

## **Report of the Parish Council Year 2014/15**

### **Council members: April 2014**

Cllr Brian Arnold (Chairman)	Cllr Charles Bithell (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Rob Bailey	Cllr May Blake
Cllr Denise Butts	Cllr Susan Holland
Cllr Susan Murrin-Bailey	Cllr Tony Schaffel
Cllr John S Stewart	Cllr Ros Wess

The precept for 2014-15 remained at £30,000, representing no increase over the last few years.

During the year the Council has considered planning applications, including some issues outside the parish such as the proposal for solar farm at Hoscar.

Representation was sent to the Examination in Public for the consideration of a further extension to Whitemoss Hazardous Waste Tip.

The Parish Council awarded a total of £1,000 in the following charitable grants:

Carols around the Christmas tree	£150
Parbold Village Festival Committee	£250
Royal British Legion - Poppy Appeal	£200
Crossroads, Caring for Carers West Lancs	£100
Parbold Scouts Hut Appeal	£300

A further £50 was donated to Parbold WI to assist with the costs of lighting the Christmas Tree. In November, Parish Councillors marked Remembrance Sunday by presenting Royal British Legion poppy wreathes at local Church services.

During 2014-15 the council was a member of the following organisations: Fields In Trust, OPSTA (Ormskirk, Preston & Southport rail Travellers Association) and Community Futures.

The beginning of last year was sadly marred by the destruction of the hedgerow and fencing along the football pitch at Alder Lane caused by a driver taking the bridge too fast and coming off the road. He was prosecuted and fined by local magistrates but because of disputed ownership of the hedge insurance would not pay for repairs. Despite being asked to contribute the driver who is a resident in this village refused so the full cost of reinstating the hedgerow has fallen on the Parish Council.

The smell from Hoscar sewage works was particularly bad last summer and local resident Paul Quirk became determined to pursue a resolution. The first meeting arranged by WLBC fell a little short of what people wanted, so the Parish Council stepped in to make arrangements for follow up meetings and ensure that the Environment Agency and United Utilities were involved. At the most recent meeting in April this year, Rosie Cooper MP came along as well and everyone agreed that progress, no matter how slow, was being made. It is important to continue to complain so that incidents can be recorded and the site can get more funding from United Utilities for odour control.

Last year, I met with police at Skelmersdale to discuss issues of concern to the village. These included an increase in burglaries and theft as well as parking, speeding, anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. The severe financial restraints put onto the police have inevitably affected the level of service, but I was assured that serious incident reports will be dealt with immediately and others will be prioritised accordingly. We are lucky to have links with PCSO Dave Benson who does all he can for the village. Complaint to the Lancashire Police Commissioner in January that we couldn't get police to attend our Friday evening meetings resulted in police attending in February and the agreement that the Commissioner, Clive Grunshaw, will attend a Parish Council meeting when he can fit it into his diary..

The Council met with Parbold Wildlife Group and Tree Wardens in July last year and ran through management issues for Chapel Meadow, agreeing to pay Midstream Garden Centre to clear more difficult areas of the Meadow. This biological heritage site continues to be a popular destination for those seeking quiet reflection as well as a number of botany students and wildlife groups.

Last summer the Parish Council commemorated the centenary of the start of World War One with a very special event, organised by the Parish Council and involving both local schools and local nursing homes. Young and old alike enjoyed a buffet lunch and were entertained by talks, poems and music. The Parish Council also increased the usual donation to the Poppy Appeal for this special year.

The land around the shops on The Common had more than its fair share of problems over the year. BT installed cabinets here and LCC installed cycle racks on land that is owned by the Parish Council, without first consulting the Parish Council. After a period of negotiation, BT moved their cabinet to a less conspicuous site and made a one-off payment of £750 to the Parish Council for using the land. LCC eventually removed the cycle racks. Both of these items had covered the newly installed dog tie rings, intended for residents to tie their dog too, if they wished to enter the shops. The dog tie rings were installed at public request, in safer positions than tying them to the notice-board as had become a habit.

The overflowing paper banks became a problem as the recycling company left them longer between emptying visits. We now have a system in-place to advise the company when they are three quarters full so that this should not be a problem in the future.

After lobbying the doctors surgery, the more expensive 0845 phone number has now been replaced with a local (01257) one.

Alder Lane Playing Fields, now supported by the new car park, have been used more than ever before. The Village Festival has returned to the site and the rugby pitch is used by Shevington Sharks. It is hoped that Appley Bridge boys football club will contract for the football pitch so that they will be in full use from September this year. Meanwhile, Parbold cubs footballers play there periodically. There is now a notice board to inform visitors what is going on down there and signs to remind people that dogs should not be exercised across the pitches. This is because of the risk from dog fouling to the health of people, particularly children, playing sports on the fields.

For many years now David Secrett has helped to keep the area around the shops on The Common and around the Village Hall, free of litter and weeds. Sadly he will cease to do this in July so we owe him a huge thank you for the immense work he has put in, which has always been above and beyond the scope of the job. It is very much hoped that we will find someone to continue the good work he has started.

Following a request from the Peter Lathom charity a stone once used to separate fields many years ago was installed into Jubilee Gardens. It was thought that this was a fitting site for this little piece of history, rather than leaving it, untended, in the grounds at Parbold Hall.

In December I met with LCC's Andrew Burrows to explore road parking issues along Mill Lane, where residents often find the space outside their home has been taken by visitors to the local pubs. He explained that there is a severe lack of funding so although resident only parking idea was explored it had to be dismissed for the present time. Cottages with no parking are just a fact of village life.

We continue close liaison with the Parbold Community Association and were third party contributor, committing £5,102 of parish money towards a funding application to buy new cinema equipment at the village hall. We have put up car park signs to discourage all day parking there so that there is room for those visiting the doctors or using the hall. Solar panels have been installed on the roof to reduce electricity costs and to obtain feed-back tariff to support council activities.

We are concerned about the Railtrack-owned property in the centre of the village. As equipment is updated, the old signal-box may become obsolete. Although it is a listed building, Railtrack seems not to have the money to maintain all of their property. We will keep an eye on the Station House and Parbold Cabin to ensure that they are not allowed to deteriorate into disrepair.

Following election on the 7th May, later tonight we will be forming a new council that will be appointed for the next four years.

In the coming year we hope to tackle those who park inconsiderately, particularly around our schools and drivers who speed through the village. We have had a recent meeting with the Head Teacher at Parbold Douglas School and hope to work together to discourage inconsiderate parking by parents. Much of the village has a 20mph limit now and we are going to encourage the police and community road safety checks to be conducted. We have a small working group looking at the feasibility of acquiring a Speed Indicator Device ("Smiley Face") to remind drivers of their speed.

We have to thank - Steve Morgan and David Reid - Parbold Unlimited - for the successful running of last year's festival and the village Christmas Lights last December. We are particularly looking forward to the Street Festival planned for next September and wish them every success.

Parish Councillors will continue to lobby and represent Parbold residents at Borough and County Councils.

## **Report from Our Lady & All Saints Primary School**

Head Teacher Clare Griffin gave an update. It has been another great year in school. Quite a challenge too though as another new curriculum has been introduced. We've had great fun experimenting with it, introducing topics to the children in a creative way and we have come up with a series of topics all the children are following now. Within each there are inextricably linked maths, English, geography, we engage children in their own learning so that they can explore how they learn best, what they learn, each child is developing their own learning style. We try to make it interesting and we found topics like "Burps, bottoms and bile" have been popular. Children went to Tesco to find out where their food came from, we had a mini-Masterchef competition in the hall and parents were invited to come and design the meals and bring in food. In history we have looked at 1066, the children love the interactive nature of this type of learning. We held parents evenings to share with them how it all works. We gain inspiration from the topic material, that we have to pay great expense for. Mathematics and English are still standing alone so that we can be sure we are maintaining and raising standards. At the back the topic books have ideas for homework. There is a school development plan about homework, whereby we undertook a questionnaire amongst learners. Some say they spend hours and hours on it, some say none at all, it's all about striking a balance. There is always an open ended task that they can choose from and parents can work alongside their children. There have been some super pieces of work produced. There have been big changes to the curriculum; we have just finished the Year 6 SATS which are standard attainment tests and are important for league tables. We try to strike a balance between the demand that we must push the children ahead and keep them from becoming too stressed out. The higher level test is sat by the higher achievers - about half of them. We tell them there reward for doing really well in their SATS is to sit some more! We are very conscious that we don't want nervous breakdowns, that is not what school is about, so we keep a balanced approach to the things they have to do.

West Lancs Schools' Sports Partnership focuses on children's fitness and developing skills, most schools sign up to it to provide more access to specialist teaching and to compete with other schools on a regular basis. We have bought into this for a third year, which will be the final year supported by government funding. Sports day will be on Monday and we are hoping for good weather. We are holding a decathlon rather than an old fashioned sports day, 10 activities to accommodate a variety of skills, because some might be good at throwing and others good as running so there is something for everyone. We have had music events - the Katona Twins, Douglas Music organised in the village hall. We attend events along with St Joseph's Wrightington, Parbold Douglas School, Dalton School and others. For the first time we took a choir to the MEN arena. 6,000 children go to sing at this event and it is really special for the children to take part in such a huge event. We took all of Key Stage 2, and though not everybody likes to sing, some got a bit of a buzz from the event and encouraged the others to join in. We play host to two choirs - Parbold Chamber Choir on a Wednesday, and a Singing for Fun group on a Monday. We have Graham, a professional musician who conducts this group and they are always looking for new members of all ages and abilities. We have another building project in the pipeline, which, when completed, will alleviate some timetabling problems as currently we are having to re-organise groups to ensure everyone has room. The new development is being funded by Archdiocese. We have had plenty of trips and visits

including last year's visit to the World War One commemoration - also the library where the children learned wartime songs and poems and things. We had a residential trip to Windermere where climbing, water-sports, biking and other outdoor activities were available. We went to Alice In Wonderland at the Bolton Octagon. Year 3 and 4 went around Farington Recycling Centre, which was an interesting trip paid for by the company. The children learned a great deal about the processing of our rubbish, the use of magnets or air methods for separating waste, all viewed safely from behind glass. David Secrett came in and did a community art project, focussing on work like Banksy. Eric Cohen - The Jewish Fellow came and talked to the children, explaining how special it is to be Jewish. He explained how he cooks, eats, why he wears a kippah. He was an inspirational visitor and the children were captivated by his story-telling. Our PTFA raises funds for school and this year they have completed a soft play area so that the children can get to the far reaches of the school without getting too muddy by using the all weather surface. They run the family bingo and this Sunday they are having the annual garden party at Parbold Hall. Some funding raised will be shared with the Church to support their roof appeal. We are now having a read-through and casting for our new play Porridge - based on nursery rhymes with a twist incorporating a pantomime horse, music and dance that will be shown in July.

Cllr Wess very kindly came along to our Awards Evening and presented prizes for our Citizenship Award.

There are 105 pupils on roll and we are looking forward to the next year, already looking about things to do with the Street Festival, Carols Around the Christmas Tree, etc.

Parbold Festival continues as ever and with everyone's support.  
I've nothing to add to my previous report

sincerely Anne Pryer, Festival Chairman.

### **Parbold Unlimited gave an oral report:**

Now working on a street festival to be staged during 5th and 6th September 2015. The Parish Council is in support. It will be organised and funded by Parbold Unlimited, who have also got support from schools, the library, churches, Parbold WI, PCA, Coffee Etc, and most of the local business. None of the retailers have been asked to contribute financially to the event which will be fully licensed and insured. The plan is to close the road from The Stocks Tavern to Parbold Library. This will be fully marshalled. The Parish Council has provided a letter of support and agreed the use of Alder Lane fields for car parking. We have spent time at WLBC who will design a series of workshops in our local schools and library in June and throughout the summer. There will be three 45 minutes performances, and a series of development to enrich the life of participants, funded by an Arts Council grant. None of the grant funds are paid to Parbold Unltd. The PCA would handle the accounts separately. To support the applications letters have been submitted with the grant, but WLBC have asked for a change to the wording to support the application better. Parbold Unlimited are non-profit making and any surplus will be reinvested in the village. We have already invested a significant four thousand pounds on Christmas

lights and tree and we are shortly erecting flowering baskets that we have organised and paid for, there are a variety of other projects in planning.

The objective of the street festival is to provide a weekend of music, arts and theatre, the overall plans get tweaked as we go along but so far it is planned to have a Friday launch celebration party. On Saturday 1pm - 6pm educational workshops for children, street entertainments, a fairground and markets stall. There will be a stage on The Railway car-park, a mini rock gig from 6.30pm to 8.30pm for young families to attend a music festival for children. There will be a Festival of Light with canal barges lit up with fairy lights and a firework display. On Sunday there will be an interdenominational Church service on the main stage, followed by a duck race, barbeque, singing of sea shanties and folk music. From 1pm until 6pm there will be street entertainment, traditional folk music and on Sunday night there will be a screening of a film in the village hall. The grant applied for is to cover workshop costs. On the Saturday evening there will be a pyrotechnical show on the canal. There will be a parade through village and several travelling walking street entertainers. A Temporary Events licence has been applied for. Also LCC, road closure and finance, WLBC grant application and a Community Chest grant secured. The Church, schools, PCA are all helping to deliver the workshops. Venues include Parbold Women's Institute Hall, Coffee Etc the U3A, Beacon Crossing, for the craft section. The bank, RBS, are providing their car-park to children's play area, Douglas Valley Lions are helping with music festival and the Rose of Parbold has been booked on the Sunday. Support from retailers in writing has been requested.

## **PARBOLD & DISTRICT RAMBLERS**

### **Report to Parbold Parish Council 2014-2015**

Membership of the group is currently 42 out of which we get 18 –20 members walking on a regular basis on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month. Destination of the walks have included Cheshire, North & East Lancs and the local area.

The Parbold web site and the newsletter print and promote our monthly walks from which we get regular enquiries. Local Life, the free magazine continues to promote the group on an occasional basis.

We currently hold our monthly meetings at the Red Lion Newburgh.

Last September, 12 members of the group spent the weekend in Reeth, North Yorkshire and were fortunate to have good weather and do 2 local walks and most of the membership as last year celebrated Christmas with a meal out at Gathurst Golf club. A weekend in Scarborough, North Yorkshire is planned for September 2015.

We are always happy to welcome new and prospective members (who can come for a day membership fee to see if they like it).

**Liz Foulds, Secretary**



## **PARBOLD WILDLIFE GROUP**

### ***Report for the Parish Council's Annual Meeting May 2015***

The Group has continued to meet bi-monthly to discuss the Biological Heritage Site at Chapel Lane, where we support Parbold Parish Council who are responsible for maintaining the status of the site. Members also plan for future events such as walks, fairs and speakers for the meetings.

We have had talks on a variety of subjects such as Life in the Irish Sea, Gardening for Wildlife, Badger Conservation, and Wildlife Photography, as well as walks accompanied by ornithologists who have opened our eyes to the birds around us that we don't usually notice.

The Group now has productive contacts with various environmental bodies.

The Canal and Rivers Trust has asked us to help them by reporting sightings of the invasive plant Floating Pennywort on the canal. This is recorded on their database and passed to their contractors for treating. The Canal and Rivers Trust are also interested in sightings of kingfishers and mink amongst other species.

We have recently been asked to send our casual sightings from the local area, as well as gardens, to the Lancashire Environment Records Network (LERN) They maintain a large database of information on the county's biodiversity, containing more than one million entries.

Over the last few years Lancashire Wildlife Trust, through their Forever Meadows Scheme, have funded projects on Chapel Meadow. They funded the new gates at the Chapel Lane end of the site, drainage to the meadow and removal of willow scrub, which was invading the meadow area. This help is continuing through their recently launched Biodiverse Society project, which aims at helping groups such as ours to monitor and manage Local Wildlife Sites.

Ben Hargreaves, of the Wildlife Trust's 'Plan Bee' project has carried out bee surveys on Chapel Meadow with the help of members, and will continue this work in 2015. One of our members, Jules Simons, is a Wildlife Trust Project Officer for Merseyside, and her wide knowledge of wildlife helps us with identification of local species. The Group staffed a stall at the 2014 Parbold Festival and Jules led walks for visitors around the meadow as well as a Mini Beast Hunt for children. The stall provided information/leaflets on all aspects of wildlife as well as generating interest in the Group.

We devoted our March meeting to the launch of the PWG's Photographic Competition for 2015, when one of our new members, who is an expert wildlife

photographer, gave us a talk on the subject. Last year's competition was very successful, generating 63 entries.

For the last two years the Group has held a Quiz Night in the WI Hall. These have been well attended and very enjoyable and have helped to increase the Group's funds. Derek Gifford, an expert ornithologist has kindly undertaken various bird surveys on the BHS site and sent his records to the British Trust for Ornithology.

We have had meetings with members of Parbold Parish Council to discuss dog control on the Alder Lane site, with particular reference to Chapel Meadow, as well as other issues of maintenance. This year the Council kindly agreed to fund a day of scrub clearance by Midstream from Skelmersdale. This work is essential to control the brambles and scrub which would otherwise eventually take over the whole site. Midstream employ and train people who have special needs, and they enjoy their day working on the site.

Members of the Group continued to undertake various conservation tasks on the meadow over the year, such as pulling thistle and ragwort in July and alder coppicing in October. They also continually litter pick the site and alert the Clerk to any incidents of vandalism and nuisance camping.

The Meadow itself needs to be mown every year in order to cut back saplings and coarse grasses. The mowings need to be removed so that they do not add any nutrients to the meadow, which would destroy the environment in which the rare plants such as orchids, yellow rattle and many others survive.

For the last few years a farmer from Mawdesley, funded through a 5 year scheme with Natural England, has mowed Chapel Meadow and removed the cuttings to their own meadows where they are trying to create a typical lowland wildflower meadow environment. We maintain regular contact with Natural England to ensure that this regime continues, and there is currently a good prospect of renewed funding to extend this important work.

The Group would like to thank the Parish Council for its continued interest and support for our work in managing Chapel Lane Meadow, which is an area highly valued by many local residents. We look forward to maintaining our close working relationship over the next few years.

Chairman Nigel Simons  
Secretary Margaret Abel 01257 462909 [abelchris@talktalk.net](mailto:abelchris@talktalk.net).  
Treasurer Gabrielle Hardman



## **REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON Friday 15th May 2015,**

Since the last Report our Group has continued to meet weekly on a Tuesday morning for two hours.

Members have continued to maintain the gardens at the Village Hall, including the planters outside the main door. The Group also maintains the Jubilee Garden, as well as the planters outside the shops and the raised round bed outside 'Yours is the Earth' cafe.

The Group has continued to look after the shrub beds at Bramble Way, the hawthorn hedge at the Village Hall and on the canal bridge. They continue to litterpick around the village and at Bramble Way, and report problems to the Parish Council

Members of the Group have carried out approximately 300 hours of voluntary work on Parish Council sites during the last year, but were unfortunate to lose two key members, Ian and Ann Smith who have returned to Scotland. Some other members have had to reduce their hours due to personal commitments.

Margaret Abel, Secretary

### **Parbold Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Parbold & Dalton Brownies**

We currently have 24 Brownies, five warranted Guiders, one Leader-in-Training, one Young Leader and two Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers. This last year has been very busy – Brownies celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and our Brownies worked hard on the special Big Brownie Birthday Challenge Badge. As part of this they had a visit from Woodlands Animal Sanctuary and they collected tinned food for the Sanctuary's cats and hedgehogs; they took over and ran a Brownie meeting, had tennis coaching at Aughton LTC, learned how to bellboat, made a wooden plaque for Father's Day and went pond dipping and bug hunting in Mere Sands Wood. They also joined in Parbold District's Big Brownie Birthday Outing to Brockholes Nature Reserve where they completed their Out and About Badge and celebrated with a huge

birthday cake. In the autumn term they worked on the Agility Badge, went on a bat walk in Mere Sands Wood, visited Skem Fire Station and did the Fire Safety Badge. They also made lots of things (with help from the Brownie mums) to sell at the Parbold Christmas Fair in aid of the Hut and they sang at the Carols Round the Tree at the Village Hall. The term ended with a great treat – a ride on the “Santa Special” from Bury to Rawtenstall. During the spring term they went to the Parbold Panto, worked on the Healthy Heart Badge, raised money for the British Heart Foundation on a special red evening (“Wear it. Beat it!”) and had a session on basic life support and the use of a defibrillator with Sue Murrin-Bailey. We are looking forward to the summer term with lots of outdoor activities and to our annual Pack Holiday at The Adventure House, Waddow in June.