

Ribchester Review



The Newsletter of Ribchester Parish Council

Issue No.7 Summer 2005

“Summer is a seemly
time”

James Kelly
A Scottish Proverb
1721



A glimpse of SS Peter & Paul's church from Stoneygate

Crime, Disorder, and public perception

Anyone reading the local news could be forgiven for thinking that local crime statistics are showing an inexorable upward trend. However, the truth, as set out in the current Borough Council Performance Plan, is somewhat different. In fact, the Ribble Valley is a low crime area and a safe place to live. Figures for most crimes are well below the County average with a decline in burglaries and vehicle crime over the last three years, two key areas directly touching on many people's lives. Whatever the true state of affairs, other evidence collected during recent surveys reveals that most people perceive a worsening in the level of crime over the past three years rather than an improvement.

The need then is to tackle the fear of crime so that it does not become out of proportion with reality. The Borough Council aims to work closely with the Ribble Valley Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce crime further and the fear of crime, and to cut anti-social behaviour.

Of course, there are other nuisances committed by the thoughtless that attack our quality of life. The good news is that Councils have now been given a stronger hand with which to fight back. The '*Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005*' was passed on the

last day of the previous Parliament. It is a series of measures including, crime & disorder, nuisance parking offences, litter & refuse, graffiti and control of dogs.

Many of the measures included in the Act will fall to be dealt with by County and Borough Councils. But the Act also affects Parish Councils in two ways:

- It allows Parish Councils to issue fixed penalty notices for litter, graffiti, fly posting, and dog offences.
- It allows Parish Councils to introduce dog control orders for a range of offences (effectively replacing the current bye-law system) including, dog fouling, keeping a dog on a lead, exclusion of dogs from certain land and the number of dogs a person can take out on a lead.

The various measures included in the Act will be brought in gradually by next spring. In the meantime the Parish Council will consider how best to respond.

See page 3 for news about Neighbourhood Watch.

“ As rich as any Town in Christendom”

At its annual meeting in May the Parish Council seeks to strike something of a counterbalance to the standing business by inviting a guest speaker. Now suitable candidates do not always leap to our notice but this year we struck gold when Roy Skilbeck agreed to present a brief history of the village. Numbers of folk attending the annual meeting have shown a steady decline over the years but the prospect of learning something of local history drew an enthusiastic audience of around 30 residents who joined parish councillors at the meeting in SS Peter and Paul’s Parish centre. And what a fascinating journey it was. Roy, of course, needs no introduction and over the years, he has amassed a fund of information about the village and of the characters that helped to shape it. The large number of documents and other miscellany were a source of great interest and enjoyment to those present.



Indeed so well received was his talk that it has whetted our appetite for more. So much so that there is talk of founding a Civic Society to research and preserve the best of our heritage, before much of it is lost as the village slowly changes.

Nothing *ever* changes around here.

Everyone has something to say about where they live and with the prospect of filling the current vacancy on the Parish Council it is worth reflecting on the role of the Parish Councillor.

Firstly, what is a Parish Council?

Parishes have been around for a long time. They are the smallest area of civil administration in England, providing the statutory tier of local government closest to the people, together with the Borough and County Councils.

Parish Councils are the essence of local democracy. They have a vital role in speaking and acting on behalf of the communities they represent. Parish Councils comment on planning applications and advise the County and Borough Councils on the views of residents. All meetings are open to the public and electors are encouraged to raise issues for the Council to answer. Ribchester Parish Council comprises seven members led by a Chairman and advised by the clerk who is there to see that business is conducted within the law.

All this is fine but what exactly do Councillors do?

Put simply Councillors contribute to the work of the Council by –

- Having a say about the things they care about.
- Putting forward ideas for better services.
- Responding to the needs of residents.
- Seeking the best outcome to local issues.
- Getting involved in decision making by voting..

And talking about change!!

The Post Office: Part X

Well the saga continues. We had, by now, hoped to have news about the re-establishment of a post office service in the village. But the Post Office is a mysterious body whose wheels grind exceedingly slow and while we hear that negotiations are continuing there is nothing definite to report.

We also wonder what considerations of road safety entered into the mind of those Post Office officials tasked with the decision to find a new home for our mail box. Surely a safer harbour could have been found than the blind corner on Blackburn Road.



‘Nothing to do!’

The lack of facilities for young people in areas such as ours is regularly put forward as a problem that needs to be addressed. Potential solutions suggested can be categorised as things to do in the village and ways to make it easier to escape the village.

The County Council’s Youth service has long wrestled with this issue and after much debate came up with the idea of a traveling bus which would visit the village from time to time and offer advice and information to youngsters who do not readily have access to other sources of youth information. Following last year’s successful trial the Youth Service aims to establish a presence in the village during the summer holidays.

Judy Mallam

June saw the departure of Judy Mallam from the Parish Council. Her resignation was accepted with regret amid thanks for her commitment and toil. Judy was the prime mover in the publication of 'The Yellow Page', Ribchester's own directory of local groups and services. She will be sorely missed for her knowledge and her enthusiastic commitment to the well being of the parish.

We wish her well for the future.

High Hedges: Complaining to the Borough Council

The right hedge can be an ideal garden boundary but the wrong hedge may bring problems. Ribchester hedges are generally neat and tidy but disputes could of course, arise in the future. For those likely to be in dispute help is at hand in the form of part 8 of the Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003. This section of the Act came into effect on 1 June 2005 and covers evergreen or semi- evergreen hedges consisting of two or more plants more than 2m high; mainly for example, Leyland Cypress, Lawson Cypress and Western Red Cedar.

An owner or occupier of an affected domestic property may make a complaint to the Borough Council if the height of a hedge is adversely affecting reasonable enjoyment of the property. Involving the Borough Council should be a last resort and only if the two parties concerned cannot agree a solution. The Borough Council may refuse to intervene if it thinks that the parties have not done everything they could reasonably do to settle the dispute.

The sting in the tail is cost. Involvement in settling disputes can be a time consuming and expensive exercise. The fee for dealing with a complaint has been set by the Borough Council at £500. This sum is not refundable, and must be paid at the time the complaint is lodged.

A copy of a Government leaflet, that answers common question in relation to high hedges, is available from the Parish Council.

Welcome to Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. Behind it lies a simple idea, and a central value shared by millions of people around the country.

Getting together with your neighbours to take action to cut crime.

Everyone knows that the police are there to fight crime, but they need help to do an effective job. Neighbourhood Watch is all about an active partnership with the police.

3 It is some while since a Neighbourhood watch scheme

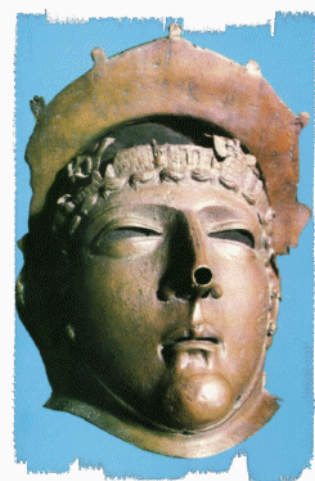
operated in the Ribchester area and at a recent Parish Council meeting, it was suggested that the time may well be right to set up a new scheme. But schemes do not just happen by themselves. Each scheme is generally led by a voluntary coordinator whose job it is to get people working together and make sure that things get done. As well as the coordinator, there is usually a committee that should meet regularly to plan which problems to target and what action to take. Schemes keep in close contact with local police to share information and advice.

To test the likely response to the suggestion for a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme the Parish Council will host a general village meeting. This is likely to be in September after the summer holiday.

Around the Village

Ribchester Parade Helmet

The famous Ribchester Parade Helmet, one of Ribchester's most enduring symbols, and one of Britain's most spectacular Roman objects, has recently been voted as the nation's second favourite Roman find. The accolade was given in a recent television vote organized as part of Time Team's Big Roman Dig, during the course of a whole



week of programmes devoted to Roman Archaeology. First place was awarded to the Vindolanda writing tablets, which have contributed so greatly to our knowledge of Roman life in northern Britain. Interestingly one of these tablets actually came from Ribchester, giving us a claim to at least a small part of the first prize as well!

The helmet was of course an accidental find, rather than an archaeologically excavated object, chanced upon by a 13 year old boy, John Walton, in 1796. Though traditionally thought to have been discovered on the riverbank, it is more likely to have been found behind one of the cottages opposite the primary school. The original is in the British Museum, having been part of Charles Townley's private collection but Ribchester Museum has an excellent bronze replica on display.

The helmet was part of a hoard of other artefacts, many of which were cavalry related. (cont p4)

In this issue the Review welcomes a newcomer to the ranks of Ribchester clubs and societies. 'Ribcaged' a talented group of local actors, recognisable from the many productions and projects around the village, including those on stage with the 'RATS'. Following their recent success at this year's Festival of Music & Art, Ribcaged will make their debut at the world renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe on 15th to 20th Au-



gust with a performance of 'The War Bus' written by Owen Phillips.



The War Bus is a tale of family, hope love and the triumph of the human spirit. It is set in a Lancashire public house during the second world war.

We wish them well in this new venture.

Photographs courtesy of Ribcaged

Parade helmet

Of course this comes as no surprise because the garrison of soldiers based at Bremetennacum was a unit of auxiliary cavalry. Two of the most interesting and finely made objects were eye guards that formed part of the protective head-gear for a horse known as a chamfron.



The helmet itself is an extremely refined piece of work. The mask depicts a youthful but stylised face with curls of hair that end in snakes' heads. The helmet is decorated with scenes of combat. Originally it is highly likely that helmet was gilded and the mask silver-plated. This type of helmet was worn during displays of military horsemanship. Some Roman cavalry sports may have resembled medieval jousting.

The Museum is delighted with the outcome of the vote, which came on the back of an extremely successful Roman re-enactment weekend. For the tenth year Legio Secvnda Avgvsta put on a wonderful

display of Roman military manoeuvres and demonstrations of civilian life in front of large crowds of enthralled villagers and visitors.

Patrick Tostevin



On Parade

One for the Diary.

Between 23 July and 9 September Ribchester Museum will hold an exhibition of drawings and costumes from the film 'King Arthur'. While legend has it that the mythical hero is linked to Glastonbury or Tintagel there is some evidence to suggest that Arthur may have been a Sarmation soldier from the Middle East.

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