

Horden Parish Council

Annual Report 2008/09



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2008/09

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Message from the Chairman, Councillor Jean White



During the past year, the Welfare Park has once again been well used with lots of activities on through the school holidays.

We had a poor summer, which put a dampener on most of the events. Hopefully, this will be a better year. We know what the people of the village want and we will strive to continue these activities to make it bigger and better!

The Parish Council has had a lot of comments about the Green Flag in the Welfare and Memorial Parks regarding how nice they look; we will be flying the flag hopefully again this year.

We have put some new equipment in the Welfare and Memorial Parks thanks to some funding we received and should be obtaining some more in time for our summer activities in the Welfare Park.

I would also like to give thanks to the Parks and Cemetery lads for maintaining the cemetery and parks to such a high standard which I'm sure the community would agree.

We are starting the Community Plan up again and hopefully, we will get a lot of support from outside bodies, as well as you, the residents of Horden to make this a success. The Community Plan is your chance to have a say in what you would like in your village.

We have a new Parish Clerk, Paul Davison, and I'm sure with the help of the Parish Councillors and myself, Paul will do well. We wish him luck in his new role!

I would like to say a big "thank you" to Horden Parish Council for making me the Chairman. I have enjoyed my year and I hope I have achieved what the Councillors expected of me.

Last, but not least, I would also like to thank all of the council staff for their continuing hard work.

Jean White, Chairman



Message from the Clerk to the Council, Paul Davison

When I was a boy, I spent a lot of my time with my Nana in Durham Avenue. The Welfare Park is a stones throw away from where she lived. Back then, the park was much different to as it is now. I can remember playing on the "witches hat", the "shuggy horse" and sitting in the old blue and white wooden hut sheltering from the rain when I should have been doing more worthwhile things.

The hut is long gone, now replaced by a maze for the toddlers to play in. My son plays there now. When I think of that, and realise that I'm now part of Horden Parish Council who are responsible for the park's upkeep, it's a humbling fact, and for me personally, a very proud one.



It's easy to dwell on the legacy the pit closure left in 1986 and the hard times that we have and in many ways, continue to endure. But Horden will not lie down and roll over. There is lots to celebrate and be proud about. Horden Parish Council have been at the forefront of this.

Not least, the regeneration initiatives which have led to both the Welfare and Memorial Parks being restored and achieving Green Flag status and Green Heritage site. Our parks now

rival those of the big city parks and that is an excellent achievement.

2008's weather could have been better but we are hoping to buy a large marquee in 2009 which should keep the rain off in the Welfare Park!

Although we are all entering a period of decline regarding the Global Financial Crisis, Horden Parish Council are committed to keeping our costs to a minimum, while trying to provide the best value for money for the services we provide you.

We will be expanding on our activities in the parks this year and hope to have a fuller programme of events for successive years.

We are also re-launching the Horden Community Plan which will govern everything the Parish Council does. Your input and ideas are vital for this to succeed. This is **your** Community Plan, and you can have a real say on which direction Horden should be heading.

I would like to thank Horden Parish Council for affording me the opportunity to put back into the village so much I have gained from, I am honoured. I would also like to thank the staff for making me feel so welcome and give credit for the dedication, hard work and excellence that they display each and every day they turn in to work. Finally, I would like to thank Sam Shippen for all that she has done for Horden and wish her the best of luck for the future.

Paul Davison, Clerk to the Council

About Us

Councillors: Horden Parish Council has 15 Councillors -

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Cllr Rod Brown Cllr June Clark	19 Naisbett Ave. 73 Cotsford Park Estate	Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee
Cllr Mary Clark	89 Cotsford Park Estate	
Cllr Edna Connor	2 Cedar St.	Chairman of Parks & Cemetery Committee
Cllr Billy Hill Cllr George Jones	6 Sunderland Ave. 12 Smillie Rd.	Chairman of SWC Sub-Committee
Cllr Terry Jones	18 Handley St.	
Cllr George Lavery Cllr Dennis Maddison Cllr George Patterson Cllr Tina Phillips	9 Park Terrace 4 Langthorne Ave. 7 Hope Ave. 13 Macbeth Walk	Vice-Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee Vice-Chairman of Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Robinson	Northlea, 19 Shotton Rd.	
Cllr Bill Smith Cllr Jean White Cllr Elizabeth Wood	22 Alder Rd. 23 Blackhills Terr. 12 Roseby Rd.	Chairman of Parish Council

Staff: The Parish Council employ staff in the following roles -

Paul Davison-	Clerk to the Council & RFO	Allan Roberts-	Gardner/Gravedigger
Gaynor Crute-	Assistant Clerk	Robert McLeod/Adam Hall-	Apprentice Gardner/Gravedigger
Gemma Rowe-	Administration & Finance Officer	Julie Bush-	Cleaner, Chapel of Rest
Jimmy Bush-	Parks & Cemeteries Manager	Janice Rudkin-	SWC Supervisor
Walter Rudkin-	Parks & Playing Fields Supervisor	Kevin Ditchburn-	SWC Assistant Caretaker
Colin Muir-	Parks & Cemetery Team Leader	Mary Armstrong-	Cleaner, SWC
Keith Bailey-	Gardner/Gravedigger	Claire Naisbett-	Cleaner, SWC
Tommy Basley-	Gardner/Gravedigger	Debbie Rothsay-	Bar Staff, SWC
Richard Hepworth-	Gardner/Gravedigger	Sarah Wood-	Bar Staff, SWC
Matthew Scott-	Gardner/Gravedigger	Sherrell Roberts-	Bar Staff, SWC
Jonathan Harrison-	Seasonal Gardner/Gravedigger	Eddie Beadle-	Doorman, SWC

Introduction

Welcome to the 2008/09 Annual Report. This is the full report of the Parish Council; a summary will be published in the next Parish Council Newsletter.

This report has been produced and made available prior to the Annual Assembly to be held on Wednesday 6th May 2009 at 6pm in the Social Welfare Centre. The Annual Assembly is a meeting of the electors of the Parish of Horden and provides an opportunity for residents to discuss the information provided and to question the Council on its activities during the past year. Any member of the public is welcome to attend this meeting.

Horden Parish Council serves the village of Horden, with a population of around 8,500 residents, of whom just less than 6,300 are over the age of 18 and registered as electors.

We deliver many services in the village, such as the provision of parks, playing fields and recreation areas. We manage the Thorpe Road Cemetery, are responsible for the Station Road Allotments and manage the Social Welfare Centre.

Our aim is to give the residents of Horden information about the Parish Council and the services which we deliver in the village, to outline how we are dealing with current challenges and highlight our plans to meet community needs and deliver quality services in the next year and beyond.

Horden Parish Council is one of around 9,500 Parish and Town Councils within England, Parish and Town Councils are the first tier of Local Government and work very closely with the other tiers to try and achieve the best for their local communities. During 2008/09, we have worked very closely with the District of Easington and Durham County Councils on a number of issues. Three of your Parish Councillors were also Councillors at the District of Easington; Edna Connor, George Patterson and Dennis Maddison. The District of Easington has now been absorbed into Durham County Council under the Local Government Re-organisation initiative in April 2009. Horden is represented by two Durham County Councillors, Dennis Maddison and Paul Stradling.

Elections to the Parish Council are normally held every four years, the last being in 2007. The next are due to be held in May 2013 due to the changes which the formation of the new Unitary Authority has brought. Any registered elector over the age of 21 years, who is not disqualified because of being declared bankrupt or having a recent criminal conviction carrying a custodial sentence, may stand for election to the Parish Council.

Meetings of the Parish Council are normally held on the first Thursday of every month, except August when Council is in recess. Meetings start at 6pm in the Training Room of the social Welfare Centre. The Agenda for Council meetings is prepared on the Friday prior to the meeting and displayed on the Parish notice board in the foyer of the Social Welfare Centre and also on our website for the public to view.

All meetings of the Council are open for the public (although certain exempt items may be held in private session). If you wish to attend a meeting, just turn up.

The Council are happy for the public to give their views or comments during Public Participation, but ask that you notify the clerk prior to the meeting of the topic on which you wish to speak. If you would like further information, please contact Paul Davison during office hours.

Minutes of meetings are available for public inspection at both the Social Welfare Centre and at Horden Library in Sunderland road, or available via our website. Any member of the public is entitled by law to obtain copies of the minutes at reasonable cost. These can only be obtained from the Parish Council Offices at the Social Welfare Centre.

Review of 2008/09

1. Welfare Park

Those of you who are regular visitors to the park will have noticed how well the parks planting scheme is continuing to flourish.

You may have noticed the installation of the new flagpoles in both the Welfare and Memorial Parks this year, complete with Green Flags.

The park was awarded with Green Flag and Green Heritage site status for the third consecutive year. This is an amazing achievement and testament to the dedication of the parks staff, and Horden is one of only a handful of Parish Councils in the country to achieve the Green Flag!

Green Flag inspection for 2009/10 is scheduled for the 20th May and the Parish Council are confident that Green Flag status will be reaccredited for the year to come.



The range of events and activities organised within the Welfare Park have continued to increase since the park was restored. Many of you will have enjoyed the various events and performances that took place during the year. Activities are arranged in school holidays, particularly over the summer where on most days in August there was something going on for young people and families to join in.

Details are always posted in the notice boards at the entrances to the park. If you have any ideas for activities or events you would like to see, or would like to become involved as a volunteer by joining the Friends of the Welfare Park, then please contact Jimmy Bush via the Parish Council Office!

The Ambulance House, occupied by the Green Leaf Café, which is run by Acumen, the local, not for profit development trust.

For those of you who have not tried the café yet, why not make a visit for drinks and snacks or a wholesome lunchtime meal. Daily specials with a drink are priced around £4!

Lights along the north/south avenue leading to the multi games area allow this part of the park to be accessed by organised groups after normal park closing hours during the winter months. The pitch can be booked between 6pm and 9pm Monday-Friday for a reasonable cost. Please contact the Parish Council Offices at the Social Welfare Centre if you would like further information.

The Parish Council staff continue to maintain the park and its sports fields to a high standard which are enviable of much larger towns and villages. Visiting players from football, cricket, rugby and bowls have commented on the high standard of facilities in Horden which continues to "punch above its weight". This is largely due to the sustained efforts of Jimmy Bush, Walter Rudkin and the parks staff for their efforts.



2. Memorial Park

2008/09 has largely been a year of ongoing maintenance for the Memorial Park. 2008 was significant however, in that the Parish Council initially applied for Green Flag status for the Memorial Park which attained the award on its first attempt. A Green Flag is now on display on the flagpole recently installed and we are sure you will join the Council in praising gardener Allan Roberts for the excellent standards he has achieved at the park. Well done Allan!

As is the tradition within the village, the Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Tree lighting services took place in the park in 2008. Many residents participated in these two events which are regulars of the Parish Calendar.

3. Cotsford Park Play Area

The grassed area in the centre of the inner ring of houses on the Cotsford Park Estate is a registered village green for which the Parish Council has management responsibility. Children's play equipment has been installed in the area to further bring the green into use as a community facility. The area continues to be an area of concern for the Parish Council as the green is constantly being used as an area for the illegal dumping of rubbish.

Some residents are still continuing to illegally extend their gardens onto the area and we would encourage residents to report such incidents to the Parish Council. Help us help you in keeping your local area looking good!

4. Sunderland Road Playing Fields & Play Area

In October 2008, children from Hordens schools planted 5000 crocus bulbs with Parish Council staff, as they have done in previous years resulting in yet another marvellous spring display!

Many football teams continue to use the football pitch at Sunderland Road and there are currently 7 teams allocated pitch space. One on a Saturday morning, four on a Sunday morning in the Peterlee & District Sunday League and two Sunday afternoon Youth Teams who play in various Russell Foster Youth Leagues. Whippet racing also takes place on the fields on a Saturday morning, in keeping with the tradition of the village.

The playing fields also cater for more informal activities such as five-a-side football, permanent mini goals are provided on the fields alongside a small play area for children.

Users of the facilities are encouraged to make use of the ample car parking on the site, rather than parking on the footpath as this eases congestion on the busy main road.



Work commenced in 2008 by a local businessman to redevelop the main hall of the pavilion which is scheduled to open in 2009.

5. Maritime Crescent Play Area

The grassed play area at Maritime Crescent in Grants Houses was owned by the District of Easington. From April 2009 this has now passed into the ownership of Durham County Council. The play equipment and mini goals are however, the property of Horden Parish Council and we maintain them.



6. Church Green

Church Green is the area of grass at the bottom of the Memorial Park opposite St. Mary's Church. It provides walkways from sixth and Seventh Streets to Blackhills Terrace and has a number of seating areas, litter and dog bins.



7. Thorpe Road Cemetery

Thorpe Road Cemetery continued to be a significant focus for the Parish Council in 2008 and much of this work will continue into 2009/10.

We have continued to extend the footpaths in the old part of the cemetery towards the dene and established a further planting scheme in this area, as well as maintaining the wildflower area adjacent to the dene. Ashes burials will be interned here once the current area is full. This part of the cemetery is unsuitable for full burials due to the drainage pipes which cross that part of the cemetery.

During 2008/09 78 burials took place as follows-

	Total	Horden	%	Others	%
All Burials	78	53	68	25	32
Full Burials	52	34	65	18	35
Ashes	26	19	73	7	27
New Grave Spaces Sold	43	32	74	11	26



In addition to the burials which took place, 7 memorial plaques were sold for display on the Memorial Wall.

Many relatives have donated seats in memory of their loved ones, the Parish Council will, when space is available, consider donations of seats, trees, rose bushes and other items.

Despite building an extension to the cemetery in the early 1990's, the cemetery is continuing to fill at a significant rate. The Parish Council changed their policy of selling reserved grave spaces and accepting non-residents other than those with a close family connection in 2003 to try and slow



down the rate at which the cemetery is filling and to provide for the residents of the village who pay for the upkeep of the cemetery. The Parish Council have sought expert opinion on the options for extending the cemetery from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. We will continue to inform residents of progress via Parish Council Newsletters.

The cemetery has suffered from periodic flooding in 2008 due to the unusually heavy rains experienced that year. Cemetery staff have installed a new drainage system between sections C and F to try and rectify the problem. This was installed in late 2008 and we will of course keep residents and users of the cemetery informed as to its success.

The Thorpe Road Cemetery also contains a Chapel of Rest. Although this has long been disused, members of the public are encouraged to make use of this when considering their funeral arrangements. For more information on this, any other queries you may have about the cemetery, or considering making a donation or memorial in memory of a relative, please contact Jimmy Bush, Parks and Cemeteries Manager at the Parish Council Offices.





8. Horden Social Welfare Centre

Built in 1926 by the Coal Board, the Miners Welfare Hall served the miners and their families as a social gathering place to meet after work. Horden Parish Council purchased the building from the Coal Board in 1986 and since then the building has enjoyed extensive refurbishment in 2000.

Horden Social Welfare Centre continues to be used by many residents and community groups and the Parish Council have identified its importance as a community resource. So much so, that the council have created a Social Welfare Centre Sub-Committee which focuses on the activities of the building and builds on the Council's commitment to encourage the use of the Centre by Horden's residents.

Today, the Centre enjoys hosting many diverse activities to many residents and local groups. Activities range from slimming groups to citizens advice sessions and even boxing events! Sessions take place all take place on weekdays and special events such as Parties, Weddings, Christenings and other functions can be booked for weekends.



In long standing tradition, Horden Parish Council continue to support its local schools and the Centre now holds regular dates in its calendar which have become annual events. The Christmas Pantomime is an annual favourite highlight and planned events include Halloween events and more!

Arguably the "jewel in the crown" of 2008's activities was the Wedding Fayre. Many local businesses contributed, including a visit from "Celebrity Big Brother" star Scott Henshall who showed his own unique creations at the Fayre. The event was well attended and has paved the way for further use of the Centre. Special credit must be given to Cllr. Margaret Robinson and Assistant Clerk Gaynor Crute for their efforts in organising the Fayre. Outstanding ladies!

Below is a list of current regular activities at the Social Welfare Centre-

Day	Time	Activity
Monday	3.30pm-4.30pm	Smoking Cessation
	5pm-6pm	Brownies
	5pm-6pm	Rainbow Guides
	5.30pm-6.30pm	Claire's Dancing
	6pm-8pm	Weight Watchers
Tuesday	9.30am-12.30pm	Citizens Advice Bureau
	6pm-8pm	Claire's Dancing
Wednesday	6pm-8pm	Slimming World
Thursday	1pm-3pm	CISWO Social Club
	6pm-8pm	Girl Guides
	7pm-9pm	Patchwork Quilters
Friday	7pm-11pm	Mechanics Social Club



For more information on the Centres facilities or if you wish to book a room or function, please contact Janice Rudkin, Social Welfare Centre Supervisor at the Parish Council Offices (which are also based in the building) for further details.

9. Station Road Allotments

The allotments, situated at the end of Acacia Avenue, are on both sides of the railway bridge. Some of the site is rented by the Parish Council from Castle Eden Estates and the remaining part belongs to the Parish Council. The whole site is rented to Station road Allotments association who manage the site including the collection of rents and also run the "Garden Hut". The committee continue to work with the Parish Council organising the annual Flower and Vegetable Show.

Sadly, 2008 has presented its own problems with the allotments. There have been various instances of fly-tipping activity where local people are using vehicles to cross the railway bridge and dump rubbish onto the allotment area. Horden Parish Council is working with the Allotments Association to try and curb this practice and would encourage residents to report any instances of fly tipping to Durham County Council.

10. Annual Flower and Vegetable Show

The 8th Annual Flower and Vegetable Show took place in August 2008 attracting 204 exhibits from 32 entrants. Each year the show becomes more popular and attracts entrants from as far afield as Scarborough and Scotland.

The show continues to host the East Durham Chrysanthemum Championship sponsored by the family of the late Mr. John Peace, a former resident and renowned grower of Chrysanthemums.

11. Horden In Bloom

Due to various issues, it was unfortunately not possible to enter Horden in the Northumbria In Bloom Competition for 2008. We are pleased to announce, that these issues have been resolved and the village is on course to be re-entered into the competition for 2009.

The Parish Council is working with Horden In Bloom and other partners, to ensure that 2009 will be a good year for us to improve on the Bronze award we achieved in 2006.



12. Planning Applications

The Parish Council are statutory consultees on all planning applications submitted to the District of Easington (and now Durham County Council). This means that the Parish Council have the opportunity to support or object against any application submitted from within the village. During 2008/09 there were 56 applications considered by the Parish Council.

13. Finance

During 2008/09, the Council set a budget of £544,969. It is estimated that we spent £543,919 during the year which includes some expenditure from earmarked reserves on capital projects. However please note, these figures are subject to adjustment as the year end final figures are still being calculated and will be available for audit in the summer of 2009. The Audit Commission appointed external auditors BDO Stoy Hayward, have set the date for the audit of the Parish Councils accounts as 10th July 2009.

By law, any interested person has the right to inspect the Council's accounts. Any registered elector also has the right to ask questions about the accounts or challenge an item of account with them. The accounts will be available for public inspection for 20 working days between 8th June and 3rd July 2009 for this purpose. If you wish to exercise your right to inspect the accounts, please contact Paul Davison, Clerk to the Council between the hours of 10am and 4pm on any of those dates stated.

14. Grants

The Parish Council give many grants and donations to local groups and charitable organisations during the year. Some of the grants are in the form of free or reduced rental for the use of Parish Council facilities, particularly the Social Welfare Centre. Other grants are in the form of monetary donations. All requests for grants are considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Listed below are the groups and organisations who received financial assistance in 2008/09.

Hartlepool Hospice
Banner Committee
Victim Support
Poppy Wreath
Peterlee Women's Refuge
Peterlee Town Council
Great North Air Ambulance
County Durham Society for the Blind
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Patchwork Quilters
Jazz Band
Claire Bennett
Flower and Vegetable Show
New Life Christian Centre
Brownies
Guides
Little Stars
Mechanics Social Club
CISWO Social Club
Horden Colliery Residents Association
Horden Community Plan Group
Cotsford Juniors
Durham County Council Summer Nibbles
Horden School Leavers
Community Safety Partnership
Horden In Bloom



15. Publicity and Communications

Each year we produce a financial information leaflet that is sent on our behalf by the District of Easington (now Durham County Council from 1 April 2009). This leaflet is sent with the Council Tax demand and details the amount we intend to spend over the coming year on delivering services within the parish and the amount that we collect from the Council Tax.

In addition, we are also publishing four news letters per year which are distributed throughout the village via the Post Office, Library, the Youth and Community Centre, pubs and clubs, churches, doctors surgeries and local shops to name just a few!

Events and activities organised by the Council are advertised on notice boards within the Welfare Park and the Social Welfare Centre as well as other outlets such as the Library etc. If any residents are interested in submitting information of interest or have information for inclusion in our news letters, then please contact the Clerk.



16. Partnership Working

In order to achieve more within the village, the Parish Council works in partnership with others. In 2008, those with whom partnerships have been formed and maintained include, Durham County Council, the District of Easington, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, Horden Regeneration Partnership, Heritage Coast, the Coal Authority, Horden In Bloom, residents associations and local sporting groups amongst many more. If you think that your group would achieve more by working with Horden Parish Council, then please contact the Clerk.



17. Quality Council Status

Quality Council Status is the benchmark to which all Town and Parish Councils aspire in the pursuit of excellence. Central Government developed the standard in order for local

councils to prove they have met various quality criteria in order to attain the award, such as communicating with residents, holding regular meetings and keeping accurate financial records to name just a few.

Horden Parish Council was awarded Quality Status in May 2007 and is due for re-accreditation in 2011.



18. Strategic Plan

In October 2008, Horden Parish Council continued its formal planning process for the next five years and beyond. Much has been achieved in the past 5 years and the Council wish to continue to improve services whilst concentrating on keeping increases to a minimum.

We hope to progress the projects in the strategic plan identified for 2009/10 and we

will continue to maintain our commitment to continuous improvement and make Horden a better place to live.

Projects currently identified in our five year plan include;

Extending Thorpe Road Cemetery
Expanding on the Welfare Parks activities
Refurbishment of Parish Council buildings
Improvements on children's play areas
Northumbria In Bloom
Upgrading of I.T. facilities
Progressing the Community Plan

As the Community Plan is progressed, your voice will have a vital role in where your money is spent. Watch out for public consultation meetings which will be held in 2009 where you can have your say in Horden's future!

If you have any queries on any of the topics covered in the Annual Report, please feel free to contact the Clerk to the Council, Paul Davison at the Parish Council Offices between 10am-4pm.

**Paul Davison
Clerk to the Council
April, 2009**

**Horden Parish Council
Social Welfare Centre
Seventh Street
Horden
Peterlee
Co. Durham
SR8 4LX**

**Tel: 0191 5180823
Fax: 0191 5180835**

**Email:
hordencouncil@btconnect.com**

**Website:
hordenparishcouncil.gov.uk**