



# LESBURY PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

(Issue 38 - January 2014)

**Superfast broadband is now available in Lesbury. Please contact your internet supplier if you want to upgrade to faster broadband speeds. It is anticipated that Hipsburn will be connected March / April time.**

**Apathy!** - recent editions of the Newsletter have asked for volunteers to help the community in various projects. Frankly the responses have been abysmal! We have asked for volunteers to assist with the Pond Field, Northumbria in Bloom and the Parish Council. The result - only 2 people have indicated that they are willing to help (with NIB and these are already well-known volunteers). This edition also calls for help but we can probably forecast the outcome. We have some 450 households in our Parish, surely we can do better?



**Parish precept**- this is the local tax that you pay to fund Lesbury Parish Council activities. It does not pay for Parish Councillors who are all unpaid volunteers. On advice from our County Councillors it has been decided to increase the precept so that the PC will have an income of £10,000 per year as opposed to the current £8,000 per year. The reasons for this are

probable cutbacks in services from the County Council and potential, future capping of rates by the Government. The PC may then have to fund extra services to maintain the Parish to current standards. The precept will be approximately £5 extra per annum / household, (based on a Band D property) and still be one of the lowest in the County.

**Proposed development, rear of the Post Office and cottages (13/03037/FUL)** - at the meeting in November 2013 the PC voted in favour of the development by 6 votes to 1. Again it should be reiterated that the PC is only **one of the organisations** consulted by the County Council prior to their review of any application. Before the Planning Committee makes a decision, statutory bodies including Highways, Northumberland Water, Northumberland Conservation, Heritage groups as well as resident's views are all taken into account in considering the application. The PC would like to confirm that, despite rumours, the 5 properties on the Lesbury main road **will not be demolished** and that reports in the local paper which showed pictures of the original development are irrelevant to the current application.



**Parish Council vacancies**- unfortunately there was no response to our appeal for volunteers to join the PC. Currently we have 3 vacancies but will have more in May as some Councillors have indicated that they will stand down. Now is the time to step forward and have your say in how the Parish is run. If you are interested in this unpaid role, please contact the Parish Clerk (contact details at the end of Newsletter) or any Parish Councillor.



**Northumbria in Bloom**- only 2 volunteers have come forwards, not enough to form a "Bloom" group. In the meantime the PC will maintain the Parish in general and hope, with guidance from Ian August, to improve or develop specifically a) the grassed, picnic area at the North end of Steppey Lane footbridge and b) the park at the entrance to Lealands. The Coach Inn, Alnmouth Station, and Foxton Golf Club will again be entered in the Special Awards category. The need for volunteers still remains so please help even if you can only spare an hour or so. For more information contact Ian August (01665 833737.)

**Alnmouth Station parking**- Council traffic wardens have recently been busy at Alnmouth Station and the surrounding roads ticketing illegally parked vehicles. Users are reminded that vehicles should only be parked in designated bays, neither on the grass nor the footpaths. Parking in Curly Lane and South View is a long-standing

problem highlighted recently by the local buses being unable to turn into or out of Curly Lane, obstruction of driveways and one case of a car being parked on a householder's private driveway!



**Watch this space-** yes the one in the photo! Lesbury Post Office has been awarded £10,000 Community Enterprise funding, one of only 25 PO's in the UK to do so. The money will be used to buy a traditional Northumberland Shepherd's Hut to provide an undercover meeting area, next to the PO, available to the community all the year round. Carol Southam, our sub-postmistress, has said "Local people identified the need for an informal meeting place in the Parish Plan (2009) and this will provide such a facility. The new space will also provide an information point for *Dementia* as part of the national *Dementia Friends* programme." For more

information on this programme please contact Carol or go to [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk). Some site preparation needs to be done before the hut arrives including laying tile drains and a conduit to take the electrical supply; if you can spare a couple of hours to help one day please contact Carol.

**Improvement to the High Path-** the path has been cleared and resurfaced. The PC had hoped that the path would have been re-aligned with the Curly Lane path without dropping down to the main road level in order to give better protection to pedestrians and to reduce the risk of soil slipping down the embankment on to the path. Unfortunately NCC did not have enough money to do this. The repaired path is certainly better but the PC recognises that soil from the embankment will still come down on the path and will ensure that NCC is asked to clear it promptly when this happens.



**Drainage works on the railway-** this has been completed but on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013, when the work began, there was some pollution of the River Aln by an orange-red sediment which settled out within the hour. The Environment Agency (EA) was contacted immediately and sent photos of the event; no fish, invertebrates or other animals were affected and the situation was monitored by the EA, Trustees of the River Aln Angling Association and local residents. EA tests identified the red substance to be naturally occurring iron oxide; the conclusion of the EA was that there was no environmental impact on the river.

Further information and photographs can be found on our web site.

**Tidal Surge, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2013-** the North East was generally fortunate during this national event. In our area some local flooding occurred resulting in the road between Hipsburn School and Alnmouth becoming temporarily impassable. Some properties in Alnmouth were also affected.



**Nature note-** Trrrrrrrrrrr----- What was that? On a walk to the post office down Steppey Lane a trilling is heard. Could it be a Mistle Thrush? No, nothing flying over or perched on the top of a tree. Wren? No, not coming from the undergrowth, nor aggressive enough. A slightly sweeter call with some high pitched chatter, there they are - Long Tailed Tits flitting amongst the shrubs. Bird calls can be misleading, especially at this time of year, but it is always worth trying to locate them. Roving tit flocks often pick up other species, like Treecreepers, and are constantly making contact

calls. Roll on the Spring when bird song fills the skies, and we can confidently say - 'now that is a Great Tit!'

#### **Parish Council Contacts.**

**Parish Clerk - Mrs Elizabeth Taylor, Rivendell, Steppey Lane, Lesbury, NE66 3PU, Tel: 01665 830040, e mail. [lesburyparishclerk@googlemail.com](mailto:lesburyparishclerk@googlemail.com).**

**Parish Council Chairman: John Wright; Tel. 01665 830127, email [lesburyparish@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lesburyparish@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Parish Council meetings** are held in Lesbury Village Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. All residents are welcome to attend.

A full list of Parish Councillors can be found at [www.lesbury-pc.org.uk](http://www.lesbury-pc.org.uk)