

Walton Parish Council Chairman's Report 2014/15

The last year saw the departure of several people from the council including Randal Brown as Chairman, Colin Pool as Clerk and Justin Heaton as an elected councillor – I'd like to start by thanking them for their service and commitment to the village and council.

I would also like to once again welcome Janet Parkin as Parish Clerk to the council and I look forward to working with you over the coming year.

I have sat on the council for 12 years and whilst it is a great privilege to chair the council, this will be my only year as chair. The council currently has vacancies for two councillors and we need to ensure that these positions are filled moving forward if we are to achieve anything this coming year as the cycle track now needs driving at pace. I don't see this as an onerous task – many hands make light work and the outcome will be a testament to the hard work put in thus far and moving forwards...

Looking back it has been a frustrating year and one in which little progress has been made – largely as a result of delays outside of our control and I will cover these now in my report:

Neighbourhood Plan

The Localism act promised great things to local councils and sadly until Leeds City Council finalises its own planning policy we have yet to see any progress on this. This has naturally been hampered by the election; however it is my hope that now that the government has been given a mandate for another term we may now see some progress. To the matter of the NP - whilst complete, we have reached an impasse with the council as the trading estate development was not known at the time of our submission and therefore it would appear that we need to repeat the consultation process with the local parish – I will be seeking further clarification now that there is a new planning officer in place and if this is indeed a requirement then we shall have to do this.

Thorp Arch Trading Estate

TATE has remained an emotive subject with little progress and has served to split the local community on its viability, sustainability and therefore fitness for purpose. The emergence of a site at Bramham has also compounded matters further and this has become a political issue within Leeds City Council.

Whilst the stance of the Parish Council remains unchanged, we have held discussions with TAG and agreement in principle to more open communication moving forward. Both parties now understand each's position and whilst we may not agree on all points I feel there is a more collaborative atmosphere moving forward.

Cycle Track

I am pleased to say that the cycle track lease documents are finally ready to be signed and we will be doing so in due course. However funding remains an issue and we will be committing the village to an ongoing lease of the land which will require maintenance whilst funding is secured to build the track. This means that we will be paying for land which technically we won't be able to use and it is therefore my intention that the working party be reinvigorated to progress this matter.

Crime

Crime statistics have largely remained static which is great news; however as residents of the parish we must remain vigilant.

Finally, I would like to thank the Parish Councillors and all those who have volunteered to lend a hand over the course of the last year and Janet Parkin the new Parish Clerk for getting up to speed and supporting us through this period of transition. This concludes my review of the past year and I would like to submit it for the records.

Signed:



Date: 18th May 2015