

NATLAND PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT for the year ending 31 March 2019 and invitation to the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING on Thursday 16 May 2019 in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm

Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting (APM) The annual assembly is an opportunity for all parishioners and those interested in the welfare of the community to come and air their views about Natland. Natland Civil Parish has an adult population of about 820, all of whom have the right to submit motions for discussion at this meeting. These must be with the Clerk, Kevin Price (01539 821596 or kevtherev7@hotmail.com or home address – see notice board or website), seven clear days before the meeting, so that they can be publicised on the Parish Council's notice board outside Natland Post Office and Shop, and on the website. Three were considered last year. This year there is no single, obvious issue for the APM to focus on, but there are several matters of ongoing concern that electors may seek to influence through an APM resolution. You may find them in this report. Natland's County Councillor, its three District Councillors (elected in 2018 but one of the seats is up for election on 2 May 2019) and a member of Cumbria Police have been invited to speak and answer any questions.

Invitation to Natland-based Organisations All community organisations within the Parish are invited to send representatives to the APM to give a brief report on their activities during the year. Twelve reported in 2018. There is always a section of the meeting allocated for this important exchange of information; please ensure your organisation is represented or sends a written report.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR

In the text CCC is Cumbria County Council, SLDC is South Lakeland District Council and "the Council" is Natland Parish Council.

The Council has held ten meetings, with a District Councillor present at eight of them. County Councillor Brenda Gray is finding it difficult to attend the Council's meetings but remains committed to representing the parish and is happy to receive details of any issues residents may have. The Police no longer attend unless specifically requested and have ceased routine reporting. Natland's new PCSO is Jenna Egglestone. Council meetings are normally held on the final Monday of each month (excluding August and December) at 7.00pm in the Village Hall, to which all parishioners are cordially invited. The Council has a procedure for electors to raise matters in person at council meetings under 'public participation'; details are publicised on the notice board and website.

Nothing New of Significance to Report There has been so little change with some regular reporting topics that I could simply repeat what I wrote a year ago but, to save space, I won't. These include **North West Coast Connections, Natland Post Office, Shop and Tea Room, Helm Common** and **Natland Community Website** (natlandnews.blogspot.com – do visit for information about organisations, forthcoming events and the Parish Directory).

Health and Wellbeing The Council has put this on its Agenda under the catch-all heading "Care for the Community of Natland", but with no clear ideas as yet of what practicable initiatives might be set up to address issues such as loneliness, dementia and lack of transport. The Council intends to give the matter an airing at the APM.

Village Green Driving or parking on the Village Green is an offence. The edges of the Green have suffered unsightly damage where drivers have sought to avoid inconsiderately parked vehicles. There are even incidents of 'joy-riding' across the Green; but the drivers or vehicles need to be identified and anyone with such information should report it to the Police on 101 and let the Council know.

Volunteering The Parish Plan 2014 vision of organised volunteering to benefit the fabric and appearance of the Parish failed to gain any real momentum, although some public-spirited individuals still act when they see something that needs doing or when requested – such as picking litter, clearing vegetation from footpaths, cleaning road signs, maintaining seats, clearing road gullies, looking after bus shelters (including graffiti removal) and anything else you can think of. The planter provided and maintained by Sandra and Tony Heap in front of the village name sign on Natland Road is much appreciated. There was a sufficient turnout for the fourteenth annual Spring Litter Hunt, but the litter keeps on arriving. David Peters has a stock of bags, gloves, high visibility jackets and picking tongs if anyone wants to 'have a go'. Nearly all of this volunteering is situated in the public highway and for over a year CCC has been expressing concern about the safety aspects of such work, promising written agreements between CCC and parish councils under a programme called "Working Together". Although proposals are still awaited, and improved safety is obviously to be welcomed, there is an ominous feeling that an underlying motive is to shift blame onto parish councils if and when accidents happen.

Highway matters Defects such as potholes, blocked drainage gullies and faulty street lights continue. They can be reported by the public on CCC's much-improved website; for the less 'tech savvy' the 'highways hotline' 0300 303 2992 is still available. The lane from Newlands to Barrows Green was resurfaced, but not Natland's priority which is Helm Lane from High House Farm to the Green. The A65 shared-use cycleway was completed, with Government funding, as far as the railway bridge. But there is still no (mainly CCC) funding for a footway along Natland Road.

The SID (speed indicator device) makes regular appearances to calm down speeding drivers at two sites on Natland Road – thanks go again to Guy Weller.

Hopes were raised when CCC funding provision in 2018-19 was spotted for improvements to drainage on Helm Lane and the Green. The current plan is to dig three large trial pits (scheduled for April 2019) on the Green and conduct infiltration tests to see if a large soakaway there might be capable of taking all the surface water arriving from Helm Lane. That would obviate the need to renew the inadequate soakaways (under domestic gardens?) at the Abbey Drive/Robby Lea Drive crossroads, but would require a new sewer from there to the Green. So we can expect a lot of disruption before the flooding is cured.

Canal Towpath Trail Progress is still awaited on the Kendal-to-Hawes Lane section of this Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership (LCRP) project to improve access for cyclists and wheelchairs (but not horse-riders) along the Lancaster to Kendal canal. A temporary closure order of the footpath from Crowpark Bridge to Natland Road is in place, ready for CCC (as contractor to LCRP) to install whatever gates, fencing and surfacing are required (the Council has asked for details but CCC won't tell us yet) but the work hasn't begun. It appears there are problems reaching agreement with landowners. A land agent was appointed, then replaced. The Project Manager has left to have a child. Newly appointed staff have offered to meet the Council or Parish Meeting to provide an update.

Planning and Development The Council was consulted on 10 planning applications during the year (compared with 11 in the previous year and eight in 2016-17) and passed its comments to SLDC as the Local Planning Authority. An application for an end-of-terrace

dwelling at New House was opposed by the Council and refused by SLDC, but an appeal was lodged in January which will be decided by a 'written representations' procedure.

Both of the year's major planning events involved Oakmere Homes. The appeal against SLDC's refusal of the application for up to 55 houses on land east of Long Meadow Lane was hastily withdrawn on the second day of the public inquiry when Oakmere realised their tactical error in including landscaping as a 'full' (rather than 'outline') element of the application, thereby preventing any flexibility over the road layout and number of dwellings, which they would need because of uncertainties over the site's surface water drainage. But withdrawal avoided the Inspector reaching a final decision, so Oakmere could still submit a fresh application for this land if they deemed it commercially worthwhile.

SLDC's refusal to allow up to 26 dwellings on land north of Natland Mill Beck Lane was reported last year. Then Oakmere appealed, withdrew the appeal, and submitted a fresh application, this time shorn of the adjoining so-called 'amenity area'. This was resoundingly refused in March 2019 despite again receiving officer support. But, judging by Oakmere's past performance, an appeal can be expected.

Elsewhere work has started on land south of Fell Close, Oxenholme (extra care residential development – 80 apartments and 24 bungalows) and, facing it across the A65, work is virtually complete on the 17-dwelling Rochester Gardens development, although we still don't whether number 8 is in Natland or Kendal.

Community Governance Review of South Lakeland Kendal Town Council is seeking to expand its boundaries by annexing adjoining land allocated for development in the new Local Plan. In the case of Natland its targets are the new housing development 'The Beeches' (but that would also envelope all of Natland Mill Beck Lane) and land on each side of A65 Burton Road south of Oxenholme (less controversial, but the Council has made the counter-suggestion that Oxenholme deserves to have its own parish council). The current consultation stage (4 March to 26 May) is a final opportunity for affected (or simply concerned) residents to make their views heard – to their district councillors or via the SLDC website, where there are full details including the Council's 'initial submission' of October 2018. Apart from considerations of effective and convenient local governance for the electors, removing about 25% of Natland's dwellings would lead to a commensurate increase in the 'parish council' element of the Council Tax.

Finances and Admin The Council's accounts for 2018-19 are on the back of this report. The precept for 2019-20 will be unchanged at £10,000. The Council received further CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) payments of £5,913.89; a final payment in April 2019 in respect of Oakmere's development at Rochester Gardens will bring the total in Natland's fund to £14,411.71. Parish councils must spend CIL payments on infrastructure to meet the needs of new developments; the Council is minded to use it towards its top priority – a footway along Natland Road. Implementing the new General Data Protection Regulation proceeded relatively painlessly when the Government conceded that parish councils would not need to appoint a separate Data Protection Officer. The Council's thanks go again to Marion Thornton who acts as the Council's independent internal auditor.

Natland Parish Council and Clerk 2018-19 Only four councillors were elected on 3 May 2018, leaving three vacancies for the Council to fill by co-option. During the year a councillor resigned but three were co-opted, so the Council now comprises Michael Clark, John Houghton, David Peters (Chair), Rhian Peters, Sarah Roberts and Richard White, with one vacancy. Details of how to contact councillors are on the notice board and website, or they can be contacted via the Clerk.

NATLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Interim Receipts and Payment Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019

	£	£	£
Balances at 01.04.18			
Community (current) Account		1718.61	
Business Bonus (deposit) Account		3046.69	
Restricted Funds (CIL)		<u>657.10</u>	5422.40
Receipts			
Precept - SLDC		10000.00	
Interest		7.64	
HMRC – VAT reclaimed		416.27	
Parish Grant - SLDC		217.18	
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)		<u>5913.89</u>	<u>16554.98</u>
			<u>21977.38</u>
Payments			
Clerk's salary & PAYE (including holiday pay)		4003.07	
Street lighting		859.18	
Grass cutting		810.00	
Donations			
North West Air Ambulance	100.00		
Great North Air Ambulance	100.00		
Kendal Mountain Rescue Team	100.00		
St Mark's PCC - churchyard	500.00		
Village Green Christmas Tree	<u>60.00</u>	860.00	
Internal Auditor remuneration		70.00	
Insurance		611.54	
Subscriptions			
Cumbria Assn of Local Councils	225.00		
Society of Local Council Clerks	22.56		
Open Spaces Society	45.00		
KADBUS	10.00		
Information Commissioner's Office	<u>35.00</u>	337.56	
Meetings		139.86	
Councillor training		126.88	
Clerk's expenses		238.38	
Clerk – use of office		216.00	
Payroll administration		75.00	
VAT paid		<u>162.00</u>	8509.47
Balances at 31.03.19			
Community (current) Account		2885.49	
Business Bonus (deposit) Account		<u>4011.43</u>	
Total Non-Restricted Funds		6896.92	
Restricted Funds (CIL)		<u>6570.99</u>	<u>13467.91</u>
			<u>21977.38</u>

Kevin M. Price – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer