



# West Linton Community Council

## **Chairman's Report 2006**

Mid 2006 saw a change in Community Council membership due to the election in July. The election was uncontested as only 8 residents were nominated for the nine seats on the Council. Six members of the retiring Community Council were nominated again with two new members, Mr John Mackie and Mr Robert Bond making up the present membership.

Thanks go to Mrs M King for acting as our Returning Officer and seeing to the necessary paperwork. Unfortunately she could not Chair the inaugural meeting of the new Council as she broke her ankle in a fall.

We were fortunate to have the perfect replacement Returning Officer in Mr David Suckling, who was no stranger to the task: grateful thanks to David for standing in and starting the Council again.

2006 was the year that saw the start of several environmental improvements for the Lower Green area of the village.

The first of these was the completion of the wooden footbridge over the Lyne adjacent to the Minister's Pool. The bridge was a culmination of several years of planning applications, growing funding and engaging structural engineers and contractors. It was opened in June by Mrs Kathleen McCall and was attended by representatives of the funders. It is proving to be a well used and appreciated asset.

The bridge was phase I of the improvements with the footpaths linking the bridge to a) the playpark and b) the White Bridge via the west side of the Green parallel to the river, being phases II and III.

I am pleased to say phase I is now completed and looks very good indeed. Thanks to SBLocal through Craig Blackie for funding this path.

Phase III funding has been approved by SNH and thanks for the work put in by Cllr. Calvert in achieving this. Work will commence at the earliest time possible.

The west side of the Green towards the south of the village is extremely wet and drainage work there is a priority before the path is laid.

Bulb planting along the top of the riverbank at the south approach to the village is to be carried out. This will provide a marvellous show of daffodils in the spring and hopefully more planting in other key areas will follow.

This year the village looked particularly clean and a blaze of colour with SBC planting and displays, the tubs, thanks to Linton in Bloom, and individual householders efforts made a superb show all round. The village was rewarded with Second place in the Gateway Competition, we stood below Melrose in the Large Village category. Melrose are a



formidable opponent and almost impossible to beat, maybe one day. This year a greater proportion of the marks were given to individual effort and with the permission from owners we could show judges round some of the beautiful garden displays within the village. It was a treat for those escorting the judges.

On the development front we have had the usual large number of applications to respond to. The major issue has been the proposal by the Church of Scotland to erect a Church Centre in the Manse grounds. The centre would replace the Old Church Hall, which presently houses the Village Nursery, which is privately run, and the New Church Hall. This proposal is the most contentious we have had to deal with for some time. There is great concern within the village over the anticipated closure of the nursery, on which so many families depend. Although closure is not a planning issue the CC is extremely sympathetic and has been working behind the scenes with the Church, SBC and the proprietor of the nursery to try and affect a solution if the closure becomes a reality. The application has not been determined at the time of writing.

There is concern in some quarters that the industrial land zoned at Robinsland remains empty. There are small businesses in the village that are seeking premises from which to work. The present legislation governing the release of such land for purchase by businesses is not good enough. There is a need for arbitration if agreement between landowner and would-be purchaser cannot be reached. There is an ongoing need for the release of some of this land to local businesses and this should be facilitated to eliminate this stalemate.

Another concern of the CC and village residents, which is very real and serious, is the level of traffic generation within the village. The greatest congestions are experienced along Main Street when movement either backwards or forwards is impossible at times. Many HGV's use the B7059 as the most direct link from the A702 to the A701 and their numbers continue to increase. The increased development in and around the village has exacerbated the problem. We are seeing an increase in inconsiderate parking along Main Street, which results in total stagnation on numerous occasions. The level of congestion is a great worry to emergency services as there is no alternative route. The level of congestions has now reached an intolerable level on too many occasions and some serious discussions must take place to resolve the problem. Any further development at Robinsland must have direct access to the roundabout at the north of the village on the A702 that goes for any development to the southeast of the village in the future. Using the road through Broomlee Crescent as a route to the roundabout must never be considered. This is a heavily built up area with on-street parking and as such could not take through traffic. A ring road skirting the village to the south must be the only alternative on road safety, ease of traffic flow and environmental and quality of life grounds.

It is to be hoped that a policy of restraint will be applied to any future development for West Linton. The village does not have the infrastructure to support a large influx of residents.

The legislation governing developer contributions is welcomed but it must not be used as the only tool for advancing infrastructure improvement, as the result could be too large a development in this rural situation.

I would like to thank you all for your support and work this year.

Thank you to Councillor Calvert for the work he has done on our behalf especially in securing the funding necessary to proceed with the paths.



Thank you to Derek Lawson our Treasurer on the Community Council until July this year, for doing an excellent job and a further thank you to him for agreeing to continue as our treasurer although he is no longer a CC member. Thanks also to Tommy Davidson our Minute Secretary and Graham Tulloch our Secretary for their work through the year. We are grateful.

I hope our new members are finding the work of the CC satisfying and worthwhile. We don't have an important part to play in the Community which comes to light at certain times as has been witnessed this summer. Sometimes you think no one in the Community knows what we are about, but they do, if all is quiet you can assume all is well but the Community come out of the closet when they need to and they do turn to the Community Council, which makes our job worthwhile.

I would like to close by wishing you all the best for the coming year.