

## **Chair's Report – Annual Parish Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

It's my pleasure to present the annual report on the work of the Parish Council over the past 12 months.

**The Picturesque Parish:** The Council again provided hanging baskets in Wortley and Howbrook this year. Our thanks go to Mr. Turton & Councillor Loxley at Howbrook for keeping them watered throughout the summer. The baskets at Wortley were watered by Barnsley MBC. Christmas Trees were again provided, two in Wortley and one in Howbrook. The trees were slightly smaller than last year but many pleasing comments were still received.

**Tidying of the Parish:** The 2007 Annual Parish Clean-Up was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June last year. Unfortunately, the event was very poorly attended and only a small amount of rubbish was collected. The date for the Clean-up this year has been set for Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008, an earlier date being set in the hope that the offending fly-tipped rubbish can be seen and not hidden by the new season hedgerow vegetation. The date has been fixed to coincide with the opening of the new Adventure Playground at the playing field and the Sunday morning Rugby Tag Event at the fielding field. Modest refreshments will be offered to those attending the planned functions if they help with the litter pick.

**Playing Fields:** The Parish Council has been fortunate in obtaining a grant of £4400 from the Barnsley MBC Community Green Space fund to be match funded by the Parish Council to enable us to provide playground equipment in the Parish. Various sites in the Parish were looked at to provide an alternative site for the equipment but after considering all the alternatives it was decided that the best site is the playing field at Finkle Street Lane. An Adventure Course has been ordered and the planned finishing date for its construction is the beginning of April. It is hoped that it will be a huge "hit" for all the children in the Parish who have been awaiting such a "challenge" for a long time.

It was reported at the last Annual Parish Meeting that the pavilion and the toilet block had been extensively vandalised. Work has been carried out to make modest improvements to these facilities at the Playing Field. A toilet has been made functional by the Parish Council and the Rugby Club have carried out major improvements to make the pavilion secure and although the facilities are primitive they are being used as an interim measure until the Club are successful in obtaining a grant for a new purpose built secure facility at the ground.

**Planning:** Observations were passed on 6 planning applications during the year, only half of the applications that were considered last year.

**Polling Station:** All Change – The Countess Tea Rooms at Wortley are now not considered suitable as the polling station for national and local government elections (DDA legislation). The new polling station, to be used for the local elections on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 and thereafter will be Wortley Church.

**Wortley Church Clock:** The Parish Council believes that the Church Clock is the focal point of the village, with local people relying on the clock and its chimes to guide them through the day. To help safeguard its future the Council have agreed to a 5 year service maintenance programme for the clock and given a grant towards the refurbishment of the two clock faces.

**War Memorial/Lych Gate:** The Lych Gate/War Memorial has again been damaged by a large articulated lorry, this being the fifth accident in the last five years at this location. The insurance claim of over £5000 has been settled this time but unfortunately the excess for future impact claims has risen to £500.00

**Barnsley MBC/Parish Council:** A Borough Council/Parish Council Charter has recently been agreed between Barnsley MBC and its Parish Councils. Hopefully it will improve the response times to queries and requests raised to them but unfortunately any action will remain the same.

**New Councillor:** Johnathan Da Rosa has been co-opted to the Council to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Councillor Mts. Elaine Wilson. We hope that he will enjoy his term on the Council and have the interests of Parishioners at heart.

**Thanks:** Finally may I thank my fellow Councillors and Clerk for their work and commitment to Wortley Parish during the past year.