

NEWSLETTER - MAY 2008

UNDERSKIDDAW PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL AGM

The Parish council held its AGM on 21 May. Members elected Jim Wilson as their Chairman and David Roberts as Deputy Chairman. The Chairman welcomed the newly elected member Mrs Jan Boniface, who had been a member of the Parish Plan working group, and who had much to offer to the Parish. Edith Helme was appointed as the Council's representative on the Village Hall Committee, and David Roberts to the Neighbourhood Forum. The Council's statement of Account for the year ended 31 March 2008 was approved, and the Annual Return to the Auditor was completed. A notice will shortly be displayed on the Noticeboards in the parish informing electors of their right to inspect the accounts.

HIGHWAY MATTERS

Councillors prepared a detailed list for the Highway Authority of all the work which needed to be done on the minor roads in the parish. The Highway Engineer subsequently advised that work would only be done in Millbeck & Applethwaite, as Ormathwaite was considered to have been dealt with last year. A fairly thorough job appears to have been done on the pot-holes, broken edges and rough surfaces, and it has been promised that a top dressing will be laid all along the length of road through Millbeck & Applethwaite which has already been treated. The very dangerous broken edge near the entrance to Underscar Manor has also been repaired, but will need to be monitored particularly in wet weather.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The police now have a very effective system for sending information to the Neighbourhood Watch wardens, giving warning of criminal activities which might happen locally, particularly scams which are being practised. It is our job to spread the

information round the parish. A resident has very kindly agreed to be an email co-ordinator. For those of you who are on email information can be spread rapidly by means of a group message. If you would like to receive messages in this way, please send your email address to the Clerk, whose details are on the back.

We are also working on the non-email ways of transmitting information.

PLANNING MATTERS

An application was received to enlarge the property known as **Merelstead** very considerably. The Parish Council objected most strongly to this, on the grounds that the enlarged property would dominate the estate of small houses in which it stands, that it would overlook a property on the downhill side, that it would create light pollution for neighbours which it overlooks, that it would come too close to a quiet footpath leading to the fell, that it would create a precedent for similar development at the house next door, turning the estate into a holiday complex. The Council also pointed out that if the National Park is pursuing policies to encourage affordable housing it is self-defeating to allow modest properties to be enlarged until they are far from affordable. Although written notification has not yet been received it is understood the development has been allowed, as the planners did not agree the building would be over bearing. The presence of common bats was not thought significant in this case.

HIGHWAY STEWARDS

Cumbria CC is investing £1m a year to create a Highway Stewards scheme - they will do something similar to the work of the former lengthsman - minor work on parish roads, keeping an eye on condition, and liaising between parishes and the Highways Authority. There will be 24 for the whole of rural Cumbria. So far 6 have been recruited - none for this area so far. Theoretically this sounds a good idea. If you want to be a local steward, please contact the Clerk. More information when we have it.

Bridge for Beginners

When the Parish Plan questionnaires were completed and also more recently at the Village Hall AGM, a number of people expressed an interest in joining a "Bridge for Beginners" group. If you would like to join such a group please contact Jan Boniface on 73693. The group would be led by David Latlmer or one of his colleagues from the Keswick Bridge Club.

MOUNTAIN BIKING ON LATRIGG

Many of you will be aware that there has for some time been a problem with unauthorised mountain biking on Latrigg. Local boys have broken gates to get access to the woods, have cut down trees, and even created earth works, in order to make an exciting track for "extreme biking". Mountain biking is not permitted off bridleways on the fells (bikes are not included in the right to roam), and cutting down trees and breaking gates is criminal damage. The police have a difficult job in catching the perpetrators in the act, because they are so far off road, and it is not possible to use too many police resources unless there is a recognisable outcome. The Police ask if you could contact them if you see anything of this kind going on when you are walking your dogs, or rambling on the fell. It may not be possible for them to drop everything and attend the incident, but at least it will

give them a better chance of taking action. Whilst local boys have initiated this it is now on a website, and people come from away. The police do **not** suggest that you tackle the offenders, but make a phone call and take any details. The number to ring is 01900 602422 (leave message for Jude Mennim).

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Councillors have recently attended a session on this topic at which the importance of low level neighbourhood help was emphasised. There have been quite a few changes of property owners in the parish, and it would be worth asking whether you are aware of any help your neighbours might need in the event of an emergency such as a power cut.

SKIDDAW HOUSE

If you want to watch the sun rise on Midsummer Day this could be the place to do it. Bookings can be made by telephone or text on 07774 717 4293.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions from readers would be most welcome and help to make this Newsletter more interesting. Please send them to the Clerk.