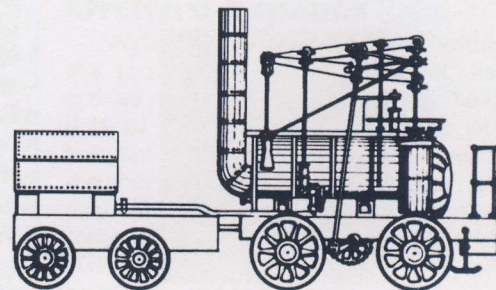


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Spring 2011

No. 100

County and Parish Council Budgets

We reported in the last issue of the "Globe" that we were waiting to hear about the final level of cuts which the County Council were planning to make in 2011/12 in the light of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. At the end of December the County Council wrote to Town and Parish Councils with a list of services that might not continue unless taken over by local councils. Even though the Parish Council was legally required to complete its own Budget for 2011/12 and submit its Precept demand by 24 January, by the middle of January the County Council had still not informed local councils of its final decisions.

Meetings had been held with Parish and Town Council representatives toward the end of the year to discuss the likely changes but with no clear picture we were becoming increasingly anxious about the likely way forward. Then, in late January, just as further meetings were anticipated, the County Council decided to defer all of the cuts they had anticipated passing on to Local Councils in 2011/12 until the following financial year, meaning that the Parish Council would not need to consider whether to take over specific services before 2012/13

Needless to say, this came as a big relief and enabled Wylam Parish Council to agree a Budget for 2011/12 which is only slightly larger than that for the current year, with an increase of only £500 in the Precept (money raised for the Parish Council through Council Tax).

This does not, of course, mean that decisions about how local services are going to be delivered have gone away for good, only that they have been deferred until next year. Senior County Councillors have now committed themselves to talking directly to individual Parish and Town Councils (or groups of small neighbouring Councils) over the next few months in order to negotiate



Signs of Spring at Charlie's Corner

about the local services that might be transferred. We have been assured that by August this year, we will know exactly what changes we can expect and the impact these will have on our 2012/13 Budget. Needless to say, Wylam Parish Council, in close consultation with residents, will make every effort to ensure that Wylam is treated fairly and that local people continue to receive the best level of service possible in the circumstances.

We are arguably in a slightly more fortunate position than some communities in that the Hagg Bank Play Area, the bus shelter at Charlie's Corner, the War Memorial, public seating and the Ovingham Cemetery are already owned and maintained by the Parish Council and the Jubilee Playing Field by Wylam Playing Field Association. In some parishes and towns, similar facilities are owned and managed by the County Council which may now seek to pass this responsibility and its associated costs to local councils.

However, there are several local facilities and services in Wylam which are owned or provided by the County Council including the library, the public toilets and grass cutting of many of the open spaces, which the County Council may try to pass on!

Our 100th Issue!

This issue of the "Wylam Globe" is the 100th since it was first published by Wylam Parish Council in July 1973 and, to mark the occasion, we have included a supplement, particularly recalling some of the more notable events and points of possible interest from past issues. If you are a long-standing resident of Wylam we trust it will help you to reminisce about days past and, if you have moved to Wylam more recently, we hope it will add a little colour to your knowledge of the village and its community.

Dine out with Drama

Wylam Amateur Dramatic Society will, at 7.30pm on Saturday 2 April, present "An Evening of Dining and Entertainment" which promises to be very entertaining. The event will commence with "bubbly" and canapés, progressing to a hilarious one-act comedy followed by a two-course meal. Booking forms are obtainable from Stobo's and the Wine Lodge with tickets at £15. First come, first served!



Peter Clarke



Peter Clarke, who died in January after a long battle with cancer, had served the Parish Council and the Wylam community for many years. Although widely known, Peter was a quiet man and, as was said at a Service of Thanksgiving for his life held in St Oswin's Church on 12 February, most people knew only that part of Peter that impacted closely upon them.

Peter was brought up in Leicestershire where he also trained as a teacher before embarking on a career teaching a range of science subjects, which also enabled him to become active in encouraging youngsters to participate in outdoor pursuits such as canoeing, walking and climbing, things that had come to mean so much in his own life. One former pupil, who spoke at Peter's Thanksgiving Service, testified to the lasting impact that led him and several of his peers to remain in contact with Peter for over 40 years.

Peter came to live in Wylam in 1975 when teaching at the John Marley School in Newcastle but it was shortly after his retirement in 1985 that he took up the voluntary role of Tree Warden, advising and assisting the Parish Council in all matters relating to trees in and around the village. Typically, Peter's love of nature and his personal enthusiasm led him to develop the role and, in doing so, to encourage others of all ages to contribute regularly to a range of projects. For many years Peter resisted standing for the Parish Council but agreed to do so in 2004, serving for the next 4 years.

There can be little doubt that the most significant of Peter's legacies to Wylam will be the Wylam Haughs Nature Reserve, towards which he had worked tirelessly for many years before it was recognised formally by English Nature in 2003. Peter continued to act as Manager of the Nature Reserve until he became too ill to cope, by which time we believe that enough had been achieved to ensure that the Reserve will continue to provide interest and enjoyment for future generations of Wylam residents and the many visitors that come here or pass through.

Spring Fayre

On Saturday 9 April a Spring Fayre in aid of Cancer Research UK will take place in the Institute between 10.00am and 12 noon, admission 50p. Stalls will include bric-a-brac, plants, cakes and preserves and there will be a raffle and Easter egg tombola. Refreshments will be available by donation. Any offers of help on the day or of contributions to the stalls would be most welcome. Please look out for the posters around the village.



Things are Hotting Up at the Institute!

Fiona Oomes writes:-

Following various fundraising efforts, Wylam Institute is undergoing building works which include the installation of two new boilers, extra radiators, insulation and secondary glazing. All of this work will make the rooms warmer and should considerably increase the comfort of users. We are very grateful to the Big Lottery, which made the largest contribution, and to all the others who added their bit, especially Wylam Parish Council. The improvements will ensure that the Institute continues to provide a superb facility for all existing and potential users. Why don't you come along and have a look?

In the process we are clearing out all the little "hidey holes" and ask organisations to label that which is theirs if you wish it to be retained, otherwise it will go into the next jumble sale!

Tynedale Hospice at Home

Sales of the booklet "Geordie Tales Ti Mek Yi Smeyle", which we publicised in the Autumn issue of *The Globe*, have so far raised over £1500 for the Hospice. 10% of this total has been as a direct result of sales from Wylam Post Office, where the booklet is still available for a donation of £3.50. Don't delay, remember, as Geordie put it,

"Time flies like an arrow.
Fruit flies like a banana."



Wylam Guides Need You!

Julie Hardy writes:-

Wylam Guides need adult volunteers to take over the running of the unit. There is currently one leader who will leave at the end of July and without volunteers the unit will close.

Wylam has had a guide unit on and off since the 1920s and has recently celebrated its 40th birthday. It would be a loss to the community if it was to disappear.

Although it can involve a lot of time, the rewards are worth the effort, both for the girls and the leaders. So if you feel that you can commit, why not pop in to St. Oswin's Church Hall on Monday evenings between 7.00pm and 8.30pm and see for yourself?

You can get more information from www.girlguiding.org.uk or you can call Jane Pearson on 07951 548290.

What, No House!

The former caretaker's house, just inside the gates of Wylam First School has recently been demolished, as this picture shows.

Although various plans for the property had been put forward, including conversion to a Day Nursery and transfer to the Local Authority's affordable housing stock, the very poor condition of the building, which has been unoccupied for several years, and its location, eventually ruled these options out in favour of providing additional car parking space for school staff and visitors.



"A&E" Has Moved

Although the change has been widely covered in the local press, we have been asked to remind everyone that the Emergency Department formerly at Newcastle General Hospital has been moved to the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Richardson Road, just along from the Leazes Wing entrance, where there is access to a wide range of specialists and a dedicated Children's Service. There is no longer any emergency department at Newcastle General Hospital but emergency cover is, of course, still provided at Hexham General Hospital, which Wylam residents may still find easier to get to.

Land in Wylam Changes Hands

An advertisement for the sale by auction of two significant areas of land within the parish of Wylam gave rise to quite a lot of local interest recently, including amongst Parish Councillors. The land has been in the ownership of The Rothschild Trust, which owns most of the land still farmed in the village by Andrew Graham. Curiosity was heightened by the claim within the publicity that one area was "ideal for future commercial use" and the other as "land with opportunity". The first description was applied to three fields, one immediately to the right at the Holeyn Hall cross-roads together with the two fields, one each side of the road, between the cross-roads and the A69. The second area comprised the two fields immediately either side of the road into Close House from Bluebell Lane.

Enquiries by the Parish Council prior to the sale confirmed that any possible commercial use was "pure speculation" but the land was seen potentially to be a generally sound investment.

The first lot was actually sold to a Mr Dixon from the Whickham area and the land off Bluebell Lane to Mr Wylie, the owner of Close House. No surprise there perhaps!

A Climb at the School Nursery

A project by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is getting under way to raise funds to purchase and install a climbing frame for the children at the Wylam First School Nursery.

The many fundraising events includes a triathlon challenge in which, on 17/18 June, a dozen or so mums and friends will be attempting to complete their own creation of "The Highest Tri". This will consist of 3 main activities - climbing Scafell Pike (the highest mountain in England), swimming across Red Tarn (the highest tarn in England) and cycling over Kirkstone Pass (the highest pass in England). Most of the group are not "all round athletes" and they are dreading one stage or another (or all!!) So, to complete the challenge in its entirety will be a great achievement.

A "Just Giving" web-site will be created nearer the time for those who may wish to use this on-line facility to support the project and the efforts of these brave ladies.



Blackett Court

Blackett Court, the Anchor Housing property which occupies the prominent and conveniently central location behind "Charlie's Corner, has been a topic in every recent issue of the "Globe", as the Parish Council and a great many other local people have fought to resist the closure plans which Anchor Housing suddenly sprung on the residents a year or so ago.

We are reluctant to admit defeat, but it now appears to be inevitable that closure is imminent, with only one resident believed to remain there as we go to press.

We have been very critical throughout, not only of Anchor Housing's motives but of the appalling way in which they appeared to treat their own residents.

The admission at one stage by their Chief Executive that they had made mistakes which they would not make again was little consolation. You may have read in the local press that a private donor recently offered to put up the money they originally claimed would be needed to bring the property up to standard. Not only did they decline the offer but they had the audacity to ask if they could inform prospective buyers that this money would be available!

We are very grateful for the efforts of Ken John and others who have tried so hard to get Anchor Housing to reverse their decision.

The most recent information we have is that Anchor Housing have accepted an offer to acquire the site from an unidentified "third party".

Secretaries - Update Your Website Contact Details

The Parish Council would like to remind Organisations/Businesses that there is an opportunity to keep information up-to-date by submitting any changes to contact details on the forms provided on the Wylam Parish Council Website.

(www.wylamparishcouncil.org)



Wylam Community Orchard Expands

Wylam Community Orchard, within the grounds of the First School, has arrived at last, planting having been delayed by severe weather in the late autumn! The hard work of many members at the start of this year has paid off with the planting of 32 apple trees and hopefully by the time this "Globe" has gone to press, this will have increased to 65 trees.

The next few months will see work to ensure the establishment and maintenance of these trees with mulching and much watering as summer approaches. By autumn some soft fruit trees will have been planted.

The coming year will also include development of the plans for an access path and the creation of a seating area, featuring information boards explaining the progress to date.

Fundraising and awareness activities will also be maintained with attendance at a School Car Boot Sale on 9 April, information sessions at the library and appearance at the Summer Fair in connection with which the orchard may even enter the scarecrow competition! If anyone is interested in joining please look out for details of workdays at the orchard, fundraising events or just email wylamcommunityorchard@gmail.com.



The Chance You've Been Waiting For?

We are sorry to announce that Melanie Dunnett, a member of the Parish Council since 2007, has decided to stand down. Those who know Melanie will realise that she has never been one to hide away when there has been a job to be done, in spite of the demands of a young family and employment. This is presumably why she applied to fill a vacancy on the Parish Council in the first place. We are very grateful to Melanie for the significant contribution she has made to the work of the Council and, through that, to other things within the village.

The process of advertising the vacancy is in full swing and, assuming a statutory number of voters do not request a by-election, the vacancy will be filled by co-option. Look out for posters advertising the post or, for further details, contact the Parish Council Clerk.

Wylam Village Plan - Another Update!

As indicated in the last issue of the "Globe", a meeting was held in February of several Parish Councillors along with members of the public who had expressed an interest in taking forward the review of the previous Village Plan, published in 2003.

Understandably there were differing views about how best the project could be progressed, and all of the opinions expressed were highly relevant and deserving of consideration.

There was recognition that the 2011 National Census on 27 March, for which you will probably have received the form by the time you read this, will itself provide a lot of information and that, in due course this information will be made public.

We also had to remember that, unlike in 2002/3 when significant grants were available to Parish Councils to prepare a Village Plan, today there is no financial help and comprehensive questionnaires, such as the one used in 2002, are expensive to publish and analyse.

These factors also have to be interpreted against the background of feed-back the Parish Council has already received from public consultations that have been held in recent months with a number of groups within the village. All of these confirmed that the general views and expectations of local residents, young and old, have changed relatively little in nearly ten years.

Finally, although knowing what people think about our village and community and particularly what they would like to see in the future is good "ammunition", it doesn't mean that the Parish Council is always in a position to deliver what people want. Firstly we don't necessarily have the money and secondly it is more likely to be the County Council which carries the authority and ability to agree to a proposal.

All these factors are prompting the Parish Council to re-think its approach to this review. A fundamental flaw in any periodic review or plan is that key issues can change significantly during the life of the plan. We are therefore considering the possibility of alternatives to earlier proposals, including one of using a "rolling sample" of local views to act as a barometer of opinion on a much more frequent basis. We apologise if this appears to be back-tracking on previous intentions but it is important that we take time to get this right and avoid the risk of wasting public money on something that will not achieve its objectives.

As always, if you have a particular opinion about this or have any constructive suggestions, please get in touch.

686 Bus Service

The Parish Council has been informed that the 686 bus service (Ovington to Prudhoe via Crawcrook) provided by "Go Ahead Northern", will soon stop making the loop within Wylam which takes the bus up The Dene, turning near the Doctor's Surgery.

Bus drivers have been experiencing great difficulty turning safely in that area, due mainly to cars parked in both the lay-by and at the end of the cul-de-sac opposite. The accompanying photograph illustrates this problem.

The Parish Council believes that this issue has only become significant since, for what the Bus Company describes as "operational reasons", the previous small bus used on this route was replaced by a much larger one.

We are aware that for people living within the Dene Estate area and for those visiting the Doctor's Surgery nearby, this is a valued and possibly crucial bus stop and the Parish Council is currently trying to persuade the Bus Company to think again, particularly as the decision appears to have been taken without any meaningful consultation.



Dog "Poop" Bags Still Free!

We are pleased to remind all dog walkers that "poop" bags are still available, free of charge, from The Spar, Wine Lodge, Library and Institute and that when used and tied these bags can be placed in any litter bin.

Although a few people still seem to think it's appropriate to allow their dogs to "perform" where they will or to throw used bags into the undergrowth, there is a general belief that these habits are less widespread than they once were. Let's try to keep it that way!

Litter Pick Thanks

It is unlikely that this issue of The Globe will reach you in time to act as a reminder about the Litter Pick on Saturday 19 March so, at the risk of being presumptuous, "Thank You" to everyone who came along to help.

Keeping the village clean is, of course, not a once a year task and we are very grateful to all those who take the opportunity to pick up litter wherever and whenever they see it.

Forthcoming Events

The following events will take place in Wylam Institute, unless indicated otherwise

Many more events and much more detail is now available in the Diary Section of the Parish Council's website:-
www.wylamparishcouncil.org

Sat. 2 April

Wylam Amateur Dramatic Society, "Dine & Drama" (see main text)

Sat. 9 April

Spring Fayre in aid of Cancer Research (see main text)

Film Club "De Loveley" 7.30pm

Mon. 11 April

Parish Council 7.00pm

Wed. 13 April

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

Mon. 9 May

Institute AGM 6.30pm

Wed. 11 May

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

Parish Council Annual Village Meeting 7.30pm

Mon 16 May

Parish Council (AGM) 7.00pm

Sat 21 May

Gardeners' Coffee Morning 10.00am to noon

Film Club "Made in Dagenham" 7.30pm

Sun May 22

Wylam & District Churches "Teddy Bear Parachute Jump" and Fair in grounds of St Oswin's from 12 noon

Wed 8 June

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

Sat 11 June

First School Jumble Sale

Thurs-Sat 23 to 25 June

Junior Gemms "Bugsy Malone" 7.30pm

Sat 25 June

Wylam Summer Fair & Bookstall on the Playing Field and in Methodist Hall

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