

Annual Parish Reports May 2023

1) *CPC Chairman's Report*

Good evening and welcome to the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting. This meeting is a week later than usual due to the bank holiday in commemoration of the coronation of King Charles III. On behalf of all the people of Corsenside we wish him a long and happy reign. I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to thank all who have taken the time and effort to make their contribution, by whichever means, to this meeting. I would also like to thank all those who give their time and energy to keep our various parish organisations running and those who support them in various ways. These organisations keep parish life vibrant, help increase community cohesion, encourage a sense of belonging and help to make our parish a place we are all fortunate to be able to call home. The previous year has seen a couple of changes to the membership of your Parish Council, Jill Fenwick moved out of the area and stood down from her councillor role in September. After due process was followed, and there was no call for an election, we were free to co-opt to fill this vacancy. I'm really pleased to report that Karen Traill, our previous clerk, has returned to the fold and has now joined us as a councillor. I'm sure her previous experience as clerk and her knowledge of the parish will be invaluable as we go forward. Andrew Harding also decided to stand down as a councillor at the end of December following almost eight years in the position. We, again, were able to co-opt to fill this vacancy and I'm very pleased to welcome Dawn Anderson from West Woodburn as a new councillor. On behalf of everyone in the parish I'd like to thank Jill and Andrew wholeheartedly for their service and also thank Karen and Dawn for being prepared to take on the role. Moving on to routine matters, I'm pleased to report a return to normal circumstances following the disruption brought to us by the pandemic. This means the PC have met 11 times since the last APM in May last year. In our meetings we have addressed ourselves to 214 separate agenda items, an average of 20 agenda items per meeting. We usually meet on the first Monday of each month and usually in the Parish Hall in West Woodburn at 19:30, though in the colder winter months, usually December, January and February, we decamp to the warmer surroundings of the Bay Horse. We thank them very much for their willingness to have us and for providing a room, separate from the bar, to facilitate our meetings and at no expense to Parish Council funds and the public purse. I have mentioned in previous reports, and feel it important to continue doing so, that being a parish councillor is much more than just turning up to a meeting every month and I make no apologies for taking this opportunity to thank all Corsenside Councillors personally, and also on behalf of the parish. They all 2 give up their time freely and without complaint to represent the parish at various different levels and on the various forums we have input to. With regard to one of these forums, Andrew Harding had been our long-term representative on the board of the Reay Wind Farm Community Interest Company. Andrew also stood down from this position when he left the PC. No other councillor had capacity to take on extra commitments and so we sought a parishioner to act as our representative. I'd like to say a huge thank you to Alison Thomson of Ridsdale who came forward and volunteered to take on this role. Alison is now the Corsenside rep on the board and will be CPC's conduit for the flow of information between the two organisations. Alison will provide us with regular written reports and occasionally attend PC meetings to give verbal reports if necessary. All agendas and previous minutes of CPC's meetings are displayed on the three noticeboards in the parish

in Ridsdale, West Woodburn and East Woodburn and also continue to be available on-line. On our website, you will also find contact details for your councillors, an events diary, a news page and information and links to local clubs, societies and groups. Agendas, minutes and other more general notices are also regularly posted on the Corsenside Clarion Facebook group which we encourage parishioners to join, and our thanks go to Peter Scott and the clerk for facilitating this. Please do pass on Parish information you come across via digital means to other parishioners you know don't have access to such means of communication. As ever, we continue to work to the highest levels of financial scrutiny to ensure complete transparency and accountability and are confident that we adhere to the best possible practice. As previously mentioned, our ongoing internal audit carries on as usual, on a quarterly basis, thanks to Andy Wilson and my thanks also go to Hazel Goodall, a parishioner who is a qualified accountant, who continues to provide annual audit services for us. Our external auditing procedures are scrutinised by the accounting firm Mazars. I'm really pleased to report that the old school playing field along with the driveway and car park have now been transferred to the ownership of the parish. This has been done at no cost to the Parish, other than the necessary legal fees, via a Community Asset Transfer from NCC. This means that the entire village green area is now in the ownership and care of CPC and is open for all to use. Although the fenced area is open for the use of everyone, we have installed our new FA approved goal posts here as the enclosed space obviously provides a safer area for ball games and we'd encourage this area to be used for this type of play. Alongside the installation of the new posts, we have removed the old metal ones as there were poo safety concerns around their ongoing use. Please can I appeal to everyone to ensure that any pet waste is cleaned up from these areas and to remember that dogs are not allowed in the play park. Animal waste is unpleasant to see lying around, awful to have to clean up if trodden in and can carry various diseases therefore also representing a significant health risk. Please remember that there is a byelaw in Northumberland which states that you must pick up after your dog wherever it may be and dispose of the waste appropriately. The problem of dog waste is our number one cause of complaint so please help keep our parish clean and safe, be considerate of others and be a responsible owner by picking up any waste left by your pet. Please don't leave poo bags behind and dispose of them in the waste bins provided or take home to put in your own bin. 3 On the perennial issue of road safety, the interactive speed signs in Ridsdale became faulty and unreliable so we had them removed for assessment and repair. I'm pleased to report that thanks to a generous grant from the Reay Wind Farm we have been able to action this repair work and they should hopefully be returned to active service very soon. There have also been two new interactive speed signs installed in West Woodburn. These new signs were installed at NCC's expense as their workers had mistakenly removed the ones we had bought and installed a number of years ago instead of the decommissioned 20mph school signs they were meant to remove. Sadly, both of these new signs have been subject to manufacturing faults and have not worked properly from the outset. The supply company are well aware of this and will be replacing the signs, once again. We are very unhappy about the length of time this is taking and continue to press the supply company for progress. We are told that supply chain issues are delaying the manufacture of new signs and when parts become available our new signs can be made. As NCC paid for these signs we have also asked them for help to expedite this matter. The new signs will collect and store speed information from passing vehicles and allow us to collect this data wirelessly. This will hopefully provide us with more than just anecdotal evidence to supply to NCC in our ongoing struggle to justify further road safety measures in West Woodburn. In December the five-year Revitalising Redesdale project came to an end. Corsenside has

directly benefitted from the work of this project in several ways such as the installation of a Star Cairn close to West Woodburn, a topographic panel in Ridsdale and various interpretive panels throughout the parish. As a legacy of this project, it is good to see that the RR website will be maintained for the benefit of all and the use of local groups and organisations for a further ten years. Many thanks go to all involved in this project but especially to our very own Carol Hawman who has been our RR representative from the outset. Thanks Carol, for all your hard work on this and all the additional time and meetings this has involved. A special mention also goes to the Ridsdale Community Group and all the staff at the Gun Inn for their undoubted commitment to community spirit. In the past year they have organised two very successful and well attended commemorative weekends, each with a variety of events and attractions to appeal to all in our community and visitors alike. These weekends have marked the Platinum Jubilee in recognition of the remarkable 70 years of service given by Her Majesty, The Queen and also to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Huge thanks to all who were involved in bringing our community together to mark these special occasions and making these weekends as enjoyable, successful and memorable as they were. In each of my reports to the APM, over the years, I have mentioned how frustrating it can be in dealing with Northumberland County Council and sadly this situation continues. We always try our hardest to bring any matters brought to our attention to a satisfactory and timely conclusion but fully appreciate that it may not seem so to the onlooker or if you have asked us to progress an issue. For any matters which require the involvement of the County Council, the cogs in the County Hall 'machine' continue to turn extremely slowly, with ever tightening budgets and greatly reduced staffing levels in all departments resulting in the extremely long waiting times we often experience between request and action. I do feel it important to stress once again that it is not inaction on our behalf. Once we raise an issue with NCC we are in constant touch to keep reminding them until action is taken or a suitable resolution arrived at. Indeed, progress often seems to depend upon developing good working relationships with officers of the council and by the extra time and effort put in by the clerk and individual councillors in being persistent with their requests. 4 Chris, our clerk has completed her first year of service and is now well into her second. A huge thank you to her for all her hard work on our behalf and all she does to continue to provide us with the excellent clerking service we have become used to. Chris also makes a further contribution to parish life as a volunteer with the Friends of Corsenside group so thanks also for all you do with them. Finally, may I, thank Carol for her support and assistance this year as Vice Chair and once again, say a huge thank you to all the Parish Councillors, on behalf of all parishioners and also from me personally, for all the amazing work they do on behalf of the parish, for giving up their time, entirely free of charge, and for their willingness to serve the wonderful parish of Corsenside. Thank you. Carl Hamilton Chair - Corsenside Parish Council. 15th May, 2023

2) *Corsenside Parish Hall Committee*

Chair John Clyde issued the following report in person:

Corsenside Parish Hall - Chairman's report to 15 May '23
Corsenside Parish meeting.

Since the last AGM we have had a quiet 12 months! Bookings have never really picked up since the COVID closures, and we are still looking for funding for the final phase of insulating and re-cladding the hall walls. This process has not been helped by rapidly increasing building costs, meaning we have had to obtain new quotes for much of the work. We do, however wish to pursue the aim of completing our 5-year plan to modernise the hall.

We have also joined the Solar Community Buildings project with CAN, NICRE, and the Rural Design Centre. This could see the installation of solar panels and battery storage.

Our income for the current year is a little short of the regular expenditure (not including one-off costs such as electrical maintenance), and as

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we can expect to see rises in costs such as electricity and insurance, it is even more important that we see an increase in hall use. If we had more bookings these extra costs would not be a problem, and we would be in a stronger position when approaching potential funders. We are looking for a total of about £25k.

I would like to thank Warm Hub Northumberland, National Lottery / CAN Village Halls Partners The Rothley Trust, the Bellingham Fund at the Community Foundation and the EDF Energy Green Rigg Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund for financial support and all the volunteers who have come in to clean, maintain and otherwise look after the hall. I would also like to thank all the local people who booked it, hired out equipment or helped out at events.

John Clyde

3) *Ridsdale Village Hall Fund*

Since last years meeting there has not been any change with The Ridsdale Village Hall Fund.

The Fund is still open although, it is still unable to make a donations and its future has still not been decided.

4) *Mission Hall Trust*

THE OLD MISSION HALL TRUST

20th April 2023

We are pleased to report on the last year's activities as follows:

Our activities are always driven by the number of requests received from within the parish and controlled by the amount of income we receive in a year. Interest rates still remain frustratingly low, which restricts the amount of income available to applicants unfortunately. As always, getting our message across to the community is always a problem, despite FB announcements, there is currently little demand for financial assistance. In some ways, this is an advantage, allowing us to build up funds which would be of better help to applicants in future years.

It is always tempting to give them larger awards out of capital, but then that would mean less income would be generated in following years.

This year however picked up and we were able to give out 3 grants to local young folk in higher education.

Peter Scott

Clerk to the Trustees

5) *The Corsenside Parish Show*

Corsenside Parish Show

Report to Parish Council Meeting; 15th May 2023

Following last year's successful show and the well-attended AGM in March, the Parish Show Committee is in full swing organising this year's show and associated fundraising events. The show will take place as always on the third Saturday in September, this year Saturday 16th September. The programme and schedule will be distributed at the end of May/early June to all households within the parish.

In addition to the competitive industrial, fruit, veg and flower classes, attractions this year will include a bouncy castle, quoits competition, tug of war, children's activities and a range of refreshments. The Army Cadets have been invited to bring along the climbing wall and the committee is also approaching the fire service and police with a view to a fire

engine and patrol car being present on the day for people to view. We will once again invite young people from the parish to accompany the judges to write out prize tickets and/or record winners, which is proving successful and helping to engage young people in the running of the show. Committee members are also looking into recruiting a couple of young people onto the show committee.

The following fundraising activities for this year are currently being planned:

- Coffee morning with plant stall, tombola and cake stall at the Bay Horse on Saturday 13th May, 11am*
- Prize Bingo evening in Otterburn Memorial Hall on Thursday 22nd June, 7.30pm*
- Race Night at the Gun Inn in on Saturday 12th August, 7.30pm for 8.00pm start*
- Darts and Dominoes evening at the Bay Horse on Saturday 21st October, 7.30pm*

Other fundraising activities have been suggested and discussed and those that are going ahead have been chosen on the basis of ease of organisation, likelihood of good attendance and fundraising potential, balanced against the cost of attendance for parishioners in current challenging financial times.

As ever, we are promoting advertising and sponsorship opportunities in the show programme and seeking donations – financial or in kind, where possible.

Support for the show in any form is always greatly appreciated and we look forward to a summer of successful community events and a great show day.

*Danny Findler
Chairman, Corsenside Parish Show*

Other Committee Members:

*Maureen Johnson, Secretary
Caroline Currie, Treasurer
Paul Johnson
Helen Patterson
Sam Robson
Debbie Fenwick
Steve Donnelly*

Report prepared 15th May 2023

6) Ridsdale Junior & Senior Citizens Fund

Part of RCG- see report below.

7) Parochial Church Council

Nothing recieved

8) The Ridsdale Community Group – The Gun at Ridsdale

Ridsdale report 2023 During 2022, business proved to be more interesting than we expected. The year started slowly with COVID affecting the village, forcing the pub to close during New Year celebrations and the days that followed. When we were able to open, the pub proved to be much appreciated by the village, the surrounding area and the traveling public with wet sales and food sales buoyant. From Easter to the end of October, the accommodation proved to be very popular with bookings from many of you, the shareholders. As with the rest of the world and in particular, the hospitality industry, business became more difficult towards the end of the year with energy costs spiraling to unprecedented levels, exacerbated by increased food and drink prices. But the pub managed to stay open at all the regular opening times. Throughout 2022, entertainment and community activities increased to the levels seen in previous years with weekly quizzes, darts and pool teams representing the pub in local leagues, periodic live music from a variety of bands and Easter and Christmas celebrations. The late Queen's 70th Jubilee celebrations were a particular highlight with a variety of activities for all ages. Another notable event was the annual Gun Leek show which is now becoming one of the most popular shows in the North East of England. It is the intention through 2023 to increase the amenities offered to the community such as a book exchange, craft activities(helpers welcome), family days and the encouragement to local producers for food and craft fayres to name a few. As we go into 2023 with the continuing energy costs, the committee temporarily reduced the opening hours of the pub and hub. This decision was not taken lightly but was essential to avoid financial difficulties. This was a short term measure and full opening was reinstated before Easter. Reducing energy costs is a priority and solutions are being vigorously sought. It is the intention to have solar panels installed on the pub roof with battery storage. The initial costs to be funded by raising monies locally and opening a second share issue. During this year, the Ridsdale Senior Citizens and Juniors Fund was brought under the umbrella of The Ridsdale Community Group. This came about due to lack of interest of anyone but the RCG and the pub Manager in organising events. Also all events took place in the pub so it seemed a natural progression. The events throughout the year mentioned above enabled fund raising activities of raffles etc to take place. We also ran a breakfast provision at the Leek Club event to raise funds for this. The monies being kept separate from RCG funds. This allowed us to fund events such as The Village Christmas party, Easter Egg Hunt and most recently contribute towards prizes for the children at the Coronation events. It has also contributed towards the planting event for the Coronation and a bookcase for the community room.

9) Friends of Corsenside

Friends of Corsenside formed in 2022. It is a Revitalising Redesdale legacy group and will continue their work maintaining a wildflower meadow at St Cuthbert's church at Corsenside. The aims of Friends of Corsenside are to work with the community to celebrate and protect the rich cultural heritage, landscape and wildlife of Corsenside Parish and the wider surrounding area. Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims of the group; membership is free and members are those who subscribe to email updates. New members are very welcome and are asked to contact friendsofcorsenside@gmail.com

Upcoming events in the diary include our Peen and Clean, this Wednesday (17th May) at 2pm. Later in the year we have sessions for learning to identify wildflowers, scything the meadow and an autumn fungal foray.

10) *Parish Council Finance*

Corsenside Parish Council concluded the year underbudget by approximately £800. This was despite some unexpected and costly repairs needed to the Play Area and a replacement laptop being purchased.

Our largest expense is wages for the clerk who carries out the day-to-day parish administration and undertakes other preapproved tasks which can be read about in the meeting minutes. Streamlining of some administration processes has saved time and meant the wage bill was underbudget.

Buying and maintaining Assets for the Parish is one of our largest expenses, alongside Landscaping costs, incurred to keep the communal spaces safe and tidy. Insurance remains a high but unavoidable cost, with the help of a broker every year we ensure that we pay a competitive rate with adequate cover.

The Precept rose marginally this year, one of several planned increases which began last year, to bring the Precept amount into line with annual spending.

Details of all CPC finances are available by contacting the clerk or visiting our website.

Christine Woodcock Parish Council Clerk & RFO