

Whalton Parish Council  
Chairman's Report May 2019

The Parish Council met on 6 occasions during the last year.

The Northumberland Local Plan has now passed through the final consultation stage and is currently being finalised for submission to the inspectorate. The Parish Council has supported NCC's position on Green Belt Policy and have made representation to that effect.

There has been however a steady stream of planning applications a number of which were on green belt land thus leading the P.C. to register objections for these. We were pleased to see a consistency in the NCC planning dept. in recommending refusal.

It has been a rather frustrating year with a number of ongoing issues from the previous one including - road markings, Article 4 letters, delays in planning applications being determined, highways and street lighting issues. We are pleased to see some progress at last on most of these matters including H bars being repainted in 4 sensitive areas and hope that the others will be resolved in the near future. We agreed to not having the centre white line replaced after resurfacing of the road and this together with the new 20mph restriction is having some influence on reducing the speed of many road users. We hope it will continue. The new speed restriction through the village has required the P.C. to update the flashing warning lights to reflect the lower speed limit. We have requested a meeting with NCC to find a suitable alternative site for the village green lamp.

On a further positive note the defibrillator training on 22<sup>nd</sup> May last year was well received by over 30 parishioners who attended. This was a free course but the PC made a donation to the provider in lieu of a fee. Thankfully no one has had to put the training into practice to date but we are all grateful to have this life saving facility within Whalton .

In line with our policy, requests for grants to the Church and Village Hall were again met. The PC also agreed to include the cost of the Baal Fire Insurance for the Village Hall . We were pleased to welcome the Headteacher of Whalton School to our September meeting and she brought us up to date on the school's ambitions for the future.

At our request NCC pruned the millennium oak tree to give it a better shape which they have agreed to continue to monitor.

Additional bins have been installed in Whalton and Ogle by Gavin Christie our handyman to further encourage dog walkers to use them for the disposal of used plastic 'poo' bags.

Our thanks to Malcolm Wilkinson for his skill as an auditor over the last few years as he retires from the post. Our gratitude also goes to our clerk Stephen Rickitt for his dedication to the job this year in some difficult circumstances. We are very fortunate to have his vast experience and knowledge of local government to ensure we meet all the increasing legal and bureaucratic requirements in terms of finance and administration.

Sue Richardson (Chair)