

Healeyfield Parish Council

Serving Castleside and District



Striving to keep our community thriving

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Chairman's Annual Report 2017/2018

I was, yet again, honoured to accept the Chairmanship of Healeyfield Parish Council for the fourth consecutive year. It has been a very busy and productive year; continuing with some projects, but more importantly embarking on new projects.

The Parish Council have continued to try and keep Castleside and the surrounding area looking it's best. Over the past year we have continued to cut the grass throughout Rowley, the verges close to the Cemetery Gates and also opposite Maudville. The effects of last years bulb planting can now be seen. Daffodils have appeared and have created a wonderful display this spring and are a welcome sight after such a harsh winter. Over 20 flower tubs were again filled with summer and winter bedding plants which were nurtured throughout the seasons by Cllr Jo Foster. In preparation for summer 2018, we have carried out a review of the tubs and a number will be replaced as we embark on a programme of replenishment. This programme has been helped enormously by a grant from our County Councillors, Ossie Johnson and Jude Considine. An area of disused land, on the northern edge of Consett Road, has been planted and this will hopefully mature and become more substantive. Additional works have been proposed for this area but we are in the early stages of planning for this.

Cllrs Judith Robson and Jo Foster once again led the annual 'Big Clean Up' in conjunction with Durham County Council. As in previous years, the event was well attended and a lot of litter collected.

This time last year, I was able to report that we were successful in obtaining a grant to erect a sculpture of a leadminer to commemorate and celebrate the lead and silver mining past of Healeyfield. This year I can report that it is now installed and has been named 'Tommy'. I feel that this almost life-size sculpture is so detailed, that even its facial expression emulates that of a miner after a number of hours work.

The Parish Wood continues to be 'a work in progress'. Cllr Adrian Hird, lead for the Parish Wood, with the aid of Mr Peter Downes, Woodland Officer from the Land of Oak and Iron, continue to prepare the appropriate documentation to complete the management plan. The wood has been host to volunteer training sessions and these will continue to be held regularly throughout the ensuing year. It has also

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been host to a child's birthday party. It is wonderful to see such a variety of activities and ages using our wood.

In September 2016, the Parish Council began to explore the possibility of reviving, in some way, the once popular Castleside Show. The 'Autumn Festival' was born and was a great success. This event has now become annual and 2017 saw larger numbers gathering, more competitions; scarecrows and entrants, a performance from the choir of Castleside Primary School. I look forward to the planning of this coming year's event. I hope, in fact I know, that it will be bigger and better than the previous 2 years.

The service of remembrance, to pay tribute to the fallen in The Great War, World War 2 and subsequent battles, was organised by the Parish Council as was exceptionally well attended by villagers. The service was enhanced by Mr John Stafford of 102 Battalion REME, playing the bagpipes and Miss Heather Nelson of 1st Castleside BP Scout Group played for the Last Post. In addition, clergy from all churches which serve the parish of Healeyfield led the service. Representatives from The Royal British Legion were also welcomed Healeyfield along with representatives from across all manner of organisations that serve the parish. Plans for Healeyfields 'Beacon of Light' commemorating the end of the First World War, are well underway and is to take place on Sunday 11th November 2018, exactly 100 years since Armistice Day.

In November, the Parish Council once again held the Christmas Light 'switch on' in conjunction with St Johns, Castleside. The event was due to host Castleside Primary School Choir and Consett Brass, but due to the adverse weather conditions we had to cancel the formal 'switch on'. Nevertheless, I went up to the church to be met by 18 people and switched them on, bringing pre-Christmas cheer to the centre of Castleside. We even had additional lighting this year provided by the emergency lighting of one of Durham Constabulary's vehicles which had the A68 closed due to treacherous road conditions.

The lettering on the War Memorial was renewed this year which now means that all of the names are now legible. Additionally, we have recently been issued approval from The Chancellor of the Diocese of Durham to carry out works surrounding the War Memorial in Castleside Church Yard. The work will include replacement entrance gates and also new surfacing around the memorial.

An application for funding has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is hoped, should we be successful, that a WW1 Heritage Trail will be created, a memorial garden at Castleside Village Hall and also a display of knitted poppies, similar to that which was at the Tower of London, at Castleside crossroads. Should we be unsuccessful, then perhaps some of the aforementioned will still go ahead with funds we already have.

The Parish Council are constantly seeking to engage with residents. One way we currently do this is through our newsletter. 2017 saw the Parish Council review the content and quality of the publication. We now produce our newsletters in colour and on a silk finish cardstock. The newsletter provides reflections on what has happened and also information about forthcoming events. The Parish Council, Castleside Primary School, Castleside Village Hall, the churches that serve Healeyfield and other charity and volunteer organisations all feature in the newsletter.

On 15th March 2018, Mr A.D.N. Addison, Honorary Freeman of Healeyfield passed away. Mr Addison was awarded this accolade by the council in August 2015 for his dedication to this community as a Police Officer, his work with children and young people through 1st Castleside BP Scout Group and as a parish councillor for over 30 years.

For the first time, the Parish Council held a public consultation event in Castleside Village Hall which enable us to showcase all of the councils work and seek the views of residents. Although attendance was low there was some positive feedback and highlighted some areas for us to improve. Members will be analysing this information and implementing changes as are necessary and appropriate.

Finally, all members of the Council have worked hard to represent the residents and do what they feel is in their best interests. This, at times, does feel rather tedious, but never the less, all things have turned out well. I wish to thank all fellow councillors for their hard work and dedication over the past year and for their support in another year as chairman. I must also thank the Parish Clerk and Responsible Officer, Mrs Ruth Wright. Ruth has worked tirelessly for the Parish Council this year and all of her efforts are truly appreciated. Lastly, my thanks to Ossie Johnson and Jude Considine our County Councillors for their advice, support with local issues and for keeping us up to date with the happenings at Durham County Council.

As we move into another year, I hope that the ambitions of the council become a reality and that we continue "striving to keep our community thriving".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Pearson".

Adam Pearson

Chairman, Healeyfield Parish Council 2017/2018.