembled a tremendous amount of detail to back up our application to NALC to secure Council Quality Status for this council which will demonstrate that our procedures and administration is up to the highest standard.

One of our recently retired Councillors, Ken Pattison should be commended for his work in tidying up Parish matters relating to ownership of grey land areas within the Parish and for coordinating flood measures with DBC and NWL in the Glebe & Friars Pardon area.

Your Parish is working closely with the Tees River Trust to counter the threat of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. The Tees from Croft to Newbus Grange is now covered for treatment of invasive species in co-operation with Thornaby Angling Club & Rockliffe Hall. The first spraying of our stretch of the Tees has already been carried out.

Comprehensive work has been achieved securing a survey of all Parish trees. those in The Grange, on the Green and over the rest of the village so that we are aware of condition & need for treatment.

A draft Emergency Plan for the Parish has been prepared for your examination to be presented later this evening.

Councillors looking after footpaths, highways, trees, parking, litter & planning have worked well to co-operate with our Borough Council and I think that due to their efforts our relationships with DBC are strong, helpful and friendly & better than ever in spite of the difficult financial straits that DBC suffer with funding cuts and staff reductions.

A new initiative is under way to walk all Parish footpaths during the next six months and Parishioners are invited to join in this programme which has had a successful start with three walks completed so far.

Highlight of the year – a successful Country Fair and Open Air concert.

Finally may I thank all Councillors for their support, help and input in the last year. We now go into 2015-2016 for a 12 month Council period with another election in May 2016

I am very pleased to announce that we have elected a new Chair for this period - Mrs Jean Peacock who has been an admirable Vice Chair during the last 12 months. I now therefore bow out and hand over to Jean to take formal charge of the remainder of this Event.

Tony Winnett
Chairman 2013-2015

2.

Hurworth Parish Plan 2010-2015.

Peter Allan, the Parish Clerk gave a presentation, which illustrated the progress which has been made in the five years from the development of the Hurworth Parish Plan. This covered all the sections which had been the subject of a detailed questionnaire in 2009, and the publication of the Parish Plan in 2010.

The presentation indicated that approximately eighty percent of the Objectives have been attained, and reasons were given for the items which had not yet been fulfilled.

The presentation concluded with a preview of the 2015

Action Plan, and a request for the meeting and residents to put forward their views and suggestions for projects and ideas which will further improve our beautiful and vibrant village.

A copy of this presentation and the 2015 Action Plan will be placed on the Parish web site.

3.

Planning Applications in Hurworth

Tony Winnett made a presentation which showed the number of applications made over the last ten years, and how the volume of applications has grown in the last three years.

The parish council has monitored this situation most diligently, and made and raised many objections. Most objections have been rejected either initially, or after appeal.

The Parish Council has raised the subject with our local MP, through the Chairman of NALC and via CPRE and the Planning Department of DBC.

Most of these overtures have not borne fruit, but Westminster have indicated that there is to be an official investigation into the Gypsy situation throughout England.

4.

Parish Walks

Val Hughes gave a talk on the importance of residents walking the rights of way, to ensure that we preserve the village rights and ensure that the pathways are in good order and not neglected.

There are seventeen officially defined walks in the parish, and it is the intention to organise walks covering all of these by the end of 2016. Three walks have already taken place, with good support, and all residents are urged to join the group.

5.

Hurworth Contingency Plan

A template was presented outlining the possible threats to the village from Flood, accident. There is a need for volunteers to be found to form a

Contingency Planning Group to handle emergencies as and when they arise.

6.

Invasive species threatened our environment

John Musham, from the Tees River Trust, gave a most informative

presentation covering the threat which is creeping into our environment,

mainly through the River Tees. Although many other rivers have greater

problems. The Tees has its own share of actual and potential dangers.

The specific purposes of the Trust are to protect, conserve, rehabilitate and

improve the river and its catchment area, its feeder streams, water courses,

estuary and adjacent coastal areas; to advance the education of the public or

any association, company, Local Authority, administrative or Government

agency or public body or representative body; to advance the understanding of

the river, the river corridor and its catchment area including fauna, flora and

economic or social activity and river catchment management; to stimulate

broader socio-economic benefits derived from an improved river, particularly

activities which generate employment

Hogweed is now rampant on many stretches of the river from Barnard Castle

downstream to Stockton. Hurworth is badly hit, and a plan has been put into

practice to combat the species by spraying the area twice a year.

Japanese Knot Weed has also appeared in Hurworth, and this causes a more

severe threat, as it can be most destructive, and very difficult to eradicate.

Action is being taken where outbreaks have been reported. Himalayan Balsa is

a potential threat, which is rampant higher up the Tees, but not yet a problem

in our parish. All residents are asked to be aware of these threats and report

any instances encountered.

John applauded the way in which Hurworth has applied itself to the problems,

with great support from Rockcliffe Hall, Thornaby Angling Club and the Parish

Council.

7. Open Forum

The Chair thanked all the speakers and opened the meeting to the public.

Several topics were raised and duly noted for further discussion, and it was

agreed that informal questions and debates would be continued during the

buffet and drinks; the public were urged to talk to the representatives of the

community groups who had prepared their tables for interactive talks.

The Chair thanked everybody for attending at 8:30pm and informal talks

continued until 9:45pm