

Chair's Annual Report 2020

SILVERDALE BUDGET

Silverdale PC reported a small increase in the Precept for 20/21 (£18.98 per Band D property). The funding will be used for things that directly benefit the Parish of Silverdale eg measures to combat ASB, asset maintenance and also keeping the village clean and tidy. Due to Covid-19, we held remote meetings and continued to operate as a local democratic parish organisation with entirely new challenges and remain intact to offer continuity as we recover from the health emergency.

Miner's Tribute Restoration (Heritage Lotteries Fund)

Earlier in 2020 London based conservators Plowden & Smith were awarded the contract to remove and restore in their workshop. Plowden & Smith are a leading provider of specialist restoration services being professionally accredited to the Institute of Conservation and a member of the International Council of Museums. Sadly, due to lockdown, the removal has been postponed until the summer.

The community engagement element of the project has also progressed well with a memory collecting event on 14th January 2020. Badge and Lantern making events also took place on 15th and 18th February 2020. A film showing of the documentary about life in Silverdale Jamland, (presented by film-maker Brian Nixon) was well attended. Other performances, The Proud Valley (starring actor-activist Paul Robeson introduced by Ray Johnson MBE, Professor of Film filmed partly in Silverdale about 1939) and a theatre performance has also been postponed. This is along with the glorious lantern parade that so many youngsters and their families were looking forward to and due on 28 March 2020, which was postponed for the second time. These elements will be picked up again later in 2020.

Skateboard and Scooter Ramp (NBC with Western Communities LAP)

Cllr Amelia Rout led the group which secured over £90,000 of funding from Red Industries, Ibstocks, NBC and 'a sponsored silence'. Tenders will be sought for a possible start later in the year.

Flooding Risks

Silverdale Parish Council has worked closely with County Councillor Dave Jones. Improvements to drains at Church Road were carried out and intermittent flash flooding problems identified at Silverdale Rd/Cemetery Rd and Underwood Rd/Pepper St. We found out that Highways set the bar very high for some important mitigation work; at least 10 household had to be effected within their homes and some areas prone to were judged 'low priority'.

A consultant's report for NBC in October 2019 showed there were parts of Silverdale, Knutton and Cross Heath with vulnerability. More detailed investigation were requested in a report for the Newcastle and Kidsgrove Town Deal, a national scheme for regenerating about 100 towns in England.

Heritage Park Play Areas

Silverdale Parish Council opposed the plans by developer, David Wilson Homes to reduce the amount of play space below the original planning permission granted in 2007 and the issue is ongoing with Planning. During the lockdown anti-social behaviour in defiance of social distance guidelines has occurred. We have worked with local police and contractors to cordon off the play areas.

Pepper Street & Scott Hay Road Mini Roundabout

Councillors highlighted the traffic hazards particularly for school children repeatedly last year. Following intervention from County Councillor Dave Jones and lobbying from Parish Councillor Matt Melvin, the Highways Department are now making the roundabout improvements.

Joint Local Plan and Keele Golf Course Site

Keele Golf course lies mostly within Silverdale and is owned by the Borough Council. Master planning by the Borough Council with Keele University created a consultation exercise chaired by the Borough Council's Chief Executive with Keele and Silverdale parishes invited. The Joint Local Plan of Newcastle and Stoke on Trent proposes that 1,200 houses in a mixed development on the site, with the promise of another primary school and some retail.

It still represents a threat to the identity of the parish. Merging Silverdale with Keele creates a big suburb with the loss of 80 hectares (one third of a square mile) of greenbelt. There's no guarantee of infrastructure, such as new road or roundabout construction on the A525. Other problems, such as parking, public transport, school catchment and land drainage is affected as well as further pressure on our services, doctors, dentists and specialist retail.

As housing need numbers did not stack up, and future housing and employment demand is uncertain Silverdale Parish Council opposes the revised master plan. Silverdale Parish Council will be looking to work with Keele Parish to join forces and issue a joint statement against moving the green belt for the development.

Preventing illegal use of motor bikes

Last August councillors met with police and walked the mineral line to discuss solutions to dangerous use by illegal bikes. Installation of kissing gates and fencing at Station Rd would prevent entry and exit of illegal motorbikes. Work started in March 2020 and will complete when conditions allow.

Landfill Odour and Discharge Limit

Odour from Walley's Quarry had been raised in the election campaign and afterwards by new MP Aaron Bell. Environment Agency's Air Quality Survey noted levels of gasses and pollutants were not sufficiently high to exceed WHO guidelines. The official 'mystery' over the air pollution has been solved but residents were dismayed to learn the odour is within international norms. Our experience is that the bar is set too high for air pollution to be a health hazard. MP Aaron Bell argued in his maiden speech for further legislation. We will pursue the passage of the 2019-21 Environmental Protection Bill containing legally-binding environmental improvement targets.

Red Industries applied to increase the amount of waste tonnage per year from 250,000 to 400,000. The Parish Council opposed this in two consultation responses. The Chief Environmental Health Officer and Planning reported their reservations. We were shocked to learn during one liaison meeting that the limit had been temporarily changed for the current year. The Scrutiny Committee of the Borough Council are due to complete their investigation and report once the site visit by councillors has taken place.

Silverdale Community Payback Service

To address concerns of reducing environmental services provided by the Borough and County Council, the Parish Council have appointed a team of Community Payback workers. Although this has also been paused for the current Covid-19 restrictions, when they are active again they will address environmental matters of concern across the Parish.

Henryk Adamczuk (Chair)