

Chairman Statement 2021/2022

In 2021 we welcomed a new face to the Parish Council, Alison Darbyshire will be a valuable asset.

The Parish Council are responsible for the maintenance of the Branxton defibrillator, which includes purchasing replacement pads and Charge Pak at a cost of approx. £100 every time the machine is used or at least every 2 years to ensure it is available to use if there is ever an emergency. The Parish Councillors decided instead of placing an extra burden on the local resident with an increase on precept for the upkeep of the defibrillator that they would organise fund raising events which local residents could participate in, so yes it may be a cost to the local resident but at least it will be a voluntary contribution. In December 2021 a coffee morning along with additional donations raised £334.50. The Parish Council will organise other fund-raising events as and when required.

Northumberland County Council offered a free tree give away in December, the Parish Council were successful and received a pack of ten assorted native trees for the village. Although the plan was initially to replace the tree blown over on the village green, we ended up giving the trees away to replace trees in the village uprooted by Storm Arwen. However, the tree on the Green will be replaced by a cherry tree with a plaque to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

Storm Arwen hit Northumberland in November. Branxton was lucky in that it was not as badly affected as some other parts of the County; However, it did cause some damage and disruption to both power and water supplies. Following the storm Northumberland County Council agreed to undertake a review into what went well, what were the issues and how to be prepared for any future incidents. There will be a Community Resilience workshop held in May in the Wooler ward which includes Branxton Parish, this will be a trial to look at what needs to be in place if and when there are incidents in the future and where are the gaps.

Branxton like many other rural villages no longer has a regular bus service. Following requests from members of the public the Parish Council looked into Border Buses reinstating a regular bus service through the village, however due to the very low passenger usage a regular service through Branxton village was not a viable option for the bus operator. However, there is still an available on

request. Passengers can ring Border Buses the night before and book the bus to call in the Village.

Branxton Parish Council are included in the Wooler area Northumberland Communities Together which is where local Parish Councils and groups are networking and looking in how working together can provide benefits and services for all local areas which due to costs cannot be delivered by individual parishes.

Branxton Parish Council are willing to consider Parish projects if that is the wish of residents, however, any project will need to be costed and the Parish Council would look into ways on how the project/s could be delivered without increasing the annual precept.

Yes, Branxton Parish Council have increased the precept in 2022/23, we were lucky that there were no election costs in May 2021, however, cannot predict that there will be no election costs in May 2025 and the current cost of an election for a Parish of our size could be approx. £500 which is 50% of the precept, also, day to day costs are increasing.