

BECKERMET WITH THORNHILL PARISH COUNCIL (BwTPC)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021/22

When I became a councillor 3 years ago, never for one moment did I think that I would find myself as the Chair of my Local Parish Council and for any of you not aware of it, being a Parish Councillor is certainly not a recipe for peace or relaxation, but it is very rewarding.

So, the first thing I would like to address in this annual report is to thank each of my colleagues for their selflessness, dedication, patience, good humour, and loyalty, without which we could not have moved forward to address the administrative debacle that was uncovered in June 2021. The Parish Council uncovered various financial, administrative and internal control issues, following the sudden resignation of the Chairman and Parish Clerk in July 2021. It has taken many dedicated hours, by several people, over many months to get the Parish Council affairs back into the position that they should be in, and I am happy in the knowledge that these have now been satisfactorily resolved going into the new financial year.

I would also like to thank our valued and esteemed Parish Clerk. We were lucky enough to recruit Tina in the summer of 2021 and she is inevitably first in the firing line when residents have a query, a grievance, a request, or when some new central or local government initiative demands hours of exploration or explanation. Without Tina's hard work since she joined us, we would certainly not be up to date with our policies, with the intricacies of our General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and our parishes would be the poorer financially and legislatively.

There are still several vacancies on the Parish Council, and I would love to welcome anyone interested in making a difference to our villages. It is also important that we try and recruit more representation from the residents of Thornhill Parish, to join us in making decisions on where our yearly precept is spent. We are a friendly, inclusive group with the common aim of improving where we live so, please, if you are interested, come along to a meeting, and see for yourselves.

The last year Covid -19 has influenced both communities, in fact the entire world. However, I think we will all agree our sense of community has become stronger and with thanks to the roll out of the vaccine, there will hopefully be more opportunities for people to meet again and to take up interests and activities old and new. Both the villages of Thornhill and Beckermet have a good network of groups working together to make our environment a better place for us all to live and as we start to open again, we can look forward to celebrating together events such as the Queen's Jubilee. I am looking forward with interest how both villages will celebrate this momentous occasion.

Despite all the challenges we have faced over the past 9 months I believe that we have still managed to achieve quite a lot since restrictions have been lifted. I finally got to visit assets like the football changing rooms for the first time and meet with one of the teams who are happily back playing football again. This year we could potentially see another team using the fabulous sport facility at Thornhill.

It is lovely to see the two new benches recently placed in Beckermet being used whilst out walking; they are positioned perfectly to allow residents to stop and enjoy the fabulous village views. The four notice boards in Beckermet have been repaired and brought back into use and plans are underway to give the notice board at Thornhill a much-needed makeover in the coming weeks.

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Following an inspection of all the playparks, unfortunately some of the equipment in Beckermets school green has come to the end of its life and we are currently looking to secure funding to replace with new pieces. Once funding is secured, we will be looking to invite the children of the village to come and engage with us to give us their thoughts on what they would like to see in their park.

I am confident that thanks to the hard work by Tim and Lesley Barlow we have a handle on all our assets and their current state of repair. We can now look to making any necessary repairs and improvements to these going forward into 2022/3. I would personally like to give special thanks to Tim, he has been a massive support to me as deputy and instrumental in accomplishing everything we have achieved during the last 9 months.

Traffic issues within the village, albeit not as bad as they once were, still prove to be a concern for some of our residents. We have recently provided highways with information on several locations of concern and are hoping that a traffic survey will be completed in the coming months. The results of this survey should enable us to hopefully install traffic calming measures in these areas.

As Chair of the Parish Council, I was automatically afforded a seat on the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Community Partnership at the end of 2021, this position is important as it will allow me to function as spokesperson for both our Parishes. Although it will be many years before any decision is made on the underground storage facility siting, being part of this journey from the very beginning allows us to work alongside Radioactive Waste Management Ltd (RWM) as local representatives. A few years ago, we found ourselves experiencing poor interaction with the proposed Moorside project, therefore it has, for my part, been encouraging to see visible engagement in both Beckermets and Thornhill by RWM.

I would also like to mention Donna McGhee and Sarah Moore who once again have supported the Parish Council, they volunteer both their time and expertise and this is very much appreciated, thank you.

So, bringing my Chairman's report to a close I can say that this last 9 months have been both interesting and extremely challenging. Hopefully, 2022/23 will see the council look forward to something a little more near normality.

Please stay safe and well and please continue to work together to make both Beckermets and Thornhill a lovely place to live.

Julie Nugent
Chairman, Beckermets with Thornhill Parish Council

The future of every community lies
in capturing the passion,
imagination, and resources of its
people.

— *Ernesto Sirolli* —