

Corsenside Annual Parish Meeting

9th May, 2022

Chair of Parish Council's Report

Good evening and welcome to the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting.

Whilst we usually encourage the representatives of our various parish organisations to give their reports in person, this year due to obvious circumstances we have again happily accepted written submissions from them, if they are more comfortable to provide their reports in this way. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have taken the time and effort to make their contribution, by whichever means, to the 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.

Moving on to routine matters, the PC have met 6 times since the last APM, which was delayed due to Covid, and have addressed an average of 22 agenda items at each meeting. This means that we have dealt with approximately 132 items in the time since November 2021.

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 and 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. Whilst our meetings have, since May last year, once again been face to face, we have met in a socially distanced and hopefully Covid safe manner and we continue to do so as although there are now no legal restrictions and life in general appears to have returned to something resembling the way it used to be, there is still Covid infection within the community at large.

As I have mentioned before, 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 personally, and also on behalf of the parish, all the councillors who 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.

In my last report, I mentioned that we still had a councillor vacancy which we were hoping to fill and I'm pleased to report that we have done so. Following advertisement of the vacancy we were happy to be able to co-opt Dawn Mole. Dawn lives in East Woodburn and gives us a geographical spread of councillors throughout the parish. Thank you Dawn for your willingness to become a councillor, your efforts so far and hopefully long into the future.

Dawn has agreed to be the Parish Council representative on the Parish Hall committee, a role we have been trying to fill for some time, so thank you very much for that also. Whilst speaking of the Parish Hall, it would be remiss of me not to, once again, recognise the huge improvements which have taken place to

breathe life and longevity back into the building. None of these improvements would have been possible or would have happened without a huge amount of time and effort by the members of the Parish Hall committee. My thanks to all of them for their contribution to ensure we can all benefit from such an important community resource.

2022 is a unique and important year in that it is the Queens Platinum Jubilee. I'm sure you would all join with me in offering our sincere congratulations for her remarkable seventy years of service. To mark the occasion in Corsenside, a Jubilee Celebrations committee was formed and Sarah Smith has been our PC representative. The committee have advertised and canvassed parishioners regarding if and how they want to celebrate and have planned events and celebrations around the bank holiday weekend. My thanks on behalf of the entire parish to this committee, I'm sure it'll be a weekend to remember.

As a longer lasting commemoration of the Queens remarkable achievement, I have been negotiating with Forestry England to have a section of Fourlaws Forest designated as the Corsenside Platinum Plantation with a new tree planted for every member of our parish. This accords with the Queens well known care and concern for the natural world and the environment and is in line with the Queens Green Canopy project initiated this year. I am really pleased to say the Forestry England are very supportive of this idea and happy to collaborate to bring it to fruition. Although it will not happen by the Jubilee weekend, it will hopefully come to pass later this year or early next when the huge backlog of extra work created by Storm Arwen has been tackled. My huge thanks to Alex McLellan of Forestry England and his team for agreeing to this and their enthusiasm for the project.

As ever all agendas and previous minutes continue to be available on-line. On the 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, 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 communication.

Also, 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 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 PKF Littlejohn.

In my last report I mentioned that following the sad closure of the school we were hoping to secure the school playing field for the benefit of all in the community and have it transferred into the ownership of the parish via a Community Asset Transfer. I'm very pleased to report that NCC have agreed to this and the field along with the driveway and car park will be transferred to the parish.

In a repeat of a part of my last report, as sadly the issue still remains and remains of great concern, the issue of road safety continues to be of high priority for us. We continue to push NCC, on a monthly basis for improvements in West Woodburn, which still suffers from speeding vehicles, despite the installation of a large raft of road safety measures a few years ago. CPC believe that the only effective way of slowing vehicles down now lies in the application of so called build out features, which NCC removed from the

original plan, to narrow the road at the north and south entrances to the speed restriction in West Woodburn. We have also registered our concerns about the road safety situation in Ridsdale both on the A68, which again sees driver regularly flouting the 40mph speed restriction and ignoring the double white lines to overtake, and also on Armstrong Street where the 30mph limit is flouted on a regular basis. We will keep pressing NCC on these matters until satisfactory solutions are in place. CPC have always sought to prevent the occurrence of accidents and it is therefore very frustrating that such important things take so long to happen.

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.

We have been very glad to welcome Chris Woodcock, of Otterburn and previously West Woodburn, to the position of Parish Clerk. Chris has hit the ground running and worked conscientiously and diligently to provide us with the excellent clerking service we have become used to. Thank you Chris, I know it's been a learning curve but the transition has been almost seamless due to the time and effort you have given.

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.

9th May, 2022

*Supplement/alternative to a report by John Clyde in person to Corsenside Parish
Council AGM on 9th May 2022*

Part of the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Corsenside Parish Hall Trust for the year ended 31 March 2022, which will be presented at the hall's AGM on Wednesday 18th May 2022

Chairman's Report

Since the latest previous report (2021), the Hall has been open and available for hire, subject to remaining government restrictions, with additional conditions of hire designed to minimize risks of Covid-19 infection. In spite of these limitations and the expected shortfall in income/expenditure in 2021-2022, hall use is gradually increasing.

Furthermore, we are now within sight of completing the 5-year plan adopted soon after the present trustees were first elected in 2016, aimed at securing and upgrading the building for energy-efficient use for decades to come.

During 2021-2022, work has been commissioned for the first of the final two phases of completion of insulation and re-cladding of the external walls of the Hall and associated roof repairs at the west gable end above the upgraded roof of the kitchen extension. This work will be funded by contributions from the Hall's unrestricted funds and from restricted funds: The Sir James Knott Trust; the National Lottery/CAN Village Halls Partnership; the Rothley Trust and EDF Energy Green Rigg Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund. The work is expected to begin in April 2022.

Other restricted funds are currently held: the Bellingham Fund at the Community Foundation (for promotion of plays and concerts) and a smaller grant from Warm Hubs Northumberland (for assisting vulnerable isolated people in Corsenside parish in necessary mobile phone use).

On behalf of all the Trustees, I would like to thank all the above charities and the individuals and organisations who have given us advice and encouragement during 2021-2022, including Community Action Northumberland, the West Northumberland Community Buildings Consortium, Hazel Goodall (independent examiner of the accounts), volunteers helping with refurbishment and cleaning, and hall-users for their patience and compliance with the necessary additional conditions of hire.

JOHN CLYDE Chairman, Corsenside Parish Hall Management Committee

Ridsdale Village Hall Fund

The Ridsdale Village Hall Fund previously (early 2020) made the decision to donate remaining funds to The Ridsdale Community Group for the benefit of the community pub, The Gun at Ridsdale. This means that the fund is currently unable to make any further donations.

The future of The Ridsdale Village Hall Fund has not yet been decided. A decision will be made this summer.

Sarah Short

THE OLD MISSION HALL TRUST

3rd May 2022

We are pleased to report on the last 2 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.

Peter Scott

Clerk to the Trustees

Corsenside Parish Show

Report to Parish Council Meeting; 9th May 2022

Following last year's successful show and the well-attended AGM in March, the Parish Show Committee are 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 17th September. The programme and schedule will be distributed at the end of May/early June to all households within the parish.

Attractions this year will include the climbing wall provided by the Army Cadets, a bouncy slide, quoits competition, children's activities, a range of refreshments and an exhibition of local photography. There are one or two changes to the industrial classes with a new class for bread being introduced this year, along with a new class for a handknitted item for a homeless person. We will once again invite young people from the parish to accompany the judges to write out prize tickets and/or record winners – this went down well last year and helps to engage young people in the running of the show.

The committee are delighted to be able to return to fundraising activities this year and are currently planning a Meal Night at the Bay Horse on Wednesday 8th June, a Prize Bingo evening in Otterburn on Thursday 7th July (tbc) and a Race Night at the Gun Inn in August. We are more reliant than ever on parishioners and friends of the show supporting our fundraising efforts as costs have increased quite significantly. Support in the form of attending fundraising events, taking part in raffles and quizzes, sponsorship and advertising in the programme, donations and 'manpower' help on show weekend are all very gratefully received and sincerely appreciated.

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

Report prepared 4th May 2022.

2021/22 Annual Review

The committee in 2021/22 consisted of Alison Thomson, Diane Elliot, Janice Smith, Tracie Laurie, Kerry Scott and Sarah Short,

This year has once again been a quiet year due to COVID.

- We restarted events with a BBQ in October which was well attended and raised about £300
- Halloween saw the village children completing a combined trick or treat then back to the pub for hot dogs and to share their spoils. The atmosphere was aided by the spooky decorations.
- John Bassets annual Leek show on 3rd October saw us providing hot sandwiches, tea and coffee and running the raffle which brought in considerable funds.
- Christmas Eve in The Gun was extremely busy with mulled wine, mince pies and a marathon raffle - I never cease to be amazed by the generosity of the raffle donations. Unfortunately both the children's party and the senior citizens meal were cancelled due to a COVID outbreak. However, events were run in the spring to compensate for this including Easter gifts for the children and a Senior Citizens meal at Easter.

Alison Thomson
Chair

Corsenside Parish Council AGM 9th May 2022

From Richard Virden, Honorary Assistant Priest

I hope that the following comments will be helpful as a supplement to Hugo Remnant's report on challenges and hopes for Corsenside PCC.

As PCC Treasurer, I want to record my grateful thanks to the generous people (in Corsenside and beyond) whose financial support throughout the Covid-19 restrictions has been and remains crucial for the solvency of the PCC.

As retired Honorary Assistant Priest (limited by medical concerns to officiating only once since March 2020 at the open-air Corsenside Public Act of Remembrance in November 2021) I see the two well-supported church services mentioned by Hugo as a hopeful sign of the continuing desire for church worship within the parish of Corsenside.

Wearing both hats, it's a pleasure to thank the team of volunteers headed by Anne Pender for distribution of *The Meeting of the Waters*. Thanks to them and to the subscribers, there has been a sizeable increase in the number of subscriptions for 2022, another token of continuing interest and willing support for the Church in Corsenside. The magazine is distributed throughout the six parishes of the North Tyne and Redesdale Benefice and it's one of the ways of encouraging parishes to work together more closely than in the past.

More responsibility is already being taken by lay-people in leading services and other church-activities, activities that were already developing before the retirement of the Revd Dr Susan Ramsaran. They have been further developed during the subsequent vacancy with support and encouragement by the Revd Sarah Lunn, whose responsibilities as Area Dean of the Bellingham Deanery extend from Byrness to Wall on both sides of the North Tyne.

A most welcome further encouragement for North Tyne and Redesdale is happening on 19th May when the Revd Dr Claire Maxim will be licensed at a service at St Cuthbert's Elsdon as Priest in Charge of the North Tyne and Redesdale Benefice.

In the very near future there will be only two full-time clergy serving the parishes of the Bellingham Deanery. Whether we in Corsenside can grasp the opportunities is wholly up to us and, with the season of Easter hope in mind, I'll be very happy to hear from anyone who wants to discuss any aspect of these things for the future of the Church in Corsenside.

Richard Virden, Honorary Assistant Priest

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RIDSDALE COMMUNITY GROUP LTD

21/22 report to Parish Council

The beginning of 2021 saw the start of a major refurbishment programme. Alongside the refurbishment and opening of the pub, grants and loans were being successfully sought for an ambitious plan to build a new toilet block and cellar, with a new kitchen going where the old toilets and rear entrance used to be situated. The plan was to carry out the new build over a twelve-month period starting in the spring of 2021. But the committee, frustrated by the lockdown, took the calculated risk of commencing the work in January 2021 with a target date for completion of April 2021. Thanks to the cooperation of local tradesmen and all the volunteers - apart from the rendering of the walls - the whole building was finished by the beginning of May: the new additions to the old building, the accommodation upstairs and, outside, the transformation of the garden, patio, and car park. The garden and its surroundings has proved to be a great asset to the business, with the magnificent view appreciated by many of our clients and locals alike. The outside area has been greatly enhanced by the patio and disabled access ensuring our facility is accessible by all.

May saw the reopening as planned and throughout the year we saw many changes and developments as the facility evolved and grew.

In July Louise Straughan took over as manager and continues to work hard to ensure the success of this community venture. While the kitchen has seen many staff changes it still continues to be a thriving destination for food, attracting visitors and locals alike. It is now being run efficiently by Scott Wardle.

The B&B has welcomed many visitors and continues to have a good occupancy rate.

Autumn saw the return of the pool and darts leagues along with the weekly quizzes, providing entertainment for the community throughout the winter and into spring. The quizzes have proved very popular and are well attended.

Other notable events include a Leek Show show with visitors coming from all over the North East, a beer festival and various music nights.

The Ridsdale Junior and Seniors Citizens fund returned with a well attended BBQ.

Christmas saw many planned events, including a Christmas quiz, a Christmas Eve get together and a Christmas Fayre. Unfortunately, then COVID hit, closing the pub over new year seeing the cancellation of the children's and senior citizens party and the new year fancy dress party.

Corsenside Parish Council Finance Report May 2022

The Parish council continues to make all financial information publicly available either by request directly to the clerk or via our website ([Corsenside Parish Council | Home \(parish-council.com\)](http://Corsenside Parish Council | Home (parish-council.com))).

Having concluded the financial year I am pleased to report that the Council remained primarily on budget, there was a deliberate overspend on assets when a set of new goal posts was purchased for the community. The instruction of a Solicitor to deal with the asset transfer of the former school field from Northumberland County Council to Corsenside Parish Council has incurred a significant but not unexpected cost. As discussed and recorded in previous meetings the Precept has this year had a small increase, the first for many years.

Christine Woodcock
Parish Council Clerk & RFO