

NEWSLETTER

Belmont Parish Council



SUMMER 2022

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Art Competition



A prize giving ceremony was held at Belmont Library on Saturday 18th of June 2022. The recently inaugurated Mayor of Durham, Councillor David Freeman, kindly presented prizes to the children who were winners in their category. The children won an Amazon gift voucher and a lovely Platinum Jubilee mug each. The competition had many entries and it proved was very difficult for the judges to choose, as they were of such a high standard! A big thank you to all the schools that supported the children's entries and library staff for their helpful support.

Bird Box Installation Project

A Community project featuring parish councillors, Belmont Beavers and Cubs, The Friends of Belmont Scrambles' members, the Friends of Kepier Woods' members and parents/carers took place over two days: Sunday 27th February and Sunday 6th of March 2022. Forty-five bird boxes that the Beavers and Cubs had built themselves were installed in both the Belmont Scrambles Nature Reserve and Kepier Woods to provide safe nesting sites to increase small bird numbers.



Planning Matters

As a statutory consultee, the parish council examines all applications relating to the area which are finally determined by Durham County Council. Routine applications are delegated to county council officers, but Belmont Parish Council can request an application is considered by the appropriate committee and address that committee.

Support for, or objections to an application, must reference material planning considerations detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted County Durham Plan.

The majority of applications are for extensions / improvements to residential properties. or developments at Belmont Business Park, Rennys Lane retail area and local shopping centres. These very rarely require comment.

Several are being lodged for conversion of residential properties to houses for multiple occupation (HMO's) Primarily targeted for student rental, these applications provoke local opposition. The Parish Council does raise issues about the effect on neighbourhoods, loss of family homes, transport, and car parking. However, the County Durham Plan's adopted policies do not permit conversion if more than 10% of the residential units within 100 metres of the application are exempt from council tax charges (Class N student exemption)

The growth of student numbers has prompted developers to also look for business opportunities with purpose-built student accommodation buildings (PBSA's) The Parish Council, together with other groups, vigorously opposed the application to convert the former Apollo Bingo Hall, held discussions with the applicant and spoke against the proposal at two County Council planning committees. Sadly, the application was approved on a split vote.

More successful was our opposition to the proposed Mill Lane Car Wash that had commenced trading behind New Durham Club. The County Council's enforcement officer was informed and our objections, together with those of other groups won the day

It is possible material planning considerations could be strengthened with a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) If one was adopted, it would have legal backing within the County Durham Plan. Such is the close proximity of Sherburn Road and Sunderland Road estate to the parish area, that discussions with Gilesgate Residents' Association are taking place about an NP covering the combined area. This will be the subject of a special newsletter in the autumn.

Horrible Histories Walk for Beavers and Cubs

In the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-two, 14th June – Verily, a Horrible History style walk and talk featuring the coal mining and quarrying history of Kepier Woods and featuring flora/fauna in the sandstone gorge was organised by the Chair and members of The Friends of Kepier Woods group. The exciting walk through Kepier Woods was exclusively for the Belmont Beavers, Cubs, and parents/carers. The content included: Horrible History style mildly gruesome historic mining and quarrying related stories and some ghostly tales, mixed with historical information regarding how young boys (of the same age as the Beavers/Cubs) were expected to work in the coal mines in Kepier Woods and other areas too. They were told all about the horrible conditions the poor boys endured. Talks also included the 500-year-old tree located in the woods and other flora/fauna. A suitably gruesome and fun time was had by all. The group of volunteers have had requests from other Scouting groups and adults to organise Horrible Histories walk and talks.



RHS AWARD FOR DURHAM GILESGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children, families, staff, and volunteer helpers of Durham Gilesgate Primary School were awarded Gold by Northumbria in Bloom in 2021 and are acknowledged as having the best school allotment in the Northumbria in Bloom area. This award builds on the many successes that the school allotment has had when entering Beautiful Durham, when it often wins the best group horticulture category and has been the overall winner in 2019 and 2021.

The school actively supports Belmont Parish Council's entry into Northumbria in Bloom and supports Durham City's entry into Britain in Bloom. It has been supporting the Parish Council's entry since 2014, after it started to develop the allotment using a National Lottery grant and the hard work of parents, children, staff, and volunteers.

During 2021, Durham's entry was in the category 'Cultivating Your Community' and the RHS filmed only three locations in the city: Wharton Park, The University Botanic Gardens and Durham Gilesgate Primary School Allotment. Durham City was awarded Outstanding in Cultivating Your Community and the school foyer now proudly displays this lovely slate plaque which recognises the quality of their allotment and the dedication for the volunteer helpers, children, staff, and families.



NOMINATE A LOCAL HERO

Do you know a local resident in Belmont, Carrville or Gilesgate Moor who deserves recognition for volunteering to help others or to make our community a better place to live?

Belmont Parish Council will be holding a special awards celebration event in October to recognise and thank those who make a difference.

If you know someone who deserves a big Thank You, please contact belmontpc@btconnect.com or telephone 0191 3860664. Tell us their name, address, and contact details and why you think they are a local hero. The deadline for nominations is 12.00noon on Friday 30 September 2022.

OUR PARISH IN BLOOM

Once again, this year Belmont Parish Council is entering the Northumbria in Bloom and Beautiful Durham competitions. Last year in Northumbria in Bloom we did extremely well winning 7 golds and 6 'Best in category's'. We won 11 awards in Beautiful Durham, including winner of the best large village.

We very much appreciate the efforts of all who work in many ways to improve our environment and make our parish such a pleasant place to live. As well as visiting the 'Specials', the judges tour the whole area of Belmont, Carrville and Gilesgate Moor in Spring and Summer. They look at all flowerbeds and verges and always commend the fine work of residents in maintaining such attractive and varied gardens. They are particularly keen to see neighbours working together to improve the local environment so if you know of any group coming together in this way, please let us know.

As a parish council, we are looking at ways we can work to alleviate the problem of the increasing number of weeds on roads and pavements. We know that many residents keep the pavement outside of their own property weed free and we are very grateful for this and would encourage all residents to support in this small way – it can make a big difference!

DATES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Held in Belmont Community Centre at 6.30 p.m. on second Thursday of the month, excluding August

Next meetings – 14th July 2022 / 8th September 2022 / 13th October 2022

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

BELMONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION RAINBOW HUB

The baby Sensory Room will close and return in September 2022, however it will be open on family Fun Days for mums and babies to drop in and enjoy

Family Fun Days (Replacing Messy Play Wednesdays) Thursday 28th July, 4th, 11th and 16th August 11.00am to 2.30pm

Regular Rainbow Hub Toddler Sessions including outdoor garden area (siblings welcome) Friday 22nd, 29th July, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th August 9.30 am to 11.30am

Big Summer Blow Out – Saturday 3rd September 11.00am to 3.00pm – Children’s entertainment, rides, café, raffle, tombola and much more, come and enjoy a family day out before the start of the new school term

THE TABLE

‘The Table’ is a lunch club for elderly singles in the Belmont area, serving a two-course lunch, tea or coffee every Thursday at 12.30pm at The Parish Hall beside Mary Magdalene Church: Contact Mrs Jean McGranaghan for further details 0191 3842570

PARISH COUNCILLORS

| <u>Belmont Area</u> | | <u>Carrville Area</u> | | <u>Gilesgate Moor Area</u> | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Eric Mavin | 07507095616 | Lesley Mavin | 07944471749 | Chris Fletcher | 03000269096 |
| Mick Bennett | 3407361 | John Appleby | 07960241576 | Patrick Conway | 07943015662 |
| Kim Noble | 07912790903 | Patricia Conway | 07943016225 | Val Hawes | 07920145442 |
| Arthur Walker | 3846282 | Joe Knight | 3862902 | Carole Lattin | 07813937725 |
| Stephen White | 07914006465 | Ann Watkins | annwatkins261@hotmail.com | Mick Watson | 07514431196 |

Parish Clerk Mrs S. Overton 0191 386 0664

(Space for Whites advert)

YOUR FEEDBACK REQUESTED

We would be very interested to hear feedback from residents about how they feel we as a parish council are doing, or whether you have any issues / concerns / support needed or anything we can help you with. Please complete the slip below and return to the parish office or email to the address below

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Name.....Contact details (phone / email)

My views / suggestions are

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Council Office: Belmont Community Centre, Sunderland Road, Gilesgate Moor, DURHAM, DH1 2LL
Open 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday to Friday. Tel 0191 386 0664; Email belmontpc@btconnect.com

