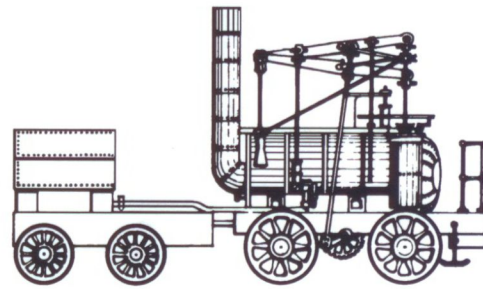


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Summer, 2006

Number 81

Safety Scheme for Village Centre

The Parish Council has been talking to Northumberland County Council for some time about an improvement scheme in the village centre and a draft scheme, with a budget of £40,000, has recently been prepared.

The objectives of the scheme are to improve pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the shops, particularly for those crossing the road, to rationalise the parking provision outside the shops and improve the appearance of the area. It is also intended to include improved street lighting, particularly on the post office side, where there is currently no provision.

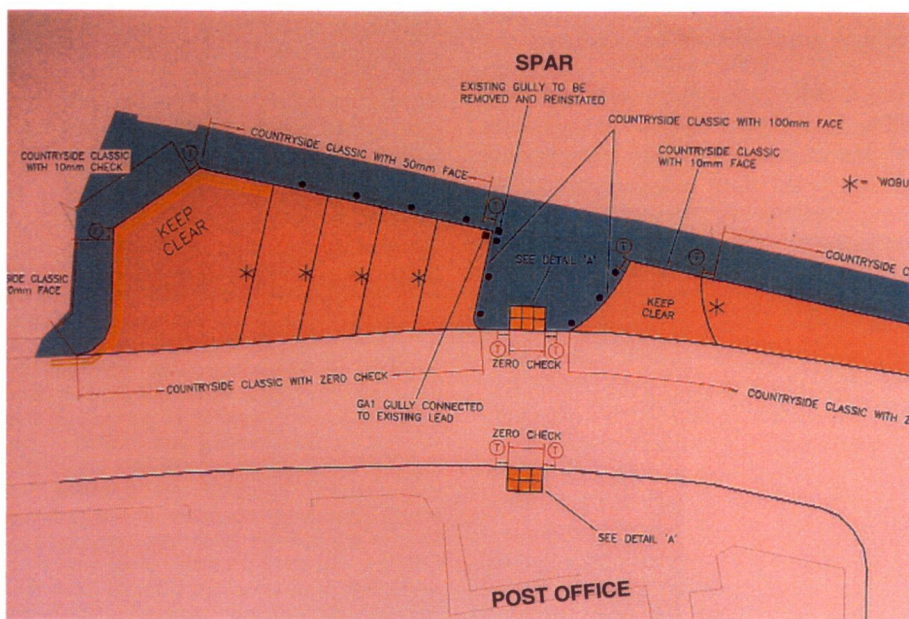
A plan of the scheme is shown here but larger (and obviously clearer) copies can be seen in the Library and Parish Council Office.

The main proposals include:

- widening the pavement on the north side and installing bollards to protect pedestrians.
- Creating a "pier" near the Spar to allow pedestrians to see approaching traffic beyond any parked cars. This area will also be protected by bollards.
- The pier and the opposite side of the road are to incorporate a dropped kerb and textured paving to assist the visually impaired.
- Block pavers will be used to define the parking area, including marked bays in a contrasting colour. These blocks will continue towards the Black Bull but without marked bays.

The scheme met with broad approval when outlined at the recent Annual Village Meeting and the County Council are currently contacting those with premises adjacent to the area in order to seek their views.

In these times of restricted budgets the Parish Council considers it fortunate that the County has agreed to proceed with this scheme when there are many other competing schemes around the area. It is an opportunity to improve both the appearance and safety of the village centre.



Plan of the proposals for the village centre

It's Summer Fair Time!

Yes, another year has almost gone by and we hope that you will support this year's important event, which will take place on Saturday 24 June on the Jubilee Playing Field, commencing at 1.00pm. Why not browse beforehand through the giant Second-hand Bookstall * in the Methodist Church Centre from 10.00am? On the main field enjoy a karate display, Chart Topper Dance Group and Prudhoe Community Band, all in the arena near the beer tent.

In the children's corner, Wanda the Witch will judge the Fancy Dress for the best Wizard and Witch and then give her own display of magic. The giant slide and whirling teapots are back, along with Punch & Judy.

For the energetic there are the annual Fun Run and Children's Races, a Tug of War and a football penalty shoot-out!

The Summer Fair is the main fundraiser for Wylam Playing Fields Association. This organisation runs and maintains the Playing Field for the village, with its sports pitches, tennis court and play areas. Our main expense this year has been the repair of the changing room and showers. A pavilion extension, with veranda, disabled access and storage facilities are the next plans for improving the field. (* Gifts of books can be taken to the Methodist Church Centre at almost any time during the week leading up to the Summer Fair or, if you would like someone to collect them from you, phone Brian Japes on 852151).

Falling Crime!

Speaking at the Annual Village Meeting in May, PC Charlie Cross, Community Beat Manager for Wylam, reminded us that fighting crime can be like building a jigsaw and even tiny pieces of information from the public can be vital to the police. He went on to reassure everyone that if we do give information to the police about anything suspicious, that information is treated in the strictest confidence.

He assured Wylam residents that we are living in what is currently one of the lowest areas for crime. Crime levels for Wylam have fallen in each of the last three years. Figures for reported crimes:-

2003	-	273
2004	-	193
2005	-	147

Between 1 January and 10 May 2006, the figure stood at just 26 (compared with 66 for the same period last year).

Constable Cross warned against complacency and reminded us that the imminent summer months usually show a rise in crime within the local area, attributed in part to an influx of visitors into the village from the Country Park and riverside areas. These areas will continue to be targeted by the police but, as garden sheds, other unsecured places and cycles are the usual objectives of the criminals, he advised us to be particularly vigilant about the security of these.

PC Cross reminded the meeting that he is available at Wylam Library from about 10.00am on the first Saturday morning each month and welcomes anyone who wishes to talk to him about any police matter.

“Community Week” to be Revived

In her report to the Annual General Meeting of the Wylam Institute Community Association, Sue Nicholson, Chairman, said; “one of the main and most problematic tasks which the Institute Management Committee has to undertake is fundraising. You will be aware of the very successful campaign to raise money for essential repairs to the Institute itself but, now that work is completed, we have to focus once again on keeping the future of the Institute secure”.

“Over the years it has become more and more difficult to find events which attract sufficient support to raise the necessary funds and so it has been decided to consolidate our fundraising and bring back Community Week.”

“Those who have lived in the village for many years will remember Community Week as a week of events, held in the Institute, with all proceeds going to that organisation. The events are to be run by the Institute Committee together with various user groups and it is hoped that there will be a good variety to suit all ages and interests. We hope that when the time comes, we can rely on your support.”

So, please make a note of the dates. Activities will commence on Saturday 4 November and conclude, to coincide with Remembrance Sunday, on 12 November.

Sue went on to say; “many village residents are members of the Institute and their subscriptions are another vital source of income. I would ask those of you who are not already members to consider supporting us in this way. The annual subscription is currently £5 for individuals, £8 for family membership and £10 for patrons. (The Institute AGM in May agreed that these would increase slightly from 2007.) If you would like to join, please call or contact the Institute Office, which is open Mon, Weds and Friday between 9.30 and 11.30am or by telephone 852498”.

Bridge Safety

It goes without saying that there has been much concern about safety on Wylam Bridge since the accident in February and this was reflected in the comments of a number of people at the Annual Village Meeting last month. The Parish Council has continued to press the County Council to confirm its intentions and recently managed to secure a meeting with the appropriate officers. At that time the view was that no action would be considered until the detailed Police and Coroner's Reports were known but we have since received an assurance that, in response to the extent of local concern that we have conveyed, work would immediately start on a detailed feasibility study and costing of “all reasonable alternatives”, so that when action is possible, further delays might be avoided.

It has to be stressed that County Council officers have emphasised that some of the suggestions made, in the press and from other sources, are not practicable for structural reasons and that they are unable to guarantee that any action will be taken other than repair of the damage.

Successful Litter Pick

“Thank you” to everyone who turned up to help with the Village Litter Pick in March. The weather was kind to us and most areas of the village were covered, either by small teams or individuals. The usual help from Liz Walters, Area Countryside Officer, was appreciated together with the co-operation of the District Council by the provision of a skip. We are very aware that there are a number of people who help to keep certain areas of the village clean and tidy throughout the year. To those people we extend our warmest thanks.

New District Councillor

Following the resignation of Nick Appleby, one of the two District Councillors to have represented Wylam for the past few years, we congratulate Tom Appleby who was elected to represent Wylam on Tynedale Council in the by-election on 25 May. The full results were Tom Appleby (Liberal Democrat) (364), Charles Heslop (Conservative) (247) and Andy Balman (Labour) (206).

We take this opportunity to thank Nick Appleby for his service to Wylam and wish him well in his new employment.

Of course this by-election does not affect the position of Philip Brooks, our other District Councillor, who continues to represent the village as he has for many years.

New Parish Councillor

We are very pleased to welcome Mrs Rosene Railton of Lynholme, Main Road (Tel: 853341) who has recently been co-opted to fill a vacancy on the Parish Council. We hope that she enjoys her new role. Please add her details to your Village Information Card. An updated card will be produced in late summer.

It is perhaps an appropriate time to remind everyone that both seats on our District Council and all eight places on the Parish Council are due to be “up for grabs” in May 2007 when the next cycle of elections for these seats is due to be held. We hope that many people will seriously consider standing for one or both of these roles. It might be another four years before another chance comes around! Do please think about it.

Possible Change to Local Footpath

Although situated outside the parish of Wylam, within Heddon-on-the-Wall, the public footpaths across the grounds of Close House have always been popular with Wylam residents. We are very grateful that Denis Peel has been diligent in pursuing local interests in that area and it is Denis who reports a plan by the owners of this estate to have the footpath that currently runs diagonally across the grounds from the south west corner, near Street Houses, to be diverted to follow the western boundary of the golf course and then up through the wood to the north, emerging near to the Close House entrance.

Changes of this kind do take time to become official, but you may wish to look out for new way-marking.

New Plans at "SCA" Add to Concerns

The International Distribution Warehouse for SCA Hygiene Ltd on the Low Prudhoe Industrial Estate, created immense public concern at the planning stage. The fact that the many objections were overruled is self-evident now that it is there for all to see.

The concern of Wylam Parish Councillors was renewed when it was recently revealed that a further application had been submitted to Tynedale Council. This application includes the building of an "Energy Recovery Plant", effectively an incinerator, for the combustion of more than 100,000 tonnes of processed and recycled paper residue per year. The proposal includes a drying kiln, incinerator and two large flues. The commercial objective is to replace the natural gas, presently used to generate the steam needed for the production process, with a system that dries and then burns what is currently a waste by-product that has to be spread on land.

The Parish Council obtained a copy of the application, which runs to more

than 400 pages of mainly very technical data, and have regularly liaised with other concerned parties, chiefly in Ovingham. It would not be appropriate to try to give a lot of details here but it may interest Wylam residents to know that the Parish Council's objections have been based on the following main issues:

1. A potential deterioration of air quality through toxic emissions.
2. Risk of water contamination by precipitation of dissolved emissions near to the Northumbrian Water abstraction point, at which water is taken from the river for treatment at Horsley for human consumption
3. The prospect of increased noise on a 24 hour basis, caused by powered emission flues.
4. Damage to the environment, including Wylam's own Local Nature Reserve, due to toxic emissions and a likely increase in acidified precipitation.
5. A counter to the socio-economic argument, in that the application repeats the statement made with

the warehouse application, that approval is essential to "secure the future of the factory and its employees for the foreseeable future."

6. Concern that although there is a claim that lorry movements will be reduced, this could change if equivalent combustibles are transferred in the future from other SCA Plants where it is currently claimed that size does not justify this type of installation.

Although the appearance of the development in that location, close to Prudhoe Castle, would have a further adverse effect on the area we have left that aspect to Ovingham residents who are treating it as a main thrust of their objections.

The District Council has also been challenged to explain the lack of prior consultation, which appears to be in direct contradiction to its own recently agreed policy for Community Involvement in matters of this kind which could be deemed "controversial".

Nature Notes

Peter Clarke writes:

There is no doubt that the major event of the season so far has been the unveiling of the two information panels giving brief accounts of the origin and development of the Nature Reserve. Early in April, we welcomed Veronica Heath, who writes in the Guardian and the Northumbrian (though not always on environmental matters - she often writes on cookery) and asked her to unveil the panels. The panels have met with much approval and have given a lot of pleasure. They drew many congratulations to Steve Pardue, who was generous in designing them and seeing them through manufacture. The cost was covered by a grant from the landfill tax, available through S.I.T.A. for environmental projects, with a small contribution from Northumbrian Water.



Detail of one of the new information panels

We have recently installed some notices on gateposts about ground-nesting birds and dogs! At least during the nesting season, which is already in full swing, dog walkers are implored to keep dogs away from open areas on the Nature Reserve. The birds concerned are mainly warblers, and many people derive much pleasure from them.

The daffodils we have planted over the years have done extraordinarily well this time. Helpers who came to the last planting, opposite the old dairy buildings in Holeyn Hall Road, planted up the final remaining section beside the hedgerow and the daffodils have made a brave show. So, bravo the daffodils, and bravo the helpers!

Some trees on the river bank are now over-mature and selective management has become essential for safety's sake. Large old willows have shed branches and some have fallen over completely. Accordingly, some of the timber has been cleared, which incidentally provides an advantage to anglers, and young saplings have been planted in order to try to stabilise the bank - not an easy job as it consists largely of loose sand!



Veronica Heath and company at the unveiling

A Restful Place

Almost all of the money raised each year by the Parish Council is, as one would expect, spent in the village. However, a major exception is the money to maintain the local cemetery at Ovingham, which provides a burial ground for the parishes of Wylam, Ovingham, Ovington and Horsley.

Not many residents know where the cemetery is situated in Ovingham, as it is well-hidden by houses and not easily seen from the road; access is from Tyne Gardens, a turning off the main road, nearly opposite the White Swan Inn.

People sometimes ask why the cemetery was provided in Ovingham, when Wylam is the largest village locally. Back in the 1860s the villages of Wylam, Horsley and Ovington were all part of the originally larger parish of Ovingham, the only one with a parish church. By 1870 the parish churchyard was almost full and it was decided that a new burial ground was needed, reasonably close to the church and convenient for the vicar!

The new cemetery was completed in 1879 at a cost of £1500, which included a caretaker's lodge, two mortuary chapels and the purchase and laying out of the grounds.

It was not until 1886 that St Oswin's church in Wylam was opened, and then not until 1902 that Wylam became a separate parish, independent of Ovingham.

The four local parish councils of Wylam, Ovingham, Ovington and Horsley were created in 1896 and later became responsible for maintaining the cemetery. A Burial Committee comprising two members from each of these councils is appointed to run the cemetery and the annual costs are apportioned between the parishes. The Wylam share for the current year is £3640, equivalent to about £2.30 per voter.

The Clerk to the Joint Burial Committee is Mrs Joanna Jackson of 12 Horsley Road, Ovingham, NE42 6AL. Tel: 832460



Part of the cemetery at Ovingham

Milestone for Family Business

Tuesday 25 July 2006 is a date to celebrate at J.A.Stobo & Son. It is when the Stobo family will have been trading in Wylam for 50 years. Sandy and Molly Stobo moved to Cherry Tree Lane in 1956, taking over the existing greengrocery business from owner Mr Harbottle on his retirement.

In 1988 they moved to Woodcroft Road, leaving the business in the care of their son Roddy.

Over recent years Roddy and his wife Marion have added a greengrocer's shop in Corbridge and a flower shop in Wylam to their list of "things to do".

It's a busy life, and their children Rory and Josh are used to their Dad being in bed long before them - as he is up on six mornings a week at 4.30am to get to the Green Market. However, Roddy says he wouldn't have it any other way, as long as he can fit in a round of golf now and again!

We offer our congratulations and best wishes to Roddy, Marion, their family and all the staff. We are delighted that their business continues to offer quality and value to their customers from far and wide, and it's always service with a smile!



Marian and Roddy Stobo - cheerful and welcoming as ever

From one Dog Owner to all Dog Owners/Walkers

June Pattinson writes:

"How many times do you have to be asked to clean up after your dog?

So many paths are disgusting, from the centre of the village, across the Bumbler Box Bridge to the paths around the riverside and past the allotments.

Just because you have left a metalled path, does not mean that you can leave your dog's mess lying for everyone to walk into!

Bag it and bin it and make sure this is the last time this needs to be said in the Globe."

(Free 'poop-scoop' bags, supplied by the Parish Council, are available from The Spar, Wine Lodge, Institute and Library).

Threat to Library - an update

The Parish Council has continued to press for the retention of the current library and related facilities in Wylam. In the last issue we explained that the County Council is considering closing a number of smaller branch libraries, including the one in Wylam. At that time we had been led to believe that the proposal was part of a cost-cutting exercise. A more recent statement suggests that it relates to an "efficiency" proposal whereby resources would be concentrated in the larger libraries to "improve the overall service provided". For Wylam borrowers this would at best necessitate travel to Prudhoe, with the associated cost and well known difficulty for those dependent on public transport. We do not consider that any change of this kind would represent an improved provision and the possible threat to other users of the Falcon Centre, which were described in the Spring issue, remain of paramount concern for us.

Although a decision on this issue was originally expected in March it has been deferred on at least one occasion and the most recent reply from the County's Divisional Director for Libraries, Arts and Archives indicates that the decision is now expected to be taken in July. We continue to receive assurances that "communities will be fully engaged in consultations before any decision is taken" but as we go to press nothing further has been heard of this.

Meanwhile we were delighted to learn of the initiative taken by a few Wylam residents who collected more than 450 signatures to a petition explaining the importance of the village library and urging its retention, which they have recently handed to the Chairman of the appropriate Committee at County Hall.

Don't Miss Out

If there is something you would like to be included in a future issue of "Wylam Globe", please remember the following closing dates:

25 August for September

10 November for December

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