



Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council News

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Winter 2021

SEE IT? REPORT IT

COUNCILLOR David Holland has spoken out at “mindless” acts of vandalism by quad and off road bikers on parish council and neighbouring land, which residents are having to pick up the bills for.

Cllr Holland, Chair of Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council, said: “Some people may think this is just a bit of fun. But there’s nothing amusing about gouging deep tyre tracks across a football field, smashing the padlocks off security gates to gain access to play areas, or tearing down fencing to ride along public footpaths at speed, putting pedestrians at risk.

“It’s mindless, criminal damage, which has to be repaired with parish council funds that the community as a whole pays for. It must stop.”

Cllr Holland spoke out after visiting Anchorage Lane and Newlands Park open spaces, both of which have been targeted by the bikers gaining access by using a bolt cropper to cut through padlocked metal security gates. Deep tyre ruts scarring the Anchorage Lane football field have had to be mechanically rolled out by Doncaster Council machinery at a cost of £45 each time. And fencing has been smashed down to avoid bollards recently installed at the entrance to Newlands Park, where damage has also been done to the playing field.

Parish Council staff are liaising with officers from South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Council to tackle the problem and with officials at Cusworth Hall, where extensive damage has been done to three sections of steel boundary

fencing and grassed areas, as aerial shots taken during the recent snowy weather show.

PC Yvonne Loveridge, from Doncaster West Neighbourhood Team, urges anyone who is aware of quad bikes or off road bikes being ridden across public land to report the incident to the police by ringing 101 or using the force’s online portal. If you have a smartphone this QR code will take you straight to it:

“If you see them causing damage, please ring 999 to report a crime in progress. Every incident is flagged for our Off Road Bike Team and from the reports we can put together a case to get the team into our area. They are constantly in demand across the force area so we need to show that we have a real demand for them here.”

Doncaster Council staff have acted quickly to designate Cusworth Hall, Newlands Park and Anchorage Lane as special places where the police have powers to stop and seize quad bikes immediately. Warning signs have been placed in all three areas. Doncaster Council’s Antisocial Behaviour Team has an Off Road Bike Intelligence Officer who is working alongside the parish council and police on the matter.

Parish Clerk Emma Garner has written to the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations asking for the legal aspects of registration and insurance of quad/off road bikes to be raised with the National Association of Local Councils and ultimately with Government.

For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/quad-bikes-the-rules>



YOUR THOUGHTS PLEASE

WE would like to know what improvements you would like to see in Sprotbrough and Cusworth that the parish council can influence. There’s a questionnaire inside for your comments - or you can tell us online. Your feedback is important to us.

Showing litter a clean pair of heels

LOOKING to increase your vocabulary? Here's an active new word for you - plogging. It has only recently come into use, but in essence it's the act of combining litter picking with jogging.

The Cusworth and Scawsby Ploggers combine their love of running with a passion to see the local area looking pristine, and 'plogging' enables them to do both. Group founder Keith Allan, a Geordie now living in Cusworth, said: "The amount of litter being dropped in the area is appalling, so some fellow runners joined me to see how we could jointly make a difference. Since starting out we have collected nearly 100 black bin bags full of discarded rubbish, which we leave at strategic points for Doncaster Council to collect.

"We have temporarily stopped our group litter picks during lockdown but intend to restart them as soon as we can. We welcome new members, and you don't have to be a runner. Please contact us via our facebook page - Cusworth and Scawsby Ploggers."

The ploggers' selfless community spirit was praised by Cusworth Councillor Pat Haith, one of a number of parish councillors who regularly litter pick in their spare time. She said: "It is heartening to see what Keith and colleagues are doing. They are local people with a real pride in where they live and want to make it look better for everyone. Well done to them."

- Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council has loaned the ploggers some litter picking equipment. If you would like to borrow what you need to safely do a pick where you live, please ring the parish council office on 01302 788093 (answerphone operates outside working hours).



Keith Allan

Two decades on

A CIRCULAR public footpath around Sprotbrough and Cusworth, which was specially commissioned by the parish council to commemorate the start of the 21st century, has celebrated its 20th anniversary.

The Millennium Walk was officially opened in late 2000, with 35 special limestone waymarks lining the five miles long route with their distinctive two letter Ms side by side. The £36,000 project was part-funded with a grant from the government's Landfill Tax, as the former waste disposal site on Cadeby Road was operational at the time.

Copies of a leaflet showing the footpath route and points of interest on the way are available from the parish council office.

Cusworth's new wildlife ponds

HEAVILY silted ponds on parish council land in Cusworth are set to play a key part in helping reverse the decline of a protected amphibian.

Environmental contractors are ready to breathe new life into the two choked up ponds on Newlands Park - close to Gamekeeper's Cottage - as part of a national drive to create suitable habitats for great crested newts.

To establish the right environment for the newts some scrub, reeds and willow bough will be removed, with the logs being piled and covered in soil nearby as part of the transformation. The two ponds, which are separated by a public footpath, are fed by water from Cusworth Park lakes. They will be deepened and turned into natural habitats for the newts.

Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council is working with Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust and environmental consultancy Wildscapes to bring the plan off the drawing board. The work is



expected to take around four days, starting in March 2021, and will include around 25 metres of fencing being installed around the site.

The project forms part of an initiative by Government agency Natural England to create a large number of new ponds - and restore some existing ones - as suitable homes for great crested newts. It follows on from the success of similar work last year, which saw over 30 ponds created or restored across South Yorkshire and Derbyshire. The Cusworth scheme is the only one earmarked for the Doncaster area this year.

Great crested newts, their eggs, breeding sites and resting places are protected by law. During the 20th century half the UK's ponds were lost, a key factor in reducing their numbers. This initiative, which is fully funded by Natural England, aims to secure the long-term protection of this species and their habitat.

- Look out for an update and pictures in our next edition.



PLAN UPDATE

THE completed Sprotbrough Neighbourhood Development Plan - a key document which when agreed will set out a number of local planning 'dos and don'ts' - is currently being independently examined by consultant Peter Biggers.

As this newsletter went to press Mr Biggers, who was jointly appointed by the parish council and Doncaster Council, was set to make a fact-finding visit to Sprotbrough, having been working closely with the authors of the document - local residents called the Neighbourhood Champions.

Mr Biggers will prepare a report about his findings, which will hopefully be the final stage before a local referendum, when Sprotbrough residents will be asked to decide if the Plan should be formally adopted. The earliest this can happen is May 2021.

New road opens in Scawsby

A NEW 'mini road', complete with a three exits roundabout, has been constructed on a Scawsby park to help local youngsters get to grips with riding a bike safely.

The two-lane scaled-down carriageway, which has road markings on its Tarmac surface, is proving popular with local families as the latest addition to the children's facilities at Barnsley Road Playing Field.

Organised by voluntary group Friends of Barnsley Road Playing Field, the cycle track features a number of junctions in its loop design - as this aerial photograph shows - and has been built with generous support from a local business.



LIGHTING

COUNCILLORS have agreed to spend around £550 on new external lighting for the Anchorage Lane Pavilion and adjacent Scout building as part of security improvements.

Election news

AS this newsletter went to press, an election has been scheduled to take place on Thursday 6th May when all 17 seats representing the seven wards for Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council will be contested.

As soon as we receive more information from Doncaster Council we will share it on our website and social media.

If you would like to find out more about becoming a parish councillor, we have produced a handy guide to what's involved which you can read by visiting: <https://www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/parish-council-elections.html>

COMMUNITY GRANTS FOR LOCAL GOOD CAUSES - DON'T MISS OUT!

EVERY year the parish council awards a number of small grants to local good causes that benefit residents living in the area we serve.

Over the years these grants have helped make a difference to many voluntary organisations that are doing great work in our communities. So don't miss out on an opportunity to boost your fund-raising ready for when things start to get back to something like normal.

Check out the guidance notes by visiting:

www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/grants

You can either fill in the online form or print the pdf and send the completed version to the parish council office at the Goldsmith Centre, Sprotbrough Road.

Emergency station

PLANS to convert a former public telephone kiosk on Melton Road into a hi-tech defibrillator station are nearing completion. The kiosk is about to get a makeover, including new safety glass panels, ahead of a life-saving 'heart-start' defibrillator being installed. British Telecom will pay the on-going electricity bill for the unit and, at January's parish council meeting, councillors agreed to fund the £400 cost of adding a special emergency button which will put users straight through to the 999 call centre when the defibrillator is needed.

- Separately, councillors have agreed to save the parish council nearly £350 a year in rental charges by removing the public payphone at the Goldsmith Centre, which hasn't been used for a long time.

BRANCHING OUT

THIRTY saplings donated by the Woodland Trust charity have been planted in scrubland at Anchorage Lane skatepark, and more are on order.

Parish Councillors Lynette Chipp and Angela Curtis - pictured - suggested the site would benefit from more trees, so the silver birch, rowan and wild cherry 'whips' were planted before Christmas. As the trees become established they will provide shade around the skate park and add to the biodiversity of the local area, with around 30 more set to join them shortly.



Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council online

OUR new website is up and running, chronicling the work of your parish council. New content is being added all the time, including the latest Covid-19 announcements that affect our activities and local public resources. Have a look at: www.sprotbroughandcusworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Our monthly meetings of the parish council will continue virtually for the time being. You are welcome to watch them online via a link published every month on our website.

You can also follow us on facebook and twitter for regular social media updates.

NO PRECEPT INCREASE IN 2021/22

COUNCILLORS agreed at January's Parish Council meeting not to increase the parish precept for the 2021/22 financial year. It will be retained at this year's figure.

Parish Chair, Cllr David Holland, said: "We recognise that the pandemic has put added pressures on the incomes of many households in the parish and wanted to do our bit to help those who are finding life tough at the moment."

The 2021/22 precept - the amount needed to fund the work of the parish council - is £186,507. This equates to £48.70 for Band D council tax properties, with higher bands paying more and lower ones paying less. Parish councillors agreed that any additional funding needed for projects during the coming year will be drawn from our financial reserves.

The parish precept is an element of residents' annual council tax and collected on our behalf by Doncaster Council. We have lost some regular income as Doncaster Council no longer gives parish councils like ours an annual grant towards our work, which they had previously done for many years. The final grant to be awarded, in 2019/20, was £2,849, which was half the 2018/19 figure and had been reducing for a number of years prior to then.

Ready, steady, census

HOUSEHOLDS across Sprotbrough and Cusworth will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021. The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

Census day is Sunday 21 March 2021 and it will be the first to be run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code allowing you to complete the questionnaire on computers, phones or tablets from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. For the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity. Results will be available within 12 months, and personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

SPEEDERS TARGETED

FOLLOWING concerns raised by residents about vehicles routinely speeding along some local roads, Parish Clerk Emma Garner wrote to South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Alan Billings to investigate the possibility of introducing community speed watch schemes.

The Commissioner's office said the schemes - which have residents working alongside police with speed guns to raise awareness of the problem - are currently on hold because of Covid restrictions, but the request would be forwarded to our local police inspector for his attention. We will update as we get to know more.

Thanks Trevor

LONG-SERVING parish council employee Trevor Barnard decided it was time to hang up his mop and bucket at the ripe old age of 84, bringing an end to a local family connection stretching back decades.



Trevor called time on his job as caretaker at Anchorage Lane's Norman Dent Pavilion after 17 years loyal service. He took over the job from his wife Anne who had been caretaker for many years prior to handing the reins on to Trevor. Parish Chair Cllr David Holland presented Trevor with a £100 gift voucher to mark his well-earned retirement, watched by Deputy Clerk Tom Hinds.

- New faces: Kerry Wood has taken over from Trevor as Caretaker and Sue Timmins is the Goldsmith Centre's new Site Supervisor, replacing Marie Murfin. Steve Hutchinson is the new Relief Site Supervisor.

WHO'S WHO ON YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

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