

# **Annual Report of Riccall Parish Council 2008/2009**

Welcome to this year's Annual Report for Riccall Parish Council. It has been a busy year for the Council, with a major project coming to fruition and another in the early stages. We have had some changes in the Councillors that represent you and I'll come onto that a bit later in the report.

Firstly, the question that you are probably most interested in.....

## **How do we spend your money?**

Due to the current economic situation which is putting pressure on all of us, the Council felt that it should keep the precept the same as last year with no increase for residents. With administration and insurance costs continually being increased, it has been a struggle to keep the precept level and the Council will use some reserves to be able to accomplish this. We do not anticipate any impact on the service that we provide for residents. For an average (Band D) household in Riccall, it currently costs around £70 per year to support Riccall Parish Council, or £1.36 per week. A summary of the Riccall Parish Council accounts for 2008/9 are attached to this annual report and any questions are welcomed. Please direct any questions to our Finance Officer, Lindsey Ryan who will be very happy to communicate with you about our finances.

## **And what do you get for your £1.36 per week?**

Riccall Parish Council provides many local services and we employ three paid staff. The Clerk and Finance Officer organises and manages the work of the Council, dealing with local residents, Selby DC, North Yorkshire CC, North Yorkshire Police, contractors, managing project work and so on. Our litter collector keeps the village clear of litter and whilst on his rounds, helps greatly by reporting other problems quickly to the Clerk. The Council Lengthsman carries out routine maintenance and various other jobs that are necessary.

### ***Riccall Parish Council provides the following services:***

\*Street lighting is provided and maintained. New street lights are added as necessary.

\*Grass cutting is carried out on the highway verges and public spaces such as the Recreation Ground and Village Green.

\*General litter collection from footpaths and public areas in the village.

\*Local planning matters are considered and responses submitted to the local planning authority – Selby DC.

\*Providing litter / cigarette and dog bins for various public areas.

\*Central Village Rights of Way are maintained, strimmed and kept clear.

\*Planting bulbs and maintaining village name planters.

\*Recreational project work is managed in partnership with the Riccall Recreation Development Group, in order to develop public areas in Riccall for recreational use. So far, the Recreation Ground has been developed in three phases of equipment, including the skate park with phase 4 being installed shortly.

\*The play equipment and skatepark at the Recreation Ground is professionally inspected, maintained and improved as necessary.

\*Producing a quarterly newsletter, 'The Riccall Beacon,' in order to communicate about Council news / initiatives and to offer the Community an opportunity to include other news and events.

\*Pest control on public areas as necessary.

\*Offers, manages and promotes a 'Community Grant Scheme', allowing Riccall Community Groups to apply for limited funding. Anyone interested in applying should contact the Clerk for details.

\*Assessing traffic schemes and helping to ensure that Riccall is represented as fully as possible in local traffic management.

\*Pushing for an appropriate solution to the southern access onto the A19.

\*Community Engagement – for example the recent Parish Plan and Parish Plan action groups have provided some excellent ideas, particularly in relation to encouraging tourism for Riccall.

## **Recreation and Leisure / Project work**

The development of the Recreation ground is a great success story for Riccall and considering the numbers of young people using this open space, I am pleased to say that most of the time it is very well respected. Two young people who have been found to be responsible for recent offensive graffiti on the Recreation Ground, have been prosecuted by the Police and have since been ordered by the courts to reimburse removal costs to the Parish Council. This offensive graffiti is not to be confused with the authorised artwork that you can see on the skatepark. This project took place last summer with Riccall Youth Club, who worked with a graffiti artist. The Council were pleased to help finance this youth project, and were particularly impressed when the young people involved attended a meeting, to deliver a power point presentation about the art project, which has helped to encourage much less of the 'unattractive' graffiti.

I am extremely pleased to announce that after much hard work, the Recreation Development Group has just been awarded a grant of almost £24,000 from "**Community Spaces**" to help develop the new enclosed pre-school area and birds nest seat (phase 4 of the development of Riccall Recreation Ground, costing in total around £32,000). Once phase 4 is complete, the Beacon will be restored and the whole area will be launched with a big fun day in September this year.

From October onwards, the development group will turn its attention to junior football facilities on Westfield and hopefully by the time next year's annual report is written, there will have been some good progress with this necessary project. Riccall FC are very keen to be involved with this one and are currently looking to set up a junior football team – so if your children are interested in

football and want to be part of a Riccall junior team at this early stage, get involved now and put their name down for the team. If you are interested - contact Roger White at Riccall FC email [jeb2vi@aol.com](mailto:jeb2vi@aol.com)

## **Environment and Conservation**

The Council has just signed a new three year contract with Dean Landscaping, who will complete all of the grass cutting in the village; this will include the Village Green, Recreation Ground, highway verges and public rights of way. Bringing all of the Councils ground maintenance services under one umbrella has saved money and will hopefully lead to an even better service. At the time of compiling the Annual report, we are in discussions with Selby District Council about taking over the maintenance of the Saunters Way green area. Part of this agreement would be that Selby DC pays agency fees to us in order to look after this area. If our negotiations are successful, managing this area locally should lead to a much better service for residents. Riccall Lands Charity continues to provide many wonderful areas of nature up at the northern end of the village within the Millennium Green and the newly created 'Northfield Wood.' The 'Nature Watch' feature that appears in each of the quarterly Riccall Beacons is an ideal way for residents to be involved in the seasonal preservation of our local wildlife and to be more fully involved in our environment.

At the request of Riccall PC, Selby DC has agreed to seriously tidy up the boundary of the Dunelm Farm site with the public right of way, Carr Lane, which runs between Back Lane and Main Street. This work is scheduled to happen in early May.

## **Traffic and Highways**

We continue discussions with North Yorkshire County Council about ways of making the village as safe as possible. We are working closely with the Police and with NYCC Highways department to come up with solutions to problems such as speeding and illegal parking. NYCC is currently assessing the safety of the Kelfield Road School crossing point and you may see some improvements there. The southern junction onto the A19 continues to be a safety concern and NYCC are currently assessing the junction again, after an on-site meeting with Riccall PC and our MP, John Grogan.

An issue that was raised this year was gritting – or rather the lack of it, during the recent cold spell that we experienced. NYCC prioritise the gritting of the highway with most of the main roads in Riccall being priority two. Footpaths are only gritted after 72 hours of sub zero temperatures. We have asked NYCC if they would consider supplying us with salt bins and will continue talks throughout the summer, so that hopefully a better system will be in place before this winter. Riccall Council will consider supplementing the existing footpath service for residents and we'll keep you up to date on this one.

## **Health & Safety**

The world that we live in demands many 'risk assessments.' The Councillors carry out regular safety checks on the Recreation Ground equipment and also pays a professional body to check all of the equipment on a quarterly basis with an annual assessment by RoSPA. If you do see anything that concerns you please inform the Parish Clerk. Risk assessments take place on all Council owned assets on an annual programme. Our thanks go to Cllr Dawson for continually looking at our H&S procedures and suggesting ways to improve and make it easy to carry out these assessments.

## **Neighbourhood Watch (NHW)**

Riccall can proudly boast that it has one of the best NHW organisations in North Yorkshire. This view is held by North Yorkshire Police and by Riccall Parish Council. For the small cost of £1 per year, membership is great value for money. In general, once people lose some of the preconceived ideas of nosy neighbours peeping out from behind their curtains to see what Mrs Jones is doing next door, many will realise that modern day neighbourhood watch organisations, like the one in Riccall, are worth their weight in gold to residents. Riccall NHW works closely with the Parish Council and with North Yorkshire Police, looking at ways of improving security and safety in the village.

The organisation is regularly represented at the J.A.G meetings – what is a J.A.G meeting? This is a Joint Action Group meeting, where residents from all over our area of Selby District come together to discuss crime issues. North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire Service, Selby DC Community Safety Partnership, the Selby District Dog Warden and occasionally North Yorkshire County Council are represented at these meetings. Residents can voice their concerns, after which each person present is entitled to two votes and the two highest scoring concerns become priorities for the appropriate services. Does it work? The Council feels that these meetings have been particularly useful in allowing regular face to face communication between communities and the Police.

If you see anything or anyone causing a nuisance phone the police on 0845 6060247 and insist on an incident number. You do not have to give your name or address unless you wish to.

By all means let the Council know by contacting us on 249222 or by emailing [Lindsey.Ryan@RiccallPC.com](mailto:Lindsey.Ryan@RiccallPC.com)

## **Planning**

Planning applications have decreased in volume a little at the moment, due to the recession. The Parish Council continues to work with residents where appropriate, helping them to come to satisfactory conclusions with applications that can affect their lives. The Dunelm Farm site, opposite Costcutter, is up for sale again after the previous buyer pulled out of

negotiations. Although permission was granted last year for a development of 56 houses off Station Road, building work has not yet started.

## **Members of the Council**

The last twelve months have seen many changes on the Council with three councillors, Martin Baker, Sue Tibbett and David Lindsey, standing down due to other commitments. I am pleased to announce that we have filled two of the vacancies and welcome Cllr Steve Sharp and Cllr Rupert Somers-Joce to the Council. The third vacancy should be filled very shortly, bringing us back up to our full complement. We have eleven Councillors in Riccall, unpaid volunteers who give up their time to help improve our community and to give a voice to the electors of Riccall. The Councillors are there to represent you and your concerns and are happy to speak to residents. Contact details for all of your Riccall Parish Councillors are in the Riccall Beacon, which will be delivered with this report.

It is with sadness that I report that former Riccall Parish Councillor David Southall passed away last May. David was a good councillor, a real family man and was very well recognised within the scouting movement in the district. In his memory, we have planted a Mountain Ash Rowan Tree on the Village Green, which replaces a tree that had to be felled last year due to damage in the severe gales. Our thanks go to Rodney Swann who collected the tree from the nursery for us, helped us to plant it and placed a guard around it. Personally, I am delighted to find that residents are prepared to rally round and support the Council and help with these kinds of community projects.

## **Council staff**

**Gary Walker (our litter collector)** can be seen around the village conscientiously collecting the rubbish. It is amazing how much he collects, considering the amount of public bins that we have in Riccall. The smoking ban in public places has caused us some problems as cigarette butts now litter our pavements and require collection. To try to help with this problem, we have installed a cigarette stub bin near to the bus stop opposite Costcutter on Main Street, as this is one of the worst offending areas. The other problem Gary has to contend with is dog fouling. Yes, it is boring and yes I do bring this up each year but if people cleaned up after their dogs, I wouldn't have to. Did you know that if you see anyone's dog fouling the village foot paths, or public spaces (this includes the footpaths around the allotments/garden pieces) you can report them to the Selby District Dog Warden or let our Council Clerk know and she will report it for you? Complaints remain anonymous in almost all of the cases and Bill Parker; the Dog Warden will take the relevant action. Recently two residents in Tadcaster have been issued with fixed penalties. I would like to thank Gary on behalf of all of us for keeping our village so tidy – he really does give us an area to be proud of.

**Gavin Wright (our maintenance/grounds man)** carries out important maintenance work within the village, mainly on the Recreation Ground. I am pleased to say it is usually general maintenance rather than repairing vandalism, but we do still get some issues with graffiti and broken glass etc. Thanks to Gavin for being willing to tackle most jobs for us and usually at short notice.

**Lindsey Ryan (our Parish Clerk and Financial Officer).** With Lindsey on board, the Council goes from strength to strength. I am delighted to announce that in March this year, Lindsey emailed me to say that she had passed the CiLCA qualification, enabling us to progress an application to gain 'Quality Council Status.' Lindsey was awarded a distinction in the 'Certificate in Local Council Administration' – quite an achievement, as many taking this qualification do not pass on the first attempt. As a Council, we will now continue to push forward in an attempt to gain 'Quality Council Status,' hopefully meaning that we will be able to take on and manage many more delegated functions locally, relying less on North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council.

## **Conclusion**

The Council continues to work on behalf of the residents of Riccall. We welcome any member of the public to our meetings, which are held in most cases on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month starting with public participation at 7.15pm. We no longer hold a meeting in August. Just before I end the report, I would like to thank the Councillors, Lindsey and the other staff for all of their hard work and for the support that they have given to me over the past 12 months. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone that has contributed to "The Riccall Beacon", we have had some interesting articles and this newsletter reflects the active community that Riccall enjoys.

All of the projects that we develop take time but you can be assured that Riccall PC has the best interests of its residents at heart and is always interested in new ideas and feedback from those that it represents.

If you have any concerns about Riccall or feel that we can help you with something, then please do let us know. If we can help you, we will help you.

Cllr Brian Keen

**Chairman, Riccall Parish Council**