

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2011

UNDERSKIDDAW PARISH COUNCIL

Please note Clerk's new email : <pauline4000@gmail.com>

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 6 April at 7.00 pm. The Parish Councillors cordially invite all residents and their friends and visitors and are pleased to let you know that Mr John Spedding has agreed to come to speak to the meeting on the topical subject of "The Tree and Woods of Underskiddaw". Before the talk there will be a short business meeting when the Chairman will present his annual report. There will be an opportunity for the public to raise any matters of concern or interest. If you wish to give notice of these beforehand please contact the Clerk, but of course any subject can be discussed at the meeting.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

ELECTIONS

This year all the members of the Parish Council come up for election, having served their 4-year term. There will also be elections for County and District Councillors. On the same day there will of course be a referendum question on the Voting System. The Village Hall is expected to be a Polling Station. This is the time when all adult members of the public could consider whether they wished to stand for office at any of these levels. Notices will be posted at the appropriate times on the Noticeboard at the Hall, and on that in Thrushwood at the bus stop. Nomination forms can be obtained from the Clerk.

PARISH BUDGET & PRECEPT

The Parish Council considered its budget in the light of current financial stringency, and believing its reserves were high enough resolved to set a Precept of £2,700 for the financial year beginning on 1 April. This is £300 less than last year's precept.

PLANNING MATTERS

There have recently been several planning matters which have caused the Council serious concern. The first of these was a property which had permission for a large extension and alterations. It was noticed that as much work again had been done without permission. The attention of the planners was drawn to this, but they did not visit the site for a further 3 months, by which time the work was finished. The planners felt their only course then was to ask for a retrospective application for approval, which was promptly granted. The Parish Council feel that the slow reaction to the notification that something was amiss narrowed the planners' options as they were presented with a fait accompli. This seems to undermine the planning process, as it can encourage the view that it is better to do what you want and ask afterwards. However it has to be said that the freedom of action of the planners in relation to enforcement is curtailed by various Government Guidelines.

There is also of course the long running saga of the occupation of Crosthwaite Meadow. In October 2010 the owner was served notice by the National Park that she had to move everything from the site. However owing to a mix up in dates between the Planning Department and the Legal Department it became necessary to withdraw the notice, and replace it with a fresh one. The time allowed for Appeal elapsed on 22 February, but an Appeal was lodged in time, and thus the matter will not be resolved in the near future. Members of the public may comment on the Appeal. For details please contact the Clerk.

These and other problems led the Parish Council to lodge a general complaint about the way matters had been handled, and a response to this has been received and is being considered.

There have also been concerns about developments at Underscar Manor and there has been some correspondence about this, without any specific outcome as yet. A provisional Tree Preservation Order has been served relating to this property, and the Parish Council has agreed to support this, subject to proper management being allowed.

The Parish Council objected strongly to a second application to extend the Sewage Works at a point very close to an adjoining domestic property. This led to a meeting arranged by United Utilities when Parish Councillors and the owner of the property put forward a case against the proposed siting of the work. As a result the application was withdrawn and has now been replaced by a proposal which is acceptable to the owner, and to the Council. The excavation work which is visible from the A591 will eventually all be covered up and grassed over, we are assured.

WITHDRAWAL OF X4 BUS SERVICE

The Parish Council will do what it can to restore this bus service, although the difficulty is that few people seem to use it, and it has to pay its way.

BUREAUCRACY

Inland Revenue have ordained that all Parish Clerks must go on PAYE – even when there is just one payment a year! The Council may also need to register for Data Protection. The Council has a Freedom of Information Policy and on the Website are details of documents available. However these procedures are being elaborated. The Clerk will be attending courses to find out how little we need do.

Meanwhile – any copies of documents you want can be obtained by ringing or emailing the Clerk.

UNDERSKIDDAW PARISH COUNCILLORS

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