



The Chronicle

Connecting the Villages of Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill
June/July 2020 Edition

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There's lots still going on in your villages...

Cricket Ground progress



The Parish Council has already replaced the roof on the Pavilion and received grants totalling £26,260 from the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP, Durham Community Trust and Durham FA to restore the grounds and pavilion and double the amount of public playing space in the village. Works to rotovate and re-seed the whole site has recently been done and install a new artificial cricket wicket. This will allow for multiple uses of the field, not just cricket, with a 7-a-side and 9-a-side football fields either side of the wicket. Residents are asked not to walk over the field or let their dogs on it particularly while the work is ongoing.

Alongside this local builder Ray Lawson is completing refurbishment of the Pavilion. When the works are complete we will host a re-opening event to rename the facility as the 'Shaun Henderson Community Sports Ground' in memory of the recently deceased former Secretary of the Coxhoe Cricket Club.

Coronavirus - Do you need, or can you offer, help?



If so please contact Coxhoe Parish Council. We are trying to co-ordinate efforts across Quarrington Hill and Coxhoe to make sure vulnerable people are supported with shopping, posting letters and regular chats etc. by local volunteers they can trust, so that vulnerable people aren't exposed to scams. We are working with Coxhoe Village Hall and Quarrington Hill Community Centre. We have published up to date advice on our Facebook and website pages, but if you aren't online and for any advice, support or help you can phone the Parish Council on 07988 283 287 or 0191 3773658. We will try our best to help as soon as possible. Whilst people may be isolated in their homes for a while we will try to make sure that they get the support they need and that they are safe in their homes knowing that their local community is standing by them. We have also tried to make sure any support from the Government, Durham County Council or elsewhere reaches the people and businesses in our community who need it.

Progress at Quarrington Hill Churchyard



Following the public meeting on 23 August 2019, which 80 residents attended, a site visit around localised geological features around Cassop and Quarrington Hill was arranged with Local Geologist David Wigham, Tarmac's Regional Geologist, about a dozen representatives from the Parochial Church Council and Diocese, ending up in the church yard. The good news was that despite the rich variety of geological issues found on the walk, none were found in the churchyard and initial views were that this was typical settlement in a churchyard of the area. There is movement of stones and ground movement, which was still of considerable concern to the PCC (Cassop-cum Quarrington Parochial Church Council) and their insurers, and so to try to reassure them, Tarmac made a generous offer to carry out a movement survey on the headstones, and had a specialist Geologists report prepared and they mapped the historical mine workings that have worked around the churchyard to hopefully confirm if this just typical settlement similar to other churchyards.

Tarmac's consultants have just issued a report and the church's insurers are now considering it. Their Insurers will respond to, and guide the PCC in any decisions to be made in the light of the report, and that the PCC must themselves then make any such decisions.

It will take a little while longer for the Parochial Church Council to evaluate the report and so the Church Council's request for people not to access the churchyard will remain in place for a while longer, but hopefully not too long. As soon as there is news we will let you know.

Parish Council News

Parish Council meetings

Parish Council meetings are usually held at 6:30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month (subject to change due to Covid19). These are currently being held remotely when needed by ZOOM until further notice.

The Parish Council will continue to work for you. You can contact your local Parish Councillors as below to let us know your views or issues.

Contacting the Parish Council

Contact our Clerk Claire on 07988 283 287 or by email clerk@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Contact our Admin Officer by email angela.searle@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Contact our Youth Worker on 07403 765 269 or by email - lan@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Check out our website www.coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk and find us on facebook and twitter

Contact the Clerk if you are interested in

- becoming a Parish Councillor.
- volunteering for our Youth clubs or other Community groups.
- advertising in the Chronicle or being represented on our business directory on our website, or
- have a village issue: we may be able to help.

Councillor Contact Details

Quarrington Hill	Telephone	Email
Ian Armstrong	0746 857 1545	ian.armstrong@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Coxhoe	Telephone	Email
Darren Brown	0776 480 2006	Darren.brown@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Nathan Brown	0795 089 0861	Nathan.brown@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Stuart Dunn (Chair)	0770 335 1046	Chair@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Adrian Hedley	0758 119 6709	Adrian.hedley@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Wendy Lavelle	0191 377 3673	Wendy.lavelle@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Kim Lowes	0798 391 8565	Kim.lowes@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Kay Simpson (Vice Chair)	0755 738 4023	Vicechair@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk
Colin Thirlaway	0191 377 2596	Colin.thirlaway@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk

We have a new Administration Officer

Welcome to Angela Searle, our new Administrative Officer who will be working with our Clerk. Angela has years of experience working in Administration roles and will provide invaluable support to our Clerk. She started working at the Village Hall at the beginning of March. We wish Karen Williams our former Administration Officer well. You'll still see her around as she is continuing to work for Coxhoe Village Hall.

Your County Councillors



Tel: 03000 268 685
jan.blakey@durham.gov.uk



Tel: 03000 264 342
stuart.dunn@durham.gov.uk



Tel: 03000 268 789
maura.mckeon@durham.gov.uk

Councillors Dunn and McKeon will not be holding monthly surgeries during the Coronavirus Pandemic. They will let you know when these recommence.

Parish Council News

Linden Grove Planning Application

Despite the Parish Council and local County Councillors opposing demolition of the garages, the Planning Authority approved the principle of building on the site of these and adjoining land. No approval was given for any development and representations that townhouses would be inappropriate for the site, and overcrowd the adjoining bungalows seemed to be accepted. It is to be hoped that any application for the site that comes forward would only be for bungalows, which residents of the area have said may be appropriate.

Basic Cottages

We have recently held meeting with residents from Basic Cottages and traders from the area to discuss environmental improvements at the end of the Village Green. They were keen to see parking and planting improved. Groundwork Trust engaged with residents to come up with an improved layout, and submitted a funding bid to deliver it. Sadly this was unsuccessful, but we will continue to work with residents and traders to deliver improvements.

Land adjoining Quarrington Hill Community Centre

We are seeking to Asset Transfer the land next to the Community Centre from DCC to the Parish Council, to maintain it as green space for use in conjunction with the Community Centre.

Kingswood

We had a walk around Kingswood with the 'Durham Woodland Revival Team'. They reassured us that this young wood is maturing exactly as it should. Talks are progressing with DCC and Tarmac regarding provision of an alternative to the 'Blue Route' through the adjoining Crowtrees Nature Reserve that has been blocked off for some time by the land owner. This could also provide a much better route for horse riders to help prevent the side paths off the main path from being chewed up. Ian Armstrong is now developing a new Management plan for Kingswood.

Junction 61

Works on the motorway roundabout by DCC have finally been completed. The works should make getting onto the roundabout from Parkhill and Bowburn considerably quicker and safer as all of the junctions are traffic light controlled. Additionally pedestrian crossings from Parkhill to Bowburn or the Services are pelican crossings.

New Doctors' Surgery?

Work continues on detailed feasibility of moving the Doctor's surgery to the land opposite Coxhoe Village Hall and building apartments for rent for over 55s on the adjoining land, as supported by the Parish Council's initial consultations. Business cases are being made to the NHS and Registered Social Landlords to attract the necessary investment. Initial discussions have already taken place with planning and highways officers etc. at DCC to explore requirements in advance of a formal planning application being made, which of course will be open to full public consultation.

A Tribute to Keith Pounder



Keith joined the Parish Council in 2005 and passionately and assertively represented Quarrington Hill until his death 22 May 2020 at University Hospital after two years of serious illness.

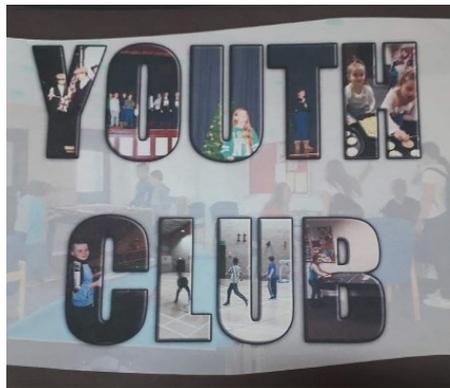
Keith was also a leading light at Quarrington Hill Community Centre, where he led the asset transfer process of the building from Durham County Council to the Trustees and the fundraising campaign to refurbish the facility. Keith really became active in the community in about 2003-2004 with the community consultation on Parish Plan 1 and was a founder member of Quarrington Hill Community Partnership which went on to raise funds for a number of initiatives in the village. He played an active part in the Quarry Liaison Committees which affect our community and also East Durham Rural Corridor AAP.

Keith served Quarrington Hill well on the Parish Council, always trying to make sure the village got its fair share of resources, although this was never an issue. He scrutinised the Parish Council finances meticulously and supported the Parish Council in growing into a more financially stable organisation for both of our villages.

Keith was also a member of the Durham Constabulary Choir and Secretary for St Helen's Church Kelloe where again he supported in major fundraising activities. Keith was well known in the community and liked by a lot of people.

Whilst he had private family funeral during Covid19, a Service of Remembrance will be arranged once the pandemic is over to remember and thank Keith.

Coxhoe Parish Council Youth Clubs



The Youth Club Staff would like to say that we are incredibly proud of all of the young people in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill. We have seen some amazing acts of kindness, wonderful displays of talent and an uplifting amount of community spirit from the young people within our villages throughout this difficult time.

The young people showcased their talents in our Easter Egg Competition, we gave the young people the theme of Heroes and were delighted with the entries. Unfortunately there could only be one winner and as difficult as it was to decide Ava won with her wonderful depiction of the key working heroes.



The Youth Staff team are busy improving the youth club behind the scenes, moving most of the forms online and updating our records, whilst trying to keep the young people busy with craft ideas, challenges and quizzes on our Facebook page. Our membership forms and rules are now available on the Coxhoe parish website along with updated staff information. We are hosting weekly Zoom meetings for both juniors and seniors. We recently played a game of Bingo with two of our young people winning prizes. More information on how to join our virtual Youth Club can be found on our Facebook page simply scan the QR or visit <https://m.facebook.com/CQHYoungPeople/>



As always we love to hear from our Young People so please get in touch with artwork, ideas, even just a quick hello! Youthclubs@coxhoeparishcouncil.gov.uk



The Youth Club is a place to meet your friends and just have fun. Coxhoe Youth Clubs offers a range of activities that are suitable for all ages. We've got Junior youth clubs Quarrington Hill (Mondays) and in Coxhoe, a Senior youth club (Friday) and even a girls only session (Wednesdays).

We hold regular indoor games activities, from table tennis to dodgeball which is one of the groups favourites, the competitive nature of young people really shows through in this game, but it's also good fun.

We have developed an ambassador scheme where young people become ambassadors and take a leading role in the successful running of the youth clubs.



We've almost full access at Quarrington Hill Community Centre on a Monday and Active Life Centre on Fridays and loads of equipment such a X-box, Pool, Air Hockey, sound systems for music to dance, craft stuff. We also occasionally organise away days in the holidays, and this year we brought in loads of inflatables for the day.

Why not come along to see for yourself when we re-start. Meanwhile check out our Facebook page for our news and some fun activities.

Coxhoe's Magic Mile

Chatting to the local community and Businesses they told us that Coxhoe has a "Magic Mile". They said if you walked down one side of our front street and back up the other you could get almost anything you needed on 'The Magic Mile'.

Coxhoe is a thriving village, an Aladdin's cave of shops and bursting with businesses and community facilities.

Lunchtime is a veritable feast, with a quick stop at Andersons Bakers or Coates Butchers, Bacon Butty at Gem Café or Coxhoe Café or lunch or afternoon tea at Seventeen. We even have Chinese food, two Italians and a Fish shop.

Choosing a special gift has never been easier! Bonsai Bon Bons has the best sweets, Flowers and candles from Michell, Wing and a Prayer for local crafts, beautiful clothes and nick-nacks from Adore. Visit Opal for furniture, gifts and their brilliant Christmas shop and Haunting Heaven is a recent addition if you fancy something quirky.

When it comes to your home improvements, Franks will replace your carpets and Coxhoe Paving can upgrade your garden. For other DIY projects Coxhoe Timber can provide all you need. Coxhoe can even alter your clothes and curtains at All Sewn Up and Opal.

Specialist Businesses include wedding dresses by Alice Elizabeth Creations, Evie Black Occasion Wear and Party Forever catering for your every celebration. The Coronation Press is a long established printers, Talbots Taxi's and AWC Insurance Services and The Signs Man, not forgetting the Post Office, Coxhoe Club and The Village Tavern.

All your beauty needs are catered for by Chic, Scissorhands by Nicola, Stephen Scarr's, Lads n Dads, Bishops Barbers, Turkish Barbers, Esprit and CoCo Beauty and even your pets can be looked after in the village at The Groom Room.

If that wasn't enough then The Wabi Sabi Academy can teach you Martial Arts, Platinum Physiotherapy and Personal Training can get you fit, while the rest of your healthcare is covered by Whitfields Chemist, Grundy and Naisbitt and The Village optician and The Dentist and Village Care. Little Legz caters for your little ones.

Food shopping won't be a problem with Cost Cutter, Best One and the Coop and we can even provide everything you need for your pets at Noah's Ark.

Coxhoe is a thriving Village with lots of other businesses in other parts of the village; you can find many of them listed on Coxhoe Parish Council Website.

County Durham Plan Consultation

You may remember these posters up and down the Front Street of Coxhoe in the summer of 2016, and various public meetings regarding the new County Durham Plan.



Extract from Coxhoe Parish Council's 2017 Formal Response to the County Durham Plan

“Coxhoe Parish Council formally objects to option c (Sustainable Communities with Central Durham Villages). Our preference would ideally be option d (wider dispersal) or Option b (Sustainable Communities). Our principle reason for this is the feedback we have had from the responses received from the Neighbourhood Plan public meetings. These have endorsed the view that Cox hoe cannot sustain much more development than the 500 houses approved in the last year without losing our village identity, loss of green space around our village, and Coxhoe being merged with Parkhill losing our separate identities and potentially leading to a continuous urban sprawl towards Bowburn, Shincliffe, Elvet and Durham City itself. Parkhill has been linked with Coxhoe for consideration of development proposals and there is a strong risk that the 190 houses approved recently will expand to 600-800, in addition to the 150 recently approved as part of Integra 61. Coxhoe, Parkhill and Bowburn do not have the infrastructure to sustain any further development.....”

Durham County Council (DCC) took on board the responses from Coxhoe Parish Council, a good number of Coxhoe residents and other Councils including Cassop-cum-Quarrington and proposed option which set out sites all around County Durham for the Government's required number of houses for County Durham. For our area, other than the sites that currently have planning approval or those pending that meant that there would be no more major development around Coxhoe, Parkhill and Bowburn and our village identities would be retained rather than merging into each other.

One of the final stages of approving the County Durham Plan was an Inspection in Public by an HM Government Planning Inspector which was held earlier in 2020 concluded. The Planning Inspector's examination in public is almost complete, he has set out a number of main modifications he considers are necessary to make the County Durham Plan sound. These were:

- Changes to Policy 6 on 'Development of Unallocated Spaces'
- the Northern and Western relief roads should be removed from the Plan
- the corridor of interest for a possible future Barnard Castle relief road should be removed from the Plan

DCC are inviting comments on the proposed Main Modifications to the County Durham Plan. Details can be found at: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/21702/County-Durham-Plan-examination-in-public>

Have your say online at: <https://durhamcc.objective.co.uk/portal/>

The consultation started 26 May and the closing date for comments is 5.00pm on Monday 21 July 2020.

As a result of the Inspector's requested amendments to the County Durham Plan, Coxhoe's village identity is at risk again.

96% of respondents to the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Survey in March 2017 said that they wanted a Settlement Boundary around the edge of the village to restrict housing development. The County Durham Plan proposed by DCC effectively offered that protection. If the Inspectors requested modifications are incorporated that protection will not be as strong.

Coxhoe Parish Council is therefore urgently recommencing work on its Neighbourhood Plan. If you don't want our village to turn into a town, please respond to the DCC consultation above and support the development of a Coxhoe Neighbourhood Plan. More details will follow on how to get involved.

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Coxhoe Parish Council Chair's Annual Report 2019 to 2020

Presented to the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held by ZOOM on 10 June 2020

Introduction

This is my fifth annual report as Chair. We are a very active Parish Council and there a long list of people below to thank for helping to make Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill the great places that they are to live. It is through our collective efforts that this council has made such progress for the benefit of our communities.

What have we achieved?

This year has been a busy year looking forward and seeking to develop community facilities. We have reviewed most of our policies, our administrative and support systems so they meet the needs of the Council and community. With the Covid19 lockdown our staff have been meeting from home and the Parish Council meetings are being held remotely by ZOOM to ensure continuity. Members have again rolled up their sleeves and delivered on identified priorities. Listed below are some of the actions, activities and progress that have been achieved towards delivery of community priorities:

- The Parish Council staff together with Coxhoe Village Hall and Quarrington Hill Community Centre volunteers been co-ordinating Covid19 support to vulnerable members of the community with over 80 volunteers from our villages.
- To safeguard it from development and restore it for community sports and recreation use we have taken a lease of the Coxhoe Cricket Ground. We have been awarded a £26,260 in grants by the East Durham Rural Corridor AAP, County Durham Community Fund and Durham FA. With match funding by the Parish Council, works have started to update the semi derelict pavilion and fully restore the fields and cricket square, also introducing a 7-a-side and 9-a-side football pitches. This will double the public playing fields available in the village. Particular thanks to local builder Ray Lawson for his support.



- The Parish Council lost out on the opportunity to purchase the Old School site but working with the new owner we carried out a public consultation on the potential uses which supported a new Doctor's surgery and social housing for senior citizens. Subject to satisfactory business case, NHS and social landlord funding, hopefully a planning application will be submitted soon.
- Plans to commemorate the centenary of the end of WW2 (World War 2) had to be cancelled due to Covid19. The community response with pop-up street parties was fabulous. In Quarrington Hill a tribute was added to the Village Green, particular thanks to Clive Lawson for this. We also commemorated Merchant Navy Day with a special service, and the people of both villages turned out in large numbers to pay their respects at Remembrance Day Services.
- Coxhoe hosted its second Fireworks event 5 November. This was a Parish Plan 2 priority that the community requested and which was very well attended. Due to the high volume of requests, it's already been booked again for 5 November 2020.

- The Parish Council has committed significant resource to employ a team of youth workers to ensure that Youth Services continue to be provided in our villages. An average of 80 young people enjoy these each week. One of the groups raised funds to host an inflatables day, which went really well and a lot of fun was had. During Covid19 our Youth Team have set up remote sessions and quizzes for our young people.
- Having taken on various pieces of Land around the parish to protect them from development and keep them as green spaces, we continue to make improvements. Tree bush pruning has been carried out on some of the village greens and at St Mary's Churchyard. We are also looking at improvements on the green next to Bower Court for residents, whilst maintaining a biodiversity corridor.
- We held our first Christmas Tree lighting event on 1 December on Coxhoe Village Green and erected our second Christmas Tree. Thanks also to St Joseph's, St Mary's and St Andrew's Churches for their support.
- Kingswood is part of 'Durham Woodland Revival' project that has been awarded £434,200 to restore and reconnect woodland in the County. The Parish Council continue to support this community wood for local people.
- The Parish Council has continued to provide grant funding to help cover costs, support and improve facilities and activities available to Quarrington Hill Community Centre, Coxhoe Village Hall and the Active Life Centre. For example, Coxhoe Village Hall used their grant to fund an Admin Support Worker and the Active Life Centre were advanced their 2019/20 grant to fund additional gym equipment as part of their gym refurbishment. We have also provided financial support to a number of local groups and teams in the villages such as Quarrington Hill Runners and Run Together in Coxhoe.
- The Council has focussed heavily on parking this year. We welcomed the introduction by Durham County Council (DCC) of waiting limits on Coxhoe's Front Street and restrictions around the crossroads at Quarrington Hill. The Parish Council working with local businesses increased parking behind Commercial Road. Working with residents and Groundwork Trust to design improved parking and amenity around Basic Cottages, sadly a grant application to fund this was unsuccessful. We continue to explore parking and traffic solutions on Cornforth Lane.



- The Parish Council objected to planning applications at Landsdowne Road for Town Houses amongst the bungalows, and also increasing the proposed number of houses at Station Road for the original 50 in the outline approval to 70.
- Our Facebook, Twitter and Website continue to provide invaluable information to our community. A huge Thank You to Ian Forster for the massive amount of work he puts into this.

The above list provides a snapshot of the main areas of work that the council has progressed and continues to work on.

Finance

In terms of finance we have prudently managed our budgets this year to leave us in a position to

address future projects whilst making clear progress on the priorities in the Parish Plan. Our Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020 will be posted on the Website for all to see and the opportunity exists for any parishioner to examine our financial records by appointment with the Clerk during the exercise of public rights which will take place between 10 June and 19 July 2019.

Thanks

Thank you to our Clerk, Claire Llewelyn, who gained her professional qualification, the Certificate in Local Council Administration, this year. Thanks also to our Youth Team. Karen Williams, our Admin Assistant, left us and we wish her well for the future. We welcome Jasmine Morris, Amena Uddin, Ellie Lowes, Sean Davison and Emma Fail to our Youth Team and Angela Searle as our Admin Officer.

Thanks also to our supporting members from Durham County Council and to all those volunteers, groups and organisations who are a vital part of our community. Furthermore, I must thank those many individuals who have attended our parish meetings throughout the year, raising issues and concerns that affect their lives. This additional input is also a vital part of making sure our council works for its community.

I have to thank all members of this council, particularly our Vice Chair Kay Simpson for her commitment and support in what has been another challenging year.

I also thank Julie Smith, Graham Mills, and Barbara Hepplewhite for their service as councillors who retired throughout the year and welcome to the Council Nathan Brown and Ian Armstrong, who were co-opted to replace them. Barbara Hepplewhite deserves particular thanks, she served as a Councillor for nearly 20 years, she was extremely hard working and an awful lot of major initiatives would just not have happened without her determined input. She is a great miss, however, she continues to work hard for residents as part of Coxhoe History Group.

Sadly, as I write this I learn that Cllr Keith Pounder passed away in May 2020. Keith served as a Councillor for Quarrington Hill for 15 years and represented the village with passion and determination. Keith offered critical challenge on many issues to make sure that the Council performed effectively.

Conclusion

It has been another very busy year for the Council and next year promises to be every bit as challenging as we look to deliver on initiative in progress. I hope that you will agree that the Council continues to work hard to improve our villages.

Stuart Dunn

Coxhoe Parish Council Chair

Councillor Kay Simpson (Vice-Chair),
Councillor Ian Armstrong
Councillor Darren Brown
Councillor Nathan Brown
Councillor Adrian Hedley
Councillor Wendy Lavelle
Councillor Kim Lowes
Councillor Colin Thirlaway

Barbara Hepplewhite - 20 Years of service as a Councillor



Barbara should be recognised as one of the hardest working most effective Parish Councillors and Community organisers that Coxhoe has ever or will ever see. Her contribution to the village alongside her husband John has been astronomic and their finger prints are all over an awful lot of the things which people see as good today. Barbara's contribution to the community should have been recognised with a formal honour such as an MBE at least, but because of her modesty she has said that is something that she would not appreciate.

Barbara played a leading light alongside John, Paul and Nicki Dodsworth in ensuring the continuity of Coxhoe Village Hall after the old committee all left, almost all of them with over 20 years' service and ensuring it reached financial stability and was refurbished throughout. Before she was a Parish Councillor she led the Coxhoe Community Partnership to invest massive funding to improve Coxhoe Park, deliver the skate park, cycle zone and sensory garden and through her efforts Coxhoe park was recognised with a Green Flag. Through Parish Planning she played a major role in the consultation on and delivery of the Front Street regeneration scheme which was replicated into many communities throughout the County.

As an active part of the Coxhoe History Group she has helped rediscover, document and share much of Coxhoe's rich history which has been enjoyed by many residents and people all around the world. Barbara played a leading part in the Historic Churchyard and Garden of Remembrance at the Village Hall. In all she has played a major part in delivering over one million pounds of investment in Coxhoe. She and John spent many hours on preparing displays on behalf of the Parish Council and as part of our fantastic Coxhoe History Group.

Barbara was one of the driving forces behind democratising of the Parish Council through the Parish Plan process, making sure that the Council sought the views and priorities of the community and then delivered on that. Barbara started the Coxhoe Chronicle and for many years edited it on behalf of the Parish Council. She played a leading role in the organisation and delivery of many community events such as the Suffragette Centenary Rally in the village. Her placard could not be more appropriate. A quiet woman of action, a determined and effective deliverer.

In her time as a Parish Councillor the Council went from relative inactivity to being a listening Council that plays a major part in delivering services that people appreciate. The people of Coxhoe really should be aware of just how hard she worked and how much she did. Whilst Barbara has left the Parish Council, we will not forget her huge contribution and legacy which we must maintain. She continues to work actively as part of the History Group and we look forward to hearing the fruits of their ongoing research.

Coxhoe Parish Council Expenditure

You will recently have received your Council Tax demand. You have a right to know how your Parish Council spends your money. We try to spend the same proportions in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill. You will see that we have requested an increase to our budget of 9.98% for 2020 to 21. This equates to £9.49 per year for a Band D property or 18p per week, for a Band A that is £5.95 per year or 12p per week. Most of the increase is increased wage costs to enable us to deliver the services that the people of the area want, and increased spending on improvements to land we maintain on behalf of the community. The expenditure of £11,265 on the Coxhoe Cricket ground by the Parish Council will bring in £26,260 in external grants to fully refurbish the facility and double the play space in Coxhoe.

Parish Council expenditure

Admin staff £32,688 or 27%

Office costs £18,767 or 16%

Communication £6,793 or 6%

Youth Services including staff £17,233 or 14%

Grounds maintenance and planting £16,822 or 14%

Community buildings or grants £12,100 or 10%

Cricket Ground £11,265 or 9%

Events £4,712 or 4%

Coxhoe Village Hall



The Village Hall remains closed due to the Covid 19 virus but we are monitoring our options closely and following government guidelines. We are keen to re-open as soon as it is safe to do so and look forward to seeing everyone again. Our Staff are currently furloughed, but our Management Committee (who are all volunteers) are actively looking to ensure that when the right time comes, we are adequately equipped and ready to safely welcome everyone back, albeit differently – it looks like social distancing is here for a while yet.

EXCITING NEWS - when we are able to reopen then we will be offering a host of new activities for you to look forward to, thanks to funding from East Durham Rural Corridor AAP and Awards for

All. The new weekly sessions will include:

- * 'An Afternoon Out' – a weekly get together to enjoy yourselves with a mix of quizzes, sing-alongs and interesting and informative talks
- * 'Family Fun and Fitness' – a fun activity session for all the family
- * 'Revolving Doors' a men's only get together
- * 'Games for a Laugh' a session to meet, have a catch up and have the opportunity to play various floor and board games
- * A new Carpet Bowls Club

Days and times and start dates are still to be finalised so please watch out on our website, facebook page and our Village Hall noticeboards for details

Fancy reading a good book?

We are working with the Little Library and have tons of books in our Reading Room available for loan. We have books for readers of all ages, abilities & interests waiting to be read

During these challenging times we have a new Ring, Reserve, Collect & Delivery service available from Coxhoe Village Hall, Tuesdays and Thursday 2pm to 4pm!!

Although this service is only manned on a Tuesday and Thursday between 2pm and 4pm, you can ring Coxhoe Village Hall anytime on 0191 377 0344 and leave your name, a message and your telephone number and we'll ring you back to arrange getting a book of your choice to you!

We are also working in partnership with the Parish Council and are helping with the Coxhoe Cares project, so if you think we can help with anything then please feel free to contact us

If you'd like any more information then please email admin@coxhoevillagehall.com In the meantime stay safe.

Ian Forster: 10 years' service to the Parish Council as our Website and Social Media Editor



The fact that so many of you know what is going on in and around Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill is thanks to a huge voluntary contribution to the community by Ian Forster, who built and has maintained the much respected Coxhoe Parish Council website in 2010 and maintains our information flow to the community through Facebook and Twitter. Our website is held up as one of the best in the County and wider simply because of the amount of hours and dedication put in by Ian.

Ian is an exceptionally intelligent and articulate communicator. He is also a superb photographer, and a lot of Coxhoe's recent history is captured thanks to his images. He joined us when his wife Margaret joined the Council as Clerk, and due to the exceptional high workload in preparing for the launch of Parish Plan 2 in 2012, he became our unpaid Assistant Clerk, and did a considerable amount of the documentary and preparation work behind the public consultation exercises and preparation of the plans and action plans summarising community aspirations.

Ian is a professional planner and he assisted the Parish Council in preparations of responses to many planning applications and responses to the County Durham Plan and Strategic Housing Assessments and the impacts on Coxhoe. He also played a major part in our preparations for a Neighbourhood Plan, albeit the Council did not complete this, but as a result of the work done views were captured and communicated in shaping the emerging County Durham Plan in respect of our community.

Coxhoe Parish Council functions as an effective team, and Ian has been a significant part in helping the communicate the work of the Council to our communities. The Council were truly saddened when Ian advised that he planned to formally retire from his Parish Council roles when he reached his 65th birthday in July. It is not really a surprise, because he has contributed an average of 10 hours per week over this period to support the Council, and this could not go on for ever.

We wish Ian a very long and happy retirement, and Margaret all the luck in the world in coping with his humour and all of this extra time on his hands. Hopefully lots more lovely holidays to enjoy and precious time with grandchildren. He will be a hard act to follow!

Coxhoe Banner Group



We start with sad news that there will be no Miners Gala this year 2020 and that is official from the Durham Miners' Association, due to Covid19, which most of you will already know. Making of the new banner has been held up also there will also be no Eve of Gala concert. It is a disappointment to us all, but we will all bounce back.

We wish everyone the best of health from the Banner Group Stay Safe. We will be back.

Everything is in a big mix and how we are all going to come out of it no one knows.

King's Wood Nature Diary

At this time of year, nature seems to spring into life. It is not just the birds returning from their winter stay in Africa, but also the flowers that come to life.



One of the earlier wild-flowers to come into bloom is the Greater Stitchwort but during May or June, it is replaced by its very similar cousin, the Lesser Stitchwort. The beautiful white flowers can form mats along our roadside verges. Strangely, the Lesser Stitchwort is a bigger plant but the leaves of the Greater are significantly bigger to give it its name.

Another white flower now in bloom is the much bigger Cow Parsley. Again, this can be found on our roadside verges and while it can perhaps take over the place and smother out smaller flowers, it still makes a pleasant spread.

But many smaller flowers are now also in bloom. Cowslip can be found in considerable numbers in Crow Trees Local Nature Reserve. The “eggs and bacon” Bird’s-foot-trefoil can also be found. A bright little yellow flower with hints of red, it makes a fine spread on our thin, calcareous soils. Soon, the orchids should be showing their blooms. Early Purple Orchid is in fact already blooming in Cassop Vale but this will be followed by Common Spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids. If you are lucky, you may also find the far rarer Bee Orchid, a flower that fools bees into thinking that it is one and so gets them to pollinate it. I have had two unusual bird sightings as well during May.

The Hen Harrier is perhaps our rarest resident bird of prey, a bird that naturally should be living in the uplands in the west of the county. However, numbers of breeding pairs in England now are in single figures, sometimes with none found breeding here at all. But in mid-May, as I was walking along the path below Cold Knuckles Quarry, I saw one fly from over the quarry towards Coxhoe. I strongly doubt whether it was doing anything other than passing through, but this is a sight anyone interested in birds loves to see. The adult male is particularly spectacular, a pale grey with a white rump. It is known as the “sky dancer” when displaying to the female. Juveniles and females look more owl like, but still with the white rump, and are generally called “ringtails”. It was a ringtail that flew over on this occasion.

The other sighting was of two unusual ducks on the ponds. Ruddy Shelduck is not a native duck in the UK, its range being far to the east of us. It is a large duck, with a reddish body, a pale head and black wingtips (quite dissimilar from our native Shelduck in colour but similar to it in size). Some are here in collections and some are now feral in Holland. I suspect these two were escapees. Even so, this was a lovely sight, whether they really count as being wild or not, as they took off from the ponds and then flew towards Cold Knuckles, going up and down the face quite a few times. **Richard Cowan CPRE (The Countryside Charity)**

Covid 19 and Open Spaces



This year has of course been marked by the Coronavirus crisis which has led to many people being at home instead of work. Many have used the time to enjoy the wonderful countryside and open spaces we have in our area. I know as I am fortunate to live in our countryside and have seen a marked increase in the number of people using the paths in our area.

Clearly, this virus has been, and still is, a tragedy that will have still unknown effects. But, when you are out, has it made you think for a while about what we all are missing when we spend our busy lives at work with little time to enjoy the countryside. In short, has it made you stop and stare? Made you wonder what that flower is, or what bird is singing that song? Or just appreciate the openness of the area?

I hope it has. These spaces are valuable. People need open space and it is now being recognised that we work much better if we can experience these areas. Also, they can help our mental health and so mean we may not need to use the health service so much. That bird singing in the scrub is not just something pleasant to listen to, it can actually help our mental health.

If this crisis has had one benefit, it may be that it has helped people to appreciate the open areas around us. The beauty of the flowers and the sound of bird song has been commented on many times.

I am saying this because, if you have appreciated the countryside around you during this unfortunate period, do you want it to be protected? Do you want to keep enjoying it in the future, now that you have perhaps got more of a taste of it?

Of course, if more people do want to enjoy this asset, then it must be respected. That dropped plastic bottle not only spoils it, it can be harmful to wildlife as well. And the security of those that live there should be respected. No one wants to have things stolen from them, but sometimes things in the countryside have to be left in an unprotected state and should be left as such.

We cannot expect all things to stay unchanged, but do we want to lose this valuable asset? If not, then perhaps we should be making this clear. Of course, this is a consideration whenever there is a proposed development of any green field site, but if we have come during this crisis to appreciate the sight of flower meadows and the song of birds, then I think we should be asking our decision makers to be more pro-active in ensuring that these valuable areas are protected and that more positive action is required to include provision for our flora and fauna within developments, particularly big ones. **Richard Cowen**

Bower Court Eco Garden



If you have seen Bower Green recently, you may be wondering why the grass has been allowed to grow so tall. Hopefully, this article will assure you that we are not letting things go to rack and ruin, but instead are trying to improve this green space for residents, walkers, and local wildlife. The motivation behind our evolving plan for the site is the council's commitment to protecting our green spaces and their biodiversity. What's more however, the success of the project we are proposing, which will be led by Cllrs Nathan Brown and Ian Armstrong, could allow us to apply some of these principles to other sites, making Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill more green, more pleasant, and more vibrant places to live.

If you were to walk through Bower Green after one of its routine grass cuts, you would likely assume that the site is a simple glade, with a few trees and a lot of grass. Upon allowing the grass, and anything hiding amongst it, to grow however, the site's hidden treasures have been revealed. After surveying the site for wildflowers, we have found between 15-19 different species of wild flowering plants and 6 different species of nettle. Some of the wildflowers you may recognise on the site are Cow Parsley, Red Clover, and Bermuda Buttercup – all of which help pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to thrive. Other creatures have benefited too, as the longer grass provides habitat for smaller insects, which are a food source for some of the 16 species of birds that can be found on the site, as well as the Green's nocturnal visitors. Bats can be seen on most nights at Bower Green, and while getting a good look at just one can be difficult at other sites, up to 6 can be seen at one point performing aerial acrobatics of a night-time.

Undoubtedly the recent reduction in cars on the road will have helped roadside sites such as this, but with a carefully thought through plan, we hope to show that this increase in wildlife and colour doesn't need to end as we begin to leave our homes and start to go about our socially distanced daily business. This will, of course, include cutting the grass back in line with a new timetable which will maximise the opportunity for wildflowers to bloom and be enjoyed by all creatures great and small. When possible, we hope to remove some of the hidden litter on site and add to the range of diverse wildflowers and trees on the Green. These steps will make Bower Green a more pleasant place not just for residents and walkers passing through, but for the wildlife which this will attract.

While we are confident that improving Bower Green in this manner will make the area a better place to live, we of course want to know what you think, and the Parish council will be consulting residents soon on this. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Cllr Nathan Brown if you have any pressing concerns about this site. We hope that this project will attract support from across the Parish, and that this support will also be lent to future attempts to increase and protect our green spaces in line with residents' wishes. Bower Green may look quite different right now, but we hope that you will agree with us that the increase in floral colour, and the variety of wildlife, is a benefit we can all enjoy, and hope to spread.

Coxhoe Runaways



We have moved our running and walking activities online at this time. There is still a lot going on that people can take part in, with something for all abilities.

Virtual Run and Walk Challenges - Since the restrictions were imposed we've been setting virtual run and walk monthly challenges for anybody that would like to take part. They are inclusive and are focused on helping motivate people to keep going during this strange time. We've also had specific challenges with prizes for participants too. You can get copies of these from our Facebook page or by emailing us at coxhoerunaways@outlook.com

100 miles in May! - One of our run leaders, Helen set herself the challenge of running every day in May. Not only did she manage to complete this but she also hit 100 miles for the month as a result. She said "lockdown has given me the freedom to commit to the challenge and I've also ran over 100 miles in the month. I'm going to donate to two charities close to my heart 4Louis and Tiny lives". Well done Helen, what a brilliant achievement!

Well done Elaine! - Congratulations to Elaine for successfully completing all aspects of the WalkDurham Walk Leader certification. Since completing her training Elaine has been coordinating our new walking group supported by Durham County Council. We are grateful for all of her hard work and it's been lovely to see a demand for this..

Staying connected - In lieu of our regular Tuesday night runs we've been meeting via Zoom every fortnight at 7pm for a catch up with our group members. It's no substitute for being face to face but it's great to see people and share ideas of how to stay active during this time and have a general catch up. We've also been staying in touch with people via the phone and email for those that have expressed a wish for this. We'll continue to offer these social sessions and calls until the restrictions are lifted in a way which makes it safe for us to RunTogether as a group again.

Staying active - We know that a lot of people are finding it difficult to run as they usually do during these times, for a number of different reasons. Any exercise at the moment should be comfortable and at a level you are used to completing. If you're finding it difficult to run at the moment, try a walk or mix it up a bit. It's more important than ever to **be kind to yourself** and to **use your time outside to promote wellbeing and relieve stress**.

If you would like to get in touch with us or request more information you can email coxhoerunaways@outlook.com

Coxhoe on the Run



In line with the Government guidelines and England Athletics/Run Together advice, we are now offering 1-2-1 and small group walking/running sessions. The maximum number of people allowed to take part in any one session is 4* and social distancing rules must always be followed.

We are an inclusive and friendly group who meet in Coxhoe on a Wednesday and Friday evening, as well as a Sunday morning. There is a lot of flexibility in the group so if you would prefer another day, we can help you arrange that too.

We like to explore and can often be found on the trails and tracks outside of Coxhoe too e.g. the old railway lines from Broompark, Durham, Sherburn, Pitkington, Sedgfield etc. If there is an area of interest to you, just let us know!

For more information head over to our Community Face Book page where you'll be given the option of joining the closed group:

https://www.facebook.com/Coxhoeontherun/?modal=admin_todo_tour

*Current Government guidelines (31 May 2020) allow a maximum of 6 people to exercise together whilst observing social distancing. However, we have taken the collective decision to allow a maximum of 4 people. There may be further developments that will impact our running sessions in the future, and we will update our Facebook page to reflect this.

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What's On at Active Life in Coxhoe



New resistance machines coming soon!

Here at active Life Coxhoe we are delighted to announce that our brand new Technogym resistance machines are still on track to be delivered around August 2020. Furthermore, we have been overwhelmed with the support we have received from our members during these difficult times and would like to say a huge thank you from all the staff at Active Life Coxhoe.

We would also like to say a huge thank you to all frontline workers.

Contact details for Active Life:

Linden Grove, Coxhoe, Durham, DH6 4DW

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Email info@activelifecoxhoe.co.uk

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