

Healeyfield Parish Council

Serving Castleside and District



Striving to keep our community thriving

May 2024

Chairman's Annual Report 2023/2024

The Parish Council has continued to work to meet the needs of the community by listening and responding to local issues and has worked with others such as Durham County Council, Mid-Durham AAP, Police and Village groups to achieve this. This report provides only the highlights of the work undertaken by the council over the past year.

Underpinning everything the council does is the work of our parish clerk. Mr. Ian Robson. Ian supports the work of the council above and beyond his contracted hours without thought of reward. I am most grateful to him for the commitment he demonstrates to the council and to those in the community which we serve.

The council has continued to cut the grass throughout Rowley, the verges close to the Cemetery Gates and also opposite Maudville. We have also continued to provide flower tubs throughout the parish which have been planted twice in the year, which as usual have been splendid.

In 2023, the council was successful in receiving a grant to aid our Civil Contingency Plan. As part of this, the council has been able to support the Warm Hub at Castleside Village Hall held each week in the winter months. Furthermore, generator hook-up points have been installed at Castleside Village Hall and St Johns Community Hall, Moorside so that in the event of widespread power outage, hubs can quickly be formed to support residents.

Following nominations, and in pursuance of section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972; Healeyfield Parish Council conferred the Honorary Freedom of the Parish of Healeyfield on David Dixon and Ann Scott. A certificate, created by local calligrapher, John Stokoe, and a plaque were awarded to them in recognition and appreciation of their long and eminent service to the community and the council.

The number attending the Autumn Festival this year has fallen and has resulted in the council reevaluating this event for future years. Therefore, the Autumn Festival will not take place in 2024.

As usual, residents of the parish paid tribute to our fallen in our usual way this year. The parade and service were exceptionally well attended by villagers. Clergy, parish and county councillors, uniformed organisations, village groups, local schools and residents paraded from outside of St Johns Church to the War Memorial. The parade was led by Mr. John Stafford of 102 Battalion REME, playing the bagpipes. As usual, clergy from all churches which serve the parish led the service with a poem being read by a pupil of Castleside Primary School. Representatives from organisations that serve the parish laid wreaths.

At the end of November, the Parish Council once again held the Annual Christmas Light 'switch on' in conjunction with St Johns Church, bringing Christmas cheer to the centre of Castleside. The well attended event hosted Castleside Primary School Choir and Consett Brass.

In recent months, time has been dedicated to the planning and preparation to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day which is on Thursday 6th June 2024. The lighting of a Beacon and a firework display are planned.

The Parish Council regularly reviews its budget and always ensures best value for any work that it undertakes. It has been necessary to increase our precept for the financial year 2024/2025 by 4.66% meaning that the annual precept for a Band 'D' property is £27.16.

It has been an enormous privilege to represent my community, and I am proud of what the Council has achieved over the past year. Councillors put aside their differences and focus their efforts on achieving the best outcome for residents, treating one another with respect and courtesy. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my fellow councillors for their contributions and commitment over the past year.

My thanks are also extended to Douglas Oliver and Mike McGaun our County Councillors for their advice, support with local issues and for keeping us up to date with the decisions and events at Durham County Council.

Adam Pearson
Chairman, Healeyfield Parish Council 2023/2024.