

CULGAITH PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Annual Report 2007-8

This is brief account of what your parish council has been doing in the past year. We hope you find it interesting.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Parish Council recognises that Affordable Housing is a key issue with many people finding it difficult to get started on the property ladder. Culgaith was one of six local councils chosen to participate in the "Rural Excellence Strategic Housing Programme" during 2007. This sought to identify the issues and possible solutions associated with providing housing in rural areas. As a result the Parish Council is working with Eden District Council to identify the need for affordable housing and the next step will be to conduct a housing survey this Autumn. The Parish is also being consulted about 6 potential sites in Culgaith and 3 in Blencarn for affordable housing.

VILLAGE GREENS

The Parish Council administers 5 village greens and during the year participated in two workshops run by the Friends of the Lake District's Rural Greens Project. The workshops looked at common problems associated with managing village greens and also the legal aspects.

In January the Parish Council asked the Rural Greens Project to facilitate a parish meeting for the community of Culgaith to look at options for managing the Tarn. The majority of people attending the meeting felt that an independent body should manage it in future and this has led to the formation of "The Guardians of Culgaith Tarn". They have begun to develop a new sustainable management plan and will continue to keep the Parish Council up to date with progress.

A second outcome from the workshops has been the recognition that the Parish Council needs to register ownership of the village greens in Culgaith, Skirwith and Kirkland with the Land Registry. Ownership of Blencarn vil-

lage green is registered with the Lord of the Manor. Work will continue on this over the coming months.

Following a meeting last December with Eden District Parish Council's Arboriculturalist a management plan for the trees on Skirwith village green has been agreed. Some of the self seeded trees will be removed or trimmed, the bracken by the stream removed and some of the larger trees will be coppiced. United Utilities have been asked to look at the trees which are close to the power lines and remove any dangerously overhanging branches.

PLAY AREAS

The annual RoSPA inspection of Skirwith Play facilities continues to be supported by the Parish Council. Included in the last report was a recommendation to raise the tree canopy by the children's play area, which will be done as part of the work on the village green.

The Parish Council was also instrumental in bringing together the Trustees of the Culgaith Recreation Ground and Eden District Council which has led to a successful lottery grant to upgrade the facilities under the Play Partnership Scheme. This will involve replacing the grass tennis courts with hard standing and erecting a sports wall.

ROADS, PATHS and BRIDGES

The Highways Response Team was in the parish in February and a number of potholes were repaired. The Parish Council continues to make representation to Cumbria Highways about the Skirwith Langwathby road. If you notice a problem on any of the roads you can report it to the Cumbrian Highways Hotline on 0845 609 6609 or <http://www.cumbriahighways.org.uk/>

Under the Parish Paths Initiative the Parish Council received a grant of just under £1800 from Cumbria County Council to repair the wall by the Culgaith Methodist Chapel and provide a new wicket gate and handrail for the footpath.

At Skirwith the Parish Council commissioned a new bridge to be built over the beck. And at Blencarn there is now a newly restored signpost thanks to a grant from Cumbrian Homes.

PLANNING

During the year the Parish Council was consulted over 17 planning applications in Culgaith, 4 in Blencarn and 3 in Skirwith.

DONATIONS

Donations made by the Parish Council included £125 each to Culgaith PCC, Skirwith PCC, and Kirkland PCC, £300 to Culgaith Victoria Institute, £200 to Skirwith Village Hall, £100 to the Kirkland and Blencarn Reading Rooms, £200 to the Memo, and £300 to the Fellrunner.

NEW COMMUNITY WEBSITE

A new community website was launched providing information about the Parish Council, local business, local groups and community facilities such as village halls, mobile library and post office. If you want to promote any events in the villages please send the details to the Parish Clerk, Sue Smith.

For more information see www.culgaith.org.uk

FINANCE

The Parish "precept" (The Parish Council's share of the Council Tax) was held at £7,500 and remains at the same level for 2008/09.

The balance carried forward at the year end was £6,150. The accounts are audited externally by the Audit Commission.

The following is a summary of the Parish Council's accounts for the year to 31 March 2008 with the previous year's figures given as a comparison.

Administration includes the clerk's salary, office expenses, room hire, insurance, subscriptions, and audit fees.

Receipts	2006/07	2007/08
Precept	7,500	7,500

Grants	3,782	3,282
VAT recovered	472	800
Other income	278	473
Total Receipts	12,032	12,055

Payments

Administration	3,920	4,264
Village Greens	1,820	2,200
Play areas	324	75
Paths/Signposts/Notice Boards/Repairs	2,960	3,640
Donations	1,275	1,475
VAT	802	417
Election expenses	0	210
Total payments	11,101	12,281

PARISH COUNCILLORS 2007/08

Culgaith

John Findlay - Hudkin House Skirwith (Chairman); Jill Hay - I Chestnut Close Culgaith (Vice Chairman); John Hindson - Hill Top Culgaith; Martin Smith - Eden Cottage Culgaith, and Alistair Urquhart - Westfields, Culgaith (until April 2008).

Skirwith

Laura Wilson - Skirwith Hall and Howard Roper - Aglionby Farm Skirwith

Blencarn and Kirkland

Elaine Froggatt - The Old Corn Mill Blencarn and Ken Philipson - Glebe Farm Kirkland.

Following Alistair Urquhart's resignation the Parish Council is looking to co-opt one new member for Culgaith. For 2008/9 Laura Wilson has been elected Chairman and Jill Hay as Vice Chairman.

Parish Clerk

Sue Smith, Briarfield, Culgaith,
Tel 01768 879006.
email: sue_smith2@btinternet.com

Forthcoming meetings

July 7th 2008 – Blencarn
September 1st 2008 – Skirwith
November 3rd 2008 – Culgaith
Jan 5th 2009 – Blencarn
March 2nd 2009 – Skirwith
May 11th 2009 (Annual Parish Council Meeting and Parish Meeting) – Culgaith