

HILL TALK

A Village Partnership and Parish Council joint publication

March 2013
Issue 5



QUARRINGTON HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE

In December, Christmas spirit returned to the community centre, though this time there was a lack of snow to complete the picture. Following the demise of the previous outdoor Christmas tree, the Parish Council kindly donated a new tree, for which the management committee are very grateful. It looks as if it is thriving in Q'hill and hopefully will last considerably longer than its predecessor. Inside the centre, members again tastefully decorated the main room and are grateful for the donation of a new indoor tree from the Half Moon. The annual carol service was very well supported with over 31 people attending. The service was conducted by Father John from Christ the King Church in Bowburn and the singing was led by members of their choir, with residents making a significant contribution. Afterwards, homemade mince pies and ginger wine were provided. The Christmas dinner for those attending the coffee mornings and bingo evenings was again very well supported and was followed by a bingo session.

The children's Christmas party was an outstanding success with 50 children attending, probably a record. The children entered into the spirit of the games and activities and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Santa managed to break his busy schedule to call in and give a gift to each of the children. Thanks are especially due to the committee ladies for arranging the food and refreshments. The management committee are especially grateful to PJA Motors and Mr. Plant for their very kind donations towards the cost of the party.

Work is continuing on the business plan and the lease with Durham County Council. Also, plans are being drawn up to redevelop the former footballers changing rooms at the rear of the community centre. **The community centre can be hired for private functions including children's parties. For further details, contact Margaret Hamilton on 07796694878.**

DIARY DATES – COMMUNITY CENTRE

Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 19th March at 6.45pm

Easter Fair - Saturday 30th March from 11.00am to 2.00pm, anyone who has items for the table top sale, please contact a member of the management committee.

VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP – see page 8 for AGM details

Environmental Improvements - Further meetings have been held with Durham County Council regeneration team, other departments and also Groundwork Northeast, good progress is being made. As mentioned in a previous Hill Talk, schemes will be drawn up for environmental improvements to the village, including a focal point in the centre of the village and will then be available to residents for comments.

Youth Club - The youth club now meets in the community centre on Mondays from 4.00pm to 5.30pm. Over recent weeks numbers attending have increased and new members will be most welcome.

DOG FOULING

Dog fouling spoils the environment, upsets local residents and can cause serious health risks, particularly to children. It is an offence if dog owners do not clean up after their dog and they could be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £80. If taken to court the maximum fine is £1,000. It takes very little time and effort for dog owners to clean up after their dog and it is no defence to claim ignorance of a dog's actions. Dog owners should always carry a 'poop-scoop' when walking their dog; a plastic container is all that is needed. Everyone should be able to walk round the village without having to continually look down to check what they may be putting their foot into. Durham County Council has prioritised 15 areas within the county for having a purge on this problem; unfortunately, Quarrington Hill is currently not included in the 15 areas. In order to endeavour to get action from DCC it is essential that residents who witness such incidents report them to the neighbourhood warden service on 03000 261018.

NATURE RESERVES

There has been a successful community conservation day at Littlewood Nature Reserve, removing invasive gorse to allow and increase butterfly habit and this was publicised in the Northern Echo. Nest boxes will be built with Cassop school children for Crowtrees and Littlewood Nature Reserves. The Exmoor ponies are doing a great job in grazing at the bottom of Crowtrees Nature Reserve. (These animals are not strays). The Hebridean sheep have now left after another visit to Quarrington Hill. There has been a volunteer day with DVCRS to remove scrub on the grassland area at Cathedral view. It is hoped that funding can be obtained to resolve the flooding of the path next to the ponds. John Olley

SCHOOL TALKS

John Olley and Billy Jones are grateful for the opportunity given to speak to pupils of Cassop School about the local nature reserves and local history, together with school days past.

John spoke about the local nature reserves including information on the bird life, pond life, rare plants and flowers and trees. All this will be brought to life later on a walk round the nature reserves.

Billy brought along a painting of Crowtrees Colliery and provided information to the pupils. They showed great interest in the Quarrington Hill incline, a railway line from the colliery which went under Church Road up to Beacon Hill. The coal trucks were pulled up the incline by a steam standing engine for transfer to the Cassop line, which went about 300 yards from the school, to then be pulled to Hartlepool by a locomotive. A visit and walk round the route will take place later.

Billy also answered questions from pupils about what school life was like when he attended Cassop School many years ago.

CHURCHYARD

A petition concerning the state of the churchyard, which will be sent to the church hierarchy, has so far attracted 440 signatures. For further details, contact Billy Jones.

WATCH YOUR SPEED

In the space of a few minutes on a recent Community Speed watch check in the village, 3 out of 22 vehicles committed a speeding offence. The drivers will be receiving a communication from the police.

EASTER FAIR

COMMUNITY CENTRE

Saturday, 30th MARCH 2013

11.00am to 2.00pm

PACT – What is it all about ?

If you live in County Durham or Darlington and want to get involved in how your local area is policed, Durham Constabulary has the answer!. Along with our local councils we have developed PACT - Police and Communities Together – to ensure we're tackling the issues which matter to you in your community.

PACT meetings are held in local venues on a regular basis. This could be a community centre or similar, and we also hold online PACT meetings, PACT meetings in schools and sometimes PACT meetings in public open spaces (weather permitting). At every PACT meeting there's a discussion about PACT priorities. These are the issues which local people tell us they want their local policing team to tackle. If an issue is made a PACT priority it will be tackled, and there will be an update at future meetings about what has been done about it. PACT priorities should change all the time, because we aim to sort out the issue and move on to something else.

The next PACT Meeting in Quarrington Hill will be held at The Community Centre on – Tuesday 5th March 2013 at 1830hrs. But you don't have to attend a meeting. You can be part of PACT simply by contacting your local neighbourhood team. You may see one of them out and about in your area, you can ring them using the 101 number or you can follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

PACT is your opportunity to influence what we focus on, where you live. Visit our website at www.durham.police.uk and click on your Neighbourhood and ward/beat area.

EAST DURHAM RURAL CORRIDOR AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP

The next Board Meeting of the East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership will be held at the Active Life Centre @ Coxhoe, (formerly Coxhoe Leisure Centre) Linden Grove, Coxhoe on **Wednesday, 6th March 2013 from 5.00pm to 7.00pm**. Come along and find out what the AAP does, what it can do for you, and how you can become involved.

At this meeting, there will be a power point presentation on the new welfare reforms which will affect many people. This will be an opportunity for residents to find out how they will be affected. To register, please contact Marie Ainscough via e-mail:

marie.ainscough@durham.gov.uk or by ringing Marie on 03000 261128



Delivering Quality Services to
Coxhoe & Quarrington Hill

Coxhoe Parish Council – Information Point

This issue of Hill Talk ties in with a busy period for the Parish Council as it moves forward with the delivery of the aspirations of residents reflected in the Parish Plan. At the last Parish Council meeting in January 2013 a discussion took place with a representative from Durham County Council to commence jointly tackling the highways and transport issues set out in the Parish Plan, also the resignations of Councillors Jimmy Taylor and Carol Parkes were reported. The Parish Council passed on their thanks and appreciation to both Councillors. Particular thanks were expressed to Councillor Jimmy Taylor for his many years in public service since 1994 in Coxhoe and prior to that in West Cornforth.

Clearing snow and gritting paths can you help - The Parish Council is continuing to explore ways of working in partnership with Durham County Council to improve the level of snow clearing and gritting in Quarrington Hill. As the Parish Council does not have a workforce that can be deployed there is a need for local volunteers, therefore if you are interested please contact the Parish Clerk on 07988 283287, or at clerk@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk. Also you can now find a weekly local Durham area weather forecast on the Parish Councils web site www.coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Council meetings - Parish Council meetings are all open to the public and are now held at Coxhoe Village Hall at 7.00 pm, agreed meetings for the first half of 2013 are set out below:-

27th February 2013, 20th March 2013 and 8th May 2013 (the 8th May 2013 meeting will be preceded at 6.30pm by the Annual Parish meeting)

Have you got what it takes?

The Parish Council has an election on the 2nd May 2013 and is looking for Parish Councillors, for more information visit the Parish Councils web site www.coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk or contact the Parish Clerk contact on 07988 283287, or at clerk@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Have you got what it takes?



Do **you** want to serve the community
you live in?

Could **you** make a difference?

Would **you** like to see your parish grow?

NATURE DIARY February 2013

Things have been rather quiet this winter in the Reserve. Moorhens have stayed on the Ponds but the Coots, which have been regular features here in previous years, have disappeared. Mallards have appeared occasionally but not been a regular feature. Winter migrants such as Fieldfare and Redwings have visited but not been regular sights. On one occasion however at least a dozen Fieldfares flew out of the King's Wood and into the Reserve. These are large thrushes with grey heads and rumps, brown wings and speckled breasts that breed in Scandinavia. Redwings are smaller thrushes with a prominent eye stripe and, as the name suggests, red flanks under the wing. They also breed in Scandinavia.

However, some birds have stayed even if they have not been quite so visible as during other years. One is the bullfinch, the male with a brilliant cherry red breast and black cap. The female has a duller chest but still has the black cap. As they fly away, the white rump of both sexes can be clearly visible. Their soft "peu peu" call can often be heard but even the male can be difficult to see. When you do see him though, he is a fantastic sight.

The days now are lengthening and soon spring will arrive. With it hopefully the summer migrants will come. The Reserve, and indeed Cassop Vale, do get quite a few Warblers. The earliest, which is likely to arrive in late March or early April, is the Chiffchaff. A rather plain little bird, it can easily be identified by its call, after which it is named.

In mid-April, the Willow Warbler, perhaps the most common Warbler, will arrive. Visually, it is almost identical to the Chiffchaff but its call is quite different, a lilting series of descending notes. It can be heard in many places around the Reserve and the Vale and is perhaps the first sign of spring arriving. Other Warblers that can be found in the Reserve are the Blackcap and Whitethroat, which can also be found virtually anywhere around the Reserve or Vale. Sedge Warblers can be found by the Ponds. A little secretive, if you see one it is identifiable by a prominent pale eye stripe and a loud, varied song. Rarer, but still possible to find with luck, are the Grasshopper Warbler, named after its reeling, almost metallic, song and the Lesser Whitethroat, a small Warbler, smaller than the common Whitethroat, with a song that sounds almost like a mini pneumatic drill. Both these birds however are more likely to be heard than seen.

Among the first flowers to appear will be the Cowslip. In this area, this is quite a common flower with bright yellow, bell-like petals. In other parts of the country, it has become quite rare so we are lucky we still have it in some numbers around the Reserve.

Richard Cowen

QUARRINGTON HILL VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - TUESDAY 26TH MARCH 2013 7.15PM

QUARRINGTON HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE

AGENDA – All residents are welcome to attend

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| 1. Welcome and apologies | 5. Election of honorary officers |
| 2. Minutes of the previous meeting | 6. Election of committee members |
| 3. Annual Report | 7. Appointment of auditor |
| 4. Approval of accounts | |

Should you wish to nominate a person or persons to the management committee please complete the nomination form below and return to Linder Parker at 62 Belle Vue, Quarrington Hill by 19th March 2013.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS MOST WELCOME

NOMINATION FROM

Name of individual _____

I would like to nominate the following person/persons to the management committee of Quarrington Hill Village Partnership.

Honorary Chair _____

Honorary Secretary _____

Honorary Treasurer _____

Committee Member _____

Committee Member _____

Please check with the person you are nominating that they are happy to stand.

Disclaimer: - The information in this newsletter is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of going to print. Quarrington Hill Village partnership accepts no responsibility for any error, omission, subsequent changes and complaints arising from items printed in this newsletter. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Village partnership or the Parish Council

