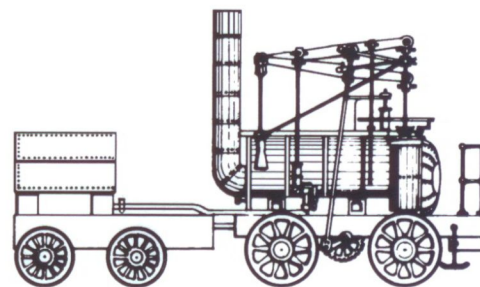


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Spring, 2006

Number 80

Library at Risk Again

Readers of the local press will be aware that Northumberland County Council has been looking for massive savings in order to balance the draft budget for 2006-07. The number of £millions appears to vary but the message is the same. Some of the services we currently enjoy are under close scrutiny and may be cut!

It was an observant local resident who first brought the possibility of a threat to our much loved library to our attention. The Parish Council immediately tried to find out what was involved and this revealed that, yes, the County Council are considering the future of all "smaller" branch libraries and Wylam is amongst these. We wrote to Dave Bonser, the Divisional Director responsible for Libraries, pointing out the importance of this service to the Wylam community and particularly stressed the multiple use to which the Falcon Centre building is currently put. We don't wish to jump to any conclusions but believe that closure of the library would seriously jeopardise the retention of the building, with an obvious threat to the Youth Club, Play Group and Railway Museum! The reply we received gave us no assurances whatsoever, other than a claim that similar communities to our own are adequately served by "mobile libraries". We were told that a decision about which libraries would close is to be taken in March but that "all communities affected would be fully consulted". In the knowledge that this would give little opportunity to influence a decision relating to a financial year commencing on 1st April, the Parish Council will not rest from trying to secure the future of this important village facility.

However, you can do your bit. "Use it or lose it" is an expression that is all too frequently relevant, and true! Even though Wylam Library is well used, there is still a high proportion of local people who don't make use of the facilities available there.

Last year at this time there was a very real risk that staffing of the local Tyne Riverside Country Park would be savagely cut and we contributed significantly to a campaign to save this. We were successful on that occasion. Don't let this one slip out of our hands.

Remember, the Library is open from 2.00 to 5.00pm and 5.30 to 7.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and between 9.00am and 12 noon on Saturdays.



Village Library - under a real threat

Help Needed for Litter Pick

The annual Village Litter Pick will take place (weather permitting) on

SATURDAY 18th MARCH
at 10.00 a.m

Adults will be particularly welcome, as well as children, to help give the village its usual spring clean. Whatever time you can spare, just come along to the Country Park Car Park (beside the War Memorial). Old clothes are advisable together with strong shoes or boots and gloves may be helpful.

As usual, there will be more plastic bags than we are likely to fill, a skip will be provided by Tynedale Council and we are assured of the support of Liz Walters from the Tyne Riverside Country Park.

For each person taking part, the Parish Council will make a small donation to a local organisation of your choice. Why not get a little group together and raise some cash for your funds?

Come along and lend a hand. Thank you in advance, to all who are willing to assist!

Realistic Tyne Valley Rail Study

One of the 'onerous duties' recently carried out by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council was to attend the launch of the Tyne Valley Rail Study in the Management Suite of the MetroCentre, with free buffet lunch!

The Study was commissioned by the Hexham-based Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership and carried out by Martin Higginson, Consultants. The presentation was well attended by representatives of local and central government, as well as the rail industry. The results of the Study were, on the whole, up-beat. Recommendations include that all trains should call at Prudhoe, additional calls at Haydon Bridge, more morning services at the MetroCentre, an additional early morning train from Hexham, a late train from Newcastle to Hexham - particularly on Friday and Saturday (and including adequate policing), various improvements to train reliability and capacity, the phasing out of 'Pacers', new fare options and improved marketing.

Paul Salveson from Northern Rail welcomed the Report and emphasised that the Company was keen to develop the service. "Contrary to newspaper speculation", he said, "there is no plan to reduce services or close stations".

Services to Wylam are valued and are expected to remain much as they are at present. The Parish Council would welcome additional trains and will continue to support the User Group and Community Rail Partnership in lobbying for improvements. Although the line receives government financial support, improvements will need to be funded from revenue, so the more we use it the more likely the service will be improved. A copy of the full Report is available for consultation in the Parish Council Office.

Concessionary Bus Travel

From the beginning of April, over 60s who have Concessionary Travel Passes from Tynedale Council will be entitled, under a national agreement, to free bus travel within Tynedale.

For local people this will chiefly cover the Prudhoe, Ovingham and Ovington (686) service, the 684 Ovingham and Holeyn Hall crossroads (where you can change to the 685 to Hexham for example) and the Corbridge and Hexham (687) service. From Hexham, other services within Tynedale will also be accessible free of charge. In addition, Tynedale Council have agreed to allow travel at half-fare beyond the District boundary, to destinations where journeys are currently available at that rate. These include Newcastle, Carlisle, Alston and Jedburgh, as long as your journey begins in Tynedale.

Fireworks Code

Several complaints about fireworks being set off late at night have recently been brought to the attention of the Parish Council.

Most of these have related to a location outside the Parish (and District) - no prizes offered but it's not far away! These concerns are being addressed but enquiries have revealed that the problem also applies much nearer home.

The law is quite clear on the subject. It is illegal to let off fireworks between the hours of 11p.m. and 7a.m., except on "Bonfire Night" (midnight and 7a.m.), New Year, Chinese New Year and Diwali (1a.m. and 7a.m.). In addition, nobody under the age of 18 may carry fireworks at any time in a public place. There are, of course, many other regulations, particularly controlling the sale of fireworks.

When fireworks go off it can clearly be disturbing to many people, particularly the elderly and the very young, and pets can be traumatised at any time of day or night. We simply ask all local residents to consider both the law and others whenever they are planning a firework party. Enjoy yourselves but please warn neighbours who may be most affected.

Sleep Easy!

A report in the winter issue of the "Wylam Globe" about an increase in the proportion of crimes involving assault, coupled with a subsequent appeal by the police for witnesses to a theft from The Spar, caused some concern amongst villagers.

Conversations between representatives of the Parish Council and local police officers confirm the underlying fact that crime in the Wylam locality is currently at a very low level. Many of the "assaults" affecting the statistics were incidents in which people from outside the village decided to "have-a-go" at each other after consuming too much alcohol! The shop theft is still under investigation but a man is under arrest for a very similar offence not far away and a link is thought to be a possibility.

Vigilance is always advised and we are reminded that PC Charlie Cross, the Community Beat Officer covering Wylam, can be contacted through Prudhoe Police Station (Tel: 832204) at any time. He also attends the Falcon Centre on the first Saturday of each month between 10 and 11a.m., when he is happy to discuss any policing issues or concerns with local people.

Emergency calls to the police should, as always, be made through the 999 system.

Information Panels

Two Information Panels are soon to be installed, one at each end of the Haughs Nature Reserve, with ideas of what visitors can look out for. The panels have been beautifully designed by Stephen Pardue of Wylam. There will be a short ceremony on Saturday 8 April at 11.15a.m., at which Veronica Heath, an Environment Correspondent of The Guardian who lives in Northumberland, will unveil the panels. Other guests have been invited but all local residents are welcome to just come along. Make a note in your diary, now! The project has been generously funded by the S.I.T.A. Environmental Trust, with additional funding from Northumbrian Water.

A Ring of Bright Water

The Parish Council has recently agreed a management plan with Wylam Angling Club for the Tyne riverbank between "Points Bridge" and the area below the Playing Field.

This plan aims to achieve a balance between the interests of anglers who wish to access the river bank and the responsibility of the Parish Council to maintain the natural (and enhanced) population of trees and other vegetation for the benefit of both the wild-life and local people.

The plan will permit very limited felling in specific spots, action to stabilise a few places on the bank where there is localised erosion and some weed control - particularly of the dreaded Japanese Knotweed!

There will be times when small areas will look a bit "naked" but we are confident that recovery will be rapid and acceptable. The whole scheme is phased over several years to reduce the impact.

To ensure that the proposed activity would not damage the wild-life in an unacceptable way, Kevin O'Hara, Wetlands Conservation Officer for Northumberland Wildlife Trust, was brought in to inspect the sites involved and give his views. We were delighted that, as well as confirming the acceptability of our plans, he was able to point out considerable evidence that there are otters living happily along that area of the river. This is something a number of people had reported in recent years and we very much hope that local otters will continue to thrive.

Playing Field

A busy time of year for the Playing Field Association! The Jumble Sale in January made over £1100 for their funds whilst the ever-popular Burn's Night Ceilidh, now in its 20th year with the Moorcock Band, made an impressive £900. Many thanks to members and others who made both events such a success.

A plea however, from the Jumble Sale organisers! The enormous volume of unsaleable material created a major problem. Trips to the Civic Waste Site had to start even before the sale began and clearing away afterwards took several hours, even though 60 bags of clothing had been passed on to Ovingham First School!

Please help the organisers of the next Jumble Sale, probably in May, by only donating goods that are genuinely saleable. Tynedale Council will remove large items of furniture at a modest cost - £10 for up to three items, free to over-60s, whilst fridges and freezers will also be collected, free of charge.

Wylam on the Web?

Now that we are in the 21st Century more and more people use computers to communicate with each other by email and do a variety of things, for example, manage their bank accounts, shop, book holidays, share photographs, download music and even complain to their local council!

A couple of years ago a successful campaign was mounted to get high speed Broadband to the village. Many villagers now have Broadband, as well as high-speed access to the Internet. Unlike with dial-up connections, they can still use their phones at the same time as "surfing the web".

The Parish Council is considering developing a village community website. This would contribute to our aim of achieving "Quality Parish Council" status by providing access to things like meeting agendas and minutes in addition to a whole range of general, historical and photographic information, news of what's on, perhaps items for sale and a forum for people to discuss local issues. The opportunities are endless! Local organisations could have their own pages or links to their own websites and businesses could advertise their services.

There are already some local websites that demonstrate what can be achieved. The Alston Moor website www.cybermoor.org is a good example whilst, closer to home, Heddon has a site www.heddon.co.uk which is run by a local person. Wylam resident Allan Stewart has a Wylam site at www.wylamontyne.co.uk and a visit to www.villagesonline.co.uk lists many others, although you will find good and bad examples of how they can be used.

The Wylam Institute Computer Group (WIC), part of the "On-line" Initiative, played an important role in the Broadband campaign and continues to provide valuable access to the Internet and training. They support the concept of a Community Website for Wylam.

Would you like to get involved in taking this initiative forward or do you have some ideas you would like to share? Contact Tony Mitcham on 852128 or Viv Smith of 'WIC' on 853713 (or by email to the Parish Council at wylampc@btinternet.com)

Community Choir with a Mission

Keren Banning writes:- The Wylam Singers meet to sing songs, drink tea and raise money for good causes. Riding high on the success of raising £605 for young women in Sri Lanka whose lives were devastated by the tsunami of 2004, the choir are now keen to recruit new members, men and women, to work towards a concert to raise money for Cancer Research UK. We sing for ourselves because of the social, health and entertainment benefits it gives us, and we sing to raise money for others, because we can. You don't have to be able to read music or have any other choir experience. Quite a few of our group think they're hopeless singers, but together we make a great sound! We're not a church choir but we meet in the Methodist Church Centre in Wylam on Monday evenings during term time, 7.30 to 9.30pm. Just come along if you'd like to give it a go or, if you want more information you can ring Keren on 830035.

The "Global Globe"

When the "Wylam Globe" underwent an editorial change and colour was more widely introduced a couple of issues ago, we invited comments from readers. A few Wylam residents have expressed their views, fortunately favourable so far, but we hadn't anticipated receiving reactions from overseas!

Recently we have heard from two former Wylam residents living far away. Lawna Allen, who lived in Bluebell Close until fairly recently, has sent greetings from Bahamas including complimentary words about the "new Globe" and Michael Asher, whose parents lived in Acomb Drive for many years, has written from China, saying how much he enjoys reading "The Globe", which his father, now living in Devon, sends on to him.

We are delighted that the publication has such a widespread readership, both nationally and internationally. If you know of other distant readers, do let us know.

Vacancy for a Parish Councillor

Catherine ("Cat") Findlay has unfortunately found it necessary to step down from the Parish Council due to pressure of work, study and other commitments. Cat was really just settling in but we are extremely grateful for the very useful contribution she was able to make.

There is therefore an opportunity for someone to join the Parish Council, initially until the next full elections, due in May 2007.

Statutory Public Notices advertising this vacancy and explaining how it may be filled have recently been posted. If you are interested, or would simply like to know more about what the "job" entails, please contact Diana Carney, Parish Council Clerk, as soon as possible, but not later than 25th March. (Contact details at the foot of this publication.)

Nature Notes

Peter Clarke writes:- The most substantial piece of woodland belonging to the parish is the narrow riverside strip within the Haughs Nature Reserve. The vegetation in it has recently become rather sparse, especially regarding the shrub layer beneath the trees, although the snowdrops try hard.

A number of shrubs and small trees have therefore been planted by a group of volunteers on a recent Saturday morning, and should make a notable improvement in a couple of years or so. Included were hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, hazel and dog rose, and they should play a useful part in holding back erosion by the river and also enhance the beauty and ecological value of the site.

The feeding station on the reserve has welcomed numbers of siskins and long-tailed tits. Members of our usual clientele have made good use of our offers and single specimens of blackcap and tree creeper have called in. "Our" great spotted woodpecker has continued to try to destroy the electricity transmission pole, but we feel that it will not make much progress while it attacks the metal part at the top.

We would really like to welcome red kite to the site. Of the forty-five that have been released further south, only one or two have visited the parish, but do not stay long.

Garden Refuse

Just as we go to press we hear that Tynedale Council are planning to extend to Wylam a garden waste collection and recycling scheme that currently operates in Hexham and Prudhoe. It would necessitate an additional "wheelie" bin but is a scheme that households can opt out of if they wish. Many people are already composting their garden refuse and others may simply not wish to have another bin but this new service has proved popular in Hexham and Prudhoe. All households will be given information about the scheme and an exhibition is to take place in the Heritage Room at Wylam Institute on Friday, 10th March between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.



Just after Christmas - will that be the last snow?

Wylam Pubs amongst the Awards!

It has been said that Wylam possibly boasts more pubs than any place of similar size but it is good to learn that "quantity" does not dilute "quality".

The 'Black Bull', has recently been awarded the title of "Charity Pub of the Year" for the Tyne/Tees Area. Congratulations to licensee Paul Bowes, his staff and volunteers, whose efforts have helped to raise the massive total of £35,000 for charity during the last year.

Jane Parker and Clive Wood at the 'Fox and Hounds' must also receive praise for reaching the final 3 out of 100 nominations for the Punch Taverns, "Community Experience, Shine Awards", towards the end of 2005.

Finally, on the other side of the river, the 'Boathouse' has been given the accolade "CAMRA Northumberland Pub of the Year". The award was won in the face of opposition from 36 other establishments and is the fifth time in six years that they have received this title. Congratulations to Norman and Mark Weatherburn and the rest of the staff.



Global Warming! Daffodils opposite the Falcon Centre in the first week of February

Teddy Bears to Jump Again



By popular request, a Teddy Bears' Parachute Jump will return to St. Oswin's Church on Saturday, 10th June from 2.00 p.m. This should be great fun for all the family, with exciting competition, stalls and, of course, teas. Book the date now. More details will follow.

Annual Village Meeting

The Annual Village Meeting, (formerly called the Annual Parish Meeting), will take place in Wylam Institute on Wednesday 8 May at 7.30p.m. This is an opportunity for anyone from Wylam to come along, to hear a little more about what the Parish Council is up to and make your views known. Philip Hindmarsh, Head of Waste & Transport Management in Tynedale Environmental Services Dept will be present to speak briefly about waste management, with particular reference to recycling, and to answer our questions. We hope that the meeting will attract a good attendance. Reminder notices will be posted but why not make a note in your diary now?

A Tragic Night

As we prepare to go to press the whole community of Wylam has been stunned and deeply saddened by the terrible road accident on Wylam Bridge which led to the tragic deaths of a young woman and two young men.

For this to happen anywhere would be a tragedy but to occur within the village in which they were all known and loved has somehow made it even more difficult for many, both young and old, to come to terms with.

For the moment we can only express our deepest sympathy to their families and friends and trust that our community will be strong enough to rally round to provide the support that they need at this time and for however long it might take.

The Parish Council has already pressed for the appropriate authorities to examine closely how safety at this location might be improved.

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

*Mrs. D. Carney,
The Clerk to the Parish Council,
Wylam Institute, Church Road,
Wylam NE41 8AP.
Tel: (01661) 852498
e.mail: wylam@btinternet.com*

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Material Planning Considerations

- Loss of privacy / overlooking
- Visual appearance
- Access and provision for parking
- Impact on the neighbourhood
- Affect on any listed building or conservation areas
- Layout and density of buildings
- Traffic generation / highway safety
- Noise/ smells resulting from use

Issues NOT Relevant to Planning Considerations

- Matters dealt with under building control regulations or other non-planning law (e.g. structural stability)
- Loss of view
- Loss of value to a property
- Issues between neighbours, e.g. boundary disputes
- Personal feelings towards the applicant
- Any restrictive covenants

The Decision

Most planning applications are dealt with under “delegated powers”, which means the decision is taken by Senior Planning Officers or The Director of Planning sitting with two senior elected members of the Development Control Committee.

The alternative process, used for more controversial applications and where there are a number of objections, is where the application is dealt with at a monthly meeting of the Development Control Committee. Until very recently these meetings did not allow for any member of the public to speak, for

or against an application. However, within the last few weeks and for a trial period of one year, an applicant, their agent or anyone who has submitted a written comment may speak at the meeting. There are strict conditions and anyone intending to speak must make this known prior to the meeting. A booklet setting out details of this aspect of the procedure can be obtained from the Planning Department.*

When a decision is made, the applicant, the Parish Council and anyone else who has made written representation are advised of the decision in writing. Development normally has to start within 3 years of permission being granted.

Time-scale

From the time the Parish Council, or a neighbour, is advised of an application, there is a period of 21 days to comment. In reality, allowing for postal time, it is probably safer to think of this as about 14 days. Most applications should be dealt with within 8 weeks from initial registration (13 weeks for “major” applications.)

Appeals

In many cases when a plan is turned down, the applicant seeks further advice, gets the plan modified to overcome the objections and then makes a fresh application. However, as long as it's within six months, an applicant may appeal against the decision of the planners. In these cases the application is referred to a Government appointed Planning Inspector and any comments that have been submitted about the original application, by objectors for example, are forwarded to the Inspector. It frequently takes many months for an appeal to be set up and for the Inspector to

make a decision. Local experience shows that relatively few appeals are successful!

* Helpful Information

Tynedale Council Planning Dept.
The Old Grammar School,
Hallgate, Hexham NE46 1XA.
General Enquiries:

Telephone: 01434 652298

or email to:

planning@tynedale.gov.uk

For independent and free advice on planning matters:-

Planning Aid:

Telephone: 0191 222 5776

or website:

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Other Websites:

Tynedale Council

www.tynedale.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister www.odpm.gov.uk

If you are considering submitting a planning application yourself, it could be very helpful to first obtain a copy of a little booklet titled “Planning. A Guide for Householders - what you need to know about the planning system”. This booklet is published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and you can obtain a copy from Tynedale Council Planning Department, The Old Grammar School, Hallgate, Hexham NE46 1XA.

In any situation where you wish to speak at a meeting of the Development Control Committee, either as an applicant, supporter or objector, you should check carefully how you may do this. A Tynedale Council publication “Public Speaking at Development Control Committee” is available from the Council.

This article is only intended as a guide. Members of the Parish Council and the Council Clerk have recently taken part in a training session led by staff of Tynedale Planning Department and can probably answer many questions, particularly about the Parish Council's role, but we make no claim to be experts. Contact Tynedale Council Planning Department for the advice of the Local Planning Authority.

This article is provided by the Parish Council as a Supplement to the Spring 2006 issue of the "Wylam Globe". We hope that it may be of general interest to householders and perhaps helpful to you in the future. You may care to put it on one side for future reference.

What are you Planning?

The photographs show views from Wylam of the new warehouse for SCA Hygiene at Prudhoe, still under construction. This was arguably one of the most controversial planning applications dealt with by Tynedale Council in recent years. Fortunately very few applications generate anything like this level of interest. Most are for minor alterations or additions to properties but, if it's a property next to where you live, you are likely to be at least interested and possibly very concerned about how the development might affect you.

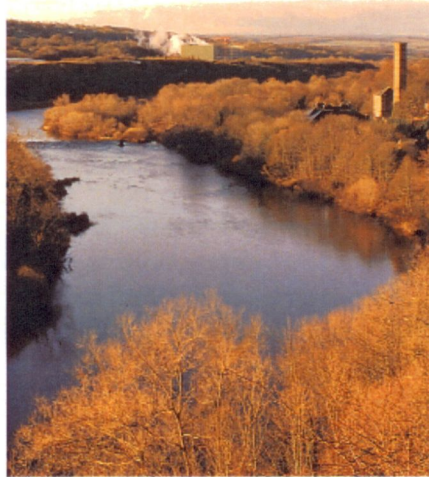
Who's in Charge?

Tynedale Council are the Planning Authority and they decide whether or not to grant permission under a process known as 'Development Control'. The fee for most planning applications is £135, but larger fees apply to extensive developments. It's important to understand that the system operates to serve the needs of the wider community, not the interests of individuals, and decisions have to conform to a wide range of legislation together with national, regional and local policies. The purpose of this article is not to explain these in detail but to provide a brief outline of how the system operates and particularly the Parish Council's role within this, which is sometimes misunderstood.

The System

Each week, Tynedale Council publishes a list of new planning applications in the Hexham Courant and on their website*. A "site notice" is also placed at or close to the location. At about the same time they send a copy

Views of the new SCA Distribution Warehouse



From above The Scars



From Wylam Wood Road

of the application to the relevant Parish Council, inviting comments, and send letters to neighbours of the site informing them of the nature of the application and advising that a copy of the plans can be examined at the Planning Department in Hexham.

Here in Wylam, we try to ensure that relevant households are not missed by either sending our own letter or at least checking that they are aware of the application. Because the

Parish Council receives a copy of the plans we can also provide an opportunity for them to be seen in the Parish Office at specified times. We are not permitted to make additional copies or allow others to do so, which can create a slight complication because, to enable the Parish Council to comment within the time allowed, we delegate the responsibility to a group of four Councillors who each consider the application and make their own observations. The Parish Council's copy of the plans can therefore be "tied up" in circulation for some time.

The comments of Parish Councillors are summarised and returned to the Planning Department. Although it rarely happens, if an application proves to be particularly contentious, the whole Council would be consulted. Time does not normally allow the matter to be referred to a regular meeting of the Parish Council for discussion but the comments made (and the final outcome of planning applications) are always reported to the next meeting and can therefore be seen in the minutes. As a point of interest, Wylam Parish Council has considered and commented upon 30 applications during the past 12 months.

Comments

To receive consideration, any objection to a planning application whether by a neighbour, other member of the public, the Parish Council or Planning Officers themselves, must relate to what is defined as a "material" consideration. These are normally the only issues that planners are allowed to take into account when reaching their decision. The following are some of the main examples:-