

Chair's Annual Report 2019

Silverdale Parish Council

1 Changes in Membership

During the year Peter Rout stood down after several years of service, so we thank him for his support for our work. Celia Jarret was co-opted to bring the parish council back to full strength. Celia has already made her mark in our meetings.

2 External Contacts

The main change from 2018 that Jan Siery, Amelia Rout and I are members of the Walley's Quarry Landfill Liaison Committee which meets quarterly (see paragraph 6.7).

Amelia Rout and I continue to represent residents of the Parish on the Western Communities Locality Action Partnership, meeting each quarter with Aspire, Police, Streetscene and other council staff and councillors (see paragraphs 5.3, 5.4 and 6.9). I became chair last April.

Owing to illness Chris Spence stood down as borough councillor for Holditch and Chesterton but continued as parish councillor for Silverdale. We wish him a full recovery.

3 Silverdale Parish Council Budget

Silverdale PC reported a small decrease in the Precept for 2019/20 (£18.32 per Band D property) at a time of general increases among other local government agencies, often accompanied by reductions in service. Our future funding is secure in view of the need to help complete several local large projects and provide the range of local services to our community.

4 Parish Council Community Grants

To support the work that is done by Silverdale by local community groups, the Parish Council has a £2,000 fund to make small grants plus a separate budget allocated to Christmas events in the community.

In the last year, some of the small grants have been given to:

Aspire Primary School Uniform Grant	500
Elim Church Children's Christmas Party	500
Christmas Tree and Lights events	
Parksite Estate	200
Silverdale Parade Lower	200
Silverdale Parade Pied Piper Entertainments	200

Total Larger Awards/Grants £1,600

5 LARGE PROJECTS

5.1 Miner's Tribute Grant

In January the Heritage Lottery Fund approved a grant of £72,800 to cover the restoration work and associated community engagement. Project management appointments were made in March to deliver the ambitious programme of monument restoration and community arts activities over the next 18 months.

A grant from Ibstock was required in the previous year for the parish to appoint Sarah Bonam of Letting in the Light. We thank her for creating the successful bid. Hall Conservation Ltd. up-dated their report at a cost of £480 to clarify matters about the work necessary.

Now, after many years of searching for a solution to long term maintenance problems, another of our major projects and our most ambitious is being realised. We can anticipate the wonderful miner's tribute restored for future generations and the re-engagement of people in Silverdale with our heritage.

5.2 Miner's Wheel and the Interpretation Board Grant

The completion of the capital project to re-erect the wheel was not without some access arrangement problems with the contractor and also safely hoisting the winding gear. We thank Matt Melvin for his work in ensuring this was done successfully.

We hosted a ceremony in May 2018 to inaugurate the new imposing wheel structure at the entrance to Silverdale Country Park. We invited a speaker and encouraged former miners to celebrate our

special mining heritage. There were activities for children made possible by Ant Sutcliffe to make it a special day for families.

Our information board was fixed on site in February setting out the origins of the wheel, following contacts with Silverdale History Society and many other interested parties and all partners to the project.

We thank Chris Spence (Plaque epitaph), Fr Peter Jones of St Luke's (photo of dedication service) and Claude Haggett (Silverdale Mine photos) but particularly to Clare Withington for so many re-edits of the text as our understanding of the origin of the winding gear expanded. Red Industries' Landfill Communities Fund was the source of this grant.

5.3 Ilkley Place Play Area (Western Communities LAP)

Play Area extension scheme Phase 2 consisting of outdoor exercise apparatus was completed 2018 (see also item 8). An opening event, pencilled in for the half term October 2018 was deferred to allow for cleaning of existing equipment.

5.4 Skateboard Ramp (Western Communities LAP)

Funding applications are anticipated in September this year for a new Skateboard provision to replace the old ramp (closed without notice because of health and safety fears). A consultation phase is needed to ensure the scheme met the needs of existing residents and users. Cllr Rout was our lead on this proposal.

The LAP has taken on the project and options for the area have been set out with Landscape Architect Jen Hough. Target funding agencies have been identified for a replacement.

6 CAMPAIGNS

One of our important roles is to make representations when vital services are threatened and public safety is at risk because of administrative changes or budget cuts.

6.1 Brighton House

An essential part of the fabric of specialist nursing and social care provided for people in Silverdale and Newcastle specialised in re-ablement. The care home was closed in 2017 because of lack of adequate funding with the loss of 25 beds and 50 full and part-time staff.

We campaigned alongside many other agencies to maintain the service. In 2017 Brighton House was acquired by Aspire and commissioned as a short-term 'step down' service to provide nursing care for patients discharged from hospital.

Then the Care Home closed again apparently following a discovery of legionella bacterium. Aspire proposed a scheme for the Brighton former care home to be converted into 16 one bedroom apartments and 3 two bed apartments. SPC had opposed previous plans as a significant fully staffed provision would be deleted in such circumstances.

Apartments are to be let as "affordable rent" properties so future tenants will pay 80 percent of the market rate. Also stipulated in March 2019 was a financial contributions of £93,727 based on £4,933 per converted dwelling to secure planning permission, and earmarked for improvements to Silverdale Park.

6.2 Heritage Park Play Areas

Silverdale Parish Council opposed the plans by David Wilson Homes which would reduce the amount of play space below the original application in 2007 and the issue is ongoing with the Planning Department. Matt Melvin has been putting pressure of the Planning Department to take action and restore the original planning consent provision.

6.3 Safety Improvements: Mini Roundabout Pepper Street & Scott Hay Road

Matt Melvin also highlighted the traffic hazards repeatedly last year with co-operation from residents to get high quality film footage of the dangers posed to vehicles and pedestrians and then offered design changes to improve safety. Intervention from County Councillor Dave Jones, the Highways Department have included an amended scheme in 18/19 capital programme, but the start date is not yet known.

6.4 St Luke's Pepper Street School Patrol

A crossing patrol at St. Luke's Primary was threatened by proposed cuts to SCC Education budget and Silverdale were poised to save the service, but these cuts were withdrawn. There are still long-standing issues for the Parish to focus to ensure safety round the school.

We feel that one 'lollypop' person is not sufficient for the amount and intensity of pedestrian and other traffic, for example.

6.5 Joint Local Plan and former Municipal Keele Golf Course Site

In 17/18 Silverdale PC opposed the Joint Local Plan initial proposal for 1,800 houses in a mixed development as representing a considerable threat to the identity of the parish by coalescing Silverdale with Keele and Thistleberry. The subsequent loss of 80 hectares of greenbelt, outdoor leisure activity in the driving range, open space, amenity space, woodland and natural habitat were likely. There's huge infrastructure implications from school catchment to land drainage and road construction and parking.

The second informal scheme reduced the housing to 1,000 and included retail and educational facilities as well as some green energy. We cast doubt on the housing need calculation requiring an exception to the policy of retaining the greenbelt and so welcomed the Government's forecast of 361 homes annually as opposed to the 682 originally estimated by Newcastle BC earlier in 2017. In any event the draft Local Plan has been deferred for at least 12 months. However, the Newcastle BC scheme is not dead just deferred.

The Government's national Planning Policy Guidance was revised in February 2019 but changes in the way developers can exploit the viability assessments might cancel out any additional protection afforded to the green belt; something I can report on in more detail after the Westminster Briefing on 30 April 2019.

6.6 Underground Fire Remediation at Hollywood Lane in Keele Parish

For many years there was concern about danger to children and residents where Hollywood colliery fire was active. Keele Homes had bought the greenbelt land for developing 100 homes. Keele inherited the security issues on a vast site without adequate fencing. In line with the requirement of the planning permission for 100 new homes, a remediation scheme was put in place. Keele PC were the lead organisation for critical meetings of interested parties, involving Silverdale Parish councillors.

Underground Fire Remediation commenced in November and a meeting was held in Silverdale for all residents fronted by the consultants and Environment Agency to explain the processes to be followed. Residents in Keele and Silverdale expressed scepticism that the fire could be extinguished and there was some geological support to this view.

Considerable movement of spoil and debris have taken place as well as on site de-contamination. Recent progress reports circulated from Professional Remediation Ltd that the heat recorded at 400 degrees Celsius. It was not clear as to what point the work was planned to finish but the consultants were confident the fire would be extinguished.

The clerk was asked to write to the Director of Planning about his assurances that a bond would be put in place to ensure the completion of the remediation work. This bond condition was not implemented as we were led to believe.

The bond issue somehow detracts from the completion of remediation but our focus will be avoidance of risk to nearby residents, including new dangers for the new development.

6.7 Walley's Quarry Landfill Odour

Red Industries Ltd. has a 10 year Environment Agency licence to dispose of non-hazardous waste and stable hazardous waste. We highlighted previously through our Facebook the reporting of offensive smells and other environmental problems, such as bird nuisance and rodents. An Environment Agency Study of Ambient Air Quality at circulated in December 2018 noted that in the main the methane and hydrogen sulphide and particulates were all within "tolerable" levels. Air quality evidence has been disputed at Silverdale and Knutton.

Despite representation on the Liaison panel that meets quarterly to review the licence conditions, there were widespread reports of offensive odours in late 2018.

A public meeting organised by residents from Westlands, Thistleberry and Knutton was attended by about 100 people. Environment Agency are conducting further air quality investigations and were party to the meeting but not owners of the site.

Red Industries formally deny that their Landfill is the source of the foul aroma reported across the western side of Newcastle under Lyme and there is still an official mystery over the air pollution, which needs to be resolved soon as residents' patience is being stretched.

A programme shown on BBC 1 Midlands Today on 8 April brought a wider attention to the issue and we hope the added publicity puts pressure on Red and the Environment Agency to come up with a lasting solution to the odour problem.

6.8 Watercourse and Flooding

In late autumn we continue to clear debris from the Casey Lane End watercourse and other necessary work. Sometimes blockages are due to grass, leaves and bricks deliberately fly tipped. We work with the county to reduce the effect of poor design and condition of the watercourse and culvert Rear of Sneyd Avenue and Kinsey Street. Flooding from surface water has occurred at Underwood Road and Silverdale Road; both reported to the Flood Team at the County Council. County Councillor Dave Jones is investigating the feasibility of adding additional grids in areas that are vulnerable to flooding.

6.9 ASB Mineral Line (Newcastle Greenway) at Station Road/The Brighton

Several instances of anti-social behaviour by young people congregating near the old railway platforms and the play area at Heritage Park have plagued residents' lives.

To limit this activity the LAP was successful in applying for a small Council grant towards environmental planting. Further measures are necessary to ensure the residents' rights to peaceful enjoyment of their homes are not disrupted. In particular more patrols and actions by Newcastle Police as well as completion of the area once the railway crossing at Station Road and the main thoroughfare for groups of youngsters at night.

More recently new residents have been threatened by older criminals. This has initiated increase activity by local police patrols. Environmental and road surfacing is outstanding at the Station Road Development, there's been fly tipping of builders rubble and a section of the perimeter wall to the railway sidings has collapsed.

Significant investment in physical assets has been partly successful in improving conditions but much is still required to integrate the development with the adjoining Greenway to truly make a difference to Silverdale.

7 SERVICES

7.1 Acre and Park Road Allotments

Our allotment associations have continued excellence and won many horticultural awards.

7.2 The New Silverdale PC Ranger Service

The Parish Council were concerned about the impact that increased fly tipping and reductions in funding for weeding and tree clipping were having on the village and opted to reverse the trend with the appointment of a part time handyman/handywoman.

This is the first new post we have established and a fresh approach to dealing with the condition of pavements and public spaces in Silverdale. The Job Description for the role was revised at the time of writing and adverts will shortly go out and we look forward to making an appointment this year providing a better service at no additional net cost to Silverdale residents.

8 PETITIONS (Ilkley Place Play Area Community Governance Review and Silverdale PC)

Ilkley Place is located in Keele Parish but is accessible mainly from Silverdale and always considered a Silverdale facility. There are several spaces; under-fives, netball/5 a side football hard playing area, football pitch and equipment for adults.

To change the boundary and include the play area with in Silverdale, Newcastle BC advised that at least 10 per cent of local signatures were required-450 people from Silverdale and 250 Keele people. Keele Parish Council approved our proposal in 2017.

The Community Governance Review for Silverdale CP is asking to increase the representation of Parksite by one member to reflect the size of that area, carried out at the same time as Ilkley Place.

These two petitions are held in abeyance until we can deploy a volunteer group to amass the required number of signatures.

Henryk Adamczuk (Chair)